

Sir William Vernon Harcourt argued recently that the savings of the people was one of the truest guarantees you could have of a country's prosperity. Is it not obvious? I can give you an illustration. I remember calling on a friend of mine who had been a fellow student at college and also in the Middle Temple. He had been a little reckless and had got married to one who turned out to be, not only a very pretty, but a very prudent woman. He is now an eminent judge in Great Britain. I said to him: How are you getting on? He said nothing, but went to his bureau, pulled out a drawer, and handed me a bank-book in which there was a considerable sum to his credit. If anybody had told me that my former fellow-student and friend would ever have been able to save any money, I would not have believed him without the evidence. But there was the very best proof you could give of his prosperity and progress, namely, that he was saving money. And it is the best test you can have of the progress of the country. I shall ask the House to bear with me a few minutes longer while I deal with one or two other matters.

An hon. MEMBER. Dispense.

Mr. DAVIN. I cannot dispense. This debate has taken such a form that I must dare to be dull and pay my hon. friends of the Opposition the sincere flattery of imitating them. I always pay the hon. member for South Oxford the respect of carefully reading his amendment. I notice that he himself hangs his cap on his amendment. He behaves as certain excellent preachers do, who give out a text, and then never say a word about it, but go on to something else. None of his friends pay him the compliment of carefully reading the amendment, but I always do. At all events, it has the charm of novelty. It is the one thing in his speech which has the charm of novelty. His speech is, year after year, like an old barrel organ that rolls out the same tune, but the amendment changed each time. I am reminded by the hon. gentleman's yearly speech and amendment, of an old Italian who used to come round the place where I lived as a boy with his barrel organ. The organ and the old Italian were always the same, but every year there was a new monkey. The barrel organ and the Italian have been the same for the last sixteen or seventeen years, but there is always a new monkey—always a fresh policy—and my hon. friend has therefore a new amendment. The first part of the amendment is a matter of account. He then goes on to say that extravagant expenditure should be diminished. But it should not be necessary in any amendment to say extravagant expenditure should be diminished. All you have to do is to prove the extravagance, and it is a truism that it should be diminished. Then the amendments goes on to say:

Mr. DAVIN.

The burden of taxation should be reduced as largely and speedily as possible, and in restoring the equilibrium, the tariff should be made a tariff for revenue only.

I complain of that because it is dubious. Nobody can make out, from the speech of the hon. member for South Oxford or from the speeches of his friends, what that means. They carefully conceal their meaning by the phrase "tariff for revenue." Sometimes it is free trade as it is in England; then it is a tariff such as they had when they were in power. But that is not a tariff for revenue only. Seventeen and a half per cent, under certain conditions, would be a very respectable protection. Therefore, I say, this amendment is dubious. What sort of a speech should we have had to support it? He should prove proposition number one. He should show that there was extravagant expenditure and apply his remedy. Now, the hon. member for South Oxford and the hon. leader of the Opposition both dislike to apply their tariff for revenue, when they are asked to apply it. Sir, that is not necessarily unreasonable. It would be quite fair for any member of the Opposition to say: We agree with Sir Robert Peel that no one should state his policy in amendment. But they do state their policy in contradistinction to the policy announced from the Government benches, and, stating it, they are bound to show the people how they could carry it out; they are bound to show what they mean. It is not enough for them simply to repeat the words "revenue tariff." What is the use of getting up and denouncing all sorts of duties as robbery of the public, as the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) has been doing? Any man can abuse taxation; but let those hon. gentlemen show how they are going to carry on the government of the country without it; show how the Government in the present condition of this country is to raise its revenues under their tariff. This is a country of vast extent, as compared with what it was when hon. gentlemen opposite were in power, and how are they going to manage the country to-day under a tariff such as they once had? Therefore, I say they are bound to apply their policy. Well, Sir, the revenue tariff which should reduce the alleged burdens, and especially diminish the alleged extravagant expenditure, and still keep up the management of the country, would certainly take with the people, and all these hon. gentlemen have to do is to show how it will work. The Government has burned its boats behind it; it is bound to the oar and cannot abandon it; and, if the hon. member for Queen's, instead of throwing himself into a theatrical attitude and shouting to gods and men, and calling on all to witness that this is a most unjust and extortionate tariff, will sit down quietly and show how he can carry on the country and save three or four millions, or two millions even, I will promise him that it will not be