

**NATIONAL
PROGRESS
IN WEALTH
AND TRADE.**

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A. L. BOWLEY.

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SINCE 1882.

STATISTICAL
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RELATING TO

NATIONAL
PROGRESS
IN WEALTH
AND TRADE
SINCE 1882 :

A PLEA FOR FURTHER ENQUIRY.

BY

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WESTMINSTER.

1904.

PREFACE.

SOME apology is needed for adding to the great mass of ephemeral literature already existing on the Fiscal Question; but it seemed possible that a serious attempt to put in a concise and clear form the facts as to our recent industrial history which seem to be established on fair evidence, irrespective of their competence to support any particular views on fiscal policy, and a careful statement of the bounds of our positive knowledge of our social and industrial condition, might be of some use to those who feel the difficulties of statistics and cannot examine them at first hand. It may well be that some estimates are missing, which advocates on one side or another of the controversy would expect to find here; if so, it is either due to my accidental ignorance of their existence, or because they do not come within the scope of this pamphlet, or because they are rejected as not satisfying the tests proposed in the introduction. In the last case I would suggest that, if I have not been convinced by evidence offered, it is possible that others also have found it insufficient, and there is room for re-statement

with further evidence on points open to dispute. If my work were to add to our knowledge in this way, it would fulfil one of its main objects.

Some part of the statistics used in the following pages has been gradually accumulated in the course of researches as to the history of wages, prices, and foreign trade covering the last ten years, and in a few cases the tables have merely been brought up to date from articles already published. Part has been specially tabulated from official returns for the present purpose. Much of the material was used by me in recent lectures at the London School of Economics, where it was treated from the purely historical point of view.

I recognise fully that the question before the nation is not one to be decided by statistics, and that their use is easily exaggerated; but it happens that very many of the arguments put forward have depended on interpretations of historical statistics, and some guide to their use may not be inopportune.

A. L. BOWLEY.

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,
February, 1904.

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