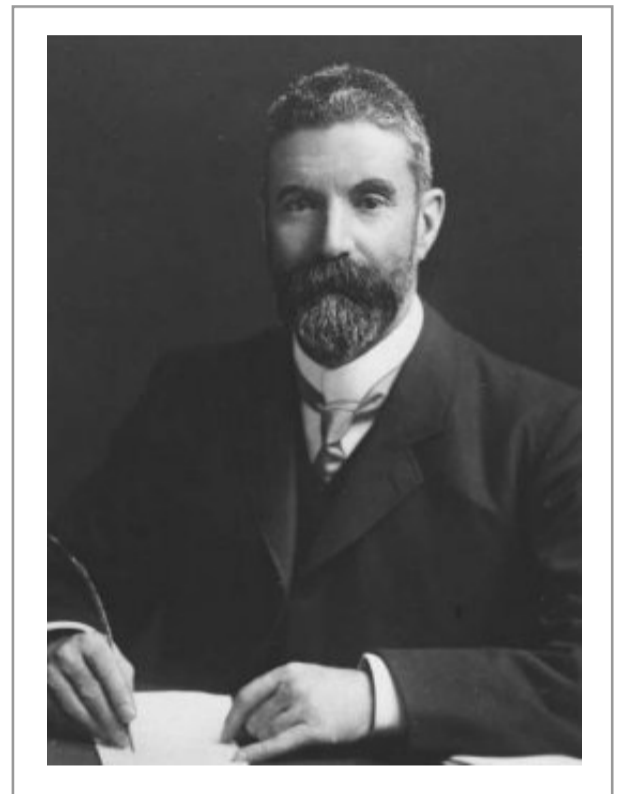
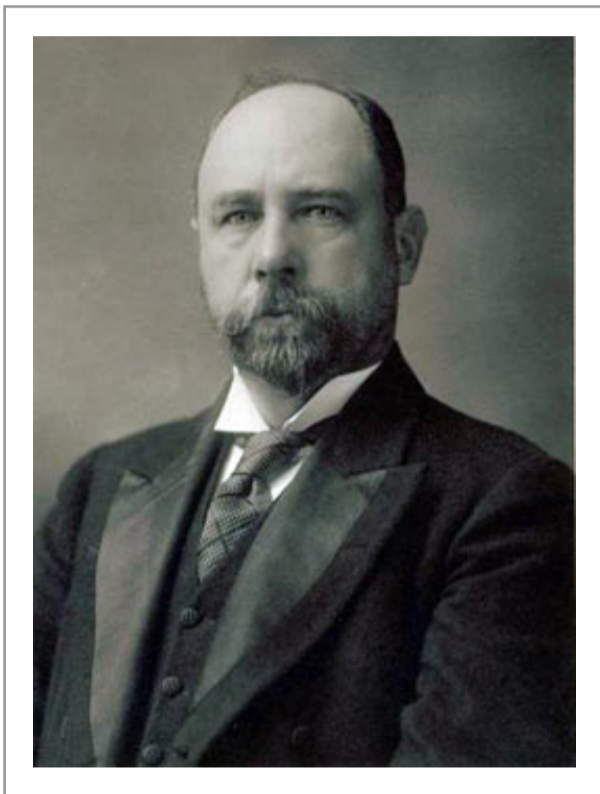


Sikh and Indian Australians

TEACHER RESOURCE 3 - IN THEIR OWN WORDS



William McMillan, Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin (*National Archives of Australia*, public domain)

The historical sources used here are from debates on the Immigration Restriction Act and subsequent Acts from 1901 to 1906.

Source 1: Ban people from the “Eastern Seas”. William McMillan (1901):

What we mean ... is that we will prevent any large infiltration of alien elements into...our national life, and that we will preserve pure for all time the British element with which we started.

We must recollect the great ... fact that we are a people situated practically in the eastern seas [Asia] ... We must also recollect that the northern portion of our continent lies in close proximity to millions and millions of people of an alien and servile character.

Source 2: Equality for some. Prime Minister Edmond Barton (1901)

I do not think either that the doctrine of the equality of man was really ever intended to include racial equality. There is no racial equality... These races are, in comparison with white races—I think no one wants convincing of this fact—unequal and inferior... There is a deep-set difference [between the English and the Chinese], and we see no prospect and no promise of its ever being [different].... Nothing we can do by cultivation, by refinement, or by anything else will make some races equal to others.

Source 3: A united race. Alfred Deakin (1901)

We here find ourselves touching the profoundest (most important) instinct of individual or nation—the instinct of self-preservation—for it is nothing less than the national manhood, the national character, and the national future that are at stake. Coloured races [are] inclined to invade our shores.

Source 4 ‘Racial contamination’ John Watson (1901)

The objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia ... lies in the main in the possibility and probability of racial contamination ... The racial aspect of the question [to restrict migration to Australia], in my opinion, is the larger and more important one.[19]

Source 5. Increased Asian labour. Senator Hugh De Largi (1906)

I cannot account for the number of Chinamen in Australia, but I know that there are more Asiatics in Western Australia, more particularly on the North West coast, today than there were prior to Federation. Undoubtedly the Japanese outnumber all the others. For instance, at Broome, 70 per cent, of the Asiatics are Japanese. But alongside the Japanese, Chinese carpenters are erecting the largest building which has yet been undertaken there. Not a white man is employed on the job. White men tendered (gave quotes for the cost) for the work, but they were cut out. What show has a white man to tender successfully against [the cheap labour of the]Chinese?

Source 6. The preserve the white race Mr L Groom (1902)

The idea in passing the Immigration Restriction Act was distinctly to preserve Australian citizenship for the white races of the world. This pearling industry is a large and important industry, and one which I am sure every citizen of the Commonwealth desires to preserve for Australia; but the question now is whether that industry is to be carried on by permitting people of coloured races to come into the Commonwealth contrary to the provisions of the statute, or whether it shall be preserved for the white citizens of Australia. I believe it was the intention of this House, in passing the Act, that all the industries of the Commonwealth should be preserved for the white people of Australia. So far as Queensland is concerned, it was said that the sugar industry required kanaka labour for a certain time, but it was unanimously held by the leading papers throughout the Commonwealth, including the leading papers of Brisbane, that upon this one question of a white Australia we were firm.

Source 7. Cheap labour Mr Page (1902)

Let the Prime Minister ask himself how it is that white people cannot engage in the [pearling]industry to-day when twelve years ago it could support 3,000 or 4,000 white men. It is not only from the pearl - diving branch of the industry that white men have being ousted. Japanese, Malays, and other aliens are carrying on the work of boat-builders and sail-makers ; and in fact everything connected with the trade is done by [coloured men], solely for considerations of cheapness.

Source 8. A quote from racial theorist Karl Pearson, Samuel Mauger (1901)

If you bring the white man into contact with the black you too often suspend the very process of natural selection on which the evolution of the higher type depends. You get superior and inferior races living on the same soil and that co-existence is demoralising to both. They naturally sink into the position of master and servant, if not admittedly into that of slave-owner and slave.

Quotations from the politicians were taken from:

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/ImmigrationDebate

http://historichansard.net/hofreps/1902/19020423_reps_1_9/

Allocate one of each of the 8 primary sources to groups of 3 or 4 students. Instruct the students discuss the quotation and explain the key idea presented by the politician at that time. Discuss reasons for the wide acceptance of the White Australia policy in 1901. List on the whiteboard these attitudes towards other races and reasons for the “White Australia policy”.