

on the other hand, is a burden on the taxes, costing probably at least £200,000 a year to maintain, until when it is scrapped after twenty years it fetches only a few thousand pounds. War expenditure is like armament expenditure, but more so. From an economic point of view, it is not merely waste, but destructive waste, whatever moral or political benefits it may elicit. It is far too early to forecast the full social and economic consequences of the war even at home. We already see the approach of hardships which from the very first invaded the Continent. We see women and boys and old men trying to do the work of the strong. In some important branches—mining especially—the enlisted men cannot be replaced, and there is no real remedy for diminished output, scarcity, and high prices of coal. A government monopoly would, of course, bring in its train inefficiency and favouritism. Everywhere it is seen that government control means less work or compulsion and friction. If the war ends before the industrial, commercial, and financial situation has become unmanageable, peace may be followed by some irregular activity in industries where stocks are low. But after a great permanent decline in the world's consumption it is difficult to see how even low-paid employment can be found for a disbanding army of two millions, most of whose places have already been taken by more or less efficient substitutes. With taxes approaching confiscation there cannot be much recovery for many years in the luxury trades of France and Great Britain. Credit will be scarce and dear, liquidation difficult, competition severe. The districts that depend on French and German custom will suffer most. Hard times for the east coast may be permanent after what