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The British Dye-producing Industry.

IN a letter to the *Yorkshire Post* of September 12, Prof. W. M. Gardiner returns to the national problem of the British dye-producing industry, which is rapidly approaching the supreme crisis in its post-War history. Recognised at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 as an essential factor in our national security and industrial welfare, the new dyestuffs corporation was then brought into existence in response to a general demand for the establishment of a home manufacture in dyes and intermediates.

Upwards of 7,000,000*l.* of government and private money have been expended in the land, building, plant, and general equipment of the British Dyestuffs Corporation Ltd. alone, and the other makers, of whom there are more than twenty, have also spent large sums in the extension of old works and the erection of new. On the technical side, the chemists employed in this new industry have made advances which are certainly revolutionary. Essential intermediates, hitherto not produced in Great Britain, are now manufactured in large quantities and of superior quality, and the range of British dyes includes eighty per cent. of the present requirements of our dye users.

On the economic side, however, the makers are in a position which is almost desperate. In spite of the fact that shareholders of dye-producing firms have received only meagre return on their capital outlay, the dye consumers are pressing continuously for reduction in prices because their foreign competitors have access to dyewares sold at prices with which no country with a stabilised currency can compete. At present, foreign dyes for which there are British equivalents are not admitted into Great Britain unless the British makers' price is greater than three times the pre-War price, and this measure of protection is being threatened. But even if the makers could get down to pre-War prices, it is doubtful whether the controversy on costs of production would cease, for in existing circumstances the German producer could profitably quote at far lower prices than those prevailing in 1914.

The chemists of the organic chemical industries, including dyewares, have shown themselves capable of the necessary concentration and patience required to build up the new scientific trades, but these essential national developments are doomed to failure in the near future unless the administrative leaders of the country in general, and of the dye-using industries in particular, can acquire what Dr. Duisberg, the head of one of the largest German colour works, speaking during the War, said England lacked, namely: "the faculty of fixing the eye on distant consequences and not merely on monetary results."

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