Carpenters and Joiners, continue a somewhat similar system to the present day.

The plan of entrusting the government of a national society to a local executive has obvious conveniences, where the society consists of a body of working men scattered over a large area and with no leisure for travelling. But the control exercised by a locally-elected committee over a general secretary deriving his authority not from them but from the vote of a much wider constituency, could hardly be expected to be very effective; while the expedients of referring all important questions to a vote of the whole body of members, and of summoning at periodical intervals special delegate meetings to revise the rules, have proved in practice but clumsy substitutes for the permanent control and direction of the executive officers by a representative council. Quite as ineffective in some cases has been the authority of a mere local executive over the committees of other districts. Accordingly, some of the largest “ amalgamated ’’ unions have now adopted a representative system of government. Thus in 1892 the Engineers revised their rules so as to provide for the election of the executive council by vote of all the members divided into eight equal electoral districts. The members of council so elected are permanent paid officials, devoting all their time to the work of the society. The general secretary, however, continues to be chosen by the whole body of members, while the responsibility of the council is also weakened by the institution of “ district delegates ” nominally responsible to them, but chosen by direct election in the various districts. (This division of authority and consequent weakness of responsibility was one of the causes of the state of things which led to the great engineer­ing dispute of 1897, and it also led to a deadlock in negotiations on the north-east coast in 1908, the executive being powerless to enforce its views.) The Boilermakers adopted the system of a permanent executive in 1895.

In the case of certain highly-localized industries, such as cotton and coal, the conditions have admitted of a somewhat different form of constitution from that described above. Thus the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton-Spinners is a federal organization, consisting of a number of local associations, all, however, situated within a comparatively small area. The governing bodies of the association are—(1) a quarterly meeting of about a hundred representatives of the districts; (2) an executive committee of thirteen chosen by the above represen­tative meeting, of whom seven must be working spinners and the other six are usually permanent district officials; (3) a sub- council to transact the ordinary daily work of the association, consisting of the six official members referred to above. The secretary is chosen by the representative meeting, and engages his own office assistants. Here we have the familiar features of representative institutions—a large legislative body, a small executive chosen by and responsible to this body, and a still smaller group of permanent officials to transact ordinary business.

Lastly, there are some large societies constituted not by the aggregation of local clubs or the federation of neighbouring associations, but originally founded as “ national societies ” divided into districts and branches for administrative convenience. An example is the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, founded in 1872.

Besides the tendency of the national society with branches to swallow up the local trade club, there is a further tendency among the larger societies to form federations for certain common pur­poses. Such federations are to be distinguished from national trade unions, inasmuch as their members are societies and not individuals, and as a rule their powers over their constituent organizations are limited to certain specific objects. On the other hand, they are more than merely consultative bodies (such as local trades councils).

Some federations consist of unions in the same industry in different districts *(e.g.* the Miners’ Federation). “ Single trade ” federations like this have usually considerable powers, including that of imposing levies.

In the cotton-spinning trade, the trade union organization has a federal character, and the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton-Spinners, in spite of its name, is, strictly speaking, a federation.

Other federations *(e.g.* in the building trade) are formed of allied trades in the same locality, and usually have little executive power. The Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades has among its objects the settlement of disputes between members of its constituent societies as to the limits of their work. Some federations aim at embracing societies in a!l kinds of industries, but as a rule such organizations have not proved long-lived. The most recent example is the “ General Federation of Trade Unions,” formed in 1899, referred to above.

Since 1866 a congress of delegates from trade unions has met annually for discussion, and a parliamentary committee elected by this congress watches over matters in which trade unions are interested during the ensuing year.

The principal object of every trade union is to protect the trade interests of its members, and to strengthen their position in bargaining with their employers with regard to the conditions under which they work. The chief means by which they seek to attain these objects (apart from political methods such as the promotion of legislation or of administrative action by public authorities) are twofold: viz. the support of members when engaged in a collective dispute with employers by the payment of “ dispute ” benefit, and the insur­ance of members against loss from want of work by the payment of “unemployed ” benefit, so as to enable them to refuse any terms of employment inferior to those recognized by the trade union. All trade unions in one form or another provide “ dis- pute ” benefit, but a separate “ unemployed ” benefit is by no means universal, though, except in certain groups of trades, it is usual among more powerful and well established societies. Thus in the mining, clothing, and even many branches of the building trade, comparatively little is spent by trade unions on “ un­employed ” benefit, while, on the other hand, in the metal, engineering, shipbuilding, printing and other trades a large proportion of the total expenditure is devoted to this object (see *Statistics* below). In some important societies, such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, “ unemployed ” and “ dispute ” benefits are mixed up together, members engaged in a dispute receiving an addition of 5s. per week (known as “ contingent ’’ benefit) to the ordinary out-of-work pay (known as “ donation ”).

Unemployed benefit may, of course, be regarded as a “ friendly ” benefit, *i.e.* a provision against one class of the casualties to which a workman is exposed—the loss of employment through slackness of trade. But in practice it also operates as a method of maintaining the “ standard ” rate of wages, members being entitled to it who could obtain employment, but only on con- ditions disapproved by the society or branch.

The conditions under which the members of a union are entitled to financial support in a strike vary in different societies, and are prescribed in the rules. Usually, though the initiative may come from the localities, the central executive must approve of the strike before it takes place, and may at any time declare it to be closed, though in some societies the central authority is often unwilling to take the responsibility of curbing its members by exercising its powers in this respect.

“ Dispute ” and “ unemployed ” benefits are the only ones which are specially characteristic of trade unions, and as regards the latter benefit, it may be said that trade unions have hitherto been the only form of organization capable of meeting the difficulties arising from “ malingering.” Most of the more firmly established unions, however, add to their trade functions those of friendly societies, providing sick, accident, superannuation, and funeral benefits, or some of these. The position of a trade union, however, with regard to these benefits differs very materially from that of a friendly society. The trade union is under no legally enforceable contract with its members to provide the stipulated benefits: it can change their scale, or even abolish them, by vote of its members, and a member who has contributed for years in hope of receiving them has no legal redress. Again, a member excluded from the society for some “ trade ’’ reason