

## APPENDIX V.

*Circular sent to Mr. E. H. Hunt, and J. B. Bradshaw, Esq., M.H.R., with Replies.*

SIR,—

House of Representatives, 7th September, 1871.

The Select Committee appointed to inquire into the question of Chinese immigration, as regards its probable effect upon the Gold Fields and the social condition of the Colony, request that you will be good enough to favour them with your views and the results of your experience with regard to the matter :—

The information sought to be obtained embraces the following, among other points, viz. :—

1. The effect generally upon the gold fields of the influx of Chinese. (a.) With regard to the development of their auriferous resources. (b.) With regard to the general conduct of the mining population; stating whether or not the presence of a Mongolian element has an immoral tendency, encourages gaming-houses, or leads to disturbances of the peace.

2. As to whether Chinese labour is adapted for any description of handicraft, for agricultural operations, or for domestic offices.

3. In the case of intermarriages with Europeans, what are the social results of such unions?

4. What is the relative cost of European and Chinese labour, and what the relative cost of living?

5. Is it desirable to take any steps with the view of checking Chinese immigration; and if so, what steps?

6. Is it desirable to impose any special taxation upon Chinese immigrants; if so, in what form, and to what extent?

The Committee will also be glad to receive any information not specified in the foregoing queries which may bear upon the subject.

I have, &c.,

W. J. STEWARD,  
Chairman Chinese Immigration Committee.

Mr. E. H. HUNT to Mr. W. J. STEWARD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th September, 1871.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter, requesting such information as I am able to furnish with reference to Chinese immigration.

I beg to submit the following answers to the queries specified in your letter, as the result of my observations during a residence of seventeen years in Victoria :—

1. "The effect generally upon gold fields of the influx of Chinese."—(a.) I consider their presence on the gold fields as decidedly advantageous; it is well known that the Chinese, by their more systematic and careful mode of operation, are frequently enabled to work profitably ground abandoned by European miners as worthless. (b.) "With regard to the general conduct of the mining population."—As far as I have had an opportunity of observing, I believe that the general conduct of the Chinese will bear favourable comparison with that of the European miners; and with reference to disturbances of the peace, it is an undisputed fact that they mostly originate with the Europeans. The principal offences charged against the Chinese are petty pilfering, stealing the washing stuff of the European miners at night, and decoying young females (frequently children) into their tents and houses for immoral purposes.

It is notorious that the Chinese are inveterate gamblers. A few years since, upon several of the gold fields in Victoria, they carried on gaming operations openly, but this is now effectually suppressed by the police.

2. "As to whether Chinese labour is adapted for any description of handicraft."—As a rule, the Chinese in Victoria, mostly confine their attention to mining or trading pursuits; but many of them are clever mechanics; they are good cooks, and are frequently employed in that capacity at hotels and squatters' stations. As gardeners, they are very successful, and can grow many vegetables to perfection in the height of the summer season, while the same vegetables are mostly destroyed by blight in gardens worked by Europeans.

3. "Intermarriage with Europeans."—The class with whom they intermarry in Victoria is mostly the lower class of Irish. It is said they are kind to their wives, and very submissive upon marrying them. They generally become converts to and profess Christianity.

4. I can give no information as to the relative cost of European and Chinese labour. Chinese are generally very poor when they arrive in the Colony; the cost of their living is then very small, as they subsist principally on rice, bread, and tea, but as they acquire means, many of them indulge in all sorts of luxuries. A few years since, at Castlemaine, in Victoria, the Chinese attended in large numbers on market days, and were the principal purchasers of the best of the produce. In the summer season, to secure the pick of whatever was offered for sale, they would come to the market at five or six in the morning.

5. "Is it desirable to check the immigration of the Chinese?"—I think not, except so far as to prevent the introduction of individuals suffering from loathsome diseases such as leprosy and elephantiasis. Numerous cases of these diseases have occurred in Victoria, causing a considerable amount of trouble to the authorities there and expense to the country.

6. Is it desirable to impose any special tax upon Chinese immigrants?—I do not think so; about twelve years since, the Victorian Legislature, to satisfy the clamour of the miners, imposed a poll tax of £10 a head on all Chinese landing in the Colony. This tax, however, was easily evaded; the vessels carrying Chinese passengers, instead of going direct to Melbourne, were despatched to Guichen Bay, in Adelaide, from whence the Chinese made their way overland to the mining districts of Victoria. The only effect was to drive an important trade from Victoria to the other Colony. This tax was I believe repealed, upon a representation of the Imperial Government that its imposition was contrary to and infringed a treaty made with the Chinese.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Chinese Immigration Committee.

E. H. HUNT.