

The less we, as a Government, have to do with such communities the better. It is not to the influence of Government, but to that of the missionary and trader, that we must in the first instance look for the improvement of their condition.

95. There are, again, in other places, as in Tonga and Samoa, regularly-organized Governments, presiding over a Christian and moderately-civilized community. With the independence of States such as these it would be scandalous to interfere.

96. But there is, again, a third class of islands where the people are orderly and peaceable, and have made some steps towards civilization, but have not organized any system of government beyond that of their chiefs, and adhere in most respects to their ancient social traditions.

97. It is in these places precisely that the mischiefs against which it is desired to guard are most likely to arise, and where interference on our part is the most desired by the people themselves.

98. It might possibly be thought advisable in the case of such islands as these that Her Majesty's Commissioner should, subject to the approval of the Home Government, be empowered from time to time, on their own application for a Magistrate, to make with the natives of islands willing to receive and pay such an officer, and abide by his decision, an agreement providing for such an appointment. The independent sovereignty of the island chiefs would be fully maintained, but the administration of justice would be secured on a basis very different from that on which it now stands, and the advice given by him in matters of administration would no doubt be generally followed. The continuance of such agreements might be made to depend on the continuance of the stipulated payment. If that ceased, or became irregular, the Magistrate should be withdrawn.

99. IV. Another suggestion is the creation of a great chartered company, which would itself undertake the control of these regions. Such a company might, we believe, be formed. How far it would be able to discharge the responsibilities of such a task is quite another question, and it is obvious that its operations might raise many delicate discussions, both international and domestic. We cannot, however, at the present stage of the question regard this suggestion as worthy of serious attention. The time for its adoption has now passed.

100. V. Finally, the possibility of so altering and improving the present system as to give it an efficiency which it does not now possess, and set to work the elaborate machinery which has as yet rusted in idleness, may and ought to be carefully investigated.

101. In the consideration of this and all other suggestions with reference to the High Commission, it should be borne in mind that the *punishment of outrages*, though lately forced into prominence, is not the only or the most important matter which has to be dealt with in these seas; and that, in fact, the groups in which murders have taken place form but a small portion of the territories over which the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner and his Court extends, a jurisdiction primarily created to bring law, both civil and criminal, within the reach of British subjects far from all other legal tribunals, to check aggressive lawlessness, and to regulate the growth and development of British settlements and trade in the Western Pacific.

102. On the whole, after a very careful reflection on the probable consequences of each of the different lines of action contemplated, we have come to the conclusion that there is no reason for a hasty abandonment of the system outlined by the Orders in Council, which has not as yet had any fair trial, or any opportunity of showing whether, if properly supplemented, and freed from the hindrances which have hitherto prevented its working, it might not answer the expectations of those who framed it, and fulfil all the requirements of the case.

103. But, to enable it to do this, it is imperative that the number of Deputy-Commissioners should be largely increased, that the regulation of the labour trade should be placed entirely under Imperial authority, and that jurisdiction over natives should in certain cases be conferred by Act of Imperial Parliament on the High Commissioner's Court. We proceed to indicate the measures which we consider desirable with a view to the attainment of these objects.

I.—General Provisions.

104. As regards the work of the High Commission generally, we have come to the conclusion that it is desirable, and indeed almost essential to its efficiency, that the High Commissioner should be an independent officer, able to devote his whole time and attention to the affairs of the Pacific, which are amply sufficient fully to occupy the thoughts and tax the energies of any man, whatever his industry and ability, and which are daily increasing in amount and in importance.

105. We think it may be also open to question whether his term of office should not be of longer duration than that ordinarily assigned to the Governor of a colony.

106. One of the chief reasons to be assigned against the employment of the Commodore as High Commissioner is to be found in the shortness of his term of service. That of a Governor is, no doubt, double the length of that of a naval commander; but, when the vastness of the area is considered, the multiplicity of languages and races existing within it remembered, and the complexity of the transactions going on independently in every group taken into account, it will probably be found that it is only after some years of administration that the High Commissioner can acquire such a knowledge and grasp of his work as to render his performance of it thoroughly effective.

107. The High Commissioner should, we think, receive a salary which would place him on a footing of equality with, at least, the minor Australian Governors, and should be given official rank and position not inferior to theirs.

108. As to the selection of his head-quarters we have felt considerable difficulty in making a recommendation. Sydney or Brisbane would be in many respects convenient, but there may be objections to the permanent residence, within the limits of a colony which he does not govern, of an official performing duties of such a nature. Some part of the High Commissioner's time every year ought, we think, to be spent in visiting in turn different parts of the Pacific, and some months will therefore probably be passed annually on board a ship. But head-quarters, an office, and a depository