

miners were justified in their antipathy, because I knew that the miners are apt to look at such a question solely as regards personal interest, and not from a political economic point of view. The principal objection was this:—The mining in this district is confined chiefly to narrow gullies, and the spurs abutting thereupon. It is the custom of the miners to take up as a claim the extreme area allowed by the regulations; then, if the ground is found payable after having worked out one claim, they proceed higher or lower down the gully. The regulations are not sufficiently elastic to allow the miner to occupy a large area of ground, affording work for years, as is done in America. The Chinese have scouts who watch the proceedings of European miners; and when they suspect the Europeans to be working good or fair ground, they “peg them off”—i.e., they peg off the ground all round, putting on a man or two to satisfy the regulations. Should the Europeans strike gold, a large Chinese party immediately set into work in the direction of “the run.” The result is that the Europeans are clearing out of the district, selling out chiefly to the Chinese themselves; and I have no doubt, if some check is not put on Chinese immigration, that in the Wakatipu district, at all events, there will not be 100 European miners in three years. There is another point also of great importance, considering that the Europeans and Chinese are working together under the same mining laws. Frequent conflicts arise in regard to the boundaries of claims and other matters, which have to be dealt with by the Wardens’ Courts. Now, I find, from personal experience, that the Chinese have not the slightest idea of truth; and consequently, when their interests are brought into conflict, the property of the European is not safe. I shall give an example of a case which occurred at Cardrona in February last. A Chinese party and a European party were working in the same gully. The European party, who were above the Chinese, struck gold; upon this the Chinese appealed to the Warden’s Court against the Europeans for encroaching upon their ground. The Chinese got up their case exceedingly well, and regardless of expense. A professional man was brought from fifty miles distant, and came into Court armed with surveyors’ plans. Of course these plans were practically only illuminated parallelograms, there being no possibility of fixing the locality with base lines. During the cross-examination, the gentleman who represented the Europeans, and who had visited the ground, exposed the whole case by putting one simple question, and completely fixed the Chinamen. After asking the particulars of pegging-off, and where they put their pegs, taking as an initial point a spot well known in the gully, where an old hut and the stump of a tree stood, he said—“How far was your upper peg from the hut and stump?” The Chinamen, quite unprepared, answered truthfully, “From forty-eight to fifty feet.” This answer put them out of Court, because it was clear from the evidence of the other side that the lower peg of the Europeans was nearly 500 feet from the hut. The case was decided against them with costs. They then appealed to the District Court. As this involved really a new trial, the whole case was gone into afresh; and, before Mr. Wilson Gray, the Chinese all swore that their upper peg was 497 feet from the hut and stump of the tree. The Warden produced his notes on behalf of the other side. One witness also swore that the Chinese had endeavoured to bribe the Interpreter, and, in fact, tried to bribe everybody connected with the business. The Judge decided the case against them, merely remarking that perhaps the course they pursued was considered the correct thing in China. I have called your attention to one case affecting property. I will mention another affecting criminal law. A Chinaman of most supernatural ugliness—a most frightful-looking being—had been convicted of indecently exposing his person before a married woman. He appealed to the District Court; and this is another instance of our beautiful appeal law. By the mere payment of £10 into Court he was set free, and in due course the case was gone into in the District Court *de novo*. Eight Chinese witnesses then swore an *alibi*, “that the man was two miles off at the time,” and he was consequently discharged. A few days before the trial came off, a Chinese storekeeper with whom I was acquainted came to me and asked me who was the best lawyer, but without telling me any particulars. I recommended Mr. Brough. I told the Chinaman who spoke to me that it would be necessary to let Mr. Brough see the witnesses before the trial. He replied, “How many witnesses do you think will be wanted? We can bring half a dozen or a dozen.” I told him I thought Mr. Brough would probably be quite satisfied with half a dozen. With these facts fresh in my mind, and seeing that the Chinese are rapidly superseding Europeans in my district, I hold strong views, even looking at the subject from a business point of view. Business men are not, as a class, very distinguished for their high feelings in regard to political matters; they look rather to making money in as short a time as they possibly can. At first the storekeepers and merchants in Dunedin advocated the introduction of Chinese, because their custom was a source of profit; but now things have altered. The Chinese have their own agents in Dunedin, and their own storekeepers up the country; and, as a matter of fact, not a penny goes through European channels of trade. In speaking of their habits and customs, as far as my own district is concerned, I know that they do not spend one quarter what the European miner does. As soon as they make £300 or £400 they return to China, whereas the European miner, if he makes a few hundred pounds, and even does leave the country, has, as a matter of fact, expended a hundred or two before he so leaves; but the Chinamen never spends one-eighth of what he takes out of the country. Gold mining is not like agriculture, where the soil, after being exhausted, will recover itself. Where the Chinaman mines, he absolutely devastates. He makes a clean sweep; everything is put through the sluice-box; and he leaves nothing, from a gold fields point of view.

27. *Mr. Harrison.*] With regard to your statement as to the untruthfulness of the Chinese, have you ever remarked any similar conduct on the part of Europeans?—No; I have known cases of individual falsehood, but no instance of concerted falsehood. Such a thing would be utterly impossible amongst a class of men like the miners. Again, if a European makes a false statement it is an easy matter to detect him by cross-examination; but with a Chinaman this is impossible, his evidence being given through an interpreter.

28. *Mr. Parker.*] A great portion of your statement seemed to point to the defective constitution of the Appeal Courts, rather than to the infirmities of the Chinese?—I cannot help so stating in showing how the present system works in regard to the Chinese; but I do not know that any alteration in the law would act as a preventive, from the mere fact that you have to deal with a number of persons who come into Court banded together to give evidence irrespective of truth. The leader of the party, who directs the operations, instructs them how to swear, and they swear accordingly.