

we are being heavily handicapped in competition with America.

Of the appliances of industry, coal is our only strong remaining natural asset. We are using it up at an enormous rate at home, and an increasing proportion of it goes abroad every year to assist our present and future competitors. It has not been pleasant lately to read how large quantities of our South Wales coal—so important to our industries and so essential to our navy, and which may therefore be regarded as our industrial and national life-blood—have been sold to equip the Russian fleet in the war with Japan. Some day we may succeed in harnessing the tides or focusing the sun's rays, and so utilizing them as industrial forces. But a wise national industrial policy should not rest on possibilities of that nature. We must build on facts that we know.

The moral of this chapter seems abundantly clear, that the time has come for us to reconsider our entire industrial and commercial position, and to revise our Fiscal policy. In the midst of much that is grave, and even anxious, we

involuntary and irregular. That is to say, in times of depression and stagnation there may be a pressure or necessity to sell in varying degrees, according to the position of the seller. It may simply be the need to earn dividends, or it may be the most urgent need to earn cash in order to avert ruin. In the latter extreme case the pressure to sell may be irresistible, and the goods are thrown on the foreign market, to go at any price they can bring.

Here, again, let us remember that we are not considering an abstraction. We are dealing with the depressions and disturbances that have occurred, that do occur, and may be expected to recur in a country like America, with a gigantic industry yielding a gigantic surplus, which will appear in bewildering forms to disturb and depress industries which are vital to the existence and security of our country.

Dumping is not by any means a new phenomenon in trade. It is, we believe, as old as commerce itself. The novelty about it for us at present is that we are now being

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PROGRESS AND THE FISCAL PROBLEM

BY

THOMAS KIRKUP

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OLD AND NEW," ETC.

LONDON

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

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PREFACE

THE writer of another book on the Fiscal Problem may well be asked why he should add to a pile which is already overgrown. To such an inquiry one might reasonably reply that most of the books already published on the subject bear obvious marks of haste and of bias ; but I would rather give as my main reason for offering such a book to the public my belief that some important points have hitherto been overlooked, and many have not received due attention. These I have tried to bring out, while I have laid special stress on wider aspects of progress which seem to me vitally, if not inseparably, connected with the Fiscal Problem. As the title of my book indicates, it is concerned not only with the Fiscal Problem, but with allied questions of progress.

I have not treated the subject merely as a technical question of economics, nor have I written in any party interest. As it is more than probable that certain limitations of the insular mind may have a serious influence on the question, I may add that I had the advantage of studying at Göttingen, Berlin, and Tübingen, at Geneva and Paris, and have long been familiar with the best German and French works on history and economics.

For the encouragement of prospective readers, I have as far as possible confined statistics to a special chapter, which they can leave alone if they see fit.

In conclusion, I wish to express special obligations on several points connected with commercial geography to the standard work, 'Handbook of Commercial Geography' (Longmans and Co.), of my friend Mr. G. G. Chisholm, who has also kindly revised the proofs. Such revision should be the more valuable because he differs from me entirely on the main question.

T. KIRKUP.

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