



WILEY

Review

Author(s): A. W. F.

Review by: A. W. F.

Source: *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Dec., 1907), pp. 671-674

Published by: Wiley for the Royal Statistical Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2339578>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 03:20 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Royal Statistical Society, Wiley are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*

in the schools of that country 12,000,000 children having physical defects needing attention from parents and doctors. Similarly, if the 1,400 children are representative of school children in New York city, there must be in that city 41,600 handicapped by malnutrition, 182,000 by enlarged glands, 382,800 by bad teeth, 236,400 by defective breathing. It is noted that few of the defects can be corrected by nourishment alone, that neither race nor nationality affords proof against physical defects, and that only 7·8 per cent. of the children had failed to have a good start by being artificially fed from the beginning. The housing conditions of the children were generally bad, inadequate medical care was given to the children, and the employment of dentists was almost unknown. It is also noted that families with low incomes do not monopolise physical defects, though they show more than their proper share of these.

Many would incline to draw a sombre forecast from the above list of physical defects. That we are glad to note is not the view of this most valuable committee. They say: "The only new thing about the physical defects of school children is not their existence, but our recent awakening to their existence, their prevalence, their seriousness if neglected, and their cost to individual children, to school progress, to industry, and to social welfare." The first step towards improvement is knowledge of evils, and this step is being taken on both sides of the Atlantic. We commend this report to the notice of all social workers

A.N.

11.—*The Tariff Commission. Vol. 3. Report of the Agricultural Committee.* London: P. S. King and Son, 1906.

The investigations of Mr. Chamberlain's Tariff Commission possess a great interest, not only to supporters, but also to opponents of the changes to promote which its efforts are put forth. The report on agriculture possesses peculiar interest in many respects, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee which has examined this subject may be very instructively compared with the statement of the situation and the historical sketch which serve as a prelude. To these, rather than to the mass of detail contained in the bulky volume forming the report and appendix, attention must be confined in the brief space available here.

With the record of abandonment of wheat cultivation we are but too familiar, and the increasing dependence on imported supplies is patent. But the compilers of the report seem to have carried a mechanical process of calculation rather far when they declare that, in the first five years of the twentieth century, only 4·5 millions of the population were fed on home-grown wheat. The tables they give us show an average yield in those years of about 52 millions of bushels. The imports, on the assumed consumption of 5·5 bushels per head, may suffice for all but 4·5 millions of the population, but that scarcely justifies the conclusion that the 52 million bushels of the home crop, less seed, were consumed by that surplus of 4·5 millions. In fact, at the same rate of 5·5 bushels per head, the needs of the population would be about 235 million bushels, and of this amount the 52

millions of home-grown wheat form 22 per cent. How, then, demonstrate that only 10.6 per cent. of our people were fed on home-grown wheat? The realities of the case would have yielded a result reasonably satisfactory for the argument desired, and it seems a pity to proceed about the work with such strange contradictions at the outset. Moreover, on another page the home supplies are shown at about 19 per cent. of total consumption. It is, perhaps, also pertinent to the argument to call attention to the fact that, even assuming that the 2 millions of acres of wheat land, representing the reduction of wheat cultivation in thirty years, could be made to yield as high an average return as the land remaining under wheat, the addition to home supplies would be no more than 63 million bushels. Even with this addition, the need for imported wheat would be very great, for imports would still need to be considerably greater than home supplies. And at what cost could 30 bushels per acre be extracted from the land in question? The difference between the production of thirty years ago and of 1901-05 is not 63, but 42 millions of bushels, and as to the degrees in which the difference between these two amounts may be ascribed to improved cultivation of our day as compared with thirty years ago, and to the inferior quality of the soils withdrawn from wheat cultivation, the present writer ventures no opinion.

Turning to another point, we find in the report the statement that home-fed meats represent now 55 per cent. of the consumption as against 85 per cent. thirty years ago. The tables in the report show a growth of 23 per cent. in the consumption per head, which goes a long way towards accounting for the contrast of these figures. Further, the home supplies are calculated on the hypothesis that the annual meat yield of a given stock of animals has been unchanged in the thirty years. Is it safe to base, on such an assumption, the assertion that the increase of area given to pasture has practically had no effect on the food supply except to reduce the yield of corn, &c.? However difficult it may be to estimate the degree of change, is it very unlikely that, from a given number of mature animals, the meat yield year by year is greater now than formerly? In any case, the statement that dairy farmers have given more attention to milk production might be regarded as some explanation of a larger pasture area without much increase of meat yield. It is associated with an increase of 140 per cent. in imported dairy products, but the very association seems to suggest that the growing population has called for more dairy products, including milk, than were available without importation, and that, to meet the deficiency, those dairy products which could best be procured from a distance have shown increased imports.

Proceeding with the examination of the conclusions in the light of the reported evidence, we find that the volume of food imports is estimated to have increased nearly four times as much (per cent.) as the population. Now this result becomes much less striking, and may even have an altogether different significance if we read the facts from another standpoint. The increase of imports of food has been, in value, 81,000,000*l.*, comparing 1905 with 1875. The

increase of population has been fully 10,000,000. Many indications suggest that the food consumption per head has increased in the interval, and it must not be forgotten that a significant change has occurred in the proportion of adults in the total population. Now, if the valuation of food supplies as made for the comparison of home and imported produce justify an estimate of total supply now at 8*l.* per head, the total will be about 344,000,000*l.*, and the home contribution 139,000,000*l.* If we could assume a consumption thirty years ago of one-eighth less per head, and also that prices are now 30 per cent. below the level then reached, the outlay per head would then have been 10*l.*, and the total about 330,000,000*l.*, of which the home contribution would be 206,000,000*l.* At a reduction of 30 per cent. in prices, this 206,000,000*l.* would now represent 144,000,000*l.* The comparison of this with the 139,000,000*l.*, estimated on the assumed basis for current production, shows little change in quantity produced, although the numbers engaged at the work are greatly diminished, and there are reduced areas under crop. The figures of this calculation are not put forward as ascertained and reliable figures, but they are more moderate in their estimate of outlay thirty years ago than the well-known figures of Sir Robert Giffen, though not as low as other estimates referring to the late seventies and early eighties. The figures of population have been taken roughly, but the object has been to show that, on assumptions not unreasonable in themselves, the assertion that the foreign producer has taken his market from the British farmer needs to be assigned a somewhat special meaning if it is to be true. As the assertion is made "especially of wheat and meat," the fact that meat production is admitted in the report not to have fallen off, but rather the contrary, seems to indicate that such a special meaning is attached to the phrase.

If anything like the results suggested by the above hypothesis be the actual facts, the decline in agriculture is a decline in values produced, and but in modest degree, if at all, in output. It seems hard to believe that one kind of produce can so largely have replaced others, but it is not inherently beyond belief.

The record of the past which forms part of the report is enriched by numerous small diagrams, many of which are devoted to comparing the price movement in England and on the Continent in the nineteenth century. The general result is to show that the price of wheat in England was higher than on the Continent up to about thirty years ago, and that since that time it has been lower, while prices in the chief Continental countries have not failed to fall at the same time as ours. Could it be more clearly shown that the price of the commodity is affected by tariff charges? And yet we are assured that the adoption of import duties here would not raise the prices of the dutiable goods!

Our space will not permit of an examination of the non-fiscal remedies proposed for the evils of the agricultural position. More might easily be said, and much profit derived from close attention to such remedies. The fiscal proposals seem strangely inadequate if we are to believe in the seriousness of the situation as sketched

by the compilers of the report, and not regard the colours they use as unduly sombre. An import duty of 2s. per quarter, on the face of assurances that no price under 40s. will substantially affect the area under wheat, seems to suggest a belief that the duty is desirable even if it has no effect on British agriculture. Five per cent. on meat and 5 to 10 per cent. on other produce are figures which suggest but little belief either in the need of transforming the existing situation or in customs duties as an instrument for that purpose. It seems incredible that such small duties can be expected to solve such large problems, and if they produce little good to the agriculturist they might easily result in no small ill to the rest of the population.

The voluminous appendix to the report gives a summary of numerous opinions gathered by the Committee, as has been customary with preceding reports. It has seemed best in this notice to confine attention to the pronouncement of the Committee, as there was so much in it which called for comment. A.W.F.

12.—*Questions Ouvrières et Industrielles en France sous la Troisième République.* Par E. Levasseur. lxxii + 968 pp., 8vo. Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1907.

With this large volume, containing more than a thousand pages, the veteran French economist and statistician brings to a worthy close the monumental contribution he has made to the industrial history of his country. As he hints in the concluding paragraphs of his Preface, which have the peculiar interest attaching to autobiographical remarks, he has now earned by advancing years the right to lay aside the powerful armour he has worn to such effective purpose through so long and active a career. But he will perhaps allow us to observe that we cannot discover in these pages any indication of the failing strength which sometimes justifies retirement. M. Levasseur's judgment indeed on controversial matters in this as in his other writings has the ripeness and the weight which are the just prerogatives of age; and the rich stores of profound and accurate erudition he has accumulated by strenuous, protracted and extensive study are once again freely placed at the disposal of his readers. They, we are sure, will gratefully appreciate the practised skill which enables him to place before their attentive gaze a mass of various material arranged in such appropriate order that its significance can be grasped with ease and without delay. They will note with admiration the facility with which so accomplished and informed a statistician indicates the interpretation which can legitimately be drawn from the copious and diversified numerical data he has collected and examined for their benefit. But they will also find that the alert and vigilant eyes of the compiler of these exhaustive chapters have not allowed fresh material of the most recent date, which bears directly or indirectly on the topics which are here successively discussed, to escape attention or appraisal; and, while he does not attempt to hide the verdict he has formed on certain heretical opinions, such as those professed by collectivists, or refrain from the confident expression of his firm belief in the