

influences which were sure to result within a comparatively short period if those laws were continued in existence. It is well known that for several years before the repeal of the Corn Laws was ultimately carried by a reluctant Legislature the people of the country were becoming most desperate. It is well known that revolution was breeding in the very heart of the British Empire. It is well known that starving thousands were patrolling the streets, cursed—cursed, I say—by the demon of protection. (Hear, hear.) And I shall be able to show before I am done the similarity which exists between that protective system and the system which some people would have prevail in this new country, where we are supposed to be in a position to sweep away all the abuses of the old land, to strike out a new line for ourselves, and to bring Canada and all it can influence into harmony with the policy of the Empire. (Cheers.) That policy is one which is eminently just to all men, as it makes no conditions that we shall pay taxes to anyone but the State; and any system of protection that compels us not merely to pay taxes for the maintenance of the State and for the execution of its laws, but compels us also to pay a large taxation for the purpose of filling the pockets of some of our fellow-citizens (hear, hear), is a most iniquitous system. It is unjust in principle, it is productive of the worst consequence in practice, even to those who may derive a temporary advantage from the enactment of protective laws. No one can possibly doubt that if they give a little passing attention to the subject.

Protective and Revenue Systems Compared in England.

Now, Sir, wages at the time that the Corn Laws were in force in England were at the very point of starvation. I recollect very well when the ordinary farm labourer had to be contented in Great Britain with about a shilling a day. I recollect also when some improvement was made that one shilling and sixpence a day was thought to be a good wage. I recollect when the hands employed by the agriculturists were thought to be well paid when they were getting £10 per annum and their board; and I recollect the time when mechanics, such as masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artificers had to be content with from threepence to fourpence per hour. Now they think themselves ill paid if they do not have from eightpence to tenpence half-penny an hour in England. This shows how beneficial free trade has been to the English mechanic and to the English labourer. Now, Sir, at the present time the ordinary farm servant—the ploughman of the old land—can easily obtain £24 per annum and his board, while formerly, within the memory of many of those I am now addressing and within my own, he only obtained £10. What was the state of the workingman as to lodging, as to the means of raising a family in decency, as to the means of obtaining a fair education for his children? The restrictive laws which so long held the workingman in a state of comparative subjection left him also, as a general thing in England, without the means of education. It is true that in Scotland, and some parts of England and Ireland, there was a more liberal system of education, but I speak of the general character of the means throughout Great Britain that were then at the disposal of a man with a family for obtaining a fair elementary education for his children. All this, I say, was the result of an evil system of legislation, discriminating against labour and in favour of the landlord and capitalist. At the time when Richard Cobden