

EFFECT ON THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

with new problems, there is much which we can learn for their solution from the experiences of the last century.

II

With this preface let me comment upon the special features of the mechanization of the last two decades. At what rate is it taking place? Is it substantially more rapid than in the past? What part has it played in causing the present depression and crisis? What is the scale and character of what is called 'technological displacement', the displacement of men by the introduction of new machines? Does it suggest only transitional or permanently increasing unemployment? What place may it be expected to occupy when other causes of unemployment are removed? The answers to such questions will help us to see what changes are to be expected, and what are to be desired, in the structure of our society.

A report recently prepared by the International Labour Office at Geneva states that 'exact information as to the rate of technical progress in recent years is not available, nor can precise comparisons be made with the rate of change characteristic of earlier periods; it is, however, generally considered that technical progress was unusually rapid during