

FOREWORD

BY THE

RIGHT HON. PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.

I AM pleased to have the opportunity of writing a few words of introduction to this abridged edition of Henry George's great work on Free Trade.

Two generations ago the great controversy of Free Trade and Protection was fought out in Great Britain, and so decisive was the victory for Free Trade that Disraeli declared Protection to be "dead and damned."

A new generation has arisen which knows nothing from painful experience of the sufferings which Protection inflicts upon the working classes. Because the limited application of Free Trade principles has not removed all social and industrial hardships there is a disposition in some quarters to deny its achievements and advantages, and to revert to a fiscal system which has been discredited by all practical experience.

Each new generation has in a large measure to re-learn the truths which its ancestors established by discussion and practical experience. Free Traders have been so confident in the funda-

mental soundness of their faith and in the security of the system, that they have neglected to keep the rising generation well grounded in the principles of the faith.

The case for Protection can be presented with great plausibility. It makes its appeal to the selfish interests of particular individuals and classes. Free Trade, on the other hand, makes its appeal to the wider welfare of the whole community.

Now that one of the great political parties in Great Britain has again definitely adopted Protection as its policy, it is vitally necessary that the case for Free Trade should be presented in a popular form. It is not enough to confine the controversy between Free Trade and Protection to disputes as to whether a tariff has benefited or injured some particular industry.

No Free Trader has ever asserted that Protection would never in any circumstances benefit an industry to which it may be applied. But Free Traders do assert that whatever advantage an industry may derive from Protection is gained by a more than corresponding loss to the community generally.

To appreciate that truth one needs to be well grounded in the fundamental principles of international trade. With that knowledge the fallacies of the Protectionists are easily detected.

This work by Henry George gets down to the fundamentals of the controversy. It is at the same time the most popular and most scientific exposition of the subject which has ever been written. A student of the question, equipped with the arguments of this book, is qualified to rout the plausibilities and pretensions of the Protectionists.

The reader of this treatise will learn that Free Trade is a principle of far wider significance and application than a question of tariffs on imports only. Even in the narrower sense in which the Free Trade issue figures in political controversy it is a matter of the greatest importance to industry and to the working-classes. Protection is the foster-mother of monopoly, and monopoly in all its forms when enjoyed by individuals is the robbery of the community for the benefit of private interests.

The publication of this cheap, abridged edition of Henry George's masterpiece is rendering a great public service, and I earnestly commend its study to all who want to get a thorough grasp of the basic elementary facts of the case for Free Trade.

PHILIP SNOWDEN.