characteristic tendency of this period being the amalgamation of local trade clubs to form societies, national in scope, but confined to single or kindred trades. High rates of contri- bution, and the provision of friendly as well as trade benefits, were among the features of the new type of union, of which the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, formed in 185r, was the most important example. The growth of unions of the new type was followed by a development of employers’ associations in the ’sixties, and by a number of widespread strikes and lock-outs, and also by various efforts to promote arbitration and conciliation by the establishment of joint boards of employers and employed. (See Arbitration and Conciliation and Strikes and Lock-outs.)

A scries of outrages at Sheffield and Manchester in 1865- 1866, in which officials of some local trade societies were implicated, led to the appointment in 1867 of a Royal Commission on Trade Unions, whose report was followed by the passage of the Trade Union Act of 1871, which as amended in 1876 and 1906 now governs the legal position of trade unions. Conferences of trade union representatives held in 1866 and 1867 to deter­mine their policy with respect to the royal commission of in- quiry, led to the gatherings of the trade union congress which are still held annually.

The period of inflated trade which began in 1871 caused, as usual, another rapid growth of trade combinations, of which the most characteristic feature was their extension to agricultural and general labourers. To meet this new development of combination, the National Federation of Associated Employers of Labour was formed in 1873. The years of depression, 1875- 1880, were marked by a series of unsuccessful strikes against reductions of wages, and by a general decline of trade unions, which did not again revive until nearly ten years later, when the new wave of prosperous trade brought with it an outburst of strikes, chiefly among unskilled labourers, for improved conditions, of which the most notable was the strike of the London dock labourers in 1889. These trade movements were accompanied by the formation of a large number of unions of a type more akin to those of 1830-1834 than to the more modern trade-friendly society with its high contributions and benefits. The “ new unions ” were chiefly among unskilled labourers; their rates of contributions were from 1d. to 3d. a week, and as a rule they only offered strike benefit. Another characteristic was the extent to which their leaders were per­meated with the Socialistic doctrines which had then recently taken root in Great Britain, and which led them to advocate positive state interference with industry in the interests of the labourers *(e.g.* the legal limitation of hours of labour).

The reports of the Royal Commission on Labour, which sat from 1891 to 1894, contain much valuable information on the state of facts and on the opinions of employers and workmen at this period.

From 1892 onwards the progress of trade unionism can be traced statistically. The depression of trade, 1892-1895, brought with it, as usual, some decline in trade unionism; but though many of the “ new unions” collapsed, some of the more important have survived to the present time. The revival of trade which began in 1896 was naturally accompanied by an increase in the strength of trade unions; but the most marked characteristic of this period was the extension and consolidation of employers’ associations, of which perhaps the most notable is the Engineering Employers’ Federation, which was originally formed on the Clyde, but gradually extended to other districts and became a national organization of great strength during its successful struggle with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1897-r898. Among the other more important employers’ associations and federations of a national character may be mentioned the Shipping Federation, the Federated Coal Owners, the Ship-building Federation, the Federation of Master Cotton-Spinners’ Associations, the National Federation of Building Trade Em­ployers, and the Incorporated Federated Associations of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers.

In 1899 a general federation of trade unions was established which had in 1907 a membership of 650,000 in 117 affiliated societies. This federation links the trade unions of the United Kingdom with those of other countries by its affiliation with the international federation of trade unions, which em­braces the national federations of the principal European countries. During recent years there has been a noticeable tendency towards the creation of federations of trade unions, and the absorption of the smaller by the larger societies. Trade unions, both in their historical development and their present organization, present a very great variety of constitutions. The oldest type is that of the local trade club, con- sisting of a comparatively small number of men following the same occupation in the same locality.

A large number of unions have never progressed beyond this primitive form of organization. The government is of the simplest kind, by a general assembly of all the members, while such officers as are required to carry on the necessary routine business of the society are chosen by rotation or even by lot.

Indisposition to concentrate power in the hands of permanent officers and a tendency to divide the business of management equally among all the members, instead of delegating authority to a few chosen representatives, are leading characteristics of trade unions in this primitive form. The organization here described, even if adequate for ordinary current requirements, is ill suited for conducting a contest with employers, and accordingly in times of strife an improvised “ strike committee ” often comes into existence and practically governs the conduct of the dispute. No doubt this double constitution of the old trade club as a loosely organized friendly society, converting itself at times into a more or less secret strike combination ruled by an irresponsible committee, is to be traced to the time when trade unions as such were illegal com­binations and had to carry out their objects under the guise of friendly societies. The Friendly Society of Ironfounders (established in 1809), though it has to a great extent out- grown its primitive constitution, retains in its name the mark of its origin, while the government of the London Society of Bookbinders, by mass meeting of its members, offers an example of the persistence of traditional methods under wholly changed conditions. The Sheffield trade clubs, responsible for the outrages which led to the appointment of the Trade Union Commission in 1867, and subsequently to the passage of the Trade Union Acts, conformed as a rule to the primitive type. At the present time over 750 trade unions are known to exist which are purely local in character, with no branches. The next step in trade union evolution seems to have generally been an alliance or federation of two or more local clubs be- longing to the same trade. This federation would make it necessary to provide some machinery for common management, the simplest and crudest expedient being for each of the allied clubs to act in rotation as the governing branch. Thus the government of the federation or “ amalgamated society ” was at any given time confided to the members of a single locality, and the seat of government was periodically shifted. Some federal societies *(e.g.* the Mutual Association of Journeymen Coopers) still retain this primitive form of government.

As the tendency developed for local clubs to unite, the necessity of permanent officials to cope with the growing business of the amalgamation caused the institution of a paid secretary (usually elected by the whole body of members), and this led naturally to the fixing of the seat of administration at a particular centre instead of rotating among the branches. Some continuity of policy and of office tradition was thus made possible, but the executive committee almost invariably continued to consist of the local committee of the district where the seat of government happened to be. Thus up to 1892 the business of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a society with hundreds of branches all over the United Kingdom and even abroad, was conducted by a committee elected by the London branches. The Boilermakers continued a somewhat similar form of government up to. 1895; and many great societies, *e.g.* the Amalgamated Society of