and lock-outs; (2) whether free collective negotiation could be replaced with advantage by any other method of settling the conditions of employment of bodies of work-people, which would dispense with the necessity of testing the labour market by a suspension of work.

1. The first of these questions is virtually the question of the advantages and disadvantages to the community of com­binations of workmen and employers, which is discussed at length in the article Trade Unions. As regards the question of the direct cost of strikes and lock-outs, it is proper to remember that individual bargaining does not do away with stoppages; in fact, the aggregate amount of time lost in the process of adjusting ten thousand separate labour contracts may be considerable—possibly not less than that consumed on an average in effecting a single agreement involving the whole body, even if the chance of a collective stoppage of work occurring during the process of combined bargaining be taken into account.

While, then, the strikes and lock-outs which accompany the system of combined bargaining are rightly to be described as wasteful, this is not so much because of the excessive amount of working time which they consume, as because of the dis­turbance and damage done to industry by the violent breach of continuity—a breach which may dislocate trade to an extent quite disproportionate to the actual loss of time involved, and the fear of which undoubtedly affects the minds of possible customers and hampers enterprise on the part of employers. The extent of the injury directly inflicted on the consuming public by a strike varies greatly in different cases, being at its maximum in the case of industries having the total or partial monopoly of supplying some commodity or service of prime necessity, *e.g.* gas-works, water-works, railway or tramway service; and least in the case of a local stoppage in some widely-spread manufac­turing or constructive industry open to active competition from other districts.

In speaking above of the loss occasioned by strikes and lock­outs attention has only been paid to the effects of the actual stoppage as such, and not to the particular methods adopted by the strikers to make the stoppage effective. The evils arising from the practice of intimidation or violence towards other workmen, or from the increase of class-hatred and bitter­ness engendered by the strike between employer and employed, are patent to all, though they cannot be estimated from an economic point of view.

2. As to the second question, viz. the possibility of main­taining combined negotiation, but of substituting some better method than strikes of resolving a deadlock, it is hardly necessary to say that so far as such substitution can be voluntarily carried out with the assent of both parties, whether by the establish­ment of wages boards or joint-committees, or by agreements to refer differences to third parties, the result is an economic as well as a moral advantage.

But the increasing adoption of these voluntary expedients for diminishing the chance of industrial friction lends no coun­tenance to the expectation that a satisfactory universal substitute for strikes and lock-outs can be devised except at the price of economic liberty. Compulsory reference of dis­putes to a state tribunal cannot be reconciled with freedom of voluntary negotiations.

Unless, then, we are prepared for a scheme of compulsory regulation of industry by the state, strikes and lock-outs must be accepted as necessary evils, but their frequency may be greatly diminished with the improvement of means of infor­mation as to the true condition of the labour market, and the influences by which it is determined. Many disputes arising purely from mismanagement and misunderstanding are wholly avoidable. While there is no warrant for expecting the total abolition of strikes and lock-outs, it is not unreasonable.to hope that the spread of education and the means of rapidly obtaining information, the improvement of class relations, and the adop­tion, where practicable, of conciliatory methods, may gradually tend to confine actual stoppages to the comparatively few cases in which there is a genuine and serious difference of principle between the parties.

*Important British Strikes and Lock-outs.*

Some of the more important labour disputes which have occurred in various groups of trades in the United Kingdom are noted below. With regard to the statistics given, it may here be noted that although for the sake of brevity it is stated in some places that a certain number of men were idle for a specified number of days, it must not be supposed that in all cases the whole number affected were idle for the whole number of days.

*Coal-Mining* is an industry which has always been more con­vulsed by labour disputes than any other, probably owing to the violent oscillations of prices and wages, and to the varied and ever­changing conditions under which work is carried on. Several of the earliest recorded disputes among coal-miners, however, referred to the term of engagement rather than the rate of wages. In 1765 the Northumberland miners struck for several weeks unsuccess­fully against the system of a yearly bond of service, which was then prevalent. In 1810 a strike of seven weeks in the same district against a variation of the yearly bond ended in a compromise. Turbulent strikes in Northumberland and Durham are also re­corded in 1831 and 1832; the former, in which the men were suc­cessful, for a general removal of grievances, and the latter, in which they were defeated, for the maintenance of the union. These strikes were attended with violence and destruction of property. In 1844 still another prolonged strike took place in the north of England to enforce alterations in the terms of the yearly bond. From 30,000 to 40,000 men were out for 18 weeks. New men, however, were obtained, and there were many evictions. In 1864 widespread strikes took place in South Yorkshire and South Staffordshire, the one for an advance and the other against a re­duction of wages. The Yorkshire strike is said to have affected 37,000 men, and the Staffordshire strike 20,000. The latter lasted over four months.

The rapid fall in the price of coal after the abnormal inflation in 1871-1872 produced a series of obstinate strikes and lock-outs arising out of reductions of wages, in which the men were usually defeated. The South Wales miners, to the number of 70,000, were out for 11 weeks in 1873 and for 19 weeks in 1875, the latter dispute being a combined strike and lock-out, and leading to the formation of the first of the series of sliding scales under which the industry in South Wales was regulated until the end of the year 1902. In 1877 the West Lancashire miners (30,000) were out for 6 weeks, and the Northumberland men (14,000) for 8 weeks. The last-mentioned dispute was terminated by an arbitration award in the miner’s favour. In 1879, 70,000 Durham men were out for 6 weeks, the dispute being terminated by an arbitration award giving half the reduction claimed by the coal-owners. The intro­duction of sliding scales in Durham and Northumberland in 1877 and 1879 did something to preserve peace in those districts, though the Durham scale did not prevent the dispute of 1879 mentioned above. Both scales, however, were terminated by the men in 1889 and 1887 respectively. In 1880-1881 the Lancashire coal­mining industry was stopped for 7 weeks by a strike of 50,000 to 60,000 men against “ contracting out" of the Employers' Liability Act of 1880.

The fall of prices after 1890 led to a renewal of disputes. In 1892 there was a prolonged stoppage in the Durham coalfield, 75,000 men being out for about 11 weeks.

In 1893 the greatest dispute took place that has ever been recorded in the coal-mining industry, affecting the whole area covered by the Miners' Federation, viz. Yorkshire. Lancashire and Cheshire, and the Midlands. During the years 1891 and 1892 most of the districts covered by the Miners’ Federation submitted to reductions of wages varying from 15% off the standard in Durham to 42⅜% in South Wales and 50% in Scotland, where the previous rise had been greatest. The Miners’ Federation, however, refused to recognize the principle that wages should follow prices, and put forward instead the theory that a minimum or “ living wage ” should be fixed and prices left to adjust themselves to this rate. They declined altogether to agree to any reduction, and so strong was their combination that the coal-owners deferred any definite action until the middle of 1893, when they considered that some reduction was absolutely necessary to enable the trade to be carried on. On the 30th of June they passed a resolution after a conference with the men, demanding a reduction of 25% off the “standard” (equivalent to about 18% off current rates of wages), and offered arbitration as an alternative; but the federa­tion absolutely refused any reduction, and the contest began. Shortly before the beginning of the dispute Northumberland and Durham had become affiliated to the federation, but these districts were not threatened by a reduction, and they seceded from the federation sooner than strike, as demanded by that body to obtain the return of the reductions sustained since 1891. These districts consequently remained at work throughout the dispute, as well as Scotland and (except for a part of August and September) South Wales, reaping the advantage of the increased prices and wages resulting from the restriction of production due to the stoppage.