

THE SIX COMPANIES.

Their Presidents Testify Yesterday.

The Immigration Committee to Finish To-Day.

Consul Bee on the Stand—A Reporter's Statements Denied by the Chinese.

The Congressional Committee on Immigration, less Senator Squire, who left for Washington, D. C., on Saturday night last, resumed its investigation into Chinese immigration yesterday morning.

Consul Bee was the first witness. He presented to the committee statements of the arrivals and departures of Chinese from this port since October 1, 1888. In every instance it was found that the figures presented by the Chinese Consul and those given by Collector Phelps disagreed by some thousands. Consul Bee was asked concerning these discrepancies and admitted that in all probability the figures as given by the Collector were correct. He admitted that he procured all his figures from the steamship companies and had no personal knowledge as to their correctness.

Congressman Stump was in just the humor to go for Consul Bee without gloves and he did it.

"You criticize people by your record," said Mr. Stump. "Let's look into the record you present and criticize you by your own figures."

Then ensued a long examination by Congressman Stump of the Chinese Consul, in which he vainly endeavored to

tolerated in this country?" was Lehibach's next question.

Bee said it did not differ materially from the customs of white creditors.

"Then we are to understand that the Chinese get all the benefits from the Six Companies without being taxed?" observed Stump.

"Exactly," responded Bee.

THE HIGHBINDER.

The next question was by Congressman Stump. He is a lawyer and an ex-Judge, and he cross-examines a witness with uncomfortable closeness for a Congressman.

"What is a highbinder?" asked Mr. Stump.

"He is a rough, a rowdy, a Baltimore plug-ugly," answered Consul Bee.

Mr. Stump is a Marylander, and the Consul's answer was in the nature of "a counter."

"Ah," said Congressman Stump, appreciating the thrust; "we understand one another now. Proceed, sir."

Consul Bee then told about the high-binders and asserted that he, the Six Companies and all the best Chinese—in fact, a majority of them—would be glad to have the highbinder societies exterminated. The examination of the Chinese Consul consumed all the time from the opening of the morning session until the recess at 2 o'clock, except about fifteen minutes which were devoted to an examination of Customs Inspector Pattison, who detailed his trip to Mexico in pursuit of Chinese who were trying to get into the United States via that country, and detailed the manner in which they were captured. The inspector also detailed his work in detecting the jailer substituting Chinese who wanted to go to China for prisoners confined in the jail under remand to be sent back to that country.

After a recess of fifteen minutes the committee again resumed the investigation. The first witness was Deputy Clerk Manly of the United States District Court, who was recalled in order to give the committee certain figures from the court records. The statement which he presented showed that from October 1, 1888, to December 1st of the present year 1401 cases of habeas corpus had been brought by Chinese before the court. Of these 533 cases resulted in the discharge of the petitioner, 87 petitioners were remanded to China and 781 cases still remain untried.

Of the eighty-seven cases in which remands to China were made fifty-five Chinese were sent back, nine appealed to higher courts, eleven were released on

Companies, said the witness, never resorted to force, threats or intimidation in any form to collect debts or settle disputes.

On Saturday B. Cromwell, a reporter, testified that he was present about five or six months ago when the police made a raid on the office of the Six Companies and, bursting in the door, rescued one Ah Luey, a Chinese from New Orleans, whom the presidents of the Six Companies were imprisoning, trying to make him pay a debt, and that when the police broke in Ah Luey ran to them for protection.

Jeong Hen Jo said, when questioned, that he had heard of the Ah Luey case, but denied emphatically that the man had ever been tried by the Six Companies.

The committee asked him if he knew who tried Ah Luey, and he said he could find out if they would let him go and see the other presidents. This was refused, but Interpreter Rickards was sent to inquire. As soon as he asked about the case Consul Bee, who was in the room, spoke up and said:

"That was a newspaper case. There was no such case before the Six Companies."

Interpreter King, connected with the consulate, was also in the room and repeated Consul Bee's words and all the five waiting presidents denied that they had ever tried Ah Luey.

Low Wy, president of the Yung Wo Company, was next called. He has been in this country for nine years and is fully up to all the tricks of examination on the witness stand. After telling that his company had 1500 members in this city and repeating substantially the testimony of the preceding president, Low Wy denied all knowledge of the Ah Luey case, and said that no such occurrence as that described by Cromwell had ever taken place in the Six Companies' office.

He was then excused, and the committee told Mr. Cromwell that it wanted him to bring before it at 10 o'clock this morning the two policemen who had made the raid on the office of the Six Companies, as it wanted and proposed to get at the facts in regard to the Ah Luey matter.

The committee then took a recess until 8 o'clock last night, at which hour it met Collector Phelps at the Palace Hotel and received from him some information upon which the investigation to-day will be based.

reconcile the figures given by the Collector with those presented by the Consul. Failing in this Mr. Stump said:

"Well, this committee believes that the figures furnished by Collector Phelps are quite as reliable, if not more so than the figures you present, which you say are taken from the steamship company's books."

"That is probable," said Consul Bee.

Congressman Lehibach was not content with Consul Bee's ready acquiescence in regard to his figures being wrong, and, after the Consul had testified that the attorney for the consulate was likewise the attorney for the Six Companies and for nearly all the Chinese getting out writs of habeas corpus, Mr. Lehibach returned once more to the Consul's figures.

"Colonel Bee," said the Congressman, "I confess I can't understand how there can be such a discrepancy between the figures you present regarding the arrival and departure of Chinese and those of the Collector of Customs bearing on the same subject. The Collector certainly takes every precaution to be correct."

"Well, I can only say that I get my figures from the steamship companies," answered Bee. "It may be that the Chinese buy tickets from the steamship companies and don't use them. I've got my figures for twelve years from the companies by means of the tickets sold. The most thorough, energetic and successful officer the Government has ever had here is the present Collector. He is enforcing the law in a manner hitherto unknown. Understand me, I don't advocate the importation of Chinese. I represent a Government opposed to any Chinese at all coming here. But they have a right to leave Hongkong and no one can stop them."

THE SIX COMPANIES.

The members of the committee then asked Consul Bee concerning the Six Companies, and he gave a history of the organization, and detailed the manner in which they conduct their business.

"In 1849 and 1850," said the Consul, "the men coming into the mines from the East found no law or order in this State. We banded ourselves into State organizations. For instance, I was in the Hangtown diggings, and there we had a New York society. Next to us was the Palmetto Society, representing the men from the Carolinas. The men coming into the mines joined the societies representing their native States. Chinese followed our example. As before stated, the Six Companies exist only in this country. All Chinamen coming here come from one of the six provinces, and the Six Companies represent those provinces. They were organized years ago. They have no connection with the highbinders. They are, in fact, courts of arbitration to settle differences between Chinese, so as to save them the costs of going into American courts. The Six Companies use no threats or intimidation, and have no power over the Chinese. They care for the members of their companies and try to regulate, as far as they can—for they have no power of arrest or compulsion in any form—the commercial quarrels of the Chinese."

The question was asked if the Six Companies did not use threats to collect debts, and if they did not compel every Chinese leaving this country to pay a fee into the treasury of one or the other of the companies.

The Consul explained that each company protected its own members when they got into trouble and never asked a cent from them until they were ready to go back to China, when dues to the amount of from \$2 to \$7 were collected. The Consul also asserted that the Six Companies never tried to prevent a Chinese from returning home, no matter whether he had paid his dues or not.

"Now, if the Chinese are at liberty to depart for China at any time, how is it that they are often stopped at the steamer's gang-plank and compelled to pay a fee?" asked Representative Lehibach.

"That's the regular due of \$2.50 or so. That man has been here for many years, perhaps, and although the company to which he belongs has expended \$100 or more in protecting him he objects to paying the honest fee. They are frequently absconders, trying to avoid paying their debts, and are stopped at the request of one of the companies to which the merchant to whom they are indebted belongs."

"Do you think such a system should be

bonds which were forfeited and the prisoners never produced, four died and eight could not be found for trial.

Previous to the hour of adjournment the committee decided to send for the presidents of the Six Companies, and upon Consul Bee's assurance that they would come upon a mere invitation they were invited through the assistant sergeant-at-arms of the committee.

That officer returned about the time Mr. Manly finished testifying and announced that he had called at the residences of the various presidents of the Six Companies, and also at their general office, only to find all of them absent. Congressman Stump said to Consul Bee:

"We want these people and we're going to have them. No subterfuges will do. We've invited them, and if they don't come we'll bring 'em."

Consul Bee said he thought the presidents would be on hand and left the building. Before an hour the six Chinese rulers of San Francisco were awaiting the pleasure of the committee.

WORKINGMEN'S VIEWS.

While awaiting the arrival of the Six Companies' presidents the committee examined Alfred Fuhrman, president of the Council of Federated Trades. He testified that there were only 350 white cigar-makers in this city, against from 3000 to 4000 Chinese employed in the same business. He estimated the Chinese population here as 30,000 and over, and said that he and the organized workmen of San Francisco favored the entire exclusion of the Chinese. "Once they leave California let them stay away forever," said Mr. Fuhrman.

Henry A. Kretlow, the secretary of the Federated Trades and a cigar-maker by trade, gave much the same testimony as Mr. Fuhrman. He declared that many of the Chinese cigar-makers were dying from leprosy; that all of them were filthy; that young white girls working with Chinese were debauched, and said that Chinese labor as compared with white labor in any trade was unfair competition.

While Kretlow was testifying the presidents of the Six Companies arrived. Inspector Rickards, the Custom-house interpreter, was sent for by the committee, and pending his arrival Charles L. Weller, assistant United States District Attorney, was examined. Mr. Weller testified to no facts that had not already been given, and, Mr. Rickards arriving, the examination of the Chinese was taken up.

THE PRESIDENTS TESTIFY.

Jeong Hen Joe, president of the Som Yup Company, was first called. Before the examination was commenced Congressman Stump moved that all other Chinese and all connected with them should be excluded from the room. This was done.

Jeong Hen Joe wore a blue embroidered quilted blouse and skirt, a black skull cap with a red knob, carried a fan and his finger nails were fully half an inch in length. He is an intelligent-looking Mongol and was very self-possessed during his examination. He was sworn through the interpreter, and said that he had come to this country about two years ago. His company had 2700 members in this city, none of whom paid anything to the company in the way of dues or fees. He received a salary of \$120 a month for his services and had an interpreter at \$60 a month to aid him. The company received \$4000 per annum revenue from the rental of buildings which it owns. These buildings were bought years ago with money that was contributed by Chinese who came here in early days and made fortunes. In his company were 1100 merchants. The Six Companies try no one, but they arbitrate difficulties between their countrymen.

In answer to a question from Congressman Stump Jeong Hen Jo said that if a debtor, after the Six Companies had decided he owed the debt, refused to pay it they had no way of making him do so and did not try to make him settle. He denied that the Six Companies ever employed highbinders and said the highbinders were very, very bad men indeed and the Six Companies would be glad if they were done away with. He stated further that in difficulties between members of his own company he alone was the arbitrator, but in all cases where the parties refused to abide by the arbitration the case was transferred to the American courts for final settlement, unless the man to whom the debt was due became angry and then he sometimes hired a highbinder to collect it, but the Six Companies never advised the latter plan. The Six