

"The Scotch census, which is the last of all to come in, shows the same increase in the town and decrease in the rural population which the whole civilized world is becoming familiar with. In England and Wales the agricultural population, during the decade, 1871-81, declined 16 per cent. The figures are not yet available for a comparison of 1881-91 with the previous decade, but it is known that the agricultural population shows a continuation of the decrease that marked the previous decennial."

The census of Ireland for 1891 shows there has been a marked decrease in the rural population, although I do not think that proves very much, because there are special causes for that decrease in the case of Ireland. Even in the United States, the country for which the hon. member for South Oxford has so much admiration, we find striking evidences of a similar movement. In the State of Vermont there has been an actual decrease in population in the last ten years. I mention this, not with any pleasure, because to me as a Canadian there can be no pleasure in the decadence of those commonwealths which have given to law, to literature, to eloquence and statesmanship, some of the brightest minds to be found in the records of our English race. But the fact is, nevertheless, those states where Horace Greely was born, and Daniel Webster, and Longfellow the poet, and Hawthorne, are losing their people by thousands, and, one after the other, these homes are being broken up. I need not to gloat over their misfortune, but by way of illustration of the truth and soundness of the proposition I am setting forth, in Maine, out of its sixteen counties, seven have declined in population; and in the Empire state of New York which, as many of us remember, was in our boyhood the foremost farming state of the Union—and no doubt many of us remember the days when all our wheat flour in the Maritime Provinces was bought in the Genesee Valley—the population shows a decrease in twenty-three out of its sixty counties. I venture to say you will find no such startling statement in any of the provinces of Canada. Pennsylvania shows that twelve out of her sixty-seven counties have decreased in population. So that, in group after group, in state after state, of the Union we find the same deplorable showing. I wish to speak of one group of states, the figures with reference to which are indeed surprising, and that is the great north central division watered by the Ohio, the Missouri and the Mississippi and including the prairie region, a group of states ten in number with a population of 22,000,000. The facts in reference to these are shown by the last American census, and I will not take up the time of the House by mentioning more than a few of them. Ohio with its 89 counties, shows a decline in population in 28 of them. Of Indiana's 92 counties, 25 have declined in population, and in Illinois 30 out of its 107 show a similar result. I think these are the most surprising facts with reference to this matter of the movement of population that we have heard of for a long time. The State of Iowa, an apparently new state, in which one would think the fertile elements of the soil could not be materially exhausted, shows a decline in 27 counties out of its 99. I will not weary the House with reading any more of these figures, but I have them here if any hon. gentleman desires to see them. To be sure I have read the strongest as illustrating my position, but there are a good many other states in which the decline, though not quite so striking, is striking and discouraging indeed. It is not my business or my duty to weary

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the House with any speculation as to the cause of this decline. I do not know the causes. In our own counties I know many of the causes for the decrease, and no doubt some of them are world-wide. The enormous increase in agricultural machinery, by means of which one man and a boy can do as much in seeding, harvesting, cutting and threshing grain as could be done by four hands thirty years ago, thus saving the labour of two or three men on every large farm, is one of the causes. And another cause, and perhaps the strongest cause, is to be found in the fact that our race is a nomadic race, which has, ever since its history began, gone on wandering south and west until the British race has fairly girdled the globe, and it was a mark of great sagacity on the part of our Conservative leaders that, seeing the drain of population owing to this and other causes, they took the means to divert it into another portion of our own territory. There was one class of farmers who were tired to death draining wet lands, taking stones out of the soil, clearing wooded lands, who were anxious to find a more pleasant field for their labours, and who when they heard that out west, at the cost of not many dollars, there were lands to be had for the asking, free of forests, springs and stones, where there were no obstructions to cultivation, they naturally determined to flock thither. And you, Sir, could not wonder at it. The young and enterprising spirits who were discouraged by the hard work and little progress in the older provinces determined to make their way to the prairie lands; and our Government, seeing this migration, determined on opening up our own prairie lands and in directing thither the course of this movement, so that if we lost these people in the east we would hold them in the west. Another class of people we were losing was the artizan class, which, before the National Policy was introduced, had not sufficient field for employment in our own country, and had to seek their living in the workshops and factories of Boston, New York and other American centres. But by means of the National Policy, instead of that class being drawn off to the United States, we have kept them here. Hon. gentlemen opposite may look wise and shake their heads and laugh, but they have never propounded any rational alternative policy to the National Policy, and it will be time enough for them to shake their heads when they will have found such a policy as will more effectually prevent any outward movement of our population. With reference to the daughters of the household, who in the olden days could only find employment in domestic work, we have furnished them with work in our own cotton mills and other manufacturing industries, and helped to prevent their seeking similar occupation in the United States. I was glad to hear the hon. Finance Minister throw a ray of hope into the discussion by pointing out to our farmers that in the British islands there was a market of great possibilities. It is all very fine for hon. gentlemen opposite to sneer at every effort made to improve things, but the people of this country look to those who are hopeful and suggestive and constructive and not to those political atheists who believe nothing and have no hope in the future. The English market for our farmers, as everyone knows who will study our statistical tables, has been a growing market. We sell twice the bulk of agricultural products in the