

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE

TO

INVESTIGATE CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

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ERRATA, CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

P. 69, last line on the page, strike out "several hundred," and insert "a great many."

P. 13, 19 lines from the bottom, change "Louderbook" to "Louderback."

P. 69, 20 lines from the top, change "Tanist" to "Tauist," both before and after "The."

P. 80, 21 lines from the top, change "Trowbridge" to "Strobridge."

P. 133, 6 lines from the bottom, change "San Diego" to "Santiago," before "de Cuba."

P. 345, lines 3 and 4 from the bottom, change "commodore" to "comprador," in both lines.

P. 732, 7 lines from the bottom, change "Adexander" to "Alexander," before "Campbell."

P. 925, 23 lines from the top, change "so" to "who," at the beginning of the line; and at the end of the line, change "the" to "a."

P. 844, half way down the page, in the name of the witness "Frances Avery," change "Frances" to "Francis."

P. 843, 7 lines from the top, change "transaction" to "transactions."

P. 1137, 24 lines from the top, fill the blank before "sh" with "The Briti," so as to read, "The British colony," &c.

REPORT OF THE JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

Mr. SARGENT, from the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, submitted the following

REPORT :

The joint special committee of the Senate and House of Representatives appointed to investigate the character, extent, and effect of Chinese immigration, report as follows :

On the 6th day of July, 1876, the Senate passed the following resolution :

Resolved, That a committee of three Senators be appointed to investigate the character, extent, and effect of Chinese immigration to this country, with power to visit the Pacific coast for that purpose, and to send for persons and papers, and to report at the next session of Congress.

On the 17th day of July, 1876, the House of Representatives passed the following resolution :

Whereas the Senate has passed a resolution authorizing the appointment of a committee of three Senators to visit the Pacific coast and report to Congress at its next session upon the character, extent, and effect of Chinese immigration into this country :

Resolved, That the Speaker is hereby authorized to appoint three members of this house to proceed to the Pacific coast, after the adjournment of Congress, to investigate conjointly with said Senate committee, or otherwise, the extent and effect of Chinese immigration into this country, with power to send for persons and papers, to administer oaths, to employ a stenographer, and to take evidence ; said committee to report to Congress at its next session.

Subsequently, at the same session, by concurrent resolution, the said special committee of the two houses were authorized to act as a joint special committee for the purposes aforesaid, and with the powers conferred by the resolutions appointing them.

In conducting the investigation required by the resolutions the joint committee visited the Pacific coast and examined one hundred and thirty witnesses. The testimony so taken covers over twelve hundred pages of printed matter, and embraces the views of all classes of the community and every variety of interest. The committee found a great diversity of opinion, resulting from different standpoints of the witnesses who were examined.

In conducting this examination the committee divided their work so as to first hear persons opposed to the unlimited introduction of Chinese, and to this branch of the subject a limited time was given. They then heard the testimony of persons favorable to such introduction, and concluded by affording time for witnesses in rebuttal. Although the subject by this means was pretty fully covered, and the inquiry, perhaps, exhausted, the conclusions to be drawn from the mass of testimony may be different to different minds. In the opinion of the committee it may

be said that the resources of California and the Pacific coast have been more rapidly developed with the cheap and docile labor of Chinese than they would have been without this element. So far as material prosperity is concerned, it cannot be doubted that the Pacific coast has been a great gainer.

This is true, at any rate, of the capitalist classes. If the inquiry should stop there; if it should be satisfied by the certainty that money is made out of the present condition of things, and not look to the present or future moral or political welfare of our Pacific States, it must be conceded, at least, that many enterprising men find their profit in Chinese immigration, and the general resources of the Pacific are being rapidly developed by means of Chinese labor. Among others who testified were those who largely employ Chinese, or are interested in their transportation, and who find a profit therein. These testified that the results of Chinese immigration had been invariably beneficial in enhancing the material prosperity of the coast, but some were not entirely clear that there were not social and moral evils springing from this immigration, which in the future would counterbalance the advantages gained by the present rapid production of wealth.

Opposition to any move restricting the immigration of Chinese was also developed among religious teachers, who testified before the committee that the presence of Chinese among us imposes a duty and gives an opportunity of christianizing them. On the other hand the committee found that laboring men and artisans, perhaps without exception, were opposed to the influx of Chinese, on the ground that hard experience had shown that they are thereby thrown out of employment, and the means of decent livelihood are more difficult of acquisition. But the opposition to Chinese immigration was not confined to laboring-men and mechanics. In the testimony will be found that of lawyers, doctors, merchants, divines, judges, and others, in large numbers, speaking of their own observation and belief, that the apparent prosperity derived from the presence of Chinese is deceptive and unwholesome, ruinous to our laboring classes, promotive of caste, and dangerous to free institutions.

In the progress of their investigation the committee called before them the municipal authorities of San Francisco, including the executive, legislative, health, and police departments, to ascertain the numbers, habits, and modes of life of the Chinese in San Francisco. The number of adult Chinese residents in that city averages at present during a year about thirty-five thousand. The testimony shows that the Chinese live in filthy dwellings, upon poor food, crowded together in narrow quarters, disregarding health and fire ordinances, and that their vices are corrupting to the morals of the city, especially of the young.

Among the testimony will be found that of some twenty operatives-numbering nearly as many trades, in which details are given in relation, to different industrial pursuits which are either monopolized by the Chinese or are fast becoming so. This evidence shows that the Chinese have reduced wages to what would be starvation prices for white men and women, and engrossed so much of the labor in the various callings that there is a lack of employment for whites; and young men are growing up in idleness, while young women, willing to work, are compelled to resort to doubtful means of support. The hardships resulting from these causes bear with especial weight upon women.

It is also shown that this distinctive competition in some branches of labor operates as a continual menace, and inspires fears that the establishment of these ruinously low rates will extend to all employments

and degrade all white working-people to the abject condition of a servile class. From this cause, among others, has sprung up a bitterly hostile feeling toward the Chinese, which has exhibited itself sometimes in laws and ordinances of very doubtful propriety and in the abuse of individual Chinamen and sporadic cases of mob violence. The influence of the better class of society is thrown against all violence toward the Chinese, although those exercising that influence may be convinced that the presence of the Chinese in California is undesirable. As long as there is a reasonable hope that Congress will apply a remedy for what is considered a great and growing evil, violent measures against the Chinese can be restrained.

As the safety of republican institutions requires that the exercise of the franchise shall be only by those who have a love and appreciation for our institutions, and this rule excludes the great mass of the Chinese from the ballot as a necessary means to public safety, yet the application of the rule deprives them of the only adequate protection which can exist in a republic for the security of any distinctive large class of persons. An indigestible mass in the community, distinct in language, pagan in religion, inferior in mental and moral qualities, and all peculiarities, is an undesirable element in a republic, but becomes especially so if political power is placed in its hands.

The safety of the State demands that such power shall not be so placed. The safety of the class, however, seems to depend in a measure upon that power. There are, therefore, springing from this subject antagonistic considerations, the only way to reconcile which would seem to be that the laws should discourage the large influx of any class of population to whom the ballot cannot safely be confided.

To any one reading the testimony which we lay before the two houses it will become painfully evident that the Pacific coast must in time become either American or Mongolian. There is a vast hive from which Chinese immigrants may swarm, and circumstances may send them in enormous numbers to this country. These two forces, Mongolian and American, are already in active opposition. They do not amalgamate, and all conditions are opposed to any assimilation. The American race is progressive and in favor of a responsible representative government. The Mongolian race seems to have no desire for progress, and to have no conception of representative and free institutions. While conditions should be favorable to the growth and occupancy of our Pacific possessions by our own people, the Chinese have advantages which will put them far in advance in this race for possession. They can subsist where the American would starve. They can work for wages which will not furnish the barest necessities of life to an American. They make their way in California as they have in the islands of the sea, not by superior force or virtue, or even industry, although they are, as a rule, industrious, but by revolting characteristics, and by dispensing with what have become necessities in modern civilization. To compete with them and expel them the American must come down to their level, or below them; must work so cheaply that the Chinese cannot compete with him, for in the contest for subsistence he that can subsist upon the least will last the longest.

It must not be understood that these views are unchallenged by a considerable and respectable class in California. Many persons of intelligence consider that this very cheapness of labor of the Chinese and the extreme docility of his habits is a strong consideration in his favor. More money can be made by employing him than can be by the employment of white men and women with the payment of adequate wages.

Admitting this, yet it would seem that an unlimited influx of Chinese might be a great future evil; that the population of the Pacific coast by a people of cognate language, religion, habits, and traditions would be better than its population by Asiatics; that its people should be like those of Iowa or Illinois rather than like those of Peking and Canton. When considerations relating to the future health of the body-politic were called to the attention of witnesses, scarcely any dissented from the idea that great numbers of a people of the average mental capacity of the Chinese, having no inclination to adopt this country as their permanent home, who come and return as pagans, having a total disregard for our Government and laws, and the servile disposition inherited from ages of benumbing despotism, were undesirable.

By the judges of the criminal courts of San Francisco it was shown that there is a great want of veracity among Chinese witnesses, who have little regard for the sanctity of an oath, and hence convictions are very difficult for offenses committed against each other, or against the public at large. The testimony seemed to be concurrent that the Chinese are non-assimilative with the whites; that they have made no progress, during the quarter of a century in which they have been resident on the Pacific coast, in assimilation with our people; that they still retain their peculiar costume and follow their original national habits in food and mode of life; that they have no social intercourse with the white population; that they work for wages which will not support white men and especially white families; that they have no families of their own in this country, or very few of them, and that by the small amount and poor quality of food which they consume, and their crowding together in close quarters, reducing individual expenses of rent, their having no families to support or educate, they are able to compete with white labor in all departments and exclude it from employment.

Testimony was further taken upon the question of any radical differences existing between the Asiatic and Caucasian races, and in the evidence will be found much valuable information upon this point peculiarly interesting to the ethnologist. The deduction from the testimony taken by the committee on this point would seem to be that there is not sufficient brain capacity in the Chinese race to furnish motive power for self-government. Upon the point of morals, there is no Aryan or European race which is not far superior to the Chinese as a class. Full and interesting details of Chinese morals and habits in their own country will be found in the testimony, fully warranting this assertion. That testimony comes from intelligent travelers, ship-captains, merchants, and others, and some of it is too revolting for miscellaneous reading. But it was proved satisfactorily that the Chinese merchants in San Francisco are honorable in their dealings with other merchants. The only testimony affecting the integrity of this comparatively small class was, that they evade, to a considerable extent, the United States revenue-laws.

There is no intermarriage between the Asiatics and the Caucasian race.

The presence of the Chinese discourages and retards white immigration to the Pacific States. This clearly appeared in evidence, and probably arises from their monopoly of farm and mechanical work through the low price of their labor, making subsistence difficult to procure by the poorer class of emigrants.

There was some conflict of testimony upon the question as to what is public opinion on the Pacific coast as to the desirability of the influx of Chinese; but it is fairly inferable from the evidence that, without

very considerable exceptions, public opinion there is that Chinese immigration is exceedingly pernicious; that the presence of that element, perpetually alien in feeling and ideas, is a great disadvantage to the community.

This opinion is shared by some of the religious teachers in California, and very interesting testimony of the deleterious effects of Chinese immigration upon the morals of the Pacific coast will be found given by some of these persons. It is very clearly in evidence that the number of the Chinese on the Pacific coast is rapidly increasing, not by births, for there are few of these, but by importations, so that the same uneducated class is supplied perpetually.

The Chinese do not come to make their home in this country; their only purpose is to acquire what would be a competence in China and return there to enjoy it. While there is a constant and increasing incoming tide there is a constant outflow also, less in volume, of persons who have worked out specified years of servitude and made money enough to live upon in China, and who sever their connection with this country.

It further appears from the evidence that the Chinese do not desire to become citizens of this country, and have no knowledge of or appreciation for our institutions. Very few of them learn to speak our language. They do not desire the ballot, and there is danger that if they had it their "head-men" would control the sale of it in quantities large enough to determine any election. That it would be destructive to the Pacific States to put the ballot in their hands was very generally believed by the witnesses. Their want of knowledge of our language and institutions would prevent an intelligent exercise of suffrage; while their number in California at the present time is so great that they could control any election if the ballot was put into their hands. The number of adult Chinese is, at the present time, as great as that of all the voters in the State, or nearly reaching that number, and they increase more rapidly than the other adult population of the State. To admit these vast numbers of aliens to citizenship and the ballot would practically destroy republican institutions upon the Pacific coast, for the Chinese have no comprehension of any form of government but despotism, and have not the words in their own language to describe intelligibly the principles of our representative system.

It was proved before the committee that Chinese women in California are bought and sold for prostitution, and are treated worse than dogs; that they are held in a most revolting condition of slavery. It was further shown that the Chinese have a *quasi* government among themselves independent of our laws, authorizing the punishment of offenders against Chinese customs, even to the taking of life. It was further shown that violent hostilities exist between Chinamen from different parts of China, who, coming together in California by accident or otherwise, engage in deadly feuds and riots, to the disturbance of the public peace. Large numbers of them, notwithstanding the difficulty of conviction, owing to the looseness of the Chinese oath, occupy the State's prison and jails.

They are cruel and indifferent to their sick, sometimes turning them out to die, and the corpses of dead Chinamen and women are sometimes found in the streets by the policemen, where they have been left by their associates at night. The climatic conditions of San Francisco are unfavorable to the prevalence of pestilence, but it was in testimony that the conditions existing in the Chinese quarter of this city transferred to New York, Saint Louis, Cincinnati, New Orleans, or other large

cities east of the Rocky Mountains, would make those cities uninhabitable. The Chinese quarter already extends over a considerable area in the heart of San Francisco, and is growing year by year. The progress is steady and constant, and the business portion of the city is already cut off by the Chinese quarter from a portion where are many of the most elegant residences.

Such Chinese quarters exist in all the cities and towns of the Pacific coast. The tide of Chinese immigration is gradually tending eastward, and before a quarter of a century the difficult question that now arises upon the Pacific coast will probably have to be met upon the banks of the Mississippi, and perhaps on the Ohio and Hudson. Many people of the Pacific coast believe that this influx of Chinese is a standing menace to republican institutions upon the Pacific, and the existence there of Christian civilization.

From all the facts that they have gathered bearing upon the matter, considering fairly the testimony for and against the Chinese, the committee believe that this opinion is well founded. They believe that free institutions founded upon free schools and intelligence can only be maintained where based on intelligent and adequately-paid labor. Adequate wages are needed to give self-respect to the laborer and the means of education to his children. Family-life is a great safeguard to our political institutions. Chinese immigration involves sordid wages, no public schools, and the absence of the family. We speak of the Chinese as they have exhibited themselves on the Pacific coast for twenty-five years past, and as they are there at the present time. They show few of the characteristics of a desirable population, and many to be deprecated by any patriot.

This problem is too important to be treated with indifference. Congress should solve it, having due regard to any rights already accrued under existing treaties and to humanity. But it must be solved, in the judgment of the committee, unless our Pacific possessions are to be ultimately given over to a race alien in all its tendencies, which will make of it practically provinces of China rather than States of the Union.

The committee recommend that measures be taken by the Executive looking toward a modification of the existing treaty with China, confining it to strictly commercial purposes; and that Congress legislate to restrain the great influx of Asiatics to this country. It is not believed that either of these measures would be looked upon with disfavor by the Chinese government. Whether this is so or not, a duty is owing to the Pacific States and territories which are suffering under a terrible scourge, but are patiently waiting for relief from Congress.