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THE ADMINISTRATION OF FRENCH OCEANIA,
1842 - 1906

by

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Colonial administration is the product of foresight and circumstance. From colonial policy, as generally conceived in Europe, and from the existing institutions of a colonial society, are framed the answers of the administration to national and local needs. Where policy is fragmentary, the administrator is thrown back on to his own judgement of what answers are the most fitting (or the most convenient). At this point, his own conception of the role of the colonial Power, based on precedent or conformity with practice elsewhere, and his knowledge of local conditions form a secondary colonial policy. The distinction is important and sometimes overlooked. The ambiguity of the content of "policy", by the time instructions from abroad have been transformed into executive action at several removes from the original draughtsman, has brought reprimand to administrators and confusion to many generalizations in writings on colonial history.

There are always social and geographical factors in the colonial situation to be borne in mind. Where the people of the territory have evolved a culture different from the administrator's, he may well be forced to acknowledge the superiority of much in the indigenous political and social structure for the needs of the native majority. Or he may seek to change this structure on prompting from the metropolis or according to his own humanitarian or bureaucratic ideals.

The introduction of new conceptions of law and authority, in accord with principles professed by the administering Power, has been characteristic of
French colonial policy. The origin and nature of these changes and modifications to them under circumstances peculiar to each territory form the history of French colonial administration. In broader perspective, France, like other colonial Powers, has had to contend with problems arising from general European contact with native societies. European expansion for trade, conquest or evangelism has not for long been separate from the expansion of European forms of justice and government. Change begets change: and the imported administration perpetuates and is subject to economic, religious and cultural factors which are no less important for the historian than for the indigenous social and political structure.

The purpose of this study is to describe French colonial policy in action in French Oceania and related changes in the organisation of the administered where their economic, social and political life was most obviously affected. The problems peculiar to the area which the first administration had to deal with had emerged, for the most important islands of the group, well before 1842 - the date of French annexation of the Marquesas Islands; French protection of Tahiti and Moorea. The effects of early European contact with eastern Polynesia had operated to different degrees and wrought far-reaching changes in the political and religious life of the islanders - particularly at Tahiti. Against this background, which I have found it necessary to describe in some detail, French rule began with a theoretical distinction in the forms of colonial administration applied to the two groups. The difference between these two measures is not entirely explained by the fact that the first was planned to obtain for France a naval base and a penal colony, while the second was hastily improvised on the initiative of a Fre
naval officer. The reasons lie also with the conception of the islands and
their people which had been formed by the 1840's among consuls, traders and
missionaries, and which found its way into official reports. The people of
the Marquesas were unfriendly and little known; the long legend of the hospi-
ality of the Society islanders and the interest of other nations in their
welfare put them in a different category. The distinction was a rough ack-
nowledgement of nearly half a century of Pacific history.

The study continues till shortly after 1900, by which date this distir-
ion had broken down, and there had grown up an incoherent but positive poli-
and practice of assimilation in the various senses of the term. On the admi-
istered society, this, and the continued influence of other Europeans combin-
to change radically important features of its social and political organisat-
though there were degrees in this process because of the isolation of many
of the islands involved.

The period is long and the material bulky. With the generous provisio
made by the Australian National University I have been able to consult the
relevant scattered sources. On these the study's claim to originality must
rest. The important period of missionary penetration of the Society Islands
has not been adequately covered before from the L.M.S. archives - least of a
by the older missionary historians. Complete and thorough works on French
colonies are so rare that one must of necessity go to French archives for
adequate material. This is especially true of works on French colonies in t
Pacific - with the exception of those on the early period of French activiti
in the area by M. Yves Person and M. Jean-Paul Faivre.
For access to French sources in Paris and Rome and for unfailing courtesy to a foreign student, I am grateful to M. Catineau Laroche of the Ministère de la France d'Outre-mer, the director of the Archives Nationales. M. Charles Braibant and his archivist, M. Olivier de Prat, M. François Kruger, librarian of the Société des Missions Évangéliques, the Very Reverend Father d'Elbée of the Pious Congregation at Grottaferrata, and, in a great measure, to Father Patrick O'Reilly, of the Société des Océanistes, whose bibliographical knowledge and collection of rare documents were always at disposal. In London, Miss Irene Fletcher's excellent catalogues of material at the London Missionary Society and ready assistance were invaluable.

In the islands themselves, M. Paul Doucet of the Bureau des Terres, advised me on the many problems of native land tenure and made available the relevant land registers and official documentation; M. H. Jacquier, president of the Société d'Études Océaniennes, kindly arranged access to material in local Museum; the British Consul, Mr. Devenish, permitted me to sort out and read a great mass of consular records which have no duplicates elsewhere.

Acknowledgements are due to the Trustees of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, for permission to use other British Consulate Papers. I have also good cause to be grateful to helpful librarians - whether in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the French Foreign Office, the Public Record Office, or the National Library, Canberra - whose interest in tracking down difficult sources often went far beyond mere duty to the research reader.

Finally, my supervisor, Dr. J.W. Davidson, Professor of Pacific History, has made valuable suggestions at various stages of the draft; and his own
unpublished thesis on European Penetration of the South Pacific, 1779-1842 has provided a useful perspective of the earlier period and a lesson in presentation and historical writing. Mr. R.P. Gilson, Research Fellow of the same Department, has read and commented on most of the anthropological material, supplementing useful advice from Mr. Bengt Danielsson, Mr. Frank Stimson of Tahiti and Mme. Nordman-Salmon of the École Coloniale, Paris.

When this thesis is circulated, it is hoped that comments from those who will read it will help correct its deficiencies. In return, it is offered as a contribution to the historical and field work which remains to be done in the Pacific.

C.W.N.

Canberra,
May, 1956.
Note on Orthography and Abbreviations

There is no standardised form for Polynesian words, including place-names. Where possible, I have adopted the spelling of native words as given in Bishop Museum publications and have used the symbol (') to mark a glottal stop and to serve as a guide to the pronunciation of common noun and titles. It has been omitted from place-names. The orthography for these is sometimes contradictory in different sources. Admiralty charts have been the main guide, and I have refrained from separating the component of geographical names and from using hyphens.

Abbreviations

A.A.E. Archives des Affaires Étrangères.
A.C.O. Archives Coloniales, Océanie.
A.M. Archives de la Marine.
A.M.P. Archives, Musée de Papeete.
B.N.N.A.F. Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises.
B.S.E.O. Bulletin de la Société des Études Océaniennes.
C.O. Colonial Office.
C.S.C.P. Congrégation des Sacres-Coeurs de Papeete.
F.O. Foreign Office.
L.M.S. London Missionary Society. (This has been used for convenience even where the early official title was "the Missionary Society").
M.L. Mitchell Library.
N.L. National Library (Canberra).
P.P. Parliamentary Papers.
S.M.E. Société des Missions Évangéliques.
T.B.C.P. Tahiti British Consulate Papers.
T.L. Turnbull Library (Wellington).
period, the Society Islands became the new Arcadia.

Yet, even while the pamphleteers and the novelists were writing of Tahiti in savoury genteelisms, events were shaping in the islands themselves and in England which were to transform the customs and the cosmology of the Polynesian and draw his scattered and vast habitation into the restless and fragmentary course of European expansion overseas. By 1779, Bligh had bartered for breadfruit and salted down hogs at Tahiti—the forerunner of trading voyage from New South Wales at the end of the century. A few years later, the mutineers took their women from the island; a few of them began the first European settlement in eastern Polynesia, at Pitcairn; others played their part in local wars; and one, a writer of talent, left a description of Tahiti and its society unequalled by the great navigators.

In England, three years after some of the mutineers had been brought to trial, men of a different stamp—"mechanics of improveable understandings of correct knowledge of the gospel, of sound experience in the power of divine grace"—were being selected by the founders of the (London) Missionary

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(2) The favorite theme was comparison of English or French society with the "ideal" society of Polynesia where, in the lines of one of the pamphleteers, "immodest words are spoken without offence, and want of decency shows innocence. A problem hence Philosophers advance, whether shame springs from nature or from chance." Robert Courtenay, A Poetical Epistle (Moral and Philosophical) from an Officer at Otaheite To Lady Gr.v.n.r., II. See, too, Gautier, "Tahiti dans la littérature française à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, quelques ouvrages oubliés", J.S.O., tome III, no. 3, 1947, 44-56.

Society. They had their own vision of the Pacific.

"A new world hath lately opened to our view, call it Island or Continent, that exceeds Europe in size, New Holland; and now becon the recepticle for our outcasts of society -- New Zealand, and the innumerable islands, which spot the bosom of the Pacific Ocean, or each side of the Line, from Endeavour Straits to the Coast of America, many of them full of inhabitants, -- occupying lands, which s to realize the fabled gardens of the Hesperides, -- where the frag groves, which cover them from the sultry beams of day, afford the food and clothing; whilst the sea offers them continual plenty of inexhaustible stores; and the day passes in ease and affluence, or the night in music and dancing. But amid these enchanting scenes, savage nature still eats the flesh of its prisoners -- appeases it gods with human sacrifices -- whole societies of men and women liv promiscuously, and murder every infant born amongst them; -- whilst the turpitude, committed in the face of open day, proclaims, that shame is as little felt, as a sense of sin is known." 5

This sermon by Dr. Haweis bridged the gap between the pamphleteers and the pirates, between those whose thinking was remote from the realities of the South Seas and those whose business lay there. When the missionaries sailed on the Duff in 1796, they carried with them in addition to their evangelical zeal, current ideas about the Pacific gleaned from the voyage narratives and a Tahitian vocabulary compiled by one of the Bounty mutinees. Thus armed they went to change the manners of a race.

The "new world" they sailed into could not be summed up in a sermon. The area of eastern Polynesia which was later to become French Oceania is

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(4) Burder to Rogers, 31 December 1795 (letter and circular regarding the purchase of the missionary vessel, Duff), Petherick Collection, 71/2, N
(5) Haweis, in Sermons, preached in London, at the formation of the Missionary Society, September 22, 23, 24, 1795: to which are prefixed, Memorials respecting the establishment and first attempts of that society, 12-13.
(6) Probably the work of Morrison whose vocabulary, mentioned in his Journal has never been located. For a reference to the manuscript given to Dr. Haweis by "an ingenious clergyman of Portsmouth" after the trial, see A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean, performed in the Year 1796, 1797, 1798, in the Ship Duff, commanded by Captain James Wilson, compiled from the Journals of the Officers and the Missionaries, 13-14.
spread over 2,000,000 square miles of ocean. Together, the 118 or so high
islands and atolls of this part of the Pacific make up only 1,500 square
miles of land. The Marquesas, Society and Austral Islands and the Mangare
group are formed of old castellated volcanoes. Their extinct cones rise
several thousands of feet above sea level, split into deep valleys and fal
away in bluff cliffs or rolling slopes which terminate in a narrow littors
Around the shores where the sea floor is moderately shelved, coral reefs c
broken shoals preserve the land between the hills and the lagoon from
excessive erosion. The soil there is rich and well watered, the vegetatic
luxuriant. In islands not subject to drought, life for man has been easil
sustained along the coastal belt or in the valleys by fishing, planting an
fruit-gathering.

Of these islands, the richest was Tahiti, where the Bounty mutineers
found hogs " large and Plenty ", goats, dogs, fowls to supplement their di
of roots, fish and wild fruit. Cultivation, one of them observed, was limi
to the tapa tree, the kava plant, taro and sweet potatoes and sometimes co
nut trees and plantains without much " Labour and Toil "; and, he continue
" as e vry ( sic ) part of the Island produces food without the help of man
it may of this Country be said that the curse of Eden has not reached it,
man having his bread to get by the Sweat of his Brow nor has he Thorns in
path."

(7) Morrison, op.cit., 143-152.
By contrast, among the atolls of the Tuamotu Archipelago or on the few coral formations lying off the volcanic islands, there is no point above sea level higher than thirty feet. Stretches of sandy, coral soil enclosed the lagoons of the atolls supported little vegetation save the coconut palm, the meat drink and housing of the inhabitants. Everywhere, fish were plentiful.

Early in the Christian era of Europe, these islands were colonised by a brown-skinned people of Asiatic origin who navigated the Pacific and adapted their life to their environment skilfully and successfully. After several centuries, their racial features, their language, their religion, their social structure, despite regional variations, still retained a recognisable homogeneity that was Polynesian. In central and eastern Polynesia, the cradle of their culture was Tahiti, Moorea and the neighbouring islands of Raiatea, Borabora and Huahine.

Wherever Polynesian society grew up, it preserved personal and corporate interests with practical efficiency and a religious ethos which made every department of life meaningful. This harmony of activity and belief which gave to every inhabited corner of Polynesia its legends and extended legend into daily ethic constituted the genius of the race. The strains imposed on this integration of livelihood and lore by aliens in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries form the Polynesian story of European expansion. It will never be fully written. Many of the details of the indigenous contribution to the meeting of Europe and Polynesia still remain to be collated by working from the present as well as the fragmentary record of the past. But there are some general features about this society which
the historian cannot afford to ignore.

Till the present day, the basic unit of importance in Polynesian society has been the family of varying size, under the authority of its headman, including often relatives and retainers - the model for much of the political structure and the effective source of labour for the subsistence economy typical of the area. Households were generally grouped into larger segments of the islands' tribal population. Membership of both households and larger units has been determined by blood ties, by marriage connections and generally qualified by residence, participation in group enterprises for sustinace or protection and entailed defined rights over lands and produce. Leadership at the two levels was hereditary with a usual, though not universal, preference for male titleholders. The function of leadership were intimately connected with immediate social and political necessities - land organisation, warfare and social alliances.

At every level of the social and political hierarchy, from the chief of the largest segments down through its votaries, craftsmen and household heads, the qualifications of birth and skill were invested with a religious sanctity. In the case of high-ranking chiefs and sub-chiefs, the society recognised the degree in which the title-holder stood as the outstanding inheritor of the *mana* which charged the Polynesian universe and which was

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(8) The main sources are those covered by Williamson in his *Social and Political Systems of Central Polynesia* - though his treatment of these did not always take account of historical events and changes in Polynesian society which separated the information of the voyagers from that of the missionaries and still later observers. See, too, Williamson, *Religion and Social Organisation in Central Polynesia* (ed. Piddington), esp. xi-xvi; Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, esp. Chap. XVI, 575-599.
notably present among those who could prove descent through chiefly families from ancestor heroes and the pantheon of deities.

Kinship status and religious beliefs were of fundamental importance too, in determining the utilisation of local resources in Polynesia - including different types of land and their produce, lagoon and off-shore fishery. An individual might have well-defined rights over area and harvest, because of his membership of the resident household; there was, too, communally organised land usage. But claims to produce, from the level of household distribution, to the privileges of craftsmen, priests, chiefs, and the gods themselves in the form of offerings or sacrifice, were not land titles in European sense. Similarly, the defined boundaries of lands worked by households, or for the use of larger units of the society, were validated by group ancestry and the religious association of the useholders with the gods. At this point in the relationship of the Polynesian to the wealth of his environment, the principles of chiefly authority, religion and social status based on kinship commingled: a chief was the trustee by birth of the land rights of his descent group; the ceremonies accompanying exchanges and services to chiefs were important religious occasions; sanctions forbidding the taking of produce during times of shortage were recognised by virtue of the social and religious position of the chief who imposed them; the share which every household had in available land was the economic testimony of its genealogical ties with ancestor colonisers. Infractions of these principles by refusal of service (or by chiefs demanding too much) were not willing tolerated and brought disgrace and punishment, or war, if the deviation
involved households or larger groups of the society.

From the arrival of the first Europeans, the history of eastern Polynesia was to a large measure the history of Tahiti. The Marquesas were the scene of only one unsuccessful missionary settlement in 1797. Neither the group, nor the Tuamotu, Austral and Mangareva groups were frequented with regularity by traders till the 1820's and the 1830's. It was at Tahiti (at Hawaii and New Zealand) that the problems arising from missionary con and European lawlessness became most acute; it was there that the answers to them were first worked out in Polynesia.

Early descriptions of Tahiti suggest that the island was divided politically into three geographical divisions which corresponded with the major descent groups, or tribes, located in the northern and eastern, the western and the southern shores of the mainland and the peninsula. These, in turn, were composed of a number of sub-tribes—some seventeen, according to Morrison, but undoubtedly more according to missionary evidence. Sub-tribe membership was presumably determined by kinship within a number of local extended families. The title and office of chief over a sub-tribe went to

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(9) The major divisions, at the end of the eighteenth century, were Porionuu and Aharoa, Oropaa and Fana (sometimes called Atahuru), and the Teva districts of southern Tahiti and the Taiarapu peninsula. See map facing p. 14.

(10) These were the vasa mata-einaa listed in Henry, Ancient Tahiti, 70-9 and elsewhere. Precise terminology for the Tahitian mata-einaa is lacking. The term "Clan" will not do unless it used in the sense of a non-exogamous descent group which was not strictly patrilineal or matrilineal. I have used the term "sub-tribe", as meaning a non-unilinear descent group whose members were not necessarily resident within the district at all times. During the nineteenth century, district boundaries altered a good deal, some of the older sub-tribal headships were assumed by the chiefs of larger groups. For an attempted reconstruction of the districts of Tahiti and Moorea, see Williamson, op. cit., vol. I, 170, and compare with the list of the districts, below in Appendix I, 339-349.
the head of the highest-ranking family. Ideally, the number of followers a chief's command depended on the numerical extent and the genealogical antiquity of the descent group of which he (or she) was the titled representative. Other factors - personal qualities of leadership in war and justice and generosity in peace - were also important. According to one source, tribal headship was influenced by similar variables.

"The eight Teva districts recognised Teriirere or Temarii of Papar as their political head, though Teriinui o Tahiti, the Vaiari chi was socially the superior, and Vehiatua of Tairarapu was sometimes politically the stronger." 11

The social and political structure of the tribes and sub-tribes was inseparable from religious ceremonies which accompanied every social occasion and from religious sanctions which gave to the authority of chief's rationale based on proven descent from ancestor-deities and on the belief inherited mana. For the chiefly class, the outward symbols of inherited accepted leadership were the title of ari'i, the right to wear the Red or Yellow Girdle, ceremonial precedence, services, the right to allocate land for occupation and cultivation, and ultimately, the function of representing the sub-tribes before the gods. For their followers, the outward symbols of land rights and religious status in relation to other kin groups was the marae temple.

Within this general pattern, the early voyagers and the missionaries named other gradations of rank - from the ari'i to the to'ofa, or sub-chief, several families, the iatoai, or relatives of chiefs, the ra'atira with land-controlling rights, priests, craftsmen and the manahune - a loose term

applied to all the lesser inhabitants without rank in the districts.

It did not always follow that the authority of the chiefs and sub-chiefs was automatically binding on all members in their districts - even less on the people of other districts, though the social respect due to an ari'i was not usually ignored wherever he was.

"...but if the Chiefs should not act up to the Dignity of their Office, they may be deposed of their Office, but they are still Chiefs, and tho' the King may be stripped of his Government he still retains his royalty and none but one of the two Families can ever enjoy that Dignity while they are in being - so that it is no more than a change of the Ministry, with the other Chiefs it is the same and they oft change stations." (sic) 14

Of the mechanisms of consultation between chiefs, or between chiefs and the people of the districts, we know very little. At least, it seems clear that although Tahitian society had not evolved the complex forms of Samoan politics, nothing of importance could be done without a lengthy exchange of views through the chiefs' speakers, or without the general consent of the great body of ra'atira in meetings held at the district maraes. Disputes, ranging from theft and adultery to insults to chiefs, land encroachment, title claims and claims to services from other districts, were settled by exchange of goods, banishment, death, council between the families concerned or, failing any settlement, by recourse to war.

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(13) Morrison, op.cit., 167; A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean... Appendix II, 318-325. Despite Williamson's plausible explanation that the Towha of the missionary accounts may be a cognate for hoa (friend, relative, companion), it seems more probable that the word is simply to'ofa, meaning "chief". Williamson, op.cit., vol. II, 38.


Wars were frequent from the arrival of the Bounty mutineers till the arrival of the Duff missionaries. The struggle centered around the efforts of the leading family of Pare with headship over the Porionuu and the Ahar peoples in northern and eastern Tahiti to have their titles respected in parts of the island and in Moorea. Many of the socially superior chiefs of the Oropaa and the Teva refused to pay homage to those who were favoured by the visits of European ships and whose dignities, acquired by marriage with chiefs at Raiaatea, were relatively recent. The chief of Pare, Tunuiéataitua (or Teu) and his son Tu (or Pomare II), at war with chiefs in Moorea and with the Teva of the mainland of Tahiti, combined the north and west of the island against the south. The mutineers living at Tahiti assisted in the struggle against the people of Oropaa with Pomare's Raiatean allies and with English muskets. For a time Pomare II was moderately successful. Wars of similar pattern broke out between 1801 and 1806 and were followed, in 1803, by an uprising in the districts subjected by Pomare. Most of the missionaries were scattered to the Leeward Islands or back to New South Wales; a few retired with newcomers in 1812 to Pomare's protection and worked for the overthrow of polytheism with no less energy than their protector fought to overthrow the independent chiefdoms. By 1813, the arms traffic, neglect of the mares during the wars, the conversion of some of the lower classes of priests of

(17) All parties were eager for arms and European advice. When the Nautilus arrived in 1798, her captain had nothing else to trade for fruit and hog The missionaries encouraged the practice. Davies, A History of the Tahiti Mission, vol. I, Chap. IV, MS., L.M.S.; Missionary Records, Tahiti and the Society Islands, 114.

(18) Ellis, Polynesian Researches, During a Residence of Nearly Eight Years in the Society and Sandwich Islands, vol. II, 79.
Moorea and the Leeward Islands and the growth of a Christian party in the north and east of Tahiti, dislocated the outward forms of the local religious structure. Exasperation with native prophets and tangible evidence of the power of the new Atua in the victory of Pomare II over the eastern and southern districts in 1815, hastened the collapse of the defenders of the old gods. Too late the chiefs of Cropaa and the two Teva areas united to stave off the political supremacy of the Porionuu family. The sudden centralisation of authority was accompanied by the wholesale destruction of traditional religious symbols.

"The King changed his Gods, but he had no other reason but that of consolidating his Government. After his conquest it is true he went by short stages to show his authority, receive presents from his subjects, drink the abundance of native spirits, and then in their inebriety, cast down their marae and destroy their Gods, thus by stratagem taking away from any future rebellion the power of the idols which were always leaders in war." 20

The European vision of the Pacific had changed on closer acquaintance with the reality: the optimistic zeal of the first missionaries had been replaced by caution among the more experienced who had learned to work through existing institutions - while still seeking to transform them. Threlkeld was still "joy at coming through the great Darkness" - as in the first few years of the mission; but it was tempered after 1815 by the desire of some of the more intelligent of the missionaries to avoid "raising such ideas of the state of this people as really does not exist". 21

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(19) Davies, op.cit., Chaps. XVI, XVII, L.M.S.
(20) Orsmond, The Old Orsmond MS., 1849, L.M.S.
(21) Harris to the L.M.S., 24 August 1798, Ropiteau-O'Reilly Collection; Threlkeld and Williams to the L.M.S., 30 October 1818, L.M.S.S.S. 2.
Elsewhere, the vision had changed too. The murder of the French navigator, Marion du Fresne at New Zealand, Cook at Hawaii and the loss of Laperouse, led the French Minister for the Navy to caution a French officer in 1800 against "over-eager philanthropy" while in the South Seas. Commerce in whale-oil, sandalwood, pork and flax began after the turn of the century the Dutch East India Company and the naval power of Spain declined and the monopoly of the English East India Company had ended. The waters of Polynesia were furrowed by new sailing routes. Bound for Hawaii from New Zealand or from Sydney, vessels swung north out of the westerly drift into the south-trades, sailing in an arc to central or western Polynesia. Tahiti to Sydney was only about 14 days sailing (though it took over a month to return); from Tahiti to Honolulu took about 20 days and at least 30 for the return journey. For whalers short of supplies in the South Pacific grounds or of the coast of South America, the closest (and the most lawless) harbours were to be found in the Bay of Islands or westward on the trades to the Marquesas and the Society Islands. With the rise of Kamehameha at Hawaii Pomare II at Tahiti and the advent of missionaries, traders and deserters, a new phase in the history of Polynesia had begun.

(22) Instructions to Captain Baudin, cited in Faivre, *op.cit.*, 113-114.
(23) Hankey, in *A Journal of the Cruises and Remarkable Events occurring on board H.M.S. the Collingwood, 1814-1816*, vol. I, 134, gives a list of sailing directions and times. These are verifiable, of course, from the logs of traders themselves and deducible from the prevailing winds and currents in the area.