

were prepared by me with very great care for that purpose. I may say that it was a review of the Board of Trade returns of the imports and exports of this country between the period of the census of 1871 and the census of 1881. My object was to endeavour to find out how far the export trade of this country was improving, or tending to the improvement of, the labouring classes. The next point was to ascertain how far that employment of the labouring classes was being created by Europe, by the rest of the foreign world, or by the British possessions. That was the point that I selected for analysis. I think I can show you that I was correct in taking up the export trade as being the proper subject for analysis, because it appeared to me to be clear that, as regarded the outer world, the export trade of the country, whatever it may be, must be the measure of employment which it has given to the capital and labour of this country. You send out, whether it be manufactures or the products of your mines, so much British and Irish produce, and they are represented by so much money. That is the value of those articles which have been created by the capital and the labour of this country. The imports of food have a great deal to do with the comforts of the people, but they have nothing to do with the question of employment in this country, or, if there is anything raised by it, it is a question which I do not propose this afternoon to discuss. I found that the only true measure of comparison must be with reference to population. Now the population in 1871 was 31,845,371; in 1880 it had risen to 35,246,562. I think the export trade was almost exactly the same in those two years—it was £223,666,162 in 1871, and £223,060,446 in 1880. Now, the amount which that export trade represented per head in 1871 was £7 0s. 1d.; in 1880 it was only £6 6s. 7d., showing the large diminution of 13s. 6d. per head of the population. That was not a desirable feature to shew in connection with the export trade of the country, and therefore I proceed to find out the reason, and how it was distributed, which may lead us to some very important conclusions. I found that there were certain countries which may be classed manufacturing countries, which competed, if not in this country, certainly in