
REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

KOOTENAY (BOOTH) ENQUIRY.

MR. SPEAKER :

Your Committee appointed to enquire into any charges of malfeasance in office against the late Gold Commissioner at Kootenay (Mr. Booth) beg to report—

That neither the late nor the present Government have made any charges of malfeasance against Mr. Booth.

That there is evidence that certain charges were made by W. Fernie, of Kootenay, in 1876; that affidavits relating thereto were forwarded to the late Government, and that said affidavits miscarried.

That the Government's attention was called to the existence of Fernie's charges against Mr. Booth during the Session of 1877.

That what purports to be a copy—but uncertified—of the Fernie charges and affidavits reached the Government in the autumn of 1877.

That the late Premier did not know by whom the said copy was made or sent, although an explanatory letter, signed by W. Fernie, was attached thereto.

As Mr. Booth held an official position the Committee are of opinion that, in the interest of the public service, as well as in justice to the accuser and the accused, the late Government should, at least, have taken steps to obtain a certified copy of the lost affidavits, as a preliminary to further investigation, which appears to have been anxiously sought by the people of Kootenay and Mr. Fernie, and also publicly demanded by Mr. Booth.

WM. WILSON,
Chairman.

In the expression of opinion of the Committee, Mr. Smithe dissents from the word "late," relating to the Government.

Although foreign to the enquiry, yet as it has cropped up in the investigation of your Committee, they take leave to refer you to a claim of \$2,700 by the Province against the United States, for the keep and expenses of a fugitive from justice detained in Kootenay fourteen months, in the hope that early steps will be taken by the Government to obtain payment.

WM. WILSON,
Chairman.

31st March, 1879.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

CHINESE QUESTION.

Your Committee appointed to draft a Report upon the Chinese Question, beg to state that, in the absence of any statistical information on the subject, they have felt some embarrassment in dealing with it.

There are various opinions as to the number of Chinese in the Province, but 6,000 is within the mark.

The acknowledged strong and growing antipathy to their presence in the community is attributable to several causes, of which the following would appear to be the most prominent :—

1st. Their moral and social condition is degraded in the extreme. A large majority of the men are in a state of semi-bondage, if not of absolute slavery, while all the women are prostitutes and are daily bought and sold as such. A state of marriage is unknown amongst them; hence the influence exerted upon society by such wholesale vice cannot be otherwise than highly pernicious, as no attempt is even made at concealment.

2nd. They are also undesirable settlers as they are wholly opposed to any assimilation or amalgamation of races or to becoming a portion of the permanent population of the country. The wealth gradually acquired by them is from time to time transmitted to China, and the Province is impoverished to the extent of and in an inverse ratio to their gains.

3rd. Their system of Coolie labour defies competition, as the low rate of wages paid is insufficient to support ordinary labouring classes, hence the Chinese are gradually monopolizing and controlling many industries which have hitherto afforded employment to the permanent population of the Province. This fact is not alone calculated to drive many valuable settlers elsewhere, but is likely to seriously discourage desirable immigrants from coming to the Province.

4th. It is well known from experience that slave labour has a degrading effect wherever it exists, as it causes an unconquerable and not unreasonable prejudice on the part of the free members of a community against engaging in any work similar to that performed by the Coolies in their midst.

The great groups of Colonies constituting the Australias and New Zealand, are now unitedly moving the Home Government to aid them in restricting, if not in stopping, the further influx of Chinese to their shores. The Committee would recommend that advantage be taken of this circumstance, and that the Dominion Government be respectfully requested to co-operate with the other Colonies of Her Majesty's Empire, and add its powerful influence with a view of securing the object mutually aimed at, namely the restriction of further Chinese immigration to British Columbia, as well as to the Colonies referred to.

GEO. A. WALKER,
Chairman.
