conviction is liable to a maximum fine of £20, or to a maximum imprisonment of three months with hard labour, who wilfully and maliciously breaks a contract of service or hiring, knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the probable consequence of his so doing, either alone or in combination with others, will be to endanger human life or cause serious bodily injury, or to expose valuable property, whether real or personal, to destruction or serious injury; or, who, being employed by a municipal authority or by any company or contractor on whom is imposed by act of parliament, or who have otherwise assumed, the duty of supplying any place with gas or water, wilfully and maliciously breaks a contract of service or hiring, knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that the probable consequence of his so doing, alone or in combination with others, will be to deprive the inhabitants of that place, wholly or in part, of their supply of gas or water; or who, with a view to compel any other person to do or to abstain from doing any act which such other person has a right to abstain from doing or to do, wrongfully and without legal authority uses violence to or intimidates such other person or his wife or children, or injures his property, or who per- sistently follows such person about from place to place, or who hides any tools, clothes or other property owned or used by such other person, or deprives him of or hinders him in the use thereof, or who watches or besets the house or other place where such person resides or works or carries on business or happens to be, or the approach to such house or place, or who follows such other person with two or more other persons in a disorderly manner in or through any street or road. Attending at or near the house or place where a person resides or works or carries on business, in order merely to obtain or communicate information was not watching or besetting within the statute, but this proviso has since been repealed. In regard to registration, trade unions are placed on a similar footing with friendly and provident and industrial societies, and they enjoy all the privileges, advantages and facilities which those associations possess and command, except in so far as they differ by the fact that there is no legally enforceable contract between a trade union and its members, and that the right of a registered trade union to invest funds with the National Debt Commissioners is limited, and in a few other matters. On their side, how- ever, they have to comply with the same conditions, are sub- ject to the same liabilities, and are compelled to make the same periodical returns.

During the years following 1876 several important amendments of the law, other than special trade union legislation, and the decisions of the courts in various cases, led up to the important act of 1906. These affected principally the liability of trade union funds to be taken in execution for the wrongful acts of agents of the union, the statute law relating to picketing and other incidents of strikes, and the law of conspiracy as affecting trade unions.

The two latter points are dealt with in the article on Strikes and Lock-Outs, and it may suffice here to say that the clauses in the act of 1875 prescribing punishment for watching and besct- ting a house, &c., with the view of compelling any other person in the manner set forth, have been amended by the repeal of the proviso that “ Attending at or near the house or place where a person resides, or works, or carries on business, or happens to be, or the approach to such house or place, in order merely to obtain or communicate information, shall not be deemed a watching or besetting within the meaning of this section ” by the enactment in the act of 1906 that : “ It shall be lawful for one or more persons, acting on their own behalf or on behalf of a trade union or of an individual employer or firm in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, to attend at or near a house or place where a person resides or works or carries on business or happens to be, if they so attend merely for the purpose of peacefully obtaining or communicating information, or of peacefully persuading any person to work or abstain from working.”

The object was to include the right of peaceful persuasion which had been supposed by parliament to be implied in the terms of the act of 1875. Further, the law of conspiracy has been amended by enactments in the act of 1906 that: “ An act done in pursuance of an agreement or combination by two or more persons shall, if done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, not be actionable unless the act if done without any such agreement or combination would be action- able,” and “ An act done by a person in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute shall not be actionable on the ground only that it induces some other person to break a contract of employment or that it is an interference with the trade, business or employment of some other person, or with the right of some other person to dispose of his capital or his labour as he wills.”

The act of 1875, in the words of Lord Cairns, was framed on the principle that “ the offences in relation to trade disputes should be thoroughly known and understood, and that persons should not be subjected to the indirect and deluding action of the old law of conspiracy,” but no one during the discussion of the bill was thinking of the civil action. This matter became important when the dicta of various judges in the House of Lords in the case of *Quinn* v. *Leathem* showed that there might be an action for damages based on any conspiracy to injure or do harm, particularly when it is considered that the very essence of a strike is in one sense injury to those against whom it is directed, and these opinions became of the utmost import to trade unions when the Taff Vale case showed that the fact of procuring to strike might also involve trade union funds in liability, even where there had been no procuring to break contracts. This important decision arose through the amendment of general procedure under the Judicature Acts in 1881. The distinction was abolished between legal and equitable rules as regards parties to sue and be sued, and in 1883 there was issued a General Order No. xvi. of the supreme court, rule 9 of which prescribed that where there arc numerous parties having the same interest in one cause or matter, one or more of such persons may sue or be sued, or may be authorized by a court or judge to defend in such cause or matter, on behalf or for the benefit of all persons so interested. It was decided in *Temper ton* v. *Russell* in 1893 where three trade unions were made defendants to represent all the members, and the order did not apply in the case of a trade union, because the words of the order “ numerous parties having the same interest in one cause or matter ” could only be satisfied by parties who had, or claimed to have, a beneficial proprietary right which they were asserting or defending, from which it was inferred that they could not be sued at all, and in the report of the Royal Commission on Labour in 1894 the opinion was cither assumed or expressly stated that they could not be sued in tort. In 1901 the House of Lords overruled *Temperton* v. *Russell* in the case of the *Duke of Bedford* v. *Ellis,* holding that the General Order No. xvi. rule 9, was universal in its application. In the same year the Taff Vale case came before the House of Lords. In the first place, expounding the Trade Union Act 1871, they held unanimously that from the provisions in that act concerning registered trade unions there is to be legally inferred an intention of parliament that a trade union might be sued in tort in its registered name, with the conse­quence that trade union funds would be liable for any damages that might be awarded. Secondly —apart from the Trade Union Act—Lord Macnaghten and Lord Lindley expressed an unhesitating opinion that under the General Order No. xvi. as interpreted in *Duke of Bedford v. Ellis,* any trade union, whether registered or not, could be sued in tort by means of a representative action. Trade unionists protested against the result as a decision of judges making a practically new law against trade unions and nullifying the settlement of their status made by the legislature in 1871, and in June 1903 a royal commission was again ap­pointed to inquire into the subject of trade disputes and trade