

Chinese Australian Herald. “Wangdong zhaoyuan” 妄動招怨 [Reckless Action Comes under Fire]. May 10, 1902.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/15343168?browse=ndp%3Abrowse%2Ftitle%2F704%2F1902%2F05%2F10%2Fpage%2F15343168%2Farticle%2F170084764>.

Reckless Action Comes under Fire

When people are on the move, they seek peace; when people are in peace, they long for action. In other words, it is reasonable that people who have been confined to their homes for long would desire to venture into the market to seek profits, while those staying in an alien land for long would, in turn, wish to return to their hometown to enjoy some chats with their beloved ones. However, actions must not be taken without first considering the appropriate timing for an “advance” or “retreat” as well as the resulting potential gains and losses. For centuries, the provinces of Australia have all enjoyed peace under the protection of Britain. However, with the sudden recent establishment of the new law,¹ the six provinces united and claimed to be one independent state. Besides, they concertedly endeavoured to purchase as many cannons as possible to reinforce their military strength so that they would not have to rely on Britain anymore. This is akin to how an eight or nine-year-old child who is not “fully fledged” and ignorant of many matters can no longer bear the constraints imposed by their parents. Falsely seeing themselves as more than capable, the child would embark on a journey to somewhere far away from home alone and have to manage to earn a living by themselves. Even without being completely devoid of support, they will suffer greatly, regretting that staying at home would have been better. Considering that the total population of all the eight provinces of Australia is even less than that of a major city in Britain, I cannot believe that they dared see themselves as a mighty state. Moreover, people I have been contacting these days are all complaining that society is not “as good” nowadays. This is because those breadwinners used to be better off and thus have more freedom in spending their salaries or wages. In contrast, the heavy burden of taxes is now making it difficult for them to make ends meet. Merchants accusing the hardship of their lives are everywhere and wages in many industries have not risen either. Furthermore, recent hot winds and droughts have been particularly destructive compared with those in the last seven years. Cattle are now sold for as much as twelve pounds each, and prices of cereal grains in Australia have also risen following the prices of cereal grains raised in Africa. Despite being one of the essential foods for Westerners, the price of bread flour per pack has increased by one or two pounds. Wheat per bushel used to cost roughly two shillings and six or seven extra pennies all along but the price has now been increased to four to five shillings. Potatoes previously cost two to three pounds per bag, a stark contrast to the current price - five to six pounds. Butter used to be no more than nine to eleven pennies but it is now sold for approximately one shilling and four to six pennies. Millet, previously around two shillings and six to seven pennies per

¹ The “new law” referred to the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900*, which was granted royal assent on July 9, 1900.

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bushel, is now four shillings and ten pennies. Bran, previously seven or eight pennies, is now sold for one shilling and four or five pennies. Hay, previously four pounds, is now worth seven pounds, seven shillings and six pennies.