

The late Government tried to remedy this position locally by reducing the rate-charges on industrial premises and transferring part of the charges to other premises or to the tax-payer, in the hope that they might break the chain which was steadily dragging the depressed areas deeper into the Slough of Despond. To what extent that effort could eventually succeed is a matter of doubt because, as we have seen, all public expenditure is eventually a handicap to industry, however it is collected. Also any benefit from "De-rating" is liable to be cancelled by fresh impositions.

In any case, the chief need of all the industries of the country is a reduction in the total costs of Government, national or local, that is, a large reduction in taxation, by whatever authorities and upon whatever section of the community it is imposed.

TRADES UNION RESTRICTIONS.

The last difficulties of industry generally to which reference may be made are those caused by trades union restrictions and demarcations. Illustrations will not be given here because, for the most part, they vary from industry to industry. So far as they directly and exclusively affect the Engineering Industry they are within the control of employers and trades unions negotiating together. But it is evident that restrictions and demarcations which increase the costs of an industry using engineering products, and therefore lower its ability to compete and to obtain orders, directly decrease orders and therefore employment in engineering. It seems to be a matter for the trades unions together to consider how far restrictions in one can be relaxed in order to help workers employed, both in the industry immediately concerned and in others.

It is not suggested that these restrictions and limitations are all due to prejudice or are all of recent growth. British industry has a longer history of development than that of any other country. It has made experiments, devised new methods, and created new products of which other countries, now its competitors, have taken advantage. But in this process of development there have naturally been caused new branches of employment which have taken away some of the work originally done by others, and attempts have been made by limitations to prevent this process going so far as to deprive the original workers of employment. The use of a new method or a new material is always apt to throw out of work men long accustomed to and skilled in the older method or the old material.