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Author(s): John Macaulay

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us whether "yeomen" included clergymen, whether "freeholders" included lessees for life, or copyholders, and who was his authority. The yeoman-myth with which Macaulay and Karl Marx dallied ought to be allowed to rest.

Having censured more perhaps than we should have done, we can only conclude by thanking the author for renewing our acquaintance with a great social pioneer and experimentalist, to whom there were no distinctions of class or creed, and the secular was so sacred that nothing could be more sacred, and before whom there was always present the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. He was vain, dull, unteachable, but a prophet withal, and the fact that we are able to look on our factory system with pride instead of shame, and the achievements of the co-operative movements of the nineteenth century are due, in the first instance, to Owen's clear insight and unflagging zeal.

J. D. ROGERS

*The Coal Question.* By the late W. STANLEY JEVONS, F.R.S.  
Edited by A. W. FLUX. (Third edition.) London : Macmillan.

THE facts and arguments advanced by Professor Jevons forty years ago in support of the conclusion that coal is the material basis of our national prosperity are as true to-day as they were then. Nor from the fuller information now at our disposal do we know of an efficient substitute for coal, although water, wind, tidal flow, sun heat, and petroleum may prove valuable auxiliary powers, or sources of power. Further, it cannot be gainsaid that the ruling factor in our commercial supremacy must be, not merely the possession of supplies of coal, but that these should be at least as profitable to us as those of our commercial competitors are to them. If we shall not be able to make up for the added cost of having to go deeper for coal, by gaining more power out of it than our rivals, the result must be commercial and national decadence. Jevons laid the greatest weight upon the relative increase of our production to that of other countries. Based upon that for several years prior to 1863, our increase was taken at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum, and, assuming this rate to be kept up, he calculated the production for every tenth year from 1861 for a period of a century. The fifth of these decennial periods was 1901, and so an opportunity is afforded of testing the correctness and value of the calculated rate of increase, for forty years. According to his figures the production in 1901 should have been 331 millions. In reality it was 245 millions—a significant differ-

ence, due, as very concisely put by Professor Flux in his able preface, to the fact that "the introduction of the steam engine in modern industry and transport caused a much more rapid growth in fuel production than sufficed for the maintenance of steam-driven industry when once coal had been established as the general source of power." Jevons, certainly, "drew the conclusion that we could not long maintain his assumed rate of increase of consumption, nor advance to the higher amounts supposed, and that this meant that the check to our progress must become perceptible within a century from that time." The century, it is true, is not up yet, but with nearly a half gone, and a lessened rate of increase, we do not show, as far as can be seen, any sign of decadence.

May there not be other weak parts in the case as put in support of nearer commercial decadence?

The last Royal Commission upon Coal Supplies found that our annual output is, in round numbers, 230 million tons, the calculated available resources in proved coalfields 100,000 million tons, and the average increase in the output,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum. In addition it was calculated that there are 40,000 million tons in unproved coalfields, which the Commissioners thought best to regard "as probable or speculative." The figures are encouragingly high, although it is admitted that the essence of the case as put by Jevons is not mere amount, nor increase, but their relation to those of other, and competitive, countries. In other words, it is a question of profitable availability as between ourselves and them. Still, it is evident that we have ample material to deal with, and the Report of the Royal Commission shows the best way of dealing with it—by indicating the enormous economies practicable. In an article upon the Report of the Commission in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL* (June, 1905), I called attention to some of these of which I had had practical experience.

In regard to the statement "that the introduction of economies in the past had not tended to decrease in consumption," I also ventured to advance that such economies as are now possible had never been so in the past. The history of the past in this is a less safe guide to the future than the classical " $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent." has proved.

It may have been the case in the past that economies have led to increased consumption by enlarging and multiplying the uses of coal, but looking at the abnormal character of the expansion of the last forty years, due to the introduction of steam in manufacturing industry and transport; and looking also at that

internal development of other nations which the introduction of steam has brought about—which could never have been accomplished had it depended upon British coal only—is there not likely to be more scope for economising in coal than there are fresh or enlarged fields for its use?

Again comes the rub, that the economies being open to all the world, all can make equally effective use of them. But will this prove to be so in practice? Power is cheapest where there is most economy in its production, not necessarily where coal is cheapest. With properly designed and centralised power producing plant, the saving in current working expenses will far more than outweigh its higher first cost. A union of cheap coal and economical appliances and methods for its use must, of course, be irresistible; but the cheaper the coal the less the stimulus to economise. The introduction of economies in the production of power leads also to the instinct for economising in its all-round application, as opposed to the indifference naturally bred where the first gaining of coal is cheap, and the application of economies in doing so of less apparent immediate moment.

Further, although the same economies are open to all, it should not be forgotten that the comparison in capacity for their adoption and application must be made between a nation which has passed further onward in development generally, than those industrially so much younger. The latter will probably be subject to many other than direct commercial checks. Progress does not wholly depend upon coal. We have gone through much which they have not yet entered upon, for from our insular position we shall always possess many advantages which they never can, and for the same reason be spared probably much trouble which they will have to face. The younger may be equally brainy, but there is a good deal more than brains necessary in the wide and profitable application of what their possessors can see the advantage of. Suitability of soil is as necessary as the right seed. Professor Jevons anticipates this after a fashion, by picturing us as developed into more artistic workers in lighter bulk. But may we not with equal justification be anticipated as developing into more economical producers and users of bulkier commercial commodities—which we must feel so loth to lose for the suggested alternative?

But whilst thus taking a more cheerful view of the future than Professor Jevons, we may express the highest admiration for the way in which he looked at things, and his grasp of true principles, which, in spite of what he thought at future stake for his country, would not permit him to recommend the adoption of any such

curative nostrums as limitation of production, or the imposition of a tax upon coal. (The recent abolition of the coal tax tried is clear experimental proof of the correctness of his views upon this point.) It is gratifying, too, that what he did recommend for the benefit of posterity has been, or is being, carried out—although, perhaps, for a less direct reason than to make up for less valuable supplies of coal left for their use—viz., improved and extended education, the abolition of child and female labour in unsuitable directions, and the reduction of the National Debt.

I also gladly ally my hope with his of the continuance of our National, in an Imperial, prosperity. The centre of Ruling Empire must change to follow the future seat of cheapest power, but there is no reason why it may not still remain the British Empire. Upon the possibility of this, it is significant and encouraging to find that Professor Flux in his remarks upon substitutes for coal, states “that even the most economical of known methods of generating electricity by the use of coal in this country fail to reach the low level of cost from favourably situated water powers in some other countries.” Canada, which he knows well, and already our most important and promising colony, is particularly blessed in regard to such water powers.

The views, arguments and conclusions of Professor Jevons most emphatically deserve the best attention of all concerned with the economics of coal. They have been the means of the acquisition and distribution of a wealth of information about our coal supplies, and the economies practicable in connection with their mining and use; and it seems specially fitting that his son, Mr. H. Stanley Jevons, who has followed in his father’s footsteps, should be Lecturer on Political Economy at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, in Cardiff, the chief coal port of the world.

JOHN MACAULAY

*The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade.* Four addresses on the logical groundwork of the free trade theory. By L. S. AMERY. (London: *National Review* Office. 1906.)

MODERN Protectionists often seem to consider the main positions of Free Trade as impregnable. But the historian of the South African war does not hesitate to make a frontal attack on those positions. So great courage is not often associated with so much ability. An open enemy, Mr. Amery scorns to obtain an advantage by wearing the badges of Free Trade. He puts on the