**CHARLES DE BUTRÉ’S**

***ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY* (EXCERPT)**

EDITED BY

LOÏC CHARLES AND CHRISTINE THÉRÉ

*The following excerpt is from the second notebook or chapter of the* Elémens d’oeconomie politique*. This document is preserved at the Departmental Archives of Indre-et-Loire (Tours) in the box C101. It is provided as an online appendix to accompany the editors’ analysis of them in “Charles Richard de Butré: An Economist in the Shadow of François Quesnay” (*Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 38 (2), June 2015). The original manuscript transcribed and translated here is composed of three* folii*, we have indicated the original pagination in bold and inside brackets. We have chosen to translate the text as closely as possible to the original, even if it means that the result (like the original) is a bit awkward. We have added a few editorial notes and supplemented a word or two when a word was obviously left out by the author or when the text was unclear on its own. In the former case, we have put the missing word inside brackets. We did not reproduce or indicate the occasional eliminations made by Butré.*

[f. 1] Abstract on the general inventory of an agricultural nation

### Or

### A brief inventory and distribution of the annual productions of a territory and their preparation for the annual consumption of the nation and foreign [trade].

It would be necessary to have a detailed record of the annual yields of each type of property, but those who would want to make a general inventory of their nation should provide the detailed record of the annual products of each type of their property. Here, I only provide an example of these diverse products, whose distribution should provide a guide whenever these records are made. This simple presentation is enough to show the method of computing the consequences of the economic operation of a nation and those of the administrative operations relative to this objective, that is to say, their political consequences. And we suppose for the following distributions that there is no tax on commodities and manufactures, and that the tax is levied according to the natural order, as a share of the net product of landed property.… [[1]](#footnote-1)

The annual production of the land is 1500:

Distribution

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Income [[2]](#footnote-2)a | | | 500 | 1500 |
| Annual advances | Food for the horses and oxen employed | 130 | 700 |
| Food for the agricultural workers and servants | 170 |
| Salaries for servants | 30 |
| Salaries for agricultural workers | 250 |
| For agricultural tools | 120 |
| Interest on advances and remuneration of agricultural entrepreneurs of all sorts and stocks of capital | | | 300 |
| Total for the annual reproduction | | | | 1500 |

This production of 1500 is divided into three parts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| It is locally consumed in kind for the total of | 300 | 1500 |
| Raw subsistence bought by the nutritive class | 800 |
| Primary goods for manufactures bought by the industrious class | 400 |

The food [trade] makes 1200, namely

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Raw subsistence bought from the agricultural class | 800 | 1200 |
| Cost of preparation, transports, interest on advances, remuneration of the entrepreneurs of the nutritive class | 400 |

Distribution of the consumption of 1200 foodstuffs

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The income consumed for | 250 | 600 | 1200 |
| Day labourer and house employees ([[3]](#footnote-3)b) | 200 |
| Rural entrepreneurs for | 150 |
| The nutritive class for | 200 | 600 |
| The industrious class for | 400 |
| Total of annual consumption of foodstuffs | | | 1200 |

**[f. 2]** The products of industry is 1200, namely

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Primary goods of these products | 400 | 1200 |
| Cost of production in wages and transport, interest on advances, and remuneration of the entrepreneurs,  About twice as much as the primary goods | 800 |

Distribution of the consumption of 1200 of industry products

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The income used to pay for | | | 250 | 600 |
| The farm | day labourers house employees | 80 | 350 |
| entrepreneur’s agricultural advances | 120 |
| the use of entrepreneurs | 150 |
| The nutritive class for | | | 200 | 600 |
| The industrious class for | | | 400 |
| Total of annual consumption of manufactured goods | | | | 1200 |

This distribution determines the trade used by a nation of which the products of every types are valued at ….. 1500

1° The property trade or [the trade] of the commodities and products of the land is 4/5 of the total of these products productions, which is in this case ….. 1200

It is sold in raw subsistence 2/3 or ….. 800

1200

Raw materials for industry ….. 400

The remaining fifth of the total [value] of products is consumed in kind on the location by the landowners, farmers of all kinds, their house keepers, horses and oxen that are necessary for cultivation, which makes for the total of production ….. 1500

2° The [value of the] food trade is 1200, of which there is 800 of raw subsistence, domestic or imported, and 400 for the preparation, transport, interest on advances, remuneration to entrepreneurs in this trade and more general total costs that are necessary for final consumption.

3° The [value] of industry or of all manufactured goods is 1200. There are 400 of domestic or imported primary goods, and 800 for the workers, cost of transportation, interest on advances, remuneration to entrepreneurs from this class and for all the advances necessary for transforming primary goods for consumption.

Of these 1200, 800 are bought by the proprietary and food classes, and 400 by the industrious class itself and the traders attached to this class, either for their personal use or to maintain the machines and other tools necessary to their works and trades.

**[f. 3]** By reuniting these three trades, one can see that in a large agricultural nation where all the products of different sorts are valued at 1500, there is a total trade or annual sales of 3600 for use by the nation, which is distributed as such:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General  trade | Property trade | Raw subsistence | | 800 | 1200 |
| Raw materials | | 400 |
| Food trade | For Landowner or Income purchases | | 250 | 1200 |
| For the farming | | 350 |
| [For] the food class | | 200 |
| For the industrious class | | 400 |
| Industry | For Landowner or Income purchases | 250 | 600 | 1200 |
| For the farming | 350 |
| For the food class | 200 | 600 |
| For the industrious class | 400 |
| Total of annual trade for use by this nation | | | | | 3600 |

This distribution portrays the economic functioning of a large agricultural nation, which dedicates about half of its annual spending to food trade and half to industry, and for which the total value of production sold is divided into 2/3 for raw food and 1/3 for raw materials. It would give a general balance of foreign trade equal in all the three parts that compose this trade, but there is no nation which has actually reached this *maximum de constitution*, and the division of the two components of the production is susceptible to infinite variations, which should make as many records of manufactures and external trade; we will develop these aspects in the three ratios that we will establish between raw food and raw materials and under which one can reunite the different variations. It will constitute three cases of the division of the production of a nation, for which one always supposes equality between spending on food and on manufactures. The nations that have another ratio between these expenses will constitute three different cases of the division of their production, to which they will apply the [reasoning] that we are going to explain.

1. Here we have deleted a long paragraph with no direct link to the rest of the chapter, in which Butré discussed the historical origins of variations in the tax system and ways of collecting the tax. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. a The incomes are divided into three parts, namely the portion of the landowners, the tithe, and the tax [note by the author]. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. b The agricultural day labourers spend at least ¾ of their wages on foodstuffs and the other quarter on industrial goods. The other classes of the nation allocate about half of their spending on each side [note by the author]. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)