

technical progress places a greater strain upon it.

I believe therefore that we need to supplement this automatic system by deliberate planning and direction. This does not, however, mean that we must replace it by a new and fundamentally different system of centralized and State control. I need scarcely recall to you the immense difficulties and dangers of any such radical solution. It is difficult to conceive its establishment without revolution. It would probably involve the supersession of all representative institutions by autocracy, and so the loss of political liberty. It would place an intolerable strain upon human character, for the ruling class would need a power and authority which (if history has any lessons) is likely to corrupt any class to which it is entrusted; and the individual would have to find his stimulus to effort, not in the prospect of positive personal advantage, but in a natural industry reinforced by threat of punishment. It would also place a great strain upon human intelligence, which is unlikely to be able to direct in detail from the centre the infinitely complex economic processes of the modern world. We should have to engage in such work as remote officials might decide, and be content for the satisfaction of our needs with what they might