

EFFECT ON THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

seem paradoxical, since mechanization is usually thought of mainly in connexion with industry. I do so for several reasons. First, agriculture remains the occupation of some 70 per cent. of the world's inhabitants. Secondly, mechanization of agriculture is relatively novel; it did not complicate the processes of adjustment in the first industrial revolution, while it is a serious factor in the present one. Agriculture has normally been not only the reserve on which industry draws when its demand for men exceeds the supply, it is the occupation to which superfluous industrial labour retreats in time of depression. This is the customary 'cushion', for example, in a country like France, where the man who loses his job in a town retires with his family to his relations in the country and takes a hand in the work. It is notable that even in the United States, after many successive years of declining agricultural population, there was an actual increase in the slump of 1930 in spite of the agricultural depression. The consequences of mechanization on those engaged in agriculture are also more serious and difficult to deal with, partly because in most countries only a small proportion of those who work on the land are easily adaptable to other occupations, and partly because the human demand