

# Commonwealth Parliamentary Debate – “The objection I have...”

Watson, J. C. in Whitlam, G. The Whitlam Government: 1972-1975 Melbourne, Penguin Books Australia, 1985.

## **The words of John Christian Watson on the Immigration Restriction Bill in 1901 - he became the first Labor Prime Minister in 1904**

As far as I am concerned, the objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia - although I admit it is to a large extent tinged with considerations of an industrial nature - lies in the main in the possibility and probability of racial contamination. I think we should gauge this matter, not alone by the abstract possibilities of the case, but by those considerations which appeal to our ordinary human weaknesses and prejudices. The question is whether we would desire that our sisters or our brothers should be married into any of these races to which we object. If these people are not such as we can meet upon an equality, and not such that we can feel that it is no disgrace to intermarry with, and not such as we can expect to give us an infusion of blood that will tend to the raising of our standard of life, and to the improvement of the race, we should be foolish in the extreme if we did not exhaust every means of preventing them from coming to this land, which we have made our own.