

Plenty of space

Extract from 'The Chinese Question'

When we heard, about five and twenty years ago, that there was a great continent nearly half as large again as China, and containing only a few hundreds of thousands of civilised people thinly scattered around the coast; that it was rich in the precious metals and very fertile; and that it was only a few weeks sail from our own country, numbers of Chinese immigrants set out for this land of promise.

(China) is estimated to contain not much less than 2 000 000 square miles of territory, and 400 million of people. Australia comprises an area of close upon 3 000 000 square miles. and it contains no more than 2 100 000 white people, and a few thousand blacks. In our own land, millions of men, women and children – yes millions — think of the horror and pity of it! — have died of starvation during the last year.

Kong Meng L, *The Chinese Question in Australia*, 1888, State Library of Victoria, pp.5, 9

