

J. B. BRADSHAW, Esq., M.H.R., to the COMMITTEE ON CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

In answer to a circular which I had the honor to receive from you, I beg to state that my experience of the Chinese dates so far back as twenty years. It was gained in parts of Asia and Africa, in Australia and New Zealand.

The Chinese by associated labour are (a.) enabled to work auriferous ground profitably which otherwise would not be worked by Europeans for some time, owing to the absence in the latter of combination of effort. The Chinese on the gold fields are bold, hardy, and enterprising. They are also very industrious, and on the whole very orderly. They are excellent miners in shallow dry workings, and also in stream workings. Chinamen will stand for hours in water dipping up gravel, while their partners separate the gold on the bank of the stream, by means of cradles and boxes. (b.) I do not believe that the presence of a Mongolian element has an immoral tendency, nor do I believe, as a rule, they encourage gambling outside of themselves. With themselves they are great gamblers, and it is a national institution in China.

2. Chinese are peaceably disposed, and those disturbances which have taken place in Australia were invariably provoked by Europeans.

Chinese labour is adapted for any description of handicraft. Chinamen are good agriculturists, and good domestic servants, but, as they come to New Zealand for gold mining, they, as a rule, devote their time to that calling, whilst a few, and not the best of them, sell their labour to Europeans as cooks, shepherds, &c.

3. Intermarriages with Europeans are of rare occurrence, and those which have taken place have been generally with Europeans of doubtful character.

4. I am not competent to give an opinion as to the relative cost of European and Chinese labour; but as to the relative cost of living, I believe that the opinion generally entertained that the Chinese cost of keep is much lower than that of Europeans is a mistake. Chinamen are large consumers of poultry and pork; and in localities where there is a large Chinese population, the prices of those articles are generally higher than in other places.

5. I am unwilling to advise whether it is desirable to take any steps with a view of checking Chinese immigration. A matter of so serious a moment, and one which must affect the condition of the people and also that of the Treasury, should, in my humble opinion, be left to be determined by the people of the Colony and His Excellency's responsible advisers. Chinese come into the Colony at their own cost, and for one purpose, and that is, to dig for gold. If the people and Government find it necessary to check Chinese immigration, then I respectfully suggest that the only effectual way of doing it is by closing the gold mines from being worked by any more new arrivals. I may add my firm conviction that it is unwise to encourage the introduction of any class of people into a new country, unless it is for permanent settlement. It is well known that Chinese come to New Zealand to dig for gold, and to leave the Colony for China so soon as they have saved a few hundreds of pounds. This is proved to be a fact by their movements in the Colony of Victoria. At one time in Victoria there were 40,000 Chinese miners; now, there are only 17,000 Chinamen and forty-three Mongolian females in that Colony.

I am of opinion that it is not desirable to impose any special taxation on Chinese immigrants. In the Colony of Victoria several Acts were passed imposing special taxes on Chinese, but those Acts have been repealed. The following are the Acts referred to:—

Chinese protection tickets were first issued under the provisions of 18 Vict., No. 39 (assented to 12th June, 1855), at the rate of £1 per annum each. The first issue of protection tickets was made in June, 1855. The Act authorizing the issue of protection tickets to Chinese was repealed on and from 28th February, 1859, by 22 Vict., No. 80 (assented to 24th February, 1859).

Chinese residence licenses were issued on and after the 1st January, 1858, under Act 21 Vict., No. 41 (assented to 24th November, 1857), and the rate was £1 each for two months. The Act 22 Vict., No. 80 (assented to 24th February, 1859), altered the rate of Chinese residence licenses to £4 each per annum, payable quarterly. This was in lieu of all other charges, dues, or imposts, except the fee for business licenses, and the fee for entering the Colony as an immigrant. The Act 25 Vict., No. 132 (assented to 19th March, 1862) abolished the Chinese residence license.

The Chinese capitation tax was imposed on and after the 1st November, 1855, by Act 18 Vict., No. 39 (assented to 12th June, 1855), and the rate was £10 for each Chinese immigrant arriving in the Colony by ship. The Act 22 Vict., No. 80 (assented to on the 24th February, 1859), made an alteration, reducing the tax, from 28th February, 1859, to £4 each in the case of Chinese immigrants entering the Colony by any other way than by ship. Act 27 Vict., No. 170 (assented to 30th June, 1863), suspended the levying of the capitation tax, at the rate of £10 for each Chinese immigrant entering the Colony, for a period of two years. Act 27 Vict., No. 200 (assented to 20th April, 1864), reimposed, from on and after 30th June, 1865, the capitation tax at the rate of £10 for each Chinese immigrant arriving by ship; and the rate was £4 on each immigrant entering the Colony by any other means. The capitation tax was abolished by Act 28 Vict., No. 259 (assented to 9th May, 1865).

J. B. BRADSHAW.

House of Representatives, Wellington, 7th October, 1871.