The results of trade disputes are nearly as varied as their causes. Sometimes a strike goes on until the employer is ruined or retires from business, and is only ended by the permanent closing of the works; sometimes, especially when trade is slack and the dispute not large, the places of the men are almost imme­diately filled, and the only economic result of the strike is to replace one body of men by another without perceptible inter­ruption of business. There have been frequent cases of this kind in strikes of unskilled labourers. Sometimes, on the other hand, the demand for labour is so active that the whole of the strikers immediately find work elsewhere, and the only eco- monic result is to transfer a body of men from one set of employers to another with little or no interruption of their employment. In years of active employment the building trades have afforded many examples of this issue of a trade dispute. ‘ In other cases, after a more or less prolonged stoppage, the disputes end by the permanent u blocking ” of an employer’s establishment by a union, or the permanent refusal of the employer to take back any of his former employes. All these, however, are extreme, and on the whole exceptional cases. The vast majority of trade disputes are settled by mutual arrangement, and whether such arrangement is wholly in favour of one or other party, or involves a compromise, its terms provide that the whole or part of the body of work-people whose labour was withheld or excluded shall return on agreed conditions to their former employment.

During the period 1901 to 1907 there were on an average 465 disputes settled annually, affecting directly and indirectly 156,800 work-people, and of these only 44 disputes, involving 15,700 work-people, were ended by the return to work of the strikers on their employers’ terms without negotiation of any kind, and 69 disputes involving 5500 persons by replacement of the work-people or by the closing of works. All the remain­ing disputes, 352 in number, involving 135,600 persons, were con­cluded by negotiation between the parties either with, or more usually without, the aid of an outside mediator or arbitrator.

The following figures for 1901-1907 (which practically coincide with those of the previous decennial average) show the compara­tive results of trade disputes. The percentages refer to the proportion of work-people directly involved in disputes which resulted in the manner indicated:—

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year. | In favor of Work-people. | In favor of  Employers. | Com­promised. | Indefinite. | Total. |
| 1901 | 27∙5 | 34∙7 | 37∙3 | 0∙5 | **100·0** |
| 1902 | 31∙8 | 31∙8 | 36·I | 0∙3 | **100·0** |
| 1903 | 31∙2 | 48·I | 20∙7 | 0·0 | **100·0** |
| 1904 | 27∙3 | 41.7 | 30∙9 | **0·1** | **100·0** |
| 1905 | 24∙7 | 34∙0 | 41∙2 | **0·1** | **100·0** |
| 1906 | 42∙5 | 24·5 | 33∙0 | **0·0** | **100·0** |
| 1907 | 32∙6 | 27∙0 | 40∙1 | 0∙3 | **100·0** |
| Mean of  7 years | 31∙1 | 34∙5 | 34∙2 | 0∙2 | **100·0** |

It is, of course, to be understood that the figures in the above table only relate to the *immediate* results, as determined by the relative extent to which one or other of the parties succeed in enforcing their demands. The question of the ultimate effect of the stoppages on the welfare of the parties or of the com­munity generally is an entirely different question.

*Organization of Strikes and Lock-outs.*

In the great majority of cases strikes are organized and controlled by trade unions. It does not, however, follow from this that the growth of trade unionism has always fostered and encouraged strikes, there being evidence that in many trades the strengthening of organiza­tion has had the effect, not only of restraining ill-considered partial stoppages, but also of preventing more serious disloca­tions of industry by providing a channel for the expression of grievances and a recognized means of negotiating with employers. Much of the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Labour (1891-1894) tended to show that the growth of trade unions has the effect on the whole of lessening the frequency, though of widening the area, of disputes. The commission, moreover, laid down that the stage of industry in which disputes are likely to be most frequent and bitter is that in which it is emerging from the “ patriarchal ” condition, in which each employer governs his establishment and deals with his own men with no outside interference, but has not fully entered into that other condition in which transactions take place between strong associations fully recognizing each other. In this state of industrial organization bitterness is often caused by the insistence of the work-people on the "recognition ” of their unions, and by the treatment of these unions by the em­ployers as outside parties interfering and causing estrangement between them and the work-people actually in their employ.

Probably next to the patriarchal stage, in which each factory is a happy family, the industrial conditions most favourable to peace are when a powerful trade union is face to face with a representative employers’ association, both under the guidance of strong but moderate leaders and neither feeling it beneath its dignity to treat on equal terms with the other. When, on the other hand, some or all of these conditions are absent, the growth of combinations may tend to war rather than peace.

Whether, however, trade unionism tends generally to en­courage or to restrain strikes, the organization and policy of all trade-unions, as at present constituted, are based on the possibility of a collective withdrawal from work in the last resort. Dispute pay is consequently the one universal form of trade-union benefit. Though, however, in most of the disputes recorded the strikers are financially supported by some trade union, this is by no means always the case. Many strikes have been entirely carried out without the instrumentality of a permanent combination, the work-people affected belonging to no union and merely improvising a more or less represen­tative strike committee to control the movement. It is not uncommon, however, for a permanent union to originate in a strike of non-unionists. In other cases *(e.g.* in the London dock strike of 1889) an insignificant trade union may initiate a strike movement involving several thousands of labourers out­side its membership. In the case quoted the membership of the Dockers’ Union rose during the few weeks of strike from 800 to over 20,000. A conspicuous case of a widespread strike of workmen not belonging to a trade union was the South Wales coal-miners’ dispute of 1898. Of the 100,000 men affected, probably not more than 12,000 belonged at the time to any trade union, but the workmen’s representatives on the committee of the sliding scale (against which the movement was directed) formed the nucleus of a strike committee, and one result of the strike was the formation of the “ South Wales Miners’ Federation,” affiliated to the Miners’ Federation. In the case of strikes of non-unionists, the strikers, of course, have to depend for their maintenance on their own resources or on the proceeds of public subscriptions. Frequently grants are made in their aid by sympathetic trade unions, and in the case of the South Wales dispute above referred to, several boards of guardians gave out­door relief illegally to strikers who had exhausted their resources.

The majority of strikers, however, belong to trade unions and receive “ dispute benefit,” which usually consists of a weekly payment of from 10s. to 15s. In 1906 the sum expended by 100 of the principal trade unions in support of men engaged in disputes was £212,000. In years of big disputes this sum has been largely exceeded.

Although most strikes are controlled by trade unions, cases are comparatively rare in this country in which the central committee of a trade union takes the initiative and directs its members to cease work. More usually a local strike movement is initiated by the local workmen, and the central committee is generally empowered by the rules to refuse its sanction to a strike and to close it at its discretion, but has no authority to order it. In many unions a ballot is taken of the members of the districts affected before a strike is authorized, and a two-thirds (or even greater) majority, either of members or of