

There has been a slight disturbance in one of the islands of the group, and a gentleman claiming the rights of a British subject states that he has been compelled to leave the islands.

Mr. Moss has already considerable experience of the Pacific Islands, and his work "Through the Atolls" is doubtless known to your Lordship.

As some time must elapse before the appointment of Mr. Moss can be received, Mr. Moss proposes, with my sanction and at the expense of the Government of the colony, to pay a visit to the Hervey Group and report to me on his return as to the state of affairs there, when I shall give him the necessary instructions for his guidance, after taking the advice of my Ministers thereon.

I have given Mr. Moss clearly to understand that his present visit is purely unofficial, and that he is not empowered in any way to act for or advise on behalf of Her Majesty, and I have heard from Mr. Moss that his action will be entirely guided by those considerations.

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

I have, &c.,

ONSLOW.

No. 20.

(No. 56.)

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 12th November, 1890.

N.Z. Gazette, 3rd
July, 1890.

The regulations, issued with Army Orders 1st April, 1890, under which commissions in the British army may be obtained by officers of colonial local military forces, have been found somewhat difficult of fulfilment, owing to the peculiar organization of the Defence Forces of this colony. By the second of these regulations "a candidate will be required to have served at least fifteen months as an officer in the local military force of the colony from which he is nominated, and must have attended two annual trainings, or have seen active service in the field."

There are two branches of the local military forces—the Militia and the Volunteers. The former is practically non-existent, not having been called out since the Maori wars, though a large number of officers continue to hold commissions, and the Government still have the power of granting commissions therein. In the Volunteers, commissions are not given on the nomination of the Government, but to the gentlemen whom the men may choose to elect to command them. Various considerations actuate the men in these elections, and their choice usually falls on comrades with whose disposition, manners, and address they are already well acquainted, but would not be likely to be given in favour of a youth of the prescribed age of 19 to 22. The only manner, therefore, in which the regulation can be complied with is by nominating a candidate to the Militia, a force which has no annual training, and no real existence other than on paper. The regulations were no doubt drawn up with special regard to the system existing in Australia and Canada, and it may have escaped the observation of the War Office that such a system as the election of officers by the men still existed in any part of Her Majesty's dominions.

I have lately appointed a gentleman to a commission in the Militia with a view to his becoming a candidate for one in the Imperial army. It is the intention of the Defence Minister to order him to be attached for duty to a Volunteer corps, and to attend the camps annually held at Easter, and other times, in the hope that his case may be considered by the War Office as coming within the terms of the regulations to which I have referred.

The privilege of obtaining commissions in the Imperial army is highly esteemed by many young men in New Zealand, and I shall be glad to hear from your Lordship in what way candidates from New Zealand may best comply with these regulations until some steps have been taken to bring the organization of the Defence Forces more in harmony with that which exists in Australia and elsewhere.

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

I have, &c.,

ONSLOW.