

THE PROVINCE

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WEALTH SENT TO ASIA.

A correspondent has asked The Province to inform his as nearly as possible what amount of money the Oriental population of British Columbia sends out of the country yearly. The question is one which it would be impossible to answer except approximately and in this case approximation ranges from one hundred thousand dollars to perhaps three million. To obtain anything like a fair idea of the amount of money which is sent from this province to Asia annually, and for which there is no return, the business of the banks would require to be scrutinized, and even then the full volume of transmission would not be learned. Many returning Orientals vary with them large sums which they convert into English money when they reach Honkong. But the leading business men of the Chinese colony in Vancouver possess a fair understanding of what their countrymen send in the aggregate and they place the amount between two and three million, nearer three, perhaps than two.

The Chinese residents are, of course, those who send the large sums away. The Japanese are not only less numerous but, as yet, they are not in the same way of making money as the people from China and besides they do not appear to have in the same equal degree that abiding affection for their relatives at home and that rooted love for their native land which distinguishes the Chinaman the world over.

The steamers plying between Vancouver and Hongkong seldom leave this coast without carrying bills of exchange amounting to between one hundred and fifty and two hundred thousand dollars payable to Chinamen whose relations in this country are making fortunes for their family. As a steamer leaves every three weeks from Hongkong, an idea of the annual tribute of British Columbia to China may be obtained.

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Of course, it would be unfair to say that this is entirely lost money to this country. Some of it may be, but for a very considerable portion of it value has been given and the most ardent and embittered anti-Orientalist should recognize this. If he does not any argument against Oriental immigration which he might deduce from it would suffer as a consequence. But the argument might fairly be drawn that with a white instead of a yellow population in the province the money so sent abroad would remain here to build up and develop the country.

Still it cannot be denied that of the Chinese population a fair proportion are doing work which entitles them from any standpoint to do with the money they earn whatever they choose. The Chinese domestic servant on this coast is apparently a necessity. It is impossible to obtain white girls and it would be absurd to say that under Crose(?) circumstances, the services of Chinamen who clear the land, and many of them are engaged in that occupation, are of use. Work of that kind white men heretofore have refused to do, but if our agricultural areas are to be made available it has to be done. The Chinese merchant class, too, must be admitted as of beneat(?) to the country.

But taking everything into account three million dollars certainly trike one as a very imposing sum for British Columbia to pay to China yearly for the privilege of employing its subjects in the occupations which they fill in this province. At the recent enquiry conducted by Mr. Mackenzie King into the Chinese claims for damages resulting from the riots in this city a year ago, the president of the Chinese Board of Trade estimated the number of Chinamen in British Columbia at 13,000. On a basis of \$300,000 sent to China every three weeks this would be about \$250 per man per year.

Vancouver is a young country and needs all the wealth it creates and no doubt it is desirable that the population it possesses should be one which will retain its earnings for its own and the country's benefit. The steps to obtain such a population, however, must be the result of constructive legislation, not of any attempted process of elimination such as the unthinking and impulsive elements of the masses might resort to.