

National Independence

Guest post by Frederic Bastiat.

Among the arguments we hear adduced in favor of the restrictive regime we must not forget that which is founded on national independence. “What should we do in case of war,” it is said, “if we are placed at the mercy of England for iron and coal?” English monopolists do not fail to cry out in their turn: “What would become of Great Britain in case of war if she is dependent on France for provisions?”

One thing is overlooked, which is this: That the kind of dependence that results from exchange, from commercial transactions, is a reciprocal dependence. We cannot be dependent on the foreigner without the foreigner being dependent on us. Now, this is the very essence of society. To break up natural relations is not to place ourselves in a state of independence, but in a state of isolation.

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