

No. 20.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Melbourne.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 25th May, 1888.

In the course of correspondence between this Government and that of New South Wales upon the Chinese immigration question, Sir Henry Parkes refers to a circular letter from the Government of Victoria dated the 22nd March upon the subject. As no such letter has reached this Government, I should feel greatly obliged if you would favour me with a copy, as it is of the first importance that we should be fully and officially acquainted with the views of a colony holding the position which Victoria does amongst her sisters of the Australasian group.

The Hon. the Premier, Melbourne.

I have, &c.,
T. W. HISLOP.

No. 21.

The ACTING-SECRETARY to the PREMIER, Melbourne, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Melbourne, 12th June, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 25th ultimo (No. 88, 1599), intimating that you had not received a copy of the circular letter addressed by me on the 23rd March last to the several Australasian Governments on the subject of the Chinese immigration question, and expressing your desire to be furnished with a copy. I have to express my regret that, through an oversight, the circular referred to was not sent to you at the time of its despatch to the other colonies, and I beg now to enclose a copy for your information.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
WM. SEWELL (For the Premier),
Acting-Secretary to the Premier.

Enclosure.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Melbourne, 23rd March, 1888.

Referring to previous correspondence respecting the immigration of Chinese to Australia, I beg to draw your attention to an aspect of the question which it appears to me requires to be borne in mind when considering the nature of the measures to be taken.

With regard to limiting even to prohibition the influx of Chinese, I assume that the Australian Governments are in accord; but the question arises whether local legislation by the several colonies is, after all, the most satisfactory, or even the most efficient means to be employed. I desire to submit to your consideration that it is quite possible that the influence of Her Majesty's Government with that of the Emperor of China might effect more, and perhaps in a more convenient manner, than drastic measures adopted here. It can hardly be supposed that in a nation like China, which numbers its population by hundreds of millions, its Government can really regard with very much concern the question whether or not a few thousands depart for Australia. On the contrary, the interest of that Government would probably be to retain rather than to lose its population. And, if this be so, it must be easily within the power of the Queen's Government in its multifarious dealings with the Government of China to find a means and an occasion of stipulating, possibly in exchange for some small concession (such as has been recently sought in Burmah), that the Emperor should prohibit emigration to Australian ports. Thus might be accomplished inoffensively, through the means of diplomacy, all that we desire; while legislative measures of sufficient stringency to effect our purpose might engender an international bitterness, which sooner or later might find means to express itself. From a merely utilitarian point of view, this is to be deprecated.

There are two important points which should not be lost sight of in dealing with this aspect of the matter—namely, the comparative proximity of the Chinese Empire to Australia, and its power to pour down upon our land vast hordes of its people.

If, then, our object can be equally well accomplished by means of friendly representations through Her Majesty's Government it would seem in every point of view desirable to take that course. The consideration of this view is the more important from the fact of representations having been made on this subject, in the form of a despatch (circular, 23rd January, 1888), by the Chinese Minister in London to Lord Salisbury so lately as December last, copy of which has just been received here. Indeed, the line of action which I suggest is that which appears, in the last resort, to have been adopted by the United States of America, as a telegram which lately appeared in the newspapers states that "A treaty has been signed by the Chinese Minister at Washington, Chang Yen Hoon, and Mr. Bayard, the Secretary of State for the United States, by which Chinese labourers are forbidden from entering America."

If you concur in the view I have put forward I shall be glad to know in what way you think we should proceed. I would suggest a memorandum through the Governor to the Secretary of State.

The Hon. the Premier, Adelaide.

I have, &c.,
D. GILLIES, Premier.