Chinese prefer almost any occupation to that of field labour, and even those who could be induced to emigrate to gain their livelihood thus, would in all probability choose places nearer home, such for instance as Borneo, which, if its settlement prove successful, I should for this reason, and on account of its proximity to India, expect to be the most dangerous of all the rivals of Polynesia in Australasian markets.

For the above reason it is probable that, as regards imported labour, Polynesia (including Fiji) must, in a by no means distant future, rely mainly upon Indian coolies as the West Indies do now, and it is therefore important to know that a comparison between the cost of carrying Indians to Fiji and to the West Indies is so far in favour of the latter. It is true that the voyages to Fiji have all been by sailing-ships to the south of Australia, and the cost of passage would no doubt have been less in steam-vessels coming through Torres Straits. It is, however, to be hoped that this latter route will never be taken for this purpose, at least until Polynesians are extinct, as, being wholly within the tropics, the use of it would create special danger of the introduction of Indian disease. Out of the five vessels which have brought Indians to Fiji, two have had on board cholera and small-pox, and it was probably due mainly to the cold weather experienced at the south that these dread diseases disappeared before the end of the voyage.

It is no doubt possible that the cost of introducing Indians will decrease as the chance increases of a return freight for the carrying vessels; but, in view of the high rates of insurance charged in respect of navigation in Polynesia, it is extremely improbable whether this part of the world will ever in this respect obtain any appreciable advantage over the West Indies.

But apart from the cost of passage, in which the West Indies and Polynesia may be considered to be on about an equal footing, there is another limitation to Indian immigration which is likely to operate to the greater disadvantage of Polynesia as having the smaller resident population,—I mean the increasing difficulty of inducing Indians to emigrate at all. Whether from the general improvement of their condition or from enlarged opportunities for employment in their own country, the people of India are year by year showing a greater reluctance to leave home, and the cost of recruiting labourers is thus continually rising, while the requisitions of the colonies can rarely be complied with.

Finally, there is another difficulty in the way of this immigration into Polynesia, which will probably be found the most serious of all. The Indian Government, warned by former experience, rightly exacts very stringent conditions, as to the treatment of its people and as to the control of their labour contracts, from those colonies which are allowed to import them; and in view of the practical impossibility of effectually supervising the proceedings of employers in the greater part of the Pacific, on account of the difficulty and cost of communication, it is open to grave doubt whether this immigration will ever be allowed except to places like Fiji, where there is a Government near at hand to afford to the labourers the requisite protection.

It would thus appear that, besides Asia and the islands contiguous to it, the West Indies and other places, like Mauritius, which are in a similar position, will for a long time to come have a great advantage over Polynesia as regards the cost of labour, inasmuch as, being able to import labourers at equal or lower cost, they will be by no means dependent upon those imported, and will have at command an incomparably better supply of resident labourers, even if the process of depopulation should in the course of a few years leave any such to Polynesia.

It may be urged that this disadvantage would be outweighed by the newness and richness of Polynesian land. This, however, appears improbable for two reasons:—First, as land becomes exhausted tillage improves, and thus lands in Barbados and Mauritius, which have been used for centuries, are still able to maintain a competition with those recently brought into cultivation; and second, not to speak of the vast unreclaimed forests of tropical Asia and of the Malay Archipelago, where the advantage in respect of labour is likely to be greatest, there is probably, even in the British and Foreign West India Colonies, including Guiana and Honduras, quite as much rich virgin soil as exists in Polynesia. Speaking comparatively, but very small areas of Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad, and many smaller islands, have been cultivated within the period of European settlement, while the British portion of Guiana, with its 80,000 square miles, though it produces more sugar than is consumed in Australia, is reclaimed from forest only in portions of a thin fringe of coast and river frontage, which is nowhere greater than six miles in depth. In view of the fact that these colonies have, up to a time still very recent, supplied by far the larger proportion of the requirements of the civilized world in respect of tropical produce, and even yet export the larger portion of the cane sugar consumed by it, the thought cannot but suggest itself that the area required for tropical cultivation is comparatively a very small one, and that making full allowance for the increasing wants of civilization, its extension can scarcely be otherwise than very gradual, and will be chiefly confined to those parts of the world where conditions are specially favourable.

This, and the other above-mentioned considerations, would appear to point unmistakeably to the conclusion that in any period which can be regarded as within the range of practical politics, agriculture on the part of whites in Polynesia can for the most part be directed only to the supply, and the very partial supply, of the Australian Colonies; and if this view be correct, the field for European colonization is evidently very narrow indeed. I do not for a moment contend that no sugar or other cultivated products will be exported from Fiji and Polynesia to places beyond Australasia. Under exceptional conditions of markets and freights some will, and not unfrequently perhaps, be attracted to America and even to Europe. But what I do say is, that the amount of such export must in any case be extremely insignificant relatively to the area of Polynesia, and that the cultivated land required for it, as well as for the consumption of Australasia, will be of far too small extent to render further colonization of the ordinary kind desirable.

In order to make this clear it is well to draw special attention to sugar, the only product the cultivation of which has as yet proved to be sufficiently profitable to attract any substantial amount of capital to Western Pacific agriculture.

At present the annual consumption of Australasia (which is considerably larger *per caput* than that of any other part of the world*) is only 110,000 tons. Supposing the population to increase within the next century so as to reach 20,000,000 (a very sanguine estimate in consideration of the fact that the number of immigrants will bear a continually less proportion to the other inhabitants), and supposing also, what is scarcely probable, that the present high consumption *per caput* should be maintained, the total quantity consumed would even then fall short of 750,000 tons. This quantity, though large, is not greater than

* A few years ago the consumption of Australasia was 85 lbs. *per caput*, as against 62 lbs. in the United Kingdom and 51 lbs. in the United States, being, in this respect, far in advance of all other countries.