

establishments and bought the cheap sugar and developed the fruit industry, employed more men and probably made more money. There is no country so backward that it cannot induce international trade when it is conducted on a free trade basis. Therefore, I say the country would be immensely benefited by the adoption of the policy which exists in the British Islands to-day. I should like to quote some views obtained from a man who I quoted last year with regard to free trade in its relation to crime, Mr. Washington. He says in the course of a letter :

The cause of the low price now prevailing for the raw products of the lands usually attributed to over production may, with more reason, be attributed to the pretended efforts each protected country makes to protect its farmers and wage-earners against the so called cheap labour of all the other protected countries.

Each country having a surplus it must sell outside its borders, and each protected country having high tariffs specially directed against this surplus of all the rest, the surplus of all or nearly all are forced into the British market where no tariffs exist.

This forced competition among the protected nations to get rid of their surplus products in the only market left open to them, enables the people of Great Britain to buy these surplus stocks virtually at their own price.

This price is further depressed, to the fabulous material advantage of the British people, by the immense bonuses all protectionist governments pay some of their people to enable such to sell their surplus goods in the British market cheap. These bonuses are paid usually paid with money borrowed from the people of England by the various protectionist governments on the security of the cultivated area within their various countries.

Now as the price paid for export governs the price paid for home consumption, and as that price will always be fixed in the market importing the largest quantity, the greater the competition in that market the lower must go the price.

In a word, the greater the number of protectionist countries at any time existing, and the more successful they are in preventing their people trading direct with the people of other protected countries which is the object of protection, the keener will be the competition each will offer to the other in the British market, in regard to their surplus for export, and the lower must fall the price in that market in consequence. This must necessarily lower the price in all the markets of the world, seeing that Great Britain imports the bulk of the exports of all countries, and that the price paid for export governs the price paid for home consumption.

I consider that those views are exceedingly sound and presented in an aspect that is very intelligent. I should like to draw hon. gentlemen's attention to the enormous

growth of wealth in Great Britain since they adopted free trade in 1840. In that year, according to Mulhall's statistics, the world's debt to Great Britain was £825,000,000. In 1882 forty-two years afterwards, the world's debt to Great Britain was £5,340,000,000. In 1888, six years after that, the world's debt to Great Britain was £7,300,000,000. In 1896, eight years after that, it is estimated now that the world's debt to Great Britain is £10,000,000,000. That has all been accomplished since the adoption of free trade. In 1840 the world's debt to Great Britain was only £825,000,000. In 1896, fifty years afterwards, the world's debt to Great Britain was £10,000,000,000. Can anything be more plain or clearer as to the advantages to be derived from the adoption of free trade ! I do not think there is any clearer proofs of its benefits, not only to the country, but to mankind generally by the expansion of trade, through the free trade policy of Great Britain. Its multiplication by all the nations of the world, would be an increased benefit to humanity, conveying great blessings and benefits with it. I quote alongside of that the amount of gold coin and bullion in the world at the following dates. In 1840 the gold and silver then in existence was £1,568,000,000. In 1880 it was £2,182,000,000. In 1890 it was £2,448,000,000 and in 1896 it is estimated at £2,636,000,000 ; that is from the same dictionary of statistics. Those I think are valuable statistics in regard to the question that I am now presenting to the House. They prove that the efforts protectionist countries have made the basis of their policy, namely, to keep the gold and silver, which is the basis of currency, in the home markets, has had the contrary effect of driving the gold or commodities which are synonymous to the free trade market from which they can only be obtained by borrowing. I should like to read also the testimony at one of the meetings—not the last meeting that the leader of the opposition was present at but the one before—of Mr. William Adamson the representative of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce at one of the Imperial Conferences. He said :

I believe the place I represent furnishes an object lesson of great value on this subject we are discussing. Sixty years ago Singapore was a mere fishing village, and now, in conjunction with the sister settlements of Penang and Malacca, making what is known as the Straits Settlements, it