

To what extent did
ireland lose
economically more
than it gained from its
connect...



To what extent did Ireland lose economically more than it gained from its connection with Britain from 1800-1914? Throughout the 19th century, Ireland was influenced by Britain, it gained more from the church and land reforms such as the Church Act and Windom's Land Act because of its special relationship with Britain. It also felt the effects of this connection through downfalls like the Act of Union, potato blight and the repeal of the Corn Law. The unsuccessful but also profitable economic causes both had a humongous effect on Irish people and their way of life was altered. The Act of Union not only meant free trade between the Ireland and Britain but also gave the Irish people a figure to blame if worst come to worst.

The act would enable the British government to assume responsibility for the defence of Ireland against rebellion and foreign invasion. Irish people will have felt like they were supported especially as this was a time when many Irishmen were already concerned with the hardships of their daily lives. The alliance between Irish and British people would mean that Irishmen would be able to benefit from a wider British economy just like the Scottish had done, and be able to pocket the advantages of economic growth and prosperity back in their own country.

The Act didn't have much success as Irish industries had no chance of competing effectively with those in Britain. British businessmen refused to invest in Ireland because they thought of their economy as a dead end with no money making power. Many Irishmen saw the unity of British and their country as a political experiment that solved none of the grievances in Ireland over land, religion or politics, neither Pitt or the public saw the Act of Union as a solution to the Irish problem. He knew that social and economic

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reforms were essential to get Ireland back on her feet. Britain's fast-growing population was making the country a food importer rather than exporter and the French wars had forced up domestic prices and encouraged agricultural investment, so there was fear of a post-war collapse of prices.

The government decided to spend 100,000 pounds on a large supply of Indian corn, which was sold cheaply and kept down the prices of other grains in Ireland. However this may have been seen as a way of staving off the starvation of the millions suffering. Peel planned to use Indian corn to combat high prices by holding the corn in a store, controlled by the government, and a supply "thrown in" when prices rose unreasonably. The law had little effect on the situation in Ireland because the peasantry, who were mainly the ones starving, couldn't afford to buy grain anyway. Peel had no plans to use the Indian corn to feed people who had lost their potato crops. Ireland had lost about 4 million pounds in potatoes, and there was no way that 100,000 worth of corn could replace it. The Encumbered Estates Act 1849 was introduced as a means to settle the situation in Ireland. The Act allowed estates in bad debt to be auctioned off upon petition of creditors or even at the request of bankrupt landlords. Land values fell as hundreds of estates with huge debts were auctioned off at bargain prices to British buyers interested solely in making a future profit.

These new owners took a harsh view toward the penniless Irish tenant farmers still living on the land. They immediately raised rents and also conducted mass evictions to clear out the estates in order to create large farms whilst evicting thousands of families. There were advantages to the

Irish economy as consequence from the Estates Act, as it sped up the sale of <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-did-ireland-lose-economically-more-than-it-gained-from-its-connection-with-britain-from-1800-1914/>

land and introduced a more enterprising landlord class. The Wyndham Act of 1903 allowed most Irish tenants to actually purchase their holdings from their landlords with British government assistance. Landlords received a generous price set by the government while tenants repaid the government purchase over time. The tenant also paid a figure that was less than the previous fixed rent.

As a result, the centuries-old landlord system in Ireland, which had resulted in exploitation of the people and much suffering, was finally ended. By ensuring that the landowner got a good price for the land he sold the Irishmen were able to get back on their feet and gain back some of the land they may have lost centuries ago when British investors purchased it in hope of profitability. Thus the demand for land reform was ended. The potato blight shattered the economy and caused an agricultural depression in Ireland. Potatoes were the staple diet of the rural population of Ireland however, the crop was very vulnerable to disease, the government in London decided to do nothing and take a *laissez faire*™ approach to the situation. The logic behind such a decision was that Ireland had suffered from potato famines before and would have the necessary knowledge on how best to get by in this case.

However, by 1846 it was plain that the public was facing no ordinary famine. Million died from starvation and Ireland continued to suffer de-population even after the famine ended. Many young Irish families saw their futures in America and not Ireland. This affected Ireland as those who were most active and who could contribute the most to Ireland, left the country. The Great

Famine reduced the size of Ireland population and by 1870, starvation and <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-did-ireland-lose-economically-more-than-it-gained-from-its-connection-with-britain-from-1800-1914/>

migration had reduced the numbers and significance of the labourers ??? cottiers??™ who had formed the largest group in Irish history. Gladstone??™s 1870 Landlord and Tenant Act was the first attempt to use legislation to resolve the bad relationship between tenants and landowners.

There was Economic pressure in the late 1880s that increased the tension between landlord and tenant, which eventually turned into the ??? Land War??™. This in turn led to the Land Act of 1881, which were, suppose to provide security for tenants through fair rents. It effectively removed the landlords??™ right to fix the rent payable for land they owned.

The policy of economic development protected by tariff barriers posed a threat to the industries that employed them. Few of the ships built on the Lagan were for Irish owners and only a small proportion of the linen and finished goods produced in Ulster were sold on the domestic market. The establishment of tariff barriers to protect fledgling industries in the south of Ireland would, Unionists argued, deprive the successful manufactures in the north of the export markets on which they depended.

This economic argument was perhaps the strongest and most coherent Unionist objection to Home Rule and one that nationalists failed to answer effectively. In conclusion, Ireland successfully gained free trade and equal privileges to Britain from its connection in the 19th century, the repeal of the corn laws meant the government were trying to actively improve the economy so prices would fall too low, but had little effect as the starving Irish couldn??™t buy grain. Land reform made it easier for landlords to buy and

sell their farms but the potato blight couldn't be suppressed causing an agricultural depression for the whole of Ireland.