

become perhaps like one of the South American republics or one of the minor nations, which really exercise no influence on human affairs, and which are the very playthings of the powerful nations of the earth. Now it is far better to belong to this great empire, to continue an integral portion of it, than, from any mistaken idea, to pander to a cry for independence that would not satisfy. Now I have spoken of the loss of influence and advantage which I really believe would be entailed on the colonies by separation. Let me now ask you to consider what would be the effect on the United Kingdom itself. The colonies are the best field you have for the surplus labour and capital of this country. Reference has been most truly made by the Lord Provost to the sad condition of, I am afraid, millions of the lower masses of this country. They are getting crowded out of the various employments by which they live. They have to look abroad, and there is no part of the world to which they can look with such confidence as our own colonies for their future home. It is not a separation; it is not emigration in the sense of severing all those home ties which Scotsmen, at any rate, have such a reverence for. It is carrying with them abroad the remembrances of their old native country, and, as we know perfectly well, having the closest and most intimate relations with the friends they have left behind. They are your best customers. The statistical returns published monthly by the Board of Trade unquestionably show that of all parts of the world, of all the inhabitants of the earth, the British people abroad are the best customers for their fellow-countrymen at home. The emigration which has become a necessity for this country would in the future tend to be a source of weakness. At present it is a source of strength. It is a transference of what you can very well spare to those portions of the empire which require it, and the consequence is an additional strength here and additional strength there. But if these countries are separate from the United Kingdom, what is the result? They go to strengthen some foreign element. It may be a friendly one, but it may be, and very often is, an unfriendly one. Putting aside those reasons—which I think are in themselves very strong