

harmless-looking dual form of administration will be the source of it. The unequal and varying administration of the labour traffic question as worked by the British and French is a cause of constant irritation to British settlers.

The French traders, for instance, deal with the natives in drink and firearms, while the British are stringently forbidden under heavy penalties from dealing in these commodities with the islanders. The English traders think, and justly, that the law on this question should be the same for both nationalities.

The special work of the delegates was accomplished earlier than anticipated, and thus the Rev. A. Hardie and Mr. M. McGillivray were able to return to Victoria a fortnight earlier than expected.

Professor Drummond sailed for the New Hebrides by the S. S. Rockton, and should have arrived at Ancyum on the 25th inst., the day on which the synod closed its sittings.

The commissioners saw the work on the whole of the islands forming the group, with the exception of that on Nguna, a small island near Efate, or Sandwich. They were well satisfied with the progress of the mission in all its departments; the natives rising steadily in civilization and Christianity. Their mode of dress is improving. There is, however, plenty of room for still further improvement in this direction. Their manners are approaching to the European standard, while in the matter of building houses, the native style is steadily giving place to the European plan.

The customs of those outside missionary influence have undergone little change. Many of these are disgusting and barbarous in the extreme, while superstition lingers long, even among the best of the Christian converts. Infanticide and burial of widows and old people are practices to be found among those outside the mission sphere of the work. Polygamy, early marriages, infanticide, labour trade, and unlawful diseases are the most prolific causes of the remarkable decrease in the population of this and all the Polynesian islands.

The capabilities of the islands in regard to commerce are very great. Tropical products such as sugar, cotton, tea, coffee, arrowroot, and maize will grow with the greatest luxuriance. Coffee, arrowroot, and maize are now the staple products. Bananas, oranges, citrons, and lemons are not at present receiving much attention, but the day of the banana is not far off. Fiji and Queensland will have to look well after their present supremacy in this direction—Fiji alone sends between 25,000 and 30,000 bunches of ban-

anas to Sydney fortnightly. There is a rich prospect of success for the future New Hebridean planters. With wise laws and fair administration in regard to labour, any practical man may make a competency in a few years. There is practically no house rent, while living costs next to nothing, and clothing gives little anxiety.

For the honest trader and planter there is then a bright prospect; for the dishonest and lazy there is no room, for there are too many already. Caution, however, must be exercised, and anyone intending to do pioneer work in the islands should have some capital, and should consult the Australian New Hebrides Company, Sussex-street, Sydney, or the foreign missions committee of the various Presbyterian churches in Australia.

The missionaries meet annually in synod to transact all business concerning their work. The retiring moderator, Rev. W. Gray, of South Australia, gave an appropriate and valuable address on missions. The address was a historical sketch of the work in the islands during the last fifty years, dating from the martyrdom of the Rev. John Williams, in 1839 to the present time. The new moderator is the Rev. Dr. Wm. Gunn, of Futuna. The Australian commissioners were formally welcomed and associated. The Revs. J. Lyall and A. Hardie, and Mr. McGillivray gave addresses, and discussed with the Synod the special matters which the Australian churches had delegated to them. These questions were satisfactorily settled. New missionaries, the Rev. A. H. MacDonald and Shanks, M. A., B. D., are to be sent to Santo, the last, and almost unoccupied, island of the group. The Rev. D. MacDonald, of Havannah Harbour, is to be the leader of this forward movement. Mr. McDonald, however, will still be in charge of Havannah Harbour, one of the most important in the island. The important question of the unification of the New Hebrides mission was discussed, but considered to be premature. Victoria, New Zealand, and Canada are the most zealous colonies with regard to this mission field. Victoria has now six missionaries, and soon will have a seventh. New Zealand has four, and is to send another before the end of this year.

The Canadian Church has three missionaries labouring there, while New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania have one each. The mother colony, however, will, it is hoped, not long occupy such a backward place in such an important field of labour. The Free Church of Scotland has two missionaries. There are thus 18 missionaries there now, and two more to be before this year closes—20 in all—just about