

MOBILIZING LABOUR FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINES: THE RECRUITING
OPERATIONS OF THE TRANSVAAL CHAMBER OF MINES IN SOUTH CHINA, 1903-1905

by

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Amid the controversy which still surrounds the reasons for, and consequences of, the use of Chinese indentured labour in the Transvaal gold mines between 1904 and 1910, one aspect of the character of the emigration has yet to receive the emphasis and study it deserves. The overwhelming majority of Chinese who worked in the Rand mines were from the northern parts of China, particularly the provinces of Shan-~~ing~~ and Chihli. (1) Out of the 43,296 labourers actually shipped to South Africa in the first year of recruitment, only 1,741 came from the south-east of China, the traditional source of Chinese emigration. (2) As the numbers of Chinese going to the Rand increased, this regional imbalance became more marked. That this was largely unexpected may be judged from the institutional arrangements which were made in the Transvaal. The first Superintendent of the Foreign Labour Department, William Evans, was chosen specifically for his knowledge of the southern Chinese dialects, acquired through his dealing with the Chinese communities in the Straits Settlements. Not until June 10, 1905, almost a year after the first shipment of Chinese mine labourers arrived in South Africa, was the Transvaal government able to claim that it had a protector of Chinese who was able to speak the same language as the majority of men under his charge. (3)

The significance of this northern Chinese character of the emigration to the Transvaal should not be underestimated. Administrative chaos in the Transvaal was only the most obvious result. (4) It seemed also to inaugurate a reorientation in the pattern of Chinese emigration under contract: the large-scale use of Chinese labourers by the British and French armies in the First World War was based to some extent on the geographical and institutional precedents set by the Transvaal experiment. (5) The volume of indentured Chinese emigration from southern Chinese ports in the period 1904-20 is markedly less than in the first phases of the development of the traffic, between 1845 and 1874. (6) That this was to some extent the result of earlier developments enhances the importance of this change. (7)

Attempts to explain the interaction of events in north and south China and assess their significance in the determination of the character of the emigration to the Transvaal have so far been inconclusive or unsatisfactory. The evidence is scattered and has only been made available over lengthy periods of time. Thus the writings of Campbell (8), Meyer (9), and Reeves (10) all have some omissions which are directly attributable to this. Unfortunately, not all problems in these writers' interpretations stem from this source alone. Reeves's treatment is particularly disappointing. With a greater range of source material available to him than to any previous writer, he attributed the evident opposition in the south of China to emigration to South Africa simply to Chinese nationalism, and "effete inefficiency

and petty corruption". (11) Denoon likewise makes unwarranted assumptions about the character of Chinese emigration to the Transvaal without any attempt to evaluate critically the evidence he cites. (12)

This paper is an attempt to assess critically the fact of a predominantly northern Chinese emigration to South Africa in the light of the historic preponderance of southern Chinese emigration and the experience of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines in the more familiar labour market of south China. In so doing, an analysis will be made of the degree to which the move away from the traditional sources of labour supply in China was forced on the Chamber of Mines. It is hoped that some light will be thrown thereby on the interests through which the mining capitalists were forced to operate, and on the interests which were arraigned against them in the period 1903-1905. It is hoped also that something will be shown of the nature of the co-operation between state and private enterprise in the development of the post-Boer War mining industry in an unusual setting. This essay is not concerned with the techniques of labour recruiting in detail, although these are unavoidably mentioned in passing. These are better left to a comparative study of labour mobilization practices in north and south China. (13) It is more concerned to explain why the traditional forces of Chinese emigrant labour mobilization - poverty, speculative foreign capitalism and state power - did not produce their expected result: a stream of southern Chinese mine workers for the Transvaal gold mines.

Southern China, it has been suggested, was the natural focus of the Chamber of Mines if their search for an alternative or supplement to the African labour supply was to be centred on China itself. More particularly, the two southernmost coastal provinces of Kwangtung and Fukhien were the acknowledged sources of emigrant labour. By 1903 the systems of mobilization were well established. The patterns of movement from the interior, the institutions set up to exploit and control the trade, and the government agencies, both Chinese and foreign, designed to control but not curtail the business, were so familiar that they failed to attract any widespread comment from observers, except in more sensational cases. From Pakhoi in the south up as far as Shanghai, the open ports were well acquainted with all the sordid trappings of this lucrative business. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the trade had become centred on four of the treaty ports open to foreign trade: Canton and Swatow in Kwangtung and Amoy and Foochow in Fukhien, and on the British colony of Hong Kong. From the port of Amoy alone in 1904, 69,587 Chinese passengers were conveyed to Singapore, the Straits Settlements and Rangoon. (14) Competition between Japanese shipping firms and the German Nord Deutscher Lloyd Company for a monopoly of the emigrant traffic was described by the British Consul at Swatow as a "war to the knife". (15) It is evident that though the pattern of Chinese emigration from these entrepôts had been somewhat restricted geographically by the advent of anti-Chinese immigration laws in certain hitherto popular countries (16), the volume of the trade remained remarkably large, and the profits likewise.

In this pattern of emigration the British colony of Hong Kong played a crucial role. Not only was it a large centre of emigrant traffic; at the end of 1903 the colony boasted fifty licensed "hotels" and sixteen emigration houses. (17) It was also of great strategic importance as a transshipment port. The excellent facilities of the harbour as a deep sea port, its proximity to other sources of emigrant traffic, and its freedom from the arbitrary interference of local Chinese officials, made it in one sense the ideal entrepôt. Hong Kong governments had, by the beginning of the twentieth century, managed to combine in almost perfect form ostensible control and actual laxity, sufficient to protect and encourage mercantile houses in the emigrant business without frightening off those whose escape from unendurable poverty was flight. Butterfield and Swire, the Chamber of Mines' chosen recruiting agents in south China, who were based in Hong Kong, felt sufficiently confident of the smooth working of the Hong Kong system to agree to contract over 4,000 labourers a month at an annual rate of 50,000 men when originally approached by Perry, the chairman of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), although this was subsequently cancelled on the initiative of the Chamber of Mines. (18) As the acting Governor of the Colony stated in June 1904:

"Coolies come forward readily if the port of embarkation is Hong Kong, partly on account of long established

emigration from here, and also owing to their full confidence in protection afforded by British officers." (19)

That this confidence was often misplaced may be judged from a report in the South China Morning Post which, in reporting on some successful prosecutions against known kidnappers, stated that

"whilst the case revealed a widespread conspiracy aimed at evading the Ordinance [of 1889] it also revealed considerable official slackness". (20)

Much effort has gone into explaining the character of the bulk of this emigrant traffic from south China as "free". Though many questions are obviously begged by this definition, it is usually taken to denote the absence of any restraining indenture of contract. The Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention of May 1904 applied only to those classes of labourers designated as indentured. (21) The Registrar General at Hong Kong and the Protector of Chinese at Singapore were both officially charged, amongst other duties, with ensuring the free nature of the emigrant's passage. Yet the evidence suggests that in most cases the distinction was a hard one to maintain. As the British Consul at Pakhoi observed in relation to emigration to Mumtok (sic) on the island of Banca (sic) in the Dutch East Indies:

"The emigration from Pak-hoi, under the actual conditions, is of an anomalous character. The coolies whilst shipped as free passengers are really in the position of indentured emigrants. They cannot on landing choose their employer or employment and the cost of their passage etc. is defrayed by the labour either of which incidents [sic] is conclusive that they are not free passengers." (22)

The Chinese Consul at Singapore, Sun Shih-t'ing, elaborated a similar tale from the island entrepôt, the distributing centre of the south-east Asian immigrant traffic:

"After sale at the emigrant station the purchaser takes them [the immigrants] to the Chinese Protectorate to be orally questioned and to sign a contract and for each man a fee \$1.40 is charged. When these measures were first introduced it was originally arranged that if a coolie was unwilling [to enter into a contract] he could pay \$16 passage money and redeem himself from the station. But as those from the interior are not intelligible they are intimidated by the bystanders, and so cannot speak out while the interpreter at his will reverses all he says. Thus those who redeem themselves are but few." (23)

The blurring of the lines was everywhere apparent in respect of the emigrant traffic. As in Singapore the Protector abetted the sale of immigrants, so at Hong Kong the Transvaal Emigration Agent there (itself a defiance of the 1904 Convention) was employed to enquire into the free choice of men recruited by agents for the Chamber under his licence. (24)

The British Consul-General at Canton, at the height of the difficulties over the South African emigration, admitted that progress since 1847 had been slow and arduous and that "serious abuses still exist in connection with coolie emigration". (25) In fact, the atmosphere of corruption and violence which surrounded Chinese emigration was an integral part of a labour market whose source of supply depended on chronic poverty and whose pace was determined by the speculative profits of mercantile capital. The inter-connection between adequate supplies of labour and poverty was everywhere apparent, a factor which did not escape the experienced eye of the investigators for the Chamber of Mines. Ross Skinner, in his report to the boards of the Chamber of Mines and WNLA, asserted confidently that

"Chinese labour ... can be obtained in unlimited numbers, as especially in the vicinity of the coast towns, an enormous proportion of the population is practically unemployed." (26)

The demand for emigrant ships which this background of famine and dislocation implied created a market in which the drive to monopoly was pursued with a peculiar ruthlessness. Competition for this traffic and its outcome could often have a very real effect on emigrants' ability to escape from their predicament. In 1904 there was a marked decline in the number of emigrants leaving Swatow for Bangkok and the Straits Settlements, compared with the 1903 figures. This was due mainly to the withdrawal of exceptional facilities for cheap passage offered by the competition for the trade between rival shipping firms. Indeed, with the establishment of a Nord Deutscher Lloyd monopoly, rates to Southeast Asia reverted to their previous level and the number of emigrants fell off accordingly. (27)

It has been necessary to dwell on the pattern of emigrant traffic in south China at the turn of the last century at some length, in order to place in a true perspective the arrangements which the Chamber of Mines made in regard to their recruiting activities, and to explain the expectations and attitudes which were likely to be encountered amongst those actively engaged in the business. It has also been necessary to illustrate that it would have been economically and strategically unsound for the Chamber of Mines not to have placed some degree of reliance on this pre-established system of emigration.

Before assessing the extent of the mining capitalists' dependence upon the south China labour market, it must be emphasized that the Chamber of Mines bought their way into this traffic in advance of any significant changes in arrangements to control what was essentially a recrudescence of large-scale government organized indentured emigration akin to the West Indian experiments of 1853 and 1874. (28) In this matter of timing, the Chamber, from their own point of view, proved to be particularly unfortunate. When circumstances were altered, their room for manoeuvre was shown to be severely curtailed by their precipitate action. A serious contradiction developed in the Chamber's position in south China, between their imperative desire for labour and the inability of their institutional arrangements to meet this need. Indeed, it was beyond the power of the Chamber of Mines, except in a limited degree, to resolve this conflict locally - the active support of local and metropolitan imperialist state power notwithstanding.

This situation is surprising if one examines the degree to which the Chamber of Mines was organized for its assault on the China market. Thorough investigation in the Transvaal and the Far East had been conducted privately by the Chamber of Mines into both the ideal composition of the labour force on the mines (29) and, given the necessity of an Asiatic component to this (30), the best way of securing it to meet the exigencies of the post-war mining situation. (31) From February 1903 (32), over a year before the signing of the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention, the Chamber of Mines pushed ahead with its arrangements to tap the sources of the Chinese labour market. Between then and the end of the year no less than four highly qualified mining men in the direct employ of the Chamber or its agents visited the Far East. The information supplied by Ross Skinner, Herbert-Noyes, F. Perry, and J. G. Hamilton not only confirmed the estimates of the numbers available in China previously supplied by unsolicited quotations from "brokers" (33) but also became the basis upon which the firm contracts were allocated. (34) As Perry stated in an interview given to the Standard newspaper in January 1905:

"Initially, arrangements were made with leading British firms to utilize their existing trading connections in the interior to further the emigration enterprise by giving it some semblance of bona fides." (35)

Not only the timing but also the pattern of these arrangements give insight into the strategy of the mining houses. Despite their full knowledge of the potentialities of the southern provinces, the Chamber endorsed Perry's decision to have

potential access to the whole of eastern China, from Manchuria southward. Butterfield and Swire (36) were given the agency for the south of China up to and including the port of Swatow. The central provinces were divided between the firms of Jardine Matheson & Co and Gibb, Livingstone & Co. (37) For the northern provinces four firms were chosen, based on Chefoo, Shantung province, and Tientsin Chihli province: namely, Cornabé Eckford & Co and Silas-Schwabé & Co at Chefoo (38), and William Forbes & Co and the Chinese Engineering and Mining Co. at Tientsin. (39) The extent of the Chamber's interest in the China labour market was thus very considerable from the outset of their operations. In addition to these arrangements, however, Perry made a very revealing statement to the Standard in the course of the interview mentioned above. He said that the Chamber had originally expected

"Southern China would be the principal source of supply of coolie labour for the Transvaal because of the past history of emigration from these provinces ..." (40)

The degree of sophistication in a policy which combined a thorough knowledge and appreciation of risks in a virtually new labour market can hardly be overemphasized. A large labour market insured the Chamber against localized difficulties. It also obviated to some degree the dangers inherent in its dependence on local intermediaries: alternative sources of supply offered protection against monopolistic rates for labour recruitment whilst rivalry between local firms, especially in the north, held out prospects for efficient activity on the Chamber's behalf. It is not without significance in the latter context, therefore, that the one place where this competition within the Chamber's arrangements did not work to their advantage was in the south. Over-dependence on one firm became a serious obstacle which ultimately forced the mining houses into a position of choosing between protracted negotiation or abandonment of a significant portion of their labour market.

To understand why the Chamber, in all other respects so efficient and concerned for its own interests, found itself in this position, it is necessary to appreciate precisely what advantages their sole agents in the south offered. Butterfield and Swire had, in the first place, the great advantage of being brokers based in the three ports most likely to serve as entrepôts for the southern emigration: Amoy (41), Swatow (42) and Hong Kong. Furthermore, the severity of the competition for the south China labour market made the usual balancing arrangements within the Chamber's organization apparently unnecessary as a means of securing efficiency. As the British Consul-General at Canton observed:

"In fact it was evident that South Africa would, so far as the Canton province is concerned, compete seriously with more local demands ..." (43)

Again, not insignificantly, the firm was well known to the Chinese authorities and did not possess the stigma usually attached to those involved in the business of recruiting emigrants. Even Chang Ta-jen, Chinese Minister in London and no friend of the brokers, was loth to believe that "a house of the character of Butterfield and Swire" could have been involved directly in the illegal recruiting activities in Kwang-tung province in 1904 which so materially increased the difficulties of the Chamber's position there. (44) In addition, Butterfield and Swire, with a wide variety of local contacts in shipping and other forms of trading, could offer the benefits of brokerage, shipping agents and food suppliers at the same place. In this situation, location at Hong Kong was a real benefit as the special advantages of that port as an emigrant entrepôt could be combined with the protection of British Colonial power. All the benefits of the emigrant traffic could be tapped without any necessity for Chinese government interference. It would, as Milner said, "be no more than other colonies have doing for years". (45) In the circumstances of an impending regulatory Labour Convention, this had obvious advantages.

If these advantages preceded the signing of the Convention, they were assumed to be enhanced by its introduction. Although the conditions of the agreement were a tightening of pre-existing ones in relation to indentured emigration, they related only to engagement at the Treaty Ports and did not cover Hong Kong or Wei-hai-wei. (46) It

did not relate to emigrants "freely" presenting themselves at Hong Kong for indenture, nor did it apparently preclude a satisfactory arrangement, perhaps presented "with a little firmness", (47), being made for transshipment with the local authorities at Canton. (48) Further, in so far as Butterfields were concerned, it emphasized and institutionalized their pattern of labour catchment outside the Colony. Treaty Ports had for decades been the focal points of the emigrant traffic, as either embarkation or transshipment ports. Under Article 1, this pattern received official Chinese and British sanction. The Chamber seemed to have every reason to be satisfied both with the foresight and the comprehensiveness of its arrangements, for within days of the signature of the Convention the SS "Tweeddale" sailed from Hong Kong, on 25th May 1904, with the first emigrants for the Transvaal, an implicit recognition of the power of fact over legality. (49)

Yet this was the only full shipment to be recruited in south China for the Transvaal gold mines. Southern Chinese made up a diminishing proportion of only two subsequent shipments. (50) By April 1905 the Emigration Agency in Hong Kong was practically deserted, and the Transvaal Emigration Agent, Cowan, returned to the Straits. (51) The collapse of the Chamber's plans in the south had come remarkably quickly, and at one point threatened to bring the whole scheme to a halt. (52) Despite repeated attempts to break the deadlock, the Chamber was finally forced to admit defeat and effectively abandon the south. (53)

Most explanations advanced for this abrupt change in the outlook of the southern Chinese labour market tell us more about the preoccupations of their authors than they do about what actually happened to the Chamber of Mines' attempts to mobilize labour there between May 1904 and April 1905. Denoon's treatment is a case in point. (54) Basing his argument for the emergence of a northern dominated emigration to the South African mines on one consular Intelligence report, he falls, for want of corroborative evidence, wide of the mark. In a general attempt to illustrate the cupidity and greed of the mine-owners (admittedly, not a difficult task), he is at pains to explain the absence of southerners by the unattractive terms of the contract presented during recruiting operations. (55) He takes no account of the fact that at the outset of the emigration, whilst recruiting for the "Tweeddale" shipment was in progress, the recruiting depot at Laichikok, Kowloon, was, according to newspaper reports, besieged by intending emigrants. (56) Denoon makes no acknowledgement of the opposition which was generated by rival broking firms on the basis of the intense competition which the South African emigration encountered in a position of labour shortage. (57) This line of explanation was open to Denoon, as it is hinted at by Campbell, a book he purports to have read. (58) Further, he makes no real evaluation of the arguments cited by the Vice-Consul in the consular Intelligence report in question. An examination of the claims made in that document does not warrant the unreserved confidence being placed in it. The report starts with a claim that "Northern Chinamen have hitherto never emigrated". (59) Whilst the relatively small volume of northern emigration to Vladivostok and Korea, and the seasonal character of population movement to Manchuria, are not in dispute, it is clearly a dubious claim to discount these facts altogether as manifestations of emigration. Further, the Consul's claim that southern Chinese were their own masters in the Straits Settlements, the Malay Straits, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, Borneo, and British North America is clearly incorrect. Whilst it might be true in North America, as late as 1910 significant numbers of Chinese were indentured in the Federated Malay States (60), and the conditions in the Dutch East Indian plantations had become a public scandal. (61) The Report's final illustration of events in south China is equally unconvincing. The failure of the French to recruit contract labourers for work in Yunnan on the French railway is taken as an indication of the temperamental unsuitability of southern Chinese to submit to the restraining fetters of indenture - hence the failure of the South African scheme. Yet all the other evidence points to a temperamental dislike on the part of the Chinese, both of the official and the labouring classes, for systematic and excessive cruelty. The Courier d'Haiphong reported the return of Chinese from the Yunnan railway

"in a lamentably repulsive state. Emaciated, suffering from fever and covered with sores, these unfortunate creatures give us an idea of the special kind of treatment meted out to them by the Public Works Department." (62)

Generally speaking, the consular report was written some time after the failure of the South African scheme and by a Vice-Consul who was not involved as closely in the events which he tried to explain as he should have been to warrant Denoon's trust in his reliability. Similarly, Reeves's castigation of the Chinese as "effete and inefficient" displays lamentable lack of critical faculty at best, inexcusable prejudice at worst. (63) Although his point about incipient nationalism is an interesting one, he wasted the opportunity of developing it further. Campbell is hampered more by lack of evidence than anything else, though she, too, makes some uncritical assumptions. For example, she cites Cowan's claim that his recruitment licences issued to Butterfield and Swire were treated with the utmost contempt by the Canton Viceroy as a reason for the failure of the south China enterprise. (65) Clearly this is insufficient; one reason is possibly to be found in why the Viceroy acted in this manner.

An important element in the explanation of the abrupt change in the Chamber's position in south China which occurred after May 1904, which has consistently been ignored to date, is the existence, after 13th May 1904, of the regulatory Labour Convention. (66) It would be naive to expect that this would in itself have effected a material change in the situation. The history of Chinese and Indian emigration is strewn with attempts at control which remained partially or totally inoperative. (67) The signature and publication of the Convention did, however, create a medium through which various hostilities and conflicts could effectively be articulated. To understand how and why this was possible, it is necessary to appreciate something of the ambiguities which were implicit in the more important articles of the Convention.

Articles I and V defined the application of the agreement to indentured emigration to be conducted at the Treaty Ports. This highlighted the anomalous position of Butterfield and Swire as recruiters of indentured labour operating from an unprotected colonial port. (68) The British Legation in Peking had been quick to see the dangers in this situation:

"... the wording of Article V of the Convention is so precise that it seems impossible to contend that Hong Kong was meant to be recognized as a port of embarkation. It would be useless to attempt to induce the Central Government to enlarge the scope of a Convention so recently concluded and a formal refusal from the Wai-wu-pu would only result in closing the door to local arrangements with the Viceroy." (69)

Yet Hong Kong was the finest deep sea port in south China, and Butterfield and Swire were agents for one of the largest shipping lines there. Further, the geographical proximity of the Colony to all southern Chinese Treaty ports made the pressures for transshipment facilities from these very great. Thus, on 23rd September 1904, Butterfield and Swire requested from the British Consulate at Amoy:

"to be permitted to send coolies in small batches to Hong Kong rather than incur the lost time involved in having a steamer wait for collection of coolies up country." (70)

Articles II, III, IV, and VIII allowed for the appointment of a Chinese Inspector and a British Consular Delegate to watch over the whole business of engagement and embarkation at an appointed Treaty Port. Again, the anomalous position of Hong Kong was emphasized by these articles. Further, the Hong Kong government was in no way well disposed towards having Chinese officials exercise any jurisdiction within its boundaries (71), whilst the appointment of a Transvaal Emigration Agent as Consular Delegate at the Colony increased the likelihood of a conflict of British authority. It was also a situation in which there was little legal basis for the activities of the Emigration Agent. (72) This potential conflict of power was further complicated by Article VI, which allowed, in the interests of "the better protection of the emigrant, and of any other Chinese subjects who may happen to be

residing in the Colony or Protectorate to which the emigration is to take place"(73), for the appointment of a resident Chinese consul or vice-consul. This, as the Hong Kong Telegraph pointed out, expressly avoided the issue of resident Chinese consular jurisdiction in Hong Kong. (74) Given the controversy over this issue, and a similar one at Singapore in which the Chinese were given this right, it is not surprising that this was one of the demands which the Chinese successfully exploited to prize apart the alliance between the Hong Kong government and the representatives of the Transvaal emigration business. (75)

Articles XI and XIII also emphasized the practical difficulties inherent in the designation of Hong Kong as the embarkation port under the terms of the Labour Convention. In respect of the former, repatriation only to the Chinese port of embarkation was likely to cause serious hardship for those returning destitute and facing up-country transshipment before making their way home. Hong Kong also escaped the latter clause's stipulation that payments of \$3 Mexican per emigrant up to 10,000 emigrants in any one year (and \$2 Mexican per emigrant in excess of that number in any one year) from any one port were payable to the Chinese government.

To add to these implicit difficulties, the local arrangements adopted by the Chamber of Mines' agents and the British government were complex and inefficient. The British Consul deputed under Article I to appoint a delegate was the one at Canton. This deputy, Cowan, the Transvaal Emigration Agent, was resident at Laichikok, Kowloon - a long way down the Pearl River. (77) Geographical distance was compounded by a conflict between British government policy in respect of Hong Kong and the Transvaal. The British government consistently adopted a policy of non-interference in relation to the Transvaal Emigration Agency, once the labour market had effectively been guaranteed by the Convention. (78) In the south China situation this was aggravated by the interests of the Hong Kong government, to which, in the case of conflict over the Transvaal emigration business, the Consuls deferred. Thus Consul Campbell at Hong Kong stated:

"I am acting throughout with the Governor of Hong Kong who I understand keeps the Colonial Office fully informed by telegraph." (79)

Further, the arrangements of the Chamber of Mines, however rational from their own point of view, failed, despite the securing of some monopsonistic advantages, to eliminate the hierarchy of local intermediaries who controlled the recruiting business: Butterfields were always working at two steps removed from the actual recruiting business. (80)

It would be wrong to imply that the situation was totally rigid - at one moment all was smooth for the Chamber, and then, with the publication of the Convention, they ran headlong into all manner of opposition. There were signs of covert opposition to emigration to South Africa in the north (81), and in the south of China (82) as early as November 1903. By April and May 1904, particularly around the old recruiting grounds of Canton and Amoy (83), a virulent poster campaign was underway. At the latter port a particularly influential placard appeared in the early part of 1904 by one Ch'en Kang, entitled "An exhortation to refrain from emigration to the savage lands of 'New Foochow' [sic], Kuyao [sic] Mexico, Manila and the Transvaal in South Africa". (84) The language was reminiscent of the virulently xenophobic placards which had greeted Westerners throughout the nineteenth century at the various treaty ports (85), and skilfully combined truth, hyperbole and falsehood effectively to smear emigration to South Africa from that port. Yet, in so far as the Chamber's operations generally in south China were concerned, this opposition was of marginal effect. Recruiting proceeded with noticeable success up until 25th May, when the "Tweeddale" sailed. Thereafter, the Convention enabled both local and central Chinese governments to articulate their opposition to this particular form of Western intrusion, and thereby emboldened other sources of opposition and enhanced weaknesses in the Chamber's position. The notion of a single cause and effect situation in south China, as implied by Denoon, could not be further from the truth.

The nature of the position of the Chinese central government and its opposition to the South African emigration scheme should be elaborated with some care. In one sense,

there was no effective opposition: at one time over 53,000 Chinese were at work in the Transvaal gold mines. Yet this was an admission more of the realities of British imperialist power than a willing consent to emigration. The Wai-wu-pu put this with clarity to the Superintendents of Northern and Southern Trade:

"The Board would point out that the engagement of coolies by Englishmen is an act which is permitted by Treaty, and to prevent them doing so is, therefore, impossible." (86)

The Labour Convention formed a means of circumscribing that power, of running it into the sand. This policy, based largely on the thinking of Chang Ta-jen, Chinese Minister in London (87), was adopted by the Peking Government in March 1904:

"... H.E. Chang's wish to draw up special regulations on the subject with the British Foreign Office and his request that no coolies be permitted to proceed until these regulations are drawn up, show that he is not a man who lacks experience." (88)

A breach of the Convention, under these circumstances, was likely to be strenuously opposed, though not necessarily successfully opposed. This theme ran throughout the negotiations both for the Convention and the long drawn out battle to secure its local application in Kwangtung province. Thus Halliday McCartney felt constrained to accept the interpretation of the restriction of the Convention to the Treaty Ports as implying that an attempt to operate it from Hong Kong would be seen by the Chinese as an unfriendly act. (89) Only under constant pressure from the British government did the Wai-wu-pu agree to sanction the protective recruiting agreement for Kwangtung province (90), although they succeeded in keeping it a dead letter by inserting too high demands into the concomitant transshipment regulation from Canton and Hong Kong. (91) The influence of the Chinese Minister in London was constant throughout these negotiations, and his intervention was decisive in vetoing the first transshipment agreement from Canton of 18th November 1904. (92)

It is clear that the Chinese local government made use of the central government's position either as delaying tactics or as a means of reinforcing their own position. Thus, when the negotiations over the recruiting agreement (under Article I of the Convention) seemed to be proceeding well for the Chamber of Mines early in September 1904, the Viceroy of the Two Kwangs referred the question to London, with the effect that on 3rd October the British Consul at Canton was forced to protest against the "very inconvenient" delay which still attended the proceedings. (93) Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan, however, exhibited an opposition to the Chamber's activities which, if fundamentally circumscribed by the same preconditions as those which animated Peking and London, differed quite substantially in emphasis and detail. Thus he was willing to consent to emigration controlled by the Chinese government from Kwangsi Province, via Wuchow on the West River (94), but strenuously opposed a similar situation in Kwangtung. (95) Indeed, he was remarkably reluctant to sanction any kind of emigration scheme for Kwangtung province, the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention notwithstanding. (96) There were sound and eclectic reasons for this: the peasant revolt then raging in Kwangsi, and the appalling poverty there, formed the background to the Wuchow scheme. The Governor reasoned to his subjects that it was

"for your [own] good to seek some new means of livelihood which will provide you with food and clothing and bring peace to your countryside". (97)

The South African scheme, based on the finance of the recruiters, seemed to provide a convenient solution, in part, to the twin problems of economic dislocation and lawlessness. Furthermore, it provided a convenient pretext for holding up the more contentious Kwangtung arrangements. Whilst the Wuchow scheme remained operative, recruiting in Kwangtung, and to a large extent emigration to South Africa in general, was at a standstill. (98) Kwangtung province, on the other hand, was, temporarily at least, in the economically favourable position of having an excess of demand over supply in relation to overseas demand for labour, and therefore was in no dire need for government-mobilized emigration schemes to attempt to remove the surplus population. In September 1904, the British Consul at Canton observed that:

"Latterly there has always been a demand for 'coolies' from these places [i.e. Kwangtung and Fukkien provinces] which the hongts have not been able to satisfy completely and this would tend to show that before South Africa moved into the field, Kwangtung at least had little surplus labour which was not absorbed by Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indo-China." (99)

Appreciation of the respective politico-economic advantages of emigration was not the only motive behind the Viceroy's policy of opposition to the Chamber's schemes in Kwangtung. Over and above a possible element of simple anti-foreignism (100) there was a real awareness of gruesome past experience with "coolie brokers" and the "pig trade", which had formed a considerable part of the indigenous population's experience of Western civilization from mid-century onwards. (101) Fear of political disquiet amongst the scholar-gentry class and the populace was mingled with a profound dislike of the indignities inherent in this speculative business. (102) It would be totally misleading to assume a predominance of vindictiveness for the South African scheme on the part of the Viceroy of the Two Kwangs: emigration from Pakhoi to the Dutch East Indies, from Canton to the Straits Settlements, the Pacific Islands and Yunnan, and from Swatow to British North Borneo, was subject to a similar scrutiny and interference. Indeed, given Ts'en's virtual embargo on these other schemes, it might be argued that he was in his own terms particularly favourable to the South Africans, or more aware of the weight of the various interests pressing on him. He effectively retarded their schemes but did not quash them altogether. The tradition of opposition was carried on by Ts'en's successor, Chang Jen-chun, who in 1908 took effective steps to stop labourers from being recruited in Kwangtung to go to Brazil. (103) It is in this sense that one may possibly speak of the incipient nationalism mentioned by Reeves in relation to the failure of the Chamber's activity in Kwangtung. Ts'en's actions bear some similarity to other late Ch'ing government assertions of national sovereignty. (104)

Having said all this, one has to beware of making a monolithic interpretation of the actions of the Chinese local government, just as one has to distinguish between the policy of the central government and its senior agents in the provinces. That a wide spectrum of opinion and interest existed within the local government structure is obvious, but in respect of emigration, particularly to South Africa, there was an apparent concurrence of sentiment which could, and did, have startling results at times. Thus, whilst the Viceroy interpreted the Wuchow scheme as a means of disposing of brigandage and poverty, three of his district magistrates, at Kwei Yun, Pheng Lok and Chiu Phing in Kwangsi, took this to be an ideal opportunity to rid themselves of the burdensome presence of 51 criminals encumbering their respective goals. (105) Similarly, whilst recruiting for South Africa was proceeding in Kwang prior to the signature of the Convention, "with the help of Chinese agencies of the same character as those which had been providing the labour supply to the Straits and elsewhere" (106), the Chinese Military Secretariat, in response to local pressure against kidnapping, arrested seven people allegedly involved in the traffic to the Straits, and succeeded in indicting the San-ho-hsing recruiting agency, a Hong Kong based firm. (107) Not all local opposition and obstruction came from a similar desire to further the cause of local economy or popular peace keeping. The British Consul at Wuchow attributed much of the lethargy to the feeling amongst local officials that they would personally be out of pocket from the use of Chinese official government machinery to mobilize labour for the Transvaal mines. (108) Other officials who possibly stood to gain from the payments made by the hongts in return for their connivance at the traffic also stood to gain little from the South African scheme. The freedom of the pre-Convention traffic stood in marked contrast to the envisaged protective clauses of the South African scheme, with its possibilities of unwelcome interference from other Chinese officials and representatives of the Western powers. As the Governor of Hong Kong remarked:

"The small extent to which this very profitable business of recruiting - undoubtedly not carried out without serious irregularities, which from time to time come to light - is interfered with by the Chinese Local Authorities, suggests that some of its profits go to those authorities. As soon as the South African trade was started a strong opposition was entered against it by the various labour hongts, who feared it would affect

their business. Violent articles appeared in the Chinese press of Canton and Hong Kong, and when their effect was to some extent discounted by the Viceroy's proclamations, those, in their turn, were nullified or counteracted by the want of co-operation and concealed opposition of his subordinates and of other interested parties." (109)

It must be clear from the foregoing that there was no uniform pattern of Chinese response to the demand for emigration to the Transvaal. There was a certain amount of favourable popular response at grass roots level initially, but this was skilfully diverted from its proposed channels under the circumstances of rival sources of demand for emigrant labour. Thus many of the prospective recruits for the mines who "found their way" to Hong Kong before the departure of the SS "Tweeddale" towards the end of May were crimped from the depot by rival firms and sent to other destinations. (110) At another level, this very popularity evoked a vicious and determined campaign from those who stood to lose their profits from this diversion of emigrant traffic, as mentioned above. The Hong Kong Telegraph reported that:

"A very powerful guild is at work, either in Singapore or Penang, the aim of which is to prevent coolies from going to South Africa from Hong Kong." (111)

In the circumstances of local power this was of real significance: the merchants' ability to wage a press campaign and buy off levels of the government was a very important factor in the failure of the Chamber's southern Chinese enterprise. When these activities coincided with, and in part occasioned Chinese government opposition, the Chamber's access to the state or private means of labour mobilization was severely and effectively curtailed. In the semi-colonial situation of late Ch'ing China, the co-operation of important elements of the Chinese ruling class was of great importance in securing the success of any kind of imperialist activity.

Severe and damaging as this Chinese opposition was, it could not, in the nature of things, be totally effective. Even the Wuchow scheme, abandoned by the Chamber of Mines on 18th November 1904 as ineffective (112), continued to produce emigrants even after the closure of the agency. Of those actually embarked on the three shipments containing southern Chinese labourers for the Transvaal mines, Kwang-si men formed 0.001 per cent, 2.86 per cent, and 14.83 per cent, respectively, of the complement. The last figure refers to the SS "Ikkbal", which did not reach Durban until 12th January 1905. (113) The progressive underdevelopment and dislocation of the Chinese countryside and the attractive power of Transvaal mining capitalism combined to hold out possibilities of a limited but regular supply of southern Chinese labour. Yet the Chamber of Mines, on its own initiative, suspended its recruiting in south China on 2nd November 1904 (114) - just over four months after the arrival of the first emigrant ship from China at Durban. The reasons for this decision must, therefore, be sought not only in the varieties of Chinese action, but also in the changing policies of the other participants in the South African scheme - namely the British government, the Hong Kong government, Butterfield and Swire, and the Chamber of Mines. For, as the slow movement in the south became increasingly apparent, so did the priorities of these participants change to accommodate their various interests.

The British government policy throughout the attempts to open up the south of China faithfully reflect their initial position in respect of their interests in China and the Transvaal. Once they had facilitated the access of the mining capitalists to the Chinese labour market by negotiation of the Convention, they remained essentially committed to the position of non-interference. Their initiatives to secure wider privileges were, at best, half-hearted and originated in the first instance in pressures from the local interests. (115) Thus Colonial Secretary Iytzelton declared that, whilst it remained open to Britain to ship emigrants from Hong Kong,

"it would be contrary to good policy to use this freedom in such a way as to obtain large numbers

from Hong Kong and thereby deprive the Chinese Government of fees which they may fairly expect to reimburse their expenditure in respect of all labourers coming from China ... For the general promotion of recruiting, we are dependent on the co-operation of the Chinese which we cannot expect if we continue to use Hong Kong as a permanent port of embarkation. On the contrary they will most probably make strong representations if this takes place and may attempt to hamper or stop emigration to the Straits as well as the Transvaal." (116)

This general reluctance was tempered by two considerations: firstly, a desire to protect, within the ground circumscribed by the Convention, the interests of the colony of Hong Kong even when these demanded a more forward policy than was desirable (117); secondly, a desire to protect the gains of the Convention itself from erosion by the Chinese authorities. (118) This policy was reflected in varying shades by all the metropolitan government's agents, both in China and in Britain. Interestingly, the British Legation at Peking showed a noticeable reluctance to do more than was absolutely necessary for the South African scheme, often needing a prod from London before orientating itself to the interests of Britain's newly won South African colony. (119) This passivity must, however, be understood for what it was: the provision of access to the labour market was clearly of crucial importance to the development of the South African scheme, and it cannot be said therefore that the British government was little more than a sleeping partner in these arrangements. After all, the metropolitan government went to considerable lengths to adjust the local workings of the Convention in south China to facilitate this access, and was stubborn in defence of its general terms when the contradiction in the arrangements appeared to be giving the Chinese government facilities for eroding the Convention. Further, the Convention actually made general the demands of the specific requirements of the most important economic elements in the Transvaal Colony: the terms of the agreement were applicable to all "British colonies or other parts beyond the seas". (120) This placed the Convention in the direct tradition of military interventionist violence, whose rationale stems from Article V of the Treaty of Peking, 1860, which in turn has direct links with the British West Indian sugar plantation lobby. (121)

The Hong Kong government, of the British government agencies, seemed the most likely source of support for the Chamber of Mines: despite the Colony's anomalous position in respect of the Convention, by virtue of the recruiting and shipping arrangements which the mine-owners had adopted, it was most intimately involved. However, the sources of opposition opened up by the South African scheme threatened important vested interests being promoted under imperial patronage: the threat to the emigrant traffic to the Straits which the activities of Butterfield and Swire in Kwangtung posed was described with masterly understatement by the Governor of the Colony as "undesirable". (121) Attempts to find ways round the various difficulties also placed the Colonial government in a difficult position: thus, they vetoed the suggestion that the island of Whampoa should become the embarkation point for emigrants to South Africa, on the basis that it would result in "the transfer of emigration business from this colony to Whampoa" (123) and open up the possibility of a rival deep-sea port, under Chinese auspices, close to Canton. (124) Furthermore, the attempted solutions and their attendant difficulties threatened new British protected developments which had a more direct and lasting stake in China itself. Thus, Nathan explained his concurrence in the abandoning of attempts to secure transshipment facilities from Canton for the Transvaal scheme on the grounds that:

"It is obviously inadvisable, from the point of view of the Colony's interests, to proceed in the discussion with the Chinese Authorities to the point where threats of some retaliatory action became necessary, especially at the time when delicate negotiations for the Canton-Kowloon railway are being initiated with them." (125)

Therefore the colonial government, for one reason or another, gave only limited and vacillating support to the South African scheme, though at the outset it had appeared as the ideal ally in the Chamber's plans.

Butterfield and Swire's position was, as has been indicated, one of apparent strength which masked critical weaknesses. When the crisis in their activities over the South African business came to a head, this forced them into actions which intensified the contradictions in their and the Chamber's position. Their wide range of material interests and shipping connections gave them a certain amount of local leverage. Also, their good standing with the local officials was of use during the early stages of negotiations to remove the Viceroy's discouragement of emigration to South Africa. (126) However, their presence in the field represented a serious threat to other broking firms in the emigrant traffic. (127) In addition, their dependence upon a relatively passive or vacillating source of state power to overcome their ambiguous position under the Convention was a serious weakness. (128) Further, the economic structure of their relationship with the Transvaal Chamber of Mines (and later the CMLIA) was one of constant difficulty. The firm's direct responsibility for the costs of the Wuchow depot and the projected depot at Canton, and the fees for the compradore to facilitate recruiting in Kwangtung and for the government agents in Kwangsi, meant that a considerable outlay with precious little results threatened to be the sum total of the firm's involvement with the South African scheme. (129)

These pressures became acute when the question of demurrage on a ship waiting at Hong Kong, the SS "Lothian", arose in late August and early September. From mid-May onwards Butterfield's attempts to secure an adequate supply of labourers had been constantly frustrated. Initially, the Viceroy had refused to sanction the Convention. (130) Only in early July was this barrier removed, by which time local government and private opposition to the South African scheme had become well established in Kwangtung. (131) To add to these difficulties, the Viceroy's change of heart related only to Kwangsi province, and the Wuchow scheme which resulted from this was not only a failure in terms of numbers but also had the effect of forestalling arrangements for the opening up of Kwangtung to officially recognized recruiting agents. (132) One ship, the SS "Courtfield" had already been diverted to the north without a single southern emigrant on board, after six weeks' delay. (133) Thus, when the Chamber decided to charter the SS "Lothian" at Hong Kong for another attempt at a southern shipment, the pressure to deliver enough men, and in time to meet the conditions of the charter party, became acute. (134) The result was an undercover mobilization of Butterfield's agents for activity in Kwangtung province. (135) The plan became badly unstuck when, on 3rd September, five recruiting agents were discovered by the Canton government and arrested. (136) The aftermath had all the makings of a serious diplomatic incident as it was, in effect, a complete breach of all tacit arrangements by the firm to refrain from mobilizing labour in Kwangtung province until a satisfactory arrangement had been negotiated with the Cantonese authorities overcoming the latter's various objections to the existing arrangements. (137) The incident was saved from becoming more serious by the timely apologies of those principally involved - namely the Transvaal Emigration Agent and Law of Butterfield and Swire. (138) The rapid exposure of all the weaknesses of Butterfield and Swire's position in the South African scheme occasioned a total reappraisal by the firm of its standing in the business. Their opposition to the Wuchow scheme became increasingly vociferous (139), and the firm did not demur at the Chamber's decision to suspend the project on 18th November. (140) Likewise, opposition to details of the recruiting agreement (141), painfully worked out by the British Consul in October and so urgently sought by Butterfield's only a month before, foreshadowed a similar acquiescence in the Chamber's decision to suspend private recruiting in south China on 2nd November 1904. (142) Denied active government support, except from the Transvaal Government Agent, himself a compromised and dependent individual, and lacking the leverage which the Chamber of Mines' support in South Africa would have assured them, this change of heart is not to be wondered at.

The position of the Transvaal Emigration Agent, Cowan, the Hong Kong representative of the Foreign Labour Department of the Transvaal Colony, was also one of acute weakness and was of little use to the Chamber in attempting to force the issue against the Canton authorities. By virtue of his geographical position in breach of the Convention, he lacked both the fullness of control over vital areas of the emigration traffic and the diplomatically convenient claim of a supervisory role. Necessarily in collusion with the Chamber of Mines' enterprise, he was identified with all the weaknesses of Butterfield's position without any of the compensating strengths which

usually come from being a representative of state power. (143)

The position of the Chamber of Mines was a curious one. They had large vested interests in the success of the southern Chinese scheme. They were chargeable for the maintenance expenses of those Chinese who had been recruited and kept at the depot pending the departure of the SS "Tweeddale". They were also financially liable for those Chinese who had been mobilized for the mines for the "Lothian" and "Ikbal" shipments. (144) They had incurred heavy liabilities in respect of contracts issued to shipping firms, some of which were to operate from the south. (145) Yet the degree of opposition displayed in south China and the weakness of their agents at Hong Kong, when viewed in the light of the rising tide of success in the north of the country, were significant factors in persuading the Chamber to make a positive step actually to suspend operations in the south. (146) The outbreak of beri-beri amongst significant proportions of the first two shipments of southern Chinese, frequently cited as the sole cause of the decision to abandon the south, was merely instrumental in persuading the mine-owners to stop active engagement in the south. (147) Even then the Chamber refused to abandon the south indefinitely: not only did they include another 236 southerners on the SS "Ikbal" (148), but they specifically reserved the right to re-enter the southern Chinese labour market. It Governor Lawley stated to the British government on 15th May 1905 that, although the CMLIA did not contemplate re-opening recruiting in southern China through Hong Kong "for the present", it was not prepared to bind itself so that recruiting in the south was abandoned for all time. (149) This is hardly surprising in view of the three-pronged attack on the Chinese labour market which had characterized the Chamber's entry into south China in the first place. As events turned out, the Chamber's decision to suspend operations did in fact amount to abandoning of the south. When the last shipment of Chinese arrived in South Africa in January 1907, no southern Chinese had been brought to work in the Transvaal gold mines for two years.

Summary

The extent of Chinese emigration from south China at the beginning of the twentieth century made it the natural focal point of the Chamber of Mines' recruiting activities in China. Economic constraints of labour costs made a total dependence on a relatively small and competitive labour market unwise. Thus northern and southern recruitment were conjointly instituted, with the south being opened up first as the anticipated leading source of supply. The unexpected degree of Chinese opposition, official and otherwise, which crystallized around the passing of the Convention, together with the passivity and half-heartedness or simple weakness of the Chamber's natural and necessary allies, the agents of the British imperialist state, made progress difficult and ultimately impossible. The economic cost of a medically poor work force, in these circumstances, made active recruitment an obviously poor decision, and the operation in the south, once success in the north was assured, was consequently abandoned.

Notes

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The following abbreviations are used in these notes: FO to denote papers of the Foreign Office housed in the Public Record Office, London; CO to denote papers of the Colonial Office also housed in the Public Record Office; FLD to denote papers of the Foreign Labour Department of the Transvaal Government, housed in the Transvaal Archives Depot, Union Building, Pretoria; ChM to denote the Private Papers of the Chamber of Mines, housed in the Chamber's building, Johannesburg.

- (1) I have adopted the Wade-Giles system of Romanization of Chinese names, not out of preference but largely because it is the one which is still most commonly used in Western books on China and will therefore aid cross-reference.
- (2) See, for example, the Annual Report of the Foreign Labour Department 1904-5, Appendix iv to Cd 3025, 1906, p. 151. Persia C. Campbell, in her book Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries within the British Empire (London, 1923; reprinted 1971), in quoting these figures (p. 192), assumes that all these men came from Kwangtung province. This is not correct, for 27.96 per cent of these southern Chinese shipped on the SS "Ikbal" came either from Kwangsi or Hunan provinces: see FLD 345.
- (3) See the Annual Report of the FLD for 1905-6, Cd 3338, 1906, p. 2.
- (4) D. Denoon, A Grand Illusion (London, 1973), p. 151, makes much of this point. See also Campbell, loc. cit.
- (5) See Judith Blick, "The Chinese Labour Corps in World War I", in Harvard University Private Seminar Papers on China, Volume 9, August 1955, pp. 113, 117.
- (6) On the early history of the Chinese indentured emigrant traffic, see Campbell, op. cit., pp. 86-160; also, Robert L. Irick: "Ch'ing Policy Towards the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878", unpublished Harvard University thesis, 1971, passim. I am most grateful to Dr Irick for his permission to read and copy from his thesis. Also Jules Davids, "Introduction to 'The Coolie Trade and Chinese Emigration'", Volume 17 of American Diplomatic and Public Papers, The United States and China, 1842-60 (published by Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 1973).
- (7) Irick, op. cit., p. 2.
- (8) Campbell, op. cit., pp. 192-3.
- (9) I. M. Meyer, "Die Chinese Arbeidsvraagstuk van die Witwatersrandse goudvelde, 1903-1910", unpublished University of Pretoria PhD thesis, 1946, pp. 214-238.
- (10) J. A. Reeves, "Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1901-1910", unpublished University of the Witwatersrand MA thesis, 1954, pp. 165-179.
- (11) Ibid., p. 165.
- (12) Denoon, op. cit., p. 151. For a discussion of the evidence cited by Denoon, see pp. 6-7 above.
- (13) This will form part of my forthcoming University of London PhD thesis.
- (14) Consular Trade Report for Amoy, 1904, reported in London and China Telegraph, 4 September 1905.
- (15) FO 228/1633, Swatow Intelligence Report for the May Quarter, 1906.
- (16) For example, United States, British Columbia and Australia.

- (17) Report of the Registrar-General for Hong Kong, 1903, reported in the Hong Kong Telegraph, 21 May 1904.
- (18) Reeves, op. cit., p. 166.
- (19) CO 879/85/755, Acting Governor May to Lyttelton, 6 June 1904.
- (20) South China Morning Post, 22 September 1904.
- (21) For full English and Chinese text of the Convention, see Treaties between China and Foreign States, Volume II (Chinese Maritime Customs Service, Shanghai, 1917), pp. 643-651.
- (22) FO 228/1596, Consul Hughes (Pakhoi) to Satow, 12 June 1905.
- (23) Sun Shih-t'ing to Ts'en Chun-hsuan, reported in Yang-cheng Jih-pao, 23 November 1906.
- (24) FO 228/1547, Colonial Secretary, HK, to Campbell, British Consul-General at Canton, 3 September 1904, FO 228/1547.
- (25) FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 22 September 1904.
- (26) Report by W. Ross Skinner on the Prospects of Obtaining Chinese Labour, etc., reprinted in Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1903; also full version with WNLA/Chamber comments in ChM - Private, Chinese Labour.
- (27) Consular Trade report on Swatow for 1904, quoted in the London and China Telegraph, 8 August 1905.
- (28) See Campbell, op. cit., p. 160, for statistics.
- (29) See Evidence submitted to the Chamber of Mines sub-Committee on Labour, 1902-3, ChM - W6(a)-(c).
- (30) See Report of sub-Committee on Labour (separate) 1902, ChM - W6 (a).
- (31) Report by W. Ross Skinner, etc., especially private version in the Chamber's papers. Significantly, information as to wages was left out of the published version. ChM - Private, Chinese Labour.
- (32) CO 291/79, Higgins, Chairman of East Rand Proprietary Mines, to Herbert-Noyes, 9 February 1903.
- (33) For examples of these quotations, see Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1903, section: Chinese labour.
- (34) ChM - Ch 14, Report of Meeting of Representatives of Groups re power of attorney to sign contracts, etc., given to Perry and Himilton, 12 November 1903.
- (35) The Standard, 25 January 1905.
- (36) For a history of the Swire empire in the Far East, and particularly their connection with the Holt, Blue Funnel Line, see F. E. Hyde, Blue Funnel: a History of Alfred Holt and Co., 1865-1914 (London, 1956), passim; see also Sheila Marriner and F. E. Hyde, The Senior: John Samuel Swire, 1825-1898 (1967), passim.
- (37) Gibb, Livingstone & Co. had by the end of the nineteenth century a very large share in the organization of the emigrant traffic to the Straits, as well as a lucrative shipping agency which was also used by the Chamber of Mines to secure shipping to South Africa: see Hong Kong Telegraph, 18 June 1904. Jardine Matheson's history as the largest, and probably the most notorious, Western merchant house in China hardly needs emphasizing.
- (38) Cornabé Eckford & Co. were a large, locally based general trading firm: see, for example, Appendix III to a "Report on a Journey through Shan-tung: a report on the Present Position and Future Prospects of Emigration of Coolies from Shan-tung to the Transvaal" in Wolfe to the Superintendent of the FID, 31 July 1905, FID 83, file 11. Silas-Schwabé & Co. were experienced brokers for the emigrant traffic from Shantung to Vladivostok to work on the Trans-Siberian Railway and with the Russian Army. See E. Silas-Schwabé to Satow, 26 October 1904, FO

- (39) William Forbes & Co. were one of the largest export companies north of Shanghai in 1904, with extensive interests in the hide, skin and wool trades. The Chinese Engineering and Mining Company were the central actors in one of the most notorious of late Ch'ing financial imperialist scandals - the seizure of the K'ai-P'ing Coal Mines: see Ellsworth C. Carlson, The K'ai-P'ing Mines, 1877-1912 (2nd ed), Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 57-151.
- (40) The Standard, 25 January 1905.
- (41) FO 228/1545, Consul Hausser to Satow, 26 September 1904.
- (42) FO 228/1562, Consul Willis to Satow, 15 October 1904.
- (43) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904.
- (44) CO 879/85/755, Chang Ta-jen to Lansdowne, 7 September 1904.
- (45) CO 879/90/747, Milner to Lyttelton, 4 May 1904.
- (46) CO 879/85/755, Lyttelton to Milner, 19 May 1904.
- (47) FLD 131, File 21: Law, Butterfield and Swire (HK) to F. Perry, 6 September 1904.
- (48) CO 879/85/755, Acting Governor May to Lyttelton, 6 June 1904.
- (49) Report in the Hong Kong Telegraph, 25 May 1904; see also CO 879/85/755, Lyttelton to Milner, 19 May 1904.
- (50) FLD 343 & 345. Namely, the SS "Lothian" and the SS "Tkbal", arrived Durban 11 October 1904 and 12 January 1905, respectively.
- (51) Report in the London and China Telegraph, 3 April 1905.
- (52) FLD 131, File 21: Perry to the Board of the Chamber of Mines Labour Importation Agency, 10 October 1904.
- (53) FO 228/154, Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong to Campbell, 2 November 1904, enclosure 5 in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (54) Denoon, op. cit., p. 151.
- (55) Ibid. The contract was a standard one, i.e. it applied equally in the north and in the south.
- (56) Hong Kong Telegraph, 12 May 1904, 29 June 1904; London and China Telegraph, 9 May 1904.
- (57) FO 228/1564, Wuchow Consular Intelligence Report for the August Quarter, 1904.
- (58) Campbell, op. cit., p. 192, n.1; Denoon, op. cit., p. 262.
- (59) CO 291/90, Canton Consular Intelligence Report for the March Quarter, 1905, 28 April 1905, enclosure in FO to CO 22 June 1905.
- (60) Cd 5192, Report of the Sanderson Committee on Indentured Labour in the Crown Colonies, 1910; also Parr's Report on the FMS, 1910.
- (61) See the appointment of Remrer, Public Prosecutor in Batavia, by the Government of the Netherlands Indies, into the Conditions of Labour of Chinese and Javanese Contract Labourers in Eastern Sumatra, Hong Kong Telegraph, 14 May 1904.
- (62) FO 228/1596, Courier d'Haiphong, 29 April 1905, in Consular Notes on Indo-China, for September 1905; see also FO 228/1590, Canton Consular Intelligence Report for the September Quarter, 1905.
- (63) Reeves, op. cit., p. 165.
- (64) Ibid.
- (65) Campbell, op. cit., p. 192, n.1.
- (66) See Note 21.
- (67) See for example, on India, H. Tinker, A New System of Slavery: the Export of

Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920 (London, 1974), pp. 236-366; Campbell, op. cit., pp. 106-8, for China.

- (68) FO 228/1540, Minute by Cockburn on Governor Nathan, HK, to Satow, 29 October 1904.
- (69) Ibid., Minute by Satow on Governor Nathan to Satow, 29 October 1904.
- (70) FO 228/1545, Butterfield and Swire to Consul Hausser, Amoy, 23 September 1904.
- (71) FO 228/1548, Consul Scott, Canton, to Satow, 31 December 1904.
- (72) See CO 879/85/755, Lyttelton to Milner, 19 May 1904, and Milner to Lyttelton, 7 November 1904, for remarks on this situation.
- (73) See Treaties between China and Foreign States, Vol. II, p. 646.
- (74) Hong Kong Telegraph, 16 June 1904.
- (75) CO 879/85/761, Governor Nathan, HK, to Lyttelton, 10 April 1905.
- (76) CO 879/85/755, Governor Nathan, HK, to Lyttelton, 28 May 1904, and Lyttelton to Acting Governor May, Hong Kong, 31 May 1904.
- (77) FLD 133, file 21/4, Correspondence relative to the Emigration Depot at Laichikok, 1904.
- (78) FO 228/1545, Kidson to Consul Butler, Chefoo, 2 October 1904.
- (79) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 24 July 1904.
- (80) See, for example, CO 879/85/755 (Enclosure 2), Perry to Farrar, 17 August 1904, in Milner to Lyttelton, 7 November 1904.
- (81) CO 879/85/755, Chang Ta-jen to Wei-wu-pu, 8 January 1904, in Satow to Lansdowne, 23 March 1904.
- (82) Report in the London and China Telegraph, 14 December 1903.
- (83) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904.
- (84) CO 228/1545, Enclosure in the Amoy Intelligence Report for May-July 1904.
- (85) See, for example, Teng Ssu-yu and John K. Fairbank, China's Response to the West: a Documentary Survey, 1839-1923 (New York, 1967), p. 36.
- (86) CO 879/85/755, Wai-wu-pu to the Superintendents of Northern and Southern Trade, in the Tientsin Official Gazette, 22 March 1904, enclosure in FO to CO, 12 May 1904.
- (87) CO 879/85/755, Chang Ta-jen to Wai-wu-pu, 18 October 1903, in the Tientsin Official Gazette, 22 March 1904, enclosure in FO to CO, 12 May 1904.
- (88) CO 879/85/755, Wai-wu-pu to the Superintendents of Northern and Southern Trade in the Tientsin Official Gazette, 22 March 1904, enclosure in FO to CO, 12 May 1904.
- (89) FO 405, Memorandum of 5th Meeting at the FO of representatives of the FO, CO and the Chinese Government, to draw up the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention.
- (90) See, for example, FO 228/1542, Satow to Prince Ch'ing, 20 September 1904; ibid., Satow to Prince Ch'ing, 25 October 1904. For the terms of the agreement, which Satow described as "excellent", see FO 228/1548, enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 28 October 1904, and memo on the same by Satow.
- (91) On the abortive negotiations for the transshipment agreement, see FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 27 October 1904; ibid., Campbell to Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan, 12 November 1904 (enclosure 1 of Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904); CO 879/85/761, Scott to Satow, 31 January 1905 (enclosure 2 in FO to CO, 7 March 1905).
- (92) See FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 27 October 1904, and ibid., enclosure 2 in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904, and CO 879/85/755, Milner to Lyttelton, 5 October 1904.
- (93) FO 228/1548, Campbell to Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan, 3 October 1904 (enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 12 October 1904).

- (94) For details of the Wuchow scheme, operative 25 July to 18 November 1904, see particularly FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 25 July 1904; ibid., Campbell to Satow and one enclosure, 27 July 1904; ibid., Fox to Campbell, 16 August 1904 and enclosure (in Campbell to Satow, 17 August 1904); ibid., Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904, and 5 enclosures; FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904; ibid., Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904, and 12 enclosures; see also FLD 132, File 21/-, correspondence re rejected Wuchow emigrants.
- (95) See, for example, FO 228/1547, Campbell to Fox, 27 July 1904 - Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 27 July 1904.
- (96) For Viceroy's opposition to emigration from Kwangtung province in general, see particularly FO 228/1548, Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan to Campbell, 28 June 1904 (Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 22 September 1904), re South Africa and the Straits; FO 228/1596, Pakhoi Consular Intelligence report for September Quarter 1905, re Dutch East Indies; FO 228/90, Canton Consular Intelligence report for the September Quarter, 1905, re Yunnan and Indo-China.
- (97) See, for example, FO 228/1547, the declaration of Governor Ts'en Chun-hsüan to Secretary, 13 September 1904 (Enclosure 3 in Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904).
- (98) The Chamber of Mines were well aware of this policy: see FLD 132, File 21/-, Perry to the Board of the CMLIA, 10 October 1904.
- (99) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904.
- (100) For another example of this in the Viceroy's activities in the Boxer Rebellion, see Hummell, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Dynasty, Volume II, p. 618.
- (101) For an example of these associations with South Africa, see the Viceroy's very important despatch on the arrest of coolie brokers in Canton working for the hong's sub-contracted for the South African trade: FO 228/1547, Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan to Campbell, 6 September 1904 (Enclosure 13 in Campbell to Satow, 24 September 1904).
- (102) See, for example, the Viceroy's reply to the Taot'ai at Swatow, 28 September 1904, on proposed emigration to British North Borneo, in FO 228/1562, Consul Willis to Satow, 22 October 1904.
- (103) Report in North China Herald, 17 January 1908.
- (104) For a discussion of these, see Mary C. Wright's Introduction to China in Revolution, 1900-1913: the first phase. Resistance to Imperialism, pp. 4-19.
- (105) For correspondence re the enlisting of criminals for the Transvaal Mines, see particularly FLD 132, File 21/-, which contains the depositions of those detected. This incident should not be taken as conclusive proof of the charge that the Chinese employed in the mines were the off-scourings of the jails (for this charge, see, for example, E. Rosenthal, Gold Bricks and Mortar: 60 Years of Johannesburg History [Johannesburg, 1946], pp. 148-152). These men formed a small proportion of those recruited even in Kwangsi province, let alone of those recruited in other areas, and further they were never sent to the mines.
- (106) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904.
- (107) Ibid., Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hsüan to Campbell, 28 June 1904 - Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 22 September 1904.
- (108) Consul Wilkinson, Wuchow, to Campbell, 29 September 1904 - Enclosure 3 in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904.
- (109) CO 879/85/755, Governor Nathan, HK, to Lyttelton, 31 October 1904.
- (110) See FLD 132, File 21/-, Cowan to Superintendent Evans, FLD, 13 September 1904.
- (111) Hong Kong Telegraph, 23 September 1904. Also quoted in Campbell, op. cit., p. 192, n.1.
- (112) See report of an interview between Perry, the British Consul at Canton, and the Governor of Kwangtung on 18 November 1904, in FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.

- (113) These figures are drawn from an analysis of the Mine Register of ERPM, FLD 405, and Contract Numbers 14 and 39 of 1904, FLD 343, 345.
- (114) FO 228/1548, Colonial Secretary, HK, to Campbell, 2 November 1904 - Enclosure 5 in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (115) See, for example, the negotiations to extend the Convention to Weihaiwei, in CO 879/85/755 & 761, April 1904-December 1905.
- (116) CO 879/85/755, Lyttelton to Milner, 19 May 1904.
- (117) See, for example, FO 228/1548 and CO 879/85/761, 27 October 1905, 31 January 1905: Campbell's and Scott's negotiations over the transshipment of labourers to Hong Kong from Canton.
- (118) See, for example, FO 228/1547 and 1548 and CO 879/85/761: Campbell's negotiations over Article I on the question of recruiting, and Article V on the question of transshipment.
- (119) See CO 879/85/755, Milner's complaints in Milner to Lyttelton, 15 June 1904; ibid., 21 June 1904; ibid., 30 June 1904; and ibid., CO to FO, 16 July 1904.
- (120) Preamble to the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention 1904.
- (121) Ibid. See also Campbell, op. cit., pp. 116-130, for the links between Article V of the 1860 Treaty and the requirements of the British West Indian Sugar Plantations.
- (122) CO 879/85/755, Nathan to Lyttelton, 8 August 1904.
- (123) Ibid., Nathan to Lyttelton, 31 October 1904.
- (124) FO 228/1540, Nathan to Satow, 29 October 1904.
- (125) CO 879/85/761, Nathan to Lyttelton, 10 April 1905.
- (126) For the Viceroy's initial refusal to sanction the Convention and subsequent delay in recruiting in Kwangtung, see CO 879/85/755, Milner to Lyttelton, 15 June 1904; FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 2 June 1904; and FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 21 July 1904.
- (127) See Notes 109 and 111 above for details.
- (128) Relations between the firm and the British Consul were at one time, when the Consul suspected the firm of misuse of Consular Authority (a charge they never effectively disproved), severely strained: see FO 228/1548, Colonial Secretary, HK, to Butterfield and Swire, 26 September 1904, and Butterfield and Swire to Colonial Secretary, HK, 27 September 1904, enclosures 5 and 6 in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904.
- (129) For Butterfield's responsibility for the Wuchow depot, see FO 228/1547, enclosure in Campbell to Fox, 27 July 1904 (Enclosure 2 in Campbell to Satow, 27 July 1904). For the projected Canton scheme, see FO 228/1548, Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 28 October 1904, For Butterfield and Swire's fees to government officials in Kwangsi, see FO 228/1548, Wilkinson to Campbell, 29 September 1904 (Enclosure 3 in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904); for comprador arrangements by Butterfield and Swire in Kwangtung, see FO 228/1547, Law, Butterfield and Swire to Campbell, 19 August 1904 (Enclosure 2 in Campbell to Satow, 24 September 1904).
- (130) FO 228/1547, Campbell to Satow, 2 June 1904.
- (131) Ibid., Campbell to Satow, 31 July 1904.
- (132) Ibid., Campbell to Satow, 16 September 1904.
- (133) Hong Kong Telegraph reports for 18 June, 29 June, 5 July, 1904; London and China Telegraph, 10 October 1904.
- (134) FO 228/1547, Law, Butterfield and Swire to Campbell, 24 August 1904 - Enclosure 4 in Campbell to Satow, 24 September 1904.
- (135) CO 879/85/755, Nathan to Lyttelton, 31 October 1904.

- (136) FO 228/1547, Colonial Secretary, HK, to Campbell, 3 September 1904 - Enclosure 7 in Campbell to Satow, 24 September 1904.
- (137) FO 228/1547, Acting Governor May to Campbell, 3 August 1904 - Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 8 August 1904; FO 228/1548, Campbell to Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hstian, 26 September 1904, in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904; ibid., Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, to Law, Butterfield and Swire, 26 September 1904; Law to Colonial Secretary, HK, 27 September 1904, and Campbell to Viceroy Ts'en Chun-hstian, 30 September 1904 - Enclosures 5, 6 & 8 in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904.
- (138) FO 228/1548, Cowan to Acting Governor May, 17 September 1904; Law to Colonial Secretary, HK - Enclosures 3 & 6 in Campbell to Satow, 4 October 1904.
- (139) CO 879/85/755, Nathan to Lyttelton, 31 October 1904.
- (140) FO 228/1548, Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (141) Ibid., Enclosure 1 in Campbell to Satow, 28 October 1904.
- (142) Colonial Secretary, HK, to Campbell - Enclosure 5 in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (143) For Campbell's censure and Cowan's collusion with Butterfield and Swire over illegal recruiting for the "Lothian" shipment, see FO 228/1547, Campbell to Colonial Secretary, HK, 9 September 1904 - Enclosure 16 in Campbell to Satow, 24 September 1904.
- (144) See CO 879/85/761, Statement on recruiting arrangements in Perry to Colonial Office, 10 February 1905; CO 879/85/755, Perry to Farrar, 17 August 1904 - Enclosure 2 in Milner to Lyttelton.
- (145) See report on Charter arrangements in Hong Kong Telegraph, 25 May 1904.
- (146) See FO 228/1548, Perry's statement to the Governor of Kwangtung, 18 November 1904, reported in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (147) See ibid., Colonial Secretary, HK, to Campbell, 2 November 1904 - Enclosure 5 in Campbell to Satow, 19 November 1904.
- (148) See also FLD 132, File 21/-, Perry to Board of CMLIA, 10 October 1904.
- (149) CO 879/85/761, Lawley to Lyttelton, 15 May 1905.