

# Automation

by ALEXANDER M. GOLDFINGER

MAN has always tried to gratify his desires with the least effort—so he has sought to substitute brain power and its consequent inventions for human muscular power. To see a mammoth machine, serviced by transistors and tens of thousands of tubes, being fed statistical data, establishing a pattern and making instantaneous computations that would require years of human endeavor, excites our marvel at man's ingenuity.

Some of the present-day fears for the future are allayed by the hopes that automation will bring, following the inevitable displacement of thousands of workers, a renewed cycle of the up-grading of labor. However, Michael Argyle in a book entitled *Social Aspects of Automation* tells of investigations which suggest that the highly skilled men in automation are above the average in intelligence, ranging between IQ's of 110 and 125. This amounts practically to genius, and is attained by only about 20 per cent of the population—what are we going to do with the large segment whose IQ's are far below that level?

Henry Winthrop, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Wichita, shows that the mean IQ of industrial workers begins at 97 for the semi-skilled and stops at 115 for professional workers. Another psychologist places unskilled workers at 86. The difference in IQ is not only qualitative but quantitative. Those who are or will be displaced represent a larger work force than will be needed in the automotive industries, even if

they could be retrained or up-graded.

In the past there has been a shift in population ratios from the extractive to the manufacturing industries and from the latter to the many services which have arisen as civilization has advanced. But even in the service industries machines have largely displaced workers, clerks and salesmen.

Automation can and probably will release man from the drudgery of human toil, and it may increase his leisure—but will it enrich the lives, happiness and spiritual well-being of mortals? The mere fact that our civilization and culture attribute worthiness and prestige to those who acquire and display more, bigger and gaudier goods, is evidence that we are not far advanced from the Freudian concepts of pleasure and pain associated with the first perception and apperception of the new-born infant and that we are still spiritually, psychologically and mentally undeveloped.

No single answer can be given to the problems automation will present, but this we know, the fundamentals of human existence are immutable. Man seeks freedom to make his own choices and his own mistakes.

Automation's best and highest uses will be felt only in a society in which freedom and equality of opportunity exist, in which whatever be man's aspirations, he will be free to pursue their realization. We know that unless the opportunity of access to land is equal, these goals will not be achieved. With access to land, automation might be a blessing and not a social problem.

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Watch for news next month of the conference just completed in Hanover, West Germany, by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade.

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