

proving that they had not fully measured the effect of the contact with European ideas which the treaty secured. Some of these effects the Australasian Colonies are already finding, to their cost.

6. It is unnecessary for me to enter here into a disquisition on the qualities of the Chinese as immigrants: suffice it to say that, though generally they are industrious, patient, inoffensive, and, so far, obedient to our laws, they do not, with few exceptions, become colonists. They are essentially aliens in manners, customs, and religion, and must continue to be so. They do not assimilate with us. They are amongst us, but not of us.

7. The question we have to consider is, What is likely to be the effect in the future upon the Australasian Colonies of their propinquity to an empire of four hundred millions of Chinese, should their migratory instinct develop into a volume beyond our power to control? At present the European population of the Australasian Colonies has not reached four millions. When we reflect upon the vast bodies of men which, even in historic times, have moved to other countries, when once the subtle and uncontrollable force of the migratory instinct had taken possession of them, we cannot regard the possibility of such an instinct influencing large masses of a population of four hundred millions without the gravest apprehension. Whenever that migratory wave sets in upon these colonies, with the present appliances at command, we shall not be able to control it, under the conditions of the existing treaties. If we are unable to control it, we may at some period, more or less distant, find the Australasian Colonies exposed to an invasion which will place these grand free colonies—now the homes of English people—under the control of Mongolian hordes, under which our bright dreams for the future would be for ever extinguished.

8. In view of such a contingency, and of the conditions of the existing treaties, there appear to me to be but two modes of dealing with the Chinese question: (1) To endeavour to procure the abrogation of the treaties, or (2) to endeavour to secure their modification. Looking at the vast and varied trade of the British Empire with China, the first of these modes is clearly beyond our reach. Nor is such a course desirable, even if it were possible, for the reason that, in the probably coming struggle between England and Russia, in these seas and elsewhere, China will be one of our most potent allies, unless we alienate her sympathies and drive her from us.

9. The latter course, namely, to endeavour to secure the modification or interpretation of the treaties, is obviously the one to adopt, and one, I think, within our power to obtain. The modification I venture to propose is—by the adoption by Great Britain and China of a clause interpreting the articles permitting the entrance of British subjects into China, and of Chinese into British dominions, in the following manner, namely: Let a census be taken, say in 1888, of the total number of British subjects entering China in that year, and let that number be the number of Chinese to enter the British dominions during the following year, and so on.

10. In such an effort, it may be presumed that we should be supported by the United States, where the Chinese immigration question has frequently been the occasion of great difficulties.

11. I have thus briefly endeavoured to bring this question under your notice, and I also address by this mail similar letters to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London, the Premiers of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales, in the hope that, however imperfectly I may have brought this subject before you, the question itself is momentous enough to induce you to consider it, and in the further hope that you may see fit to bring it under the notice of the Legislature of New Zealand, in order that concerted action may be taken.

I have, &c.,

J. C. FIRTH.

Sir Harry Atkinson, Premier, New Zealand.

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