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*The STRIKES of the PAST TEN YEARS.*

By G. PHILLIPS BEVAN, F.S.S., F.G.S.

[Read before the Statistical Society, 20th January, 1880.]

I APPROACH the subject of my paper this evening with the greatest diffidence, and a strong distrust in my own powers to deal with it as it should be dealt with. The subject itself is not a grateful one; and I am sure that all who have paid any attention to the labour question, will join with me in the appreciation of the difficulties with which it is surrounded, and in a very decided feeling of dissatisfaction at the results of our inquiries into the particular branch of trade disputes. Indeed, at the very outset, the thought naturally occurs, *cui bono*? For what object are we examining the strikes of the past decade? What can be the good of raking up quarrels which should never have been begun, and that should be consigned to limbo as soon as finished; and why should we seek to disinter the chronicles of disputes which have passed into the regions of history? To this not unreasonable question I would reply, that it would be well for this country if strikes *had* become a matter of history, instead of being episodes of the present time, so constant as to be the rule and not the exception. Striking has become a disease, and a very grave disease, in the body social, a remedy for which has long occupied the attention of learned sociologists and legislators, but which as yet shows no sign of having run its course. I think therefore that it is not only useful, but necessary, for all who are interested in the proceedings of capital and labour (and who are not, directly or indirectly?), to examine and diagnose this great evil in all its bearings, as it is only by so doing that we can arrive at any hope of alleviation. For myself, I do not believe in any speedy cure by legislative measures or any one course of action. What I have endeavoured to do in this short paper, is to bring together as many cases of strikes as I have been able to collect, that have happened within the last ten years, as a text upon which the opinions and discussions of this Society may be founded. It is, I have reason to think, the first time that this subject has been brought before the Statistical Society: and although many a pleasanter one could have been selected, not one could be discussed which is of more vital importance to the country. I am happy to know that it will be discussed by an assembly which is so eminently calculated to do so judicially and dispassionately, free from the

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bias with which the employer naturally views the question, or from the intemperate spirit which so often characterises the disputants on the other side. I feel sadly conscious that my investigations have been most imperfect: for I have met with more difficulties than I expected in the way of procuring information. Strikes, numerous as they are, have been so imperfectly chronicled, even in those journals and publications which profess to devote most attention to industrial matters, that the labour of getting at the simple fact of their occurrence has been very considerable, and in a vast number of cases I have only been able to state that such and such a strike did take place, without any further information. Even this bald statement, however, is not without its uses, for it has enabled me to make an aggregate of the number of labour disputes, which may perhaps startle those who have engaged in them, if they ever do happen to reflect upon the enormous hindrance to labour and trade that these quarrels represent. The causes of strikes are so few, that it becomes monotonous to read them: nor is it perhaps very essential to our subject to know what is the reason of each strike, as long as the strike takes place. But the points of information which are most lacking, and the absence of which I very much regret, are the results. There is an especial difficulty about getting at the results of the termination of a strike, unless it happens to be one on a very large scale, so large as to be chronicled from day to day in the public papers: the reason being, that whether masters or men are victorious, neither side are anxious to trumpet forth the fact, but prefer to let the whole quarrel glide into obscurity without enlightening the outside world as to its specific features. I have however been able in a great number of cases, the majority indeed, to ascertain pretty correctly the duration of the strike, a very important fact when we try to arrive at any calculation as to the cost of a strike to the country. In the case of very large and important strikes, we are often informed as to the probable loss sustained, sometimes stated, as it were, *ex cathedra*, in the report of a trade society, but more frequently the result of a simple guess, which as often as not is exceedingly wild and vague. Supposing it were possible to arrive at an accurate conclusion as to the loss in wages of the aggregate strikes, which seems to me to be scarcely feasible, considering the lack of data, I fear that the figures, gigantic as they would be, would have no appreciable effect in checking the recurrence of strikes; for the moment that a fresh *casus belli* arises, all prudence seems to be flung to the wind. The losses, the miseries, the starvation, the debt, the destruction to trade, which have occurred on previous occasions, are forgotten in the bitterness of fighting; and it is only the sober few, whose age and experience remind them sadly of the past, that hold up their hands

for peace, and council a more prudent policy. This is supposing the quarrel to be a *bonâ fide* one, and not a question of deliberate war carried by the trade societies into the enemies' ground. It is much to be feared that an offensive campaign of this kind has not unfrequently been commenced and persisted in as part of a determined scheme, against which the feelings of the majority of workmen, who have to contribute to the strike fund, would decidedly pronounce, if full opportunity and free licence of opinion were allowed. If however the statements made by Mr. George Howell in "Fraser's Magazine" for December last are correct, it appears that strikes are frequently carried on because it pays the strikers to do so; and if undertaken in this way as an investment, I confess that I do not see much hopes of any solution of the difficulty.

The following table shows the number of strikes that have taken place during the last ten years, as far as I have been able to obtain the facts, to amount in the aggregate to 2,352, viz. :—

1870 .....	30	1875 .....	245
'71 .....	98	'76 .....	229
'72 .....	343	'77 .....	180
'73 .....	365	'78 .....	268
'74 .....	286	'79 (to 1st December)	308

The numbers of 1870 and 1871 are out of all proportion to those of succeeding years, and the only way in which I can account for it, is the fact that a great epidemic of strikes broke out at the end of the latter year—an epidemic which has unfortunately become chronic, and seems, if anything, to grow in intensity. It may be, too, that public attention was not so much directed to these questions as it has been of late years; so that many disputes might have taken place, which were not chronicled in the local papers. The causes of strikes are monotonously due to either demands for advance of wages and resistance to a reduction, or, what seems to be the same thing, an increase or a decrease of working hours. The great number of strikes that took place in 1872-73, which have not been equalled either before or since, happened at a time when, as we all remember, industry was at its highest. Labour was in extreme demand; there was a great inflation of prices, which culminated about 1874; and as a matter of wage, men could get pretty well what they liked to ask within fairly reasonable limits; sometimes, indeed, the limit might well have been pronounced extravagant; still they were not satisfied; and though the generality of them were earning more money than they had ever earned before, they determined to work the question in another way, and demand a reduction of working hours—a reduction which in the main was universally complied with, though not until after many disastrous

quarrels. At the present time we see the converse of this state of things. Times are bad—worse almost than we have ever known them—and although the inevitable decline of wages which has taken place during the increasing depression of trade has provoked many strikes, the men have been obliged to bow to the necessities of the occasion, and have not been able to carry on their resistance with the same pertinacity which they could afford to exercise in brisk seasons. The masters have seized their opportunity, and done in 1879 exactly what the men did in 1872-73, viz., made an effort to win back the extra hour which they then conceded. This is partly the explanation of the large number of strikes in 1879.

Looking through the detailed list of later quarrels, I find that amongst the extraneous causes are—alterations of old rules in factories and workshops; piecework; refusal of the men to allow women to participate in their employment (as in the case of the Nottingham hosiers in 1871); dismissal of workmen; insubordination (as in the case of the gas-stokers at Beckton in 1872, when they nearly succeeded in plunging London into darkness); the importation of foreign labour (as in the case of the experimental beetroot sugar making at Lavenham, in Suffolk, in 1873); the introduction of juvenile labour; legislative interference (as in the case of the chain cable makers of Newcastle, who struck in 1873 because the Act required a chain of stronger straining power than they had been in the habit of making); an increased speed of loom (as in the case of the carpet weavers at Elderslie in 1874); dislike to check weighmen (as in the case of the Tyldesley and the Barnsley colliers in 1876, the Ryhope colliers in 1877, and the Wigan colliers in 1879); the introduction of labour saving machinery (as in the case of the bootmakers of Leeds in 1876); disapproval of an arbitration award (as in the case of the Ashton towel weavers, and the Middlesbrough ironworkers in 1878); the Manvers Main colliers who struck against Mr. Mundella's arbitration; the colliers at Dodsworth, in 1877; the Northumberland colliers, in the same year, who declined to accede to Mr. Herschel's arbitration; the painters at Preston, and the Wolverhampton joiners. Colliers have also struck against the use of a more stringent safety lamp (as in the case of the Carlton Main and Rawmarsh colliers, in 1878); and there have been strikes also against the employment of non-unionists (as in the case of the Padiham building operatives); against riddling in collieries (as in the case of the Kippax collieries, 1878). These are amongst the minor causes that have produced quarrels, the great majority being, as before stated, against a reduction or for an advance of wage. The persistence with which large bodies of men have fought a hopeless battle is worthy of the highest praise, were the energy a bit better directed. The Manchester

joiners, in 1878, fought for a whole year for an increase of wages; and at the end of that time, those who did not find their places filled up, were glad to get back at less than the original terms; while in the same year the Dundee slaters disputed unsuccessfully for two months for an extra halfpenny per hour, and the Corton Main colliers stuck out for many weeks against what amounted to five-eighths of a penny.

Let us now examine how many trades have struck in the last ten years, and which are the industries that seem most open to this course of proceeding. I have drawn up two tables on this subject—the first rather more in detail, and the second dealing with the trades in groups. The subdivisions of labour are so numerous in the present day, that I have been obliged to comprise a good many classes under one head. Under that of the iron trade, for instance, are included not only the workmen in an iron or steel establishment, such as furnace men, puddlers, rollers, hammerers, &c., but also blacksmiths, moulders, foundrymen, and other subsidiary classes of operatives. Under the heading of engineers are comprised fitters, mechanics, and engine tenters; while under that of the cotton trades are winders, piecers, self-acting minders, strippers, grinders, spinners, weavers, &c. The result of the list shows that 111 trades are implicated in these disputes. Of course, as might be expected, the staple industries exhibit the largest number of strikes; but it is encouraging to find how few of the trades *do* strike in comparison with those who do not. Even some of those who figure in our list might almost be eliminated, as far as the number and duration of their strikes go; for, what we may call the striking trades are limited to some forty or so. Taking the last census tables of the industrial population as a general guide to the number of trades, we find that they are set down at 187, and it is perhaps a source of congratulation to observe the small proportion of industrial combatants, although the fighting instinct in this proportion is a matter of regret.

TABLE II.

Trade.	'70.	'71.	'72.	'73.	'74.	'75.	'76.	'77.	'78.	'79.	Total.
Agricultural labourers....	1	—	3	—	1	1	—	1	5	5	17
Anchor makers.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Axle makers.....	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bakers.....	—	—	10	7	4	—	1	1	—	—	23
Beetsugar makers.....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bobbin makers.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Boilermakers.....	—	—	4	4	3	6	2	3	4	1	27
Bookbinders.....	—	—	1	3	1	—	—	1	—	—	6
Brass and copper workers.....	—	—	1	1	1	1	2	1	—	4	11

TABLE II—*Contd.*

Trade.	'70.	'71.	'72.	'73.	'74.	'75.	'76.	'77.	'78.	'79.	Total.
Brewers.....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Brick and tile makers ....	—	—	6	3	2	—	2	—	—	2	15
Brickbat makers .....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bricklayers .....	—	2	6	6	10	6	8	3	5	6	52
Brushmakers .....	—	—	3	2	—	1	3	—	—	—	9
Building operatives .....	1	1	15	4	4	2	3	3	3	7	43
Butchers .....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Cabinet makers and } polishers .....	—	1	4	8	3	2	6	8	2	3	37
Carpenters and joiners .....	1	4	34	27	23	25	19	25	14	15	187
Carpetmakers .....	—	—	1	1	—	2	1	—	—	1	6
Carriage and waggon } builders.....	1	1	5	3	4	1	5	4	1	5	30
Casemakers .....	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Causeway layers .....	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cement makers.....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Chain makers .....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Chemical operatives.....	1	1	—	2	6	2	1	—	—	3	16
China-clay diggers .....	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
Cloth and wool opera- } tives .....	—	2	6	5	—	4	5	3	8	4	37
Colliers .....	4	15	26	46	41	23	20	19	56	64	314
Combmakers.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Confectioners .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Coopers and packing } case makers .....	—	1	4	4	2	1	—	1	—	—	13
Corkcutters .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Cotton hands .....	3	5	3	11	6	10	7	9	42	24	120
Cutlery and tool makers .....	1	—	4	2	3	2	3	—	2	5	22
Distillers .....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Dock labourers.....	—	—	10	5	2	—	—	—	1	5	23
Drivers and carmen.....	—	—	4	5	—	2	—	1	—	2	14
Dyers and printers .....	—	5	3	5	5	1	2	—	—	4	25
Electroplaters .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Engineers and fitters ....	1	5	16	16	15	16	4	6	4	13	96
Farriers.....	—	—	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	4
Fender and fireiron } makers .....	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Fishermen.....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Flax, linen, and jute } hands.....	—	4	8	12	10	3	2	4	3	10	56
Floor cloth and mat } makers .....	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Fustian cutters.....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gardeners.....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gaswork men .....	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	6
Glass makers.....	—	1	4	1	2	2	6	1	6	8	31
Gun makers .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hardware makers.....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	3
Hatters .....	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	2	4
Hinge makers .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Horseshoe makers .....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hosiery hands .....	1	2	3	1	3	—	—	—	3	1	14
Indiarubber workers ....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Iron workers.....	1	10	15	19	10	20	12	4	16	20	127
Lace hands .....	—	2	—	1	2	—	—	—	1	2	8



TABLE II—*Contd.*

Trade.	'70.	'71.	'72.	'73.	'74.	'75.	'76.	'77.	'78.	'79.	Total.
Labourers (general) .....	—	2	1	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	6
Lath splitters .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	3
Leather workers and tanners .....	—	1	3	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	7
Lockmakers .....	—	1	2	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	5
Maltsters .....	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Masons .....	1	2	13	16	18	22	21	17	29	12	151
Military clothing makers .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Millers .....	1	—	—	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	7
Miners (metallic) .....	1	—	7	4	2	2	1	2	2	4	25
Nail and chain makers .....	2	1	3	10	2	2	2	8	4	5	39
Navvies .....	—	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	6
Needle makers .....	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Nut and bolt makers .....	—	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	—	—	10
Officials .....	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Painters .....	—	—	3	5	10	6	18	6	6	3	57
Paperhangers .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Paupers .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Paviors .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Pinmakers .....	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Pipe and tube makers .....	—	—	2	—	1	2	—	—	—	1	6
Plasterers .....	—	1	3	5	2	8	2	5	6	7	39
Plumbers .....	—	—	2	6	3	5	3	—	5	4	28
Porters .....	5	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	8
Potters .....	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	3	4	1	10
Printers and compositors .....	—	—	8	2	5	3	3	1	1	1	24
Professionals .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Quarrymen .....	—	4	6	6	4	3	4	4	6	—	37
Railway and telegraph employés .....	—	3	5	5	—	—	3	1	3	2	13
Ropemakers .....	—	1	—	2	3	1	2	—	—	—	9
Saddlers and harness makers .....	—	2	2	3	5	4	3	—	—	—	19
Sailors .....	1	—	4	2	1	1	—	—	2	2	13
Sailmakers .....	—	—	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	4
Sawyers and wood cutters .....	—	—	3	—	3	1	—	1	—	—	8
Shipbuilders .....	—	6	8	14	19	14	11	9	6	13	100
Shopkeepers .....	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Shoe and bootmakers .....	1	3	20	25	7	6	7	3	4	6	82
Silk hands .....	—	—	6	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	9
Skinners .....	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Slaters .....	—	2	4	5	8	6	1	7	3	4	40
Spring makers .....	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Stone cutters and polishers .....	—	1	—	—	1	—	1	2	—	3	8
Tailors .....	1	—	7	17	11	10	15	4	3	3	72
Tinplate workers .....	—	—	2	4	2	—	5	2	—	4	19
Tobacco pipe makers .....	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	3
Tobacco spinners .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Trunk makers .....	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	3
Umbrella makers .....	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Wheelwrights .....	—	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	3
Whitesmiths .....	—	1	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	4
Wire workers .....	—	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	3	7
Zinc workers .....	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1



In this somewhat long list the colliers figure in a rather unenviable manner for 314, which, while we bear in mind that they form a very large body of workmen, amounting to 500,000 in round numbers, is out of proportion to the strikes in other trades. While dispassionately searching for and reviewing the causes that lead to so many coal mining disputes, one cannot but be struck with the fact, that colliers, more than any other class of workmen, appear to live in a chronic state of excitement as to the wages question, and that there seems to be a perpetual distrust between the employed and employers. I simply state the circumstances as I find them recorded in the public papers, which anybody can read for themselves; and these records are of a continuous succession of restless advice and inflammatory speeches, made by those who assume the control of the colliers' policy in Great Britain. As to whether the colliers are to be envied or pitied for thus being drilled into a perpetual state of industrial warfare, I offer no opinion, my wish, as far as possible, in this paper, is to try and get at facts and figures. Grouping the subdivisions into more compact bodies, we find the following results as to the industries engaged in strikes:—

TABLE III.

Building trades .....	598
Metal trades .....	390
Colliers and miners.....	339
Textile trades .....	277
Clothing trades .....	163
Ships and shipping.....	140
Pottery and glass trades.....	63
Wood trades .....	63
Stone trades (not masons).....	54
Food and drink trades .....	39
Carrying trades .....	35
Carriage building trades .....	33
Leather trades (not shoes) .....	28
Fibre trades.....	22
Agricultural trades.....	18

The building trades, which head this list with the formidable number of 598, are composed of a good many sections, which have separate organisations and interests, and yet which seem to follow, as by an irrepressible impulse, the infectious habit of striking. They comprise masons, carpenters and joiners, slaters, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers, builders' labourers, with certain minor occupations; and it is not unnatural to find all these branches in an unsettled state under certain conditions of trade. The carpenters and joiners have the proud distinction of being the most restless, there having been 187 strikes under this head; and next to them come the masons, with 151. There are several reasons which may

account for the building trades striking so often:—1st. It is a class of industry which feels almost instantaneously the ups and downs of trade depression or revival. 2nd. The employers are, as a rule, men of but moderate means, and in a great many cases men who have emerged more or less recently from the ranks of the employed. Capital being short, and speculative building being rife, it is not a matter of surprise that extreme cutting should be practised in the matter of wages, and that disputes should frequently happen between two classes of men so little divided from each other by position. Of course there are giants in the building trade, as in all others; to them these remarks will not apply; but the great majority of building strikes have happened amongst the rank and file of employers; and this fact will also seem as a reason why, as a rule, the building strikes are not only soon settled, but also much more frequently in favour of the men than in other trades. 3rd. The inequality of wages may be also a reason as to the frequency of these disputes. At the time of the Manchester joiners' strike, in 1877, they were paid  $8\frac{1}{2}d.$  per hour, whereas in Liverpool the wages at the same time were  $8\frac{1}{4}d.$ , at Bradford  $8d.$ , at Lincoln  $7\frac{3}{4}d.$ , at Lancaster  $7d.$ , at Cambridge  $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ , at Gloucester  $6d.$ , at Winchester  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ , at Frome  $4\frac{3}{4}d.$  The amount of labour being the same, and the prices of living being so little different in all these towns, it is a natural feeling that the lower-waged should seek to be on a little better level with the higher-waged. The next point of interest, though we cannot call it one of very much importance, is as to the localities in which strikes abound. It is to be expected that the greatest number of strikes would be found in the largest industrial centres; and this is true to a great extent, though at the same time some industrial towns with large populations are much freer from strikes than others, proving that certain trades which affect those towns are not so much given to strikes. But throughout England and Scotland the value of the special industry figures is a good deal detracted from by the perpetual recurrence of the building strikes, which may happen in a little town like Margate just as they do in Glasgow or London. I will first of all give a sort of strike chart by counties, taking Scotland, Ireland, and Wales each as one.

TABLE IV.

		Character of Trades.
Scotland .....	473	} Coal, iron, textiles, shipping
Yorkshire .....	388	
Lancashire .....	149	
Northumberland .....	138	} Coal, iron, shipping
South Wales .....	135	
Durham .....	131	
Staffordshire .....	80	Coal, iron, hardwares, pottery
Ireland .....	65	Linen, shipping
Middlesex .....	58	Metal, wood, decorative trades
Warwickshire .....	52	Coal
Gloucestershire .....	51	Shipping, agriculture
North Wales .....	40	Coal, iron, mining
Monmouthshire .....	33	} Coal, iron, shipping
Cumberland .....	32	
Nottinghamshire .....	30	
Derbyshire .....	28	Coal, textiles
Cheshire .....	26	Shipping, agriculture
Worcestershire .....	24	Coal, iron
Devonshire .....	24	Mining, shipping
Leicestershire .....	23	Coal, textiles
Kent .....	20	} Agriculture
Cambridgeshire .....	19	
Suffolk .....	11	
Northamptonshire .....	11	Agriculture, textiles
Liverpool .....	10	Mining, leather
Norfolk .....	9	Iron, agriculture
Hampshire .....	5	Agriculture
Salop .....	4	„ shipping
Westmoreland .....	4	„ mining
Sussex .....	3	Mining
Essex .....	1	Agriculture
		„

The most noteworthy feature in the foregoing list is the extraordinary prevalence of strikes in Scotland, which, with the exceptions of the counties of Lanark, Roxburgh, Ayr, Forfar, and Fife, has no industrial population to compare with those of the same character in England. A large proportion of the Scotch strikes are in the coal mining, and I must confess that I cannot dissociate these particular strikes from the policy of the individuals to whom I have alluded before, who claim to direct this organisation, and whose particular aim it seems to be is to prevent any possibility of unanimity or friendly feeling growing up between masters and men. At the same time, I cannot find that the same important influence exists in the case of other Scotch strikes, and am quite unable to give any reason for their frequency. It would be tedious to detail every place in which a strike has occurred during the ten years, and I content myself therefore with specifying the principal ones.

TABLE V.

		Character of Trades.
Glasgow .....	85	Shipping, textiles, railway works, chemicals
Leeds .....	73	Iron, coal, cloth, flax
Sheffield .....	66	Coal, iron, glass, cutlery
Edinburgh and Leith .....	65	Shipping, milling, printing
Newcastle .....	63	„ coal, iron, glass, chemicals
London .....	56	„ general industries
Barnsley .....	48	Coal, iron, linen
Dundee .....	46	Shipping, linen, and jute
Merthyr .....	45	Coal, iron
Manchester .....	44	Cotton, silk, coal, iron, engineering
Bolton .....	43	„ coal, engineering
Sunderland .....	40	Shipping, coal, glass
Birmingham .....	36	Hardwares, iron
Bradford .....	36	Stuff and worsted
The Tyne .....	30	Shipping, coal, glass, chemicals
Nottingham .....	30	Lace, silk, coal
Liverpool .....	29	Shipping, engineering
Barrow .....	29	„ iron, jute
Oldham .....	28	Cotton, engineering
Dudley .....	28	Coal, iron, nails
Huddersfield .....	27	Woollens
Bristol .....	26	Shipping, coal, leather
Belfast .....	26	Linens, shipping
Shields .....	24	Coal, shipping
Blackburn .....	24	Cotton
Middlesbrough .....	22	Iron, shipping, engineering
Derby .....	22	Woollens
Forest of Dean .....	21	Iron, coal
Ashton .....	21	Cotton
Dublin .....	19	Shipping, general trades
Wolverhampton .....	19	Iron, coal, hardwares
Rotherham .....	19	Coal, iron
Greenock .....	18	Shipping, sugar refining
Preston .....	17	Cotton
Hartlepool .....	16	} Shipping, iron
Stockton .....	16	
Wigan .....	16	Textiles, coal, iron
Hull .....	16	Shipping, engineering
Potteries .....	16	Pottery, coal, iron
Aberdeen .....	16	Shipping, quarries, woollens
Cleveland .....	15	Mining, iron
York .....	14	General
Perth .....	14	Dyeing, woollens
Bunbury .....	13	Cotton, coal
Alloa .....	13	Glass, pottery, linen
Birkenhead .....	13	Shipping, engineering
Carlisle .....	13	Hats and caps, cotton
Cardiff .....	13	Shipping, iron, coal, tinplate
Leicester .....	13	Hosiery, coal
Dumfries .....	12	Woollens
Halifax .....	11	Cloth, worsted
Whitehaven .....	10	Shipping, mining, coal
Plymouth .....	10	„ quarries
Neath .....	10	Copper, iron, coal

In addition to this list, there are 87 towns which have experienced strikes varying from 1 to 9, of which there is no occasion to give any detailed account. The next point to which I would briefly direct attention, is the duration of time which these 2,352 strikes have lasted. Although in nearly half of them I have been able to ascertain the time which was wasted, in the remaining portion, viz., 1,256, there is nothing to guide us, so that I think we are warranted in giving each of them a duration of one week only. Some may have lasted more, and some less, but in the latter case we are quite safe in assuming that the work of that week was first broken into and destroyed. The following table gives the time each year spent in strikes :—

TABLE VI.

	Weeks.
1870.....	68
'71.....	279
'72.....	988
'73.....	1,093
'74.....	812
'75.....	684
'76.....	952
'77.....	759
'78.....	1,621
'79 (up to 1st December) .....	1,774
Total .....	<u>9,027</u> weeks or 54,162 working days.

The durations of strikes are frequently of very considerable length, and one can only account for them either by supposing that the strike allowance is of so comfortable a nature, that the striker really does not care whether he works or not, or that the object to be gained is considered to be sufficiently valuable to repay the great sacrifice of time and money. The following are some of the principal durations of strikes since 1870 :—

TABLE VII.

Trades.	Towns.	Weeks.	Years.
Carpenters and joiners ....	Heywood .....	28	1872
	Wolverhampton .....	27	'77
	Manchester .....	52	'77
	Dunfermline.....	40	'78
	Hartlepool .....	34	'78
	Shields .....	34	'78
Tailors.....	Merthyr .....	27	'74
	Blanaon .....	47	'75
	Aberdeen .....	57	'75
	Bradford .....	20	'78
Dock labourers .....	Shields .....	23	'73

TABLE VII—*Contd.*

Trades.	Towns.	Weeks.	Years.
Colliers .....	South Wales.....	21	1875
	Burnley.....	26	'76
	Dronfield .....	36	'77
	Pembrokeshire .....	28	'76
	Kinneil .....	26	'78
	Church Lane .....	36	'78
	Manvers Main .....	26	'78
Iron workers .....	Wishaw .....	20	'73
	Middlesbrough.....	29	'73
	Parkgate .....	22	'75
	Aberdare .....	26	'79
	Bradford .....	36	'79
Ship builders .....	Glasgow .....	20	'70
	Dumbarton .....	28	'76
	Runcorn .....	26	'76
Glass workers.....	Glasgow .....	23	'77
	Sunderland .....	26	'76
	Glasgow .....	33	'76
	Alloa .....	56	'78
Masons .....	London .....	33	'77
	Newcastle .....	24	'78
	Kirkcaldy .....	36	'78
	Wigan .....	30	'79
	Barnsley .....	31	'79
Spring makers .....	Sheffield .....	28	'75
Tin plate workers .....	Edinburgh .....	33	'79
Engineers .....	Newcastle .....	21	'71
	Ashton .....	22	'79
	Belfast .....	26	'79
Railway men .....	Taff Vale .....	25	'76
Tobacco spinners .....	Newcastle .....	24	'79
Plumbers .....	Nottingham .....	38	'78
	Darlington .....	37	'76
Compositors .....	Dublin .....	31	'78

The two next points to be examined are unfortunately the most disappointing in the whole inquiry, viz., the numbers engaged in these strikes, and the results of the strikes. It is obvious that unless we can form some approximate idea of the numbers of men who are idle in any particular dispute, we can give a very poor estimate as to the amount of money lost, and the same may be said as to the results. Those results which I have been able to collect are, on the face of them, unfavourable to the strikers; but in taking this view, we must not forget that many a successful strike entails far greater advantages than the mere fact of the strike shows, as a small section of a trade may fight a battle for the whole trade, and by winning it obtain very considerable pecuniary results extending over a long period. The number of strikes of which I have been able to ascertain any results for certain are ridiculously few, and bear no reasonable proportion to the bulk of the disputes. Such as they are, however, I give them.

TABLE VIII.

	Number of Strikes.	Lost.	Won.	Compromised.	Accounted for.	Unknown.
1870 .....	30	1	8	2	11	19
'71 .....	98	5	10	11	26	72
'72 .....	343	6	8	8	22	321
'73 .....	365		No	details		365
'74 .....	286		No	details		286
'75 .....	245	23	17	9	49	196
'76 .....	229	24	15	16	55	174
'77 .....	180	15	7	10	32	148
'78 .....	268	43	3	15	61	207
'79 .....	308	72	3	20	95	213
Total ....	2,352	189	71	91	351	2,001

Meagre and almost useless as this list is for deducing facts from, it shows nevertheless that of the results really known, the balance is very considerably against the strikers, and also, that there is an increasing tendency to compromise, which is so far a hopeful sign, which may soon lead to an agreement before the battle has commenced. The cases in which the numbers actually engaged are given are also, I regret to say, very few, though perhaps they are sufficiently definite for us to form some idea of what those particular strikes cost in actual loss of wages. The following table is one of 110 strikes in which the numbers engaged and the duration are based on reliable facts. I have estimated the loss on wages as the daily loss of 4s. for five days in the week, and considering that in the ten years we have had the maximum and the minimum of wages, and considering also that men, women, and children are all implicated in the strikes, I do not think that I have placed the average wage too high.

TABLE IX.

Date.	Trade.	Locality.	Duration in Weeks.	Numbers.	Loss.
					£
1870	Nailers .....	Netherton .....	1	600	600
'70	Cotton operatives .....	Wigan .....	1	3,000	3,000
'70	Colliers .....	Vron .....	1	600	600
'70	Miners .....	Cleveland .....	2	1,500	3,000
'70	Joiners .....	Glasgow .....	4	1,400	5,600
'70	Waggon builders .....	Saltley .....	4	200	800
'71	Colliers .....	Hanley .....	1	400	400
'71	Shoemakers .....	Rotherham .....	6	1,500	9,000
'71	Cotton spinners .....	Perth .....	1	500	500
'71	Pottery pressers .....	Stoke .....	1	240	240
'71	Colliers .....	Butterley .....	1	2,000	2,000
'71	Railway men .....	L. Y. R. ....	1	160	160



TABLE IX—*Contd.*

Date.	Trade.	Locality.	Duration in Weeks.	Numbers.	Loss.
					£
1871	Telegraph clerks .....	Manchester .....	1	200	200
'71	Engineers .....	Sunderland .....	3	3,000	9,000
'71	Glass workers .....	" .....	1	500	500
'71	Engineers .....	Newcastle .....	20	9,000	180,000
'71	Cotton hands .....	Oldham .....	1	35,000	35,000
'71	Nut and bolt makers .....	Smethwick .....	40	1,500	60,000
'71	Colliers .....	South Wales .....	12	18,000	216,000
'71	" .....	Forest of Dean .....	11	700	7,700
'71	Iron workers .....	Leeds .....	1	1,700	1,700
'71	Colliers .....	Sheffield .....	1	300	300
'71	Joiners .....	Darwen .....	2	200	400
'71	Bakers .....	London .....	9	400	3,600
'72	Saucer makers .....	Longton .....	9	400	3,600
'72	Hosiery .....	Nottingham .....	14	700	9,800
'72	Linen weavers .....	Banbury .....	11	1,700	18,700
'72	Printers .....	Edinburgh .....	7	600	4,200
'72	Engineers .....	Sheffield .....	2	600	1,200
'72	Moulders .....	Keighley .....	4	2,500	10,000
'72	Carters .....	Liverpool .....	1	5,000	5,000
'72	Steamboat men .....	M. S. L. R. ....	1	100	100
'72	Railway men .....	Glasgow .....	1	1,300	1,300
'72	Dock labourers .....	Hull .....	1	600	600
'72	Building operatives .....	London .....	12	10,000	120,000
'72	Shoemakers .....	Norwich .....	1	600	600
'72	Engineers .....	Birkenhead .....	6	800	4,800
'72	Railway men .....	L. N. W. ....	2	400	800
'72	Colliers .....	Ryhope .....	1	2,000	2,000
'72	Engineers .....	Glasgow .....	1	500	500
'72	" .....	N. B. R. ....	1	400	400
'72	Colliers .....	South Wales .....	1	2,000	2,000
'72	Miners .....	Cleveland .....	1	700	700
'73	Colliers .....	South Wales .....	11	70,000	770,000
'73	" .....	Bedworth .....	2	500	1,000
'73	Linen hands .....	Barnsley .....	25	1,500	37,500
'73	Colliers .....	Wishaw .....	10	1,000	10,000
'73	Iron workers .....	Clarence .....	1	600	600
'73	Plasterers .....	Leeds .....	1	200	200
'76	Joiners .....	Southampton .....	1	300	300
'77	Masons .....	London .....	33	1,700	56,100
'78	Cotton hands .....	Lancaster .....	9	300,000	2,700,000
'78	" .....	Macclesfield .....	3	700	2,100
'78	" .....	Glasgow .....	2	1,200	2,400
'78	Colliers .....	Aldwark .....	1	350	350
'78	" .....	Bestwood .....	9	2,000	18,000
'78	" .....	Park Gate .....	1	250	250
'78	" .....	Rawmarsh .....	15	250	3,750
'78	" .....	Unstone .....	1	160	160
'78	" .....	Leeds .....	11	2,000	22,000
'78	" .....	Denaby Main .....	10	700	7,000
'78	" .....	Chadderton .....	1	1,700	1,700
'78	" .....	Manvers Main .....	26	1,000	26,000
'78	" .....	Kippax .....	4	2,000	2,000
'78	" .....	Rosa .....	1	700	700
'78	" .....	Thorp Gawber .....	1	700	700
'78	" .....	Wednesbury .....	1	300	300

TABLE IX—*Contd.*

Date.	Trade.	Locality.	Duration in Weeks.	Numbers.	Loss.
					£
1878	Colliers .....	Harrington .....	1	200	200
'78	" .....	Eddlewood .....	1	300	300
'78	" .....	Seaham .....	1	150	150
'78	" .....	Rother Vale .....	1	300	300
'78	" .....	Pemberton .....	1	500	500
'78	" .....	Bristol .....	12	500	6,000
'78	" .....	Stourport .....	2	200	400
'78	" .....	Spon Lane .....	4	750	3,000
'78	Moulders .....	Boroughbridge .....	1	120	120
'78	Joiners .....	Bolton .....	16	200	3,200
'78	" .....	Aberdeen .....	1	500	500
'78	Nailers .....	Staffordshire .....	10	25,000	250,000
'78	Navvies .....	Hartlepool .....	1	400	400
'78	Painters .....	Liverpool .....	10	1,600	16,000
'78	Plumbers .....	Edinburgh .....	9	200	1,800
'78	Railway men .....	N. B. R. ....	15	900	13,500
'78	Silk hands .....	Macclesfield .....	1	4,000	4,000
'78	Tailors .....	Bradford .....	20	200	4,000
'78	Cotton hands .....	Macclesfield .....	4	1,600	6,400
'78	" .....	Oldham .....	5	5,000	25,000
'78	" .....	Leigh .....	4	500	2,800
'78	" .....	Todmorden .....	1	150	150
'78	" .....	Bristol .....	6	2,000	12,000
'78	" .....	Radcliffe .....	5	2,000	10,000
'78	" .....	Rhodes .....	1	150	150
'78	" .....	Glasgow .....	2	400	800
'78	" .....	Daubhill .....	1	1,000	1,000
'78	" .....	Oldham .....	4	10,000	40,000
'79	" .....	Carlisle .....	22	600	600
'79	" .....	Ashton .....	5	5,000	25,000
'79	" .....	Macclesfield .....	7	1,000	7,000
'79	" .....	Stockport .....	2	400	800
'79	" .....	Gorton .....	2	1,500	3,000
'79	Waggon builders .....	Liverpool .....	4	500	2,000
'79	" .....	Manchester .....	13	1,000	13,000
'79	Building operatives .....	Wigan .....	2	500	10,000
'79	" .....	Northallerton .....	1	400	400
'79	Chemical workers .....	Widnes .....	17	5,000	85,000
'79	Flax hands .....	Forfar .....	4	1,000	4,000
'79	Colliers .....	Aberdare .....	1	2,000	2,200
'79	" .....	Tyldesley .....	1	1,200	1,200
'79	Masons .....	Bristol .....	8	1,000	8,000
'79	Joiners .....	" .....	2	1,000	2,000
'79	Ship builders .....	Tyne .....	3	8,000	24,000
			577	—	4,468,950

To this sum we may add a few totals of well-known strikes, which I have taken at the time from the public papers, viz., the engineers' strike of London during 1879, which is said to have cost 28,875*l.*; the Clyde shipbuilders' strike of 1877, which cost 300,000*l.*; the Longton colliers' strike of 1878, which cost 30,000*l.*; and the Durham miners' strike of 1879, on which 240,000*l.* is said to have

been lost, swelling the total amount to 5,067,825*l.* This being the sum lost in 114 strikes, what are we to say for the losses on the remaining 2,238? As we have no figures to go upon, it is impossible to form even an estimate, though the sum must clearly be a very enormous one. Mr. Howell, to whose recent paper in "Fraser's Magazine" I have already alluded, puts as an asset in favour of the men on strike a sum averaging about 10*s.* per week, which they received as strike pay, and this of course would amount to many thousands to be put to their credit. But I fail to see by what right he can call this sum in any degree a set-off, or even partial set-off, to the losers, except indeed that portion of the strike fund which may have been contributed by other sections of trades or the public for the maintenance of the men on strike. Unless I am wrong in my conjectures, the strike fund has been contributed to the trade society by the men themselves, and the payment to them of so much when on strike, is really only giving them back their own money, which, were there no strikes, would be accumulating, to be spent in what we may hope would be a more profitable manner. Mr. Howell seems to be right, in my opinion, in putting forward a statement, that many a strike, though resulting in the expenditure of a large sum of money at the time, has resulted also in the gain of a more or less permanent advantage to the great body of the trade. I think, however, that he has considerably exaggerated both the permanence and the amount of these benefits, even when the strikes have been successful; but my own observations find this to be so seldom the case comparatively, that I cannot help thinking the many losers far outbalance the few gainers.

Whatever these losses or gains may be, we must remember that they are, after all, only those of the employed, and that in calculating or considering the results of strikes to the country, the employed only form one part of the social economy. Who is to gauge the individual losses to the masters? To estimate these would be impossible, for very few employers would care, perhaps, to make the amount of their losses known, even if they could estimate them themselves, which would not be an easy task, and especially during prolonged strikes. There are doubtless many cases in which employers, and particularly those who have not much capital, might welcome, or at all events not disapprove of, a strike, as being the means of relieving them from a losing contract, or freeing them from the obligation of paying higher wages than they can afford. It is better, they may say, to keep the works idle, than make a loss on each day's production. On the other hand, idleness of a mill, factory, ironwork, or colliery, means not only unprofitable capital for the time, but a very serious depreciation of plant and machinery; not to mention the chances (and very probable ones) that the customers

will go elsewhere for what they want, and will perhaps never return. Let us think, too, of the deterioration of house property in all neighbourhoods which have been the subject of a great strike; of the dwellings uncared for and left without tenants; of the rents unpaid; of the shopbills in arrear; of the tradesmen left with heavy legacies of debt; of the accumulating poor rates; of the deteriorated physique; the illness, and the consequently lessened labour value of the workmen, and their wives and families. Nor must we omit to take cognizance of the cases in which a whole industry has been driven away to more kindly localities. Trade is, after all, but a tender plant, which will not survive many rude shocks; and more than one instance has happened, in which it has been completely scared away from the neighbourhood. The Thames shipbuilding at Millwall is a well known instance of this, the still idle yards standing even now as a monument of the perversity and folly of those who once gained their livelihood in them, while Sheffield, Dundee, and other industrial towns can bear witness to similar occurrences, where capital and machinery have been transplanted to foreign countries, in which labour was more pliable than at home. I believe that if all these results could be put into figures, they would double and treble the actual losses of wages, though it is impossible to do more than allude to them in this general manner.

Whatever the figures that I have been able to bring forward this evening may be worth, they at all events show what a terrible cancer we have got in the midst of our industrial body, and should make all earnest and thinking men set vigorously to work to see what can be done to lessening the evil. Strikes have been discussed, and remedies proposed to any amount within the last few years, but we seem to get no nearer the solution of the difficulty. I may perhaps be permitted to add my contribution to the subject, feeling that, at all events, its importance warrants any suggestions. Many people have a firm belief in arbitration as the best settlement of the vexed question. I confess that, looking back on the results of arbitration, I do not share in that belief, but think that the success of arbitration is far too doubtful to seek the remedy in that direction. Arbitration has been treated in so fast and loose a way, and has been so often played with, that it has lost all its dignity and respect. Striking has been made a business of by the workman, and it has become an institution in the country. I would make also the treatment of strikes an institution, so that those who commence the quarrel should know what they would have to expect. It would not be amiss perhaps to glance at our neighbours in France and Belgium, and see what results their *Conseils des Prud'hommes* have produced. I find that in France, previous to the Franco-German war, the number of cases that came before these tribunals were very

large, viz., 43,807 in 1860, and 45,001 in 1868. After the war they decreased, being 29,913 in 1873; and since that year they have gradually increased to 31,244 in 1874, 33,907 in 1875, 34,774 in 1876, and 35,046 in 1877.

Of this number, 25,834 cases were heard before the councils in private, and a reconciliation was effected in 18,415 cases, or 71 per cent. 7,419 could not be conciliated, and were remitted for hearing by the General Council, while 9,076 quarrels were settled outside the court. As to the causes of dispute, 21,368 or 61 per cent. were relative to wages, 4,733 or 14 per cent. to dismissals, and 1,795 or 5 per cent. to apprenticeship cases. These councils, it must be remembered, not only settle disputes between the masters and the men, but also between the men themselves. In Belgium we find the results of their operations as follows:—

TABLE X.

	Cases Heard.	Cases Conciliated.	Cases Heard before the General Council.	Cases Settled between the Parties.
1862 .....	2,761	2,345	179	201
'63 .....	3,037	2,552	200	207
'64 .....	3,317	2,759	221	214
'65 .....	3,382	2,712	419	326
'66 .....	2,999	2,425	403	340
'67 .....	3,234	2,535	452	384
'68 .....	3,494	2,646	581	251
'69 .....	3,323	2,474	543	291
'70 .....	3,536	2,687	579	242
'71 .....	3,368	2,517	426	392
'72 .....	3,330	2,492	497	304
'73 .....	3,526	2,701	594	224
'74 .....	3,638	2,815	580	220
'75 .....	4,158	2,750	578	494
'76 .....	3,823	2,738	267	432
'77 .....	3,854	2,866	305	656

These results in both countries appear to me to be exceedingly satisfactory, and I should wish nothing better than to see the establishment of similar legalised institutions in this country. Twelve council boards might be appointed for the various industrial centres, viz.:—

1. Lancashire, Cheshire, and Cumberland.
2. Yorkshire.
3. Northumberland and Durham.
4. Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire.
5. Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Derbyshire.
6. North Wales and Shropshire.
7. South Wales and Monmouthshire.
8. Somersetshire and South West of England.
9. London and home counties.
10. Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, and South West of Scotland.
11. Fifeshire, Forfarshire, and East of Scotland.
12. Ulster.

Each board should be composed of an equal number, say ten each, of employers and employed, so that the various staple industries might be fairly represented, each member being regularly elected, like the School Board members, for a term of years, say three or five. The expenses of the board, which would only sit as often as required, might be met by a scale of fees, based upon the amount in dispute. My own belief is, that, if a wages quarrel arose in the district, which could not be settled amicably at first hand between the parties, and that if this dispute was obliged to come before the board for hearing, each party to contribute beforehand a sum in proportion to the amount in question, a great many disputes would be nipped in the bud. To strike costs nothing in the way of preliminary expenses, but when a certain round sum had to be paid down before the necessary hearing could be obtained, it might, and I think would, considerably modify the state of affairs. A superior board of appeal should be constituted for the whole kingdom, consisting of twenty-four members, one employer and one employed out of each district board. The decisions of the boards, not being self-constituted or voluntary, would carry legal weight with them, and should be enforced just in the same way as the orders of a magistrate or judge. I believe that under some such arrangement as this, a vast number of disputes would never come to the stage of publicity at all—and that the great majority of those that did come for hearing would be settled by the board, the very composition of which could not fail to inspire confidence in the minds of the disputants. Of course, circumstances might arise, in which a body of men might decline to abide by the decision of the district board, and even of the after decision of the superior board. In that case, the strikers would be in the position of men who had simply outlawed themselves by not obeying the laws of the country, and should be dealt with, if necessary, as such. I say, if necessary, for this reason: a disputant or a body of disputants would probably not go on with their work (although they might do so) until the case was fairly settled by the superior court. If decided in a way by which they declined to abide, their only alternative would be to leave their work and let the masters fill up their places as best they could, without attempt at interference or molestation of any kind. The least approach to this, either by moral suasion or physical force, should be most stringently punished. Some plan such as this appears to me the most likely to work with reasonable smoothness; at all events, I offer it for what it is worth. Unsatisfactory in many ways as are my data, I think they are full enough to show the gravity of the complaint, and that the subject is one which may well invite the discussion of the Statistical Society.

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## DISCUSSION on MR. G. P. BEVAN'S PAPER.

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir Rawson W. Rawson), in inviting discussion on the paper, said that particular attention ought to be devoted to the suggestion of the author as to the *Conseils des Prud'hommes*. There was no doubt that if there were constituted bodies to arbitrate in these matters, their decision, coming from a body not appointed for a special case, but a permanent body, consequently likely to be disinterested, and numerically stronger than one or two or even three arbitrators, would be likely to influence both the contesting parties more than the decision of arbitrators had hitherto done. That was the practical point of Mr. Bevan's paper; but upon the other points, which the author had not been able fully to elucidate, some gentlemen present might be able to supply interesting and useful information.

MR. THEO WOOD BUNNING, Secretary of the Northumberland and Durham Coal Owners' Associations, said that having been asked to attend the meeting to hear the paper read on the strikes of the last ten years, he had accepted the invitation with pleasure, as having been actively engaged in some of the largest of them, he had gained considerable experience in these matters.

Before making any remarks upon the general questions of strikes, he desired to point out an important error in the paper. The miners of Northumberland did not strike against Mr. Herschell's award, but, on the contrary, both the owners and men of Northumberland and Durham had at all times loyally accepted all awards made by umpires. He also deprecated the tone of some parts of the paper, for all such expressions as "the owners seized their opportunity," were improper. In discussing matters of this kind, any slighting remarks, whether from the one side or the other, did an immense amount of injury to the efforts of those who were loyally attempting to promote friendly relations between capital and labour.

He further stated that the experience gained in his connection with trades unions, of upwards of thirteen years, had resulted in his becoming convinced that men of all classes have pretty much the same passions, and have a pretty equal percentage of reasonable and unreasonable men amongst them; and that they all have the same common lever by which they can be moved, namely, "self interest;" and the reason that self interest does not operate in preventing strikes is that each party is unable to measure and allow for the interests of the other.

This became very apparent during a strike that took place in 1866, at a shipyard on the Tyne, where the men were actually on strike because they wanted to work a certain supposed fewer number of hours than was the custom, whilst in fact they were actually working fewer hours than they were asking for. The men



wanted to work nine hours a day, while through men being off work on Mondays and other times, for their own pleasure, the average number of hours worked per man was only about eight and a half.

It is evident here the owners might reasonably have said that if they were guaranteed nine hours a day, it would be worth their while to close every day after that number of hours had been worked, and this seemed so reasonable, that the wonder is that both sides did not see it, and mutually help each other in carrying it out; and it immediately occurred to him (Mr. Bunning), that if the owners and the men formed separate organisations to meet together and discuss their several necessities, that half of the difficulties connected with the relationship between capital and labour would be at an end.

He did not think, from the nature of things, that strikes would ever cease, but he did think that the number of them could be much diminished, and those that must take place reduced to questions which scarcely any other means could determine.

It might as well be said that domestic quarrels would cease, or that merchants could be compelled, by awards or acts of parliament, to continue to sell their goods to any given man at a loss. There must be absolute freedom and perfect equality between the contracting parties, and the bond that keeps them together must be mutual self interest. These remarks apply equally to capital and labour, the relations between which being precisely those between two merchants, the one selling and the other buying.

It has been premised that all classes of men have much about the same average of good and bad amongst them; but to compose this general average, there must be some who are more or less difficult to deal with, and strikes very often occur through men who have no grievance with their own employers, going out on strike out of sympathy for others who have left work on account of a quarrel started through the unreasonableness of other owners. This class of strike could be prevented by the formation of large associations of masters and men, where the average intelligence of the two bodies would have more chance of being developed and of directing the councils of all, so that there would be less difference between badly managed places, and so that an insubordinate workman would be more under the control of the better informed of his class.

The immediate effect of this arrangement is no doubt to drag down the best managed concerns somewhat, and to prevent workmen from individually bettering their condition, but in the end these defects will, if not disappear entirely, at least be considerably modified; besides, these large associations give stability to all arrangements mutually agreed upon, create precedent, and afford ample opportunity for each side ascertaining the wants and feelings of the other.

There are two great dangers however which beset these associations from the commencement of their existence: the one is that, formed as they are at first for the protection of the interest of their members, they are made use of by outsiders for political

purposes; and the second is, that they offer a convenient opportunity for advertising nostrums in the shape of political economy warranted to cure everything; but these dangers rectify themselves in the end, and the latter especially will die out from the very folly of the various panaceæ suggested.

It must not be for one moment supposed that it is intended that these remarks should apply to one side only, for they are equally applicable to both, and are made with the belief that there is the most absolute equality in the average good sense of all; and this, combined with mutual self interest, renders a joint discussion amongst all parties concerned the best means of solving difficulties.

To make these meetings successful, each side must be treated as perfectly on the same footing; there must be the most rigid politeness and cordiality observed, and there should be a total absence of all patronising lessons in morality on the one side, and of begging appeals to benevolence on the other.

Now it has pleased some to advert to the north as a country where disputes are frequent, and where there is an absolute ignorance of all political economy, and a total absence of all sympathy between the masters and the men.

His (Mr. Bunning's) experience was precisely the contrary; and he thought there was no district in Great Britain where more had been done to bring men and masters on one common platform of mutual interest than in Newcastle. In that town has been inaugurated the most important ameliorations in the relations between capital and labour, the most striking of which may be summed up as the joint committee, and the sliding scale: institutions which are rapidly becoming extended over England.

It is not averred that either of these institutions is perfect, or that they will become perfect, but it is fearlessly asserted that no two arrangements have done more to open the eyes of both sides to their mutual necessities; for instance, before the adoption of the sliding scale, could any miner be got to *believe*, that while coal was selling for 25s. a ton in London, and 15s. in some of the local dépôts, the coal owner was only getting 4s. 5d. a ton over an output of 26 million tons in the counties of Northumberland and Durham? but this has now become an acknowledged fact; the working of the sliding scale has thus done more to give the men an insight into the necessities of the owners, than worlds of political economy. Arbitration may also be said to be a child of the north; but it is one which certainly has not developed itself so rapidly, or done so much good, as the joint committee, and the reason is this: the umpire must of necessity be a man who has no direct interest at stake; but this does not necessarily prevent his having a personal bias, while it precludes him from having the least technical knowledge of the interests he is called upon to decide. The umpire may have a pet idea like restriction to advertise; he may have a peculiar training, which may cause him to exclude a certain class of evidence; he may have all, or a certain number of defects; but he never can have a perfect knowledge of the absolute wants of both sides, and this often causes mischievous awards. The men themselves are annoyed when a blundering verdict gives them all

their own way, foreseeing that the necessities of the case would soon assert themselves, and that arbitration would be swept away when the dam was let loose, and a struggle for existence commenced. Mistakes such as these can be cited, in which awards have screened men from a small reduction, at a period when a small reduction might have saved a trade from dire loss, and caused the men to have to submit to a reduction of over 20 per cent. a few months after.

His opinion was, that arbitration in its present form, where the arbitrator has full power to decide on matters deeply affecting the interests of large districts, was a great mistake; but combined with a committee of both the interested parties, who have already made concessions to each other, and narrowed the issue, it may be conducive of much good.

In conclusion, it will have been observed that the gist of all these remarks is to endeavour to prove the necessity of bringing masters and men to discuss their interests together, with a view of letting each know the necessities of the other; that the parties should meet and talk matters over with a view of narrowing the questions in dispute, leaving not the whole question, but the question so narrowed, to the umpire; in this way the umpire could not make any very improper award.

This is precisely the construction of the joint committee, where the two sides meet and discuss before the chairman their several cases, when it often happens that an arrangement is come to without having recourse to an umpire.

Mr. ALSAGER HILL said he rather agreed with the last speaker, that any strong language made use of in a matter of this sort was highly inexpedient. He submitted that the whole of Mr. Bevan's facts seemed to indicate that the phenomena of strikes were more of a "measly," than of a "cancerous" description. These phenomena of strikes were simply the result of the higher organisation of labour, bringing those diseases more rapidly to a head. Mr. Bevan himself had admitted that the net result of strikes had been, on the whole, satisfactory to the body of workmen of this country, in bringing about compromises in matters of dispute. He thought he was right in saying that the average condition of the industrial classes in England was never higher than it was at present, and even taking the international view, he did not think there was any part of the world in which a man could secure better reward for his labour than in England. As far as the building operatives were concerned, they came naturally to the front, and after them, the colliers. The latter class worked under more difficult conditions than almost any other class of men, and had less leisure than those who generally worked during the day time. He did not think, therefore, that any great value was to be laid on his friend's calculations with regard to any particular class of people on strike. Mr. Bevan seemed to have forgotten that it was only recently that the industrial classes of this country had had time to organise. The question was entirely one of general economic policy, and the main difficulty at present was the want of economic know-

ledge on the part of those who constituted the industrial classes. The number of strikes alluded to by Mr. Bevan had, in a great measure, resulted from a mere matter of organisation, because the leaders of these organised strikes were able to insist upon having that haggling in the market which, Mr. Bevan had said, lay at the root of the whole question. Mr. Bevan had shown that a large body of the most educated portion of the industrial classes in the north of England and in Scotland, had come to the conclusion that these particular contests were in their interest. He had in his possession the last report of the Glasgow Trades Council, which showed that the secretary was only paid 10*l.* a-year. Mr. Brassey some time ago expressed an opinion that the great body of the people who formed the industrial classes, had not seen their way to pay their own servants properly. So long as the secretary of such a body as the Trades Council of Glasgow was paid only 10*l.* a-year, so long it would be found that the more ignorant section, like colliers, would fight when they did not get what they thought were the market wages.

Mr. HOWELL said he had come rather to be a listener than a speaker. He felt with Mr. Bevan, that the more that was known about those subjects the better. He thought, however, that Mr. Bevan ought to be a little more careful in some of his facts. Mr. Bevan had asserted that strikes drove from the Thames the ship building industry. He (Mr. Howell) thought if there was any one thing that was proved to be wrong, it was that statement. Mr. Samuda, who was an authority on this subject, gave what he (Mr. Howell) should have thought a quietus to that statement, and Mr. Brassey had entered into statistics upon it, and it was well known to every trades unionist in London, that other causes had operated to drive the ship building from the Thames. There was one thing referred to by Mr. Bunning, namely, the difference of language used by speakers regarding the masters and the men. No one could find fault with the tone of Mr. Bevan's paper, but he (Mr. Howell) wished to note the difference with which he spoke of one very simple fact. He said, "I am happy to know that it will be discussed by an assembly which is so eminently calculated to do so judiciously and dispassionately, free from the bias with which the employer naturally views the question, or from the intemperate spirit which so often characterises the disputants on the other side." He did not think it was intended by Mr. Bevan to say anything unkind with regard to the men, but he could assure him that all the "intemperance" did not belong to the workmen. He was speaking to a very large employer in the building trade a few days ago, who was chairman of the association in the district, and who had suffered from strikes. Referring to several strikes that had taken place recently, he said, "Are the men always in the wrong?" "Oh, no," he said, "my greatest difficulty is to keep some of the masters back. They would be getting up a strike every week if it was not for other employers that restrained them." That was to say, that there were intemperate spirits among the masters as well as among the men. If Mr. Bevan thought that he (Mr. Howell) wished to encourage strikes by the facts he brought out in "Fraser's

Magazine," the conclusion was a wrong one. He wanted to show that certain results followed from certain courses, and until it was known whether these results did or did not follow, they would not feel safe ground. He (Mr. Howell) did not intend to say that strikes were carried on because it paid the strikers to do so. What he endeavoured to convey was, that in the long run, having no other course open to them by which to adjust wages, strikes ultimately paid the men; and, moreover, that it was often the only way they had open to them to get out of the difficulty. The men were not always to be blamed for causing a strike. If the master attempted a reduction, and the men struck against this reduction, the one who was originally the cause of the quarrel seemed to be in the wrong, unless circumstances showed that he was justified in taking that step. Although it was stated that a certain course of action would pay, that did not prove that the action was right. Any one who had read the report on loan mongering with foreign States, could not but say that it paid somebody to enter very largely into that business. He did not say that strikers were to be brought to that level; but he did say that, having no other recognised means of adjusting their differences, they had found in the long run that this would pay them. Mr. Hill had taken exception to the calculation that he (Mr. Howell) had made with regard to the 10s. per week that a man received in the form of pay. He did not think it could be said that a man paid himself his strike wages, any more than it could be said of a man in an insurance society that he paid for the rebuilding of a house that had been burned down. He paid into a society, a first class benefit society, which gave him certain advantages. In reality they paid for a great number of benefits, and it happened, perhaps, that once in a life time he was thrown out on strike and got a great deal of strike payment. In those great labour battles a very small proportion of the men fight the battle for the entire class. If 10 or even 20 per cent. of a trade fought the battle for the whole number, that class must be benefited by that struggle, and the loss to the entire body would be very small indeed. Supposing in a certain district 200 men struck for two months, and received 2s. per week advance, that was a small number of men; but if those 200 men fought the battle, and gained it, for say, 1,000 men in the district, and prevented the repetition of a similar struggle, this would do good. With regard to arbitration, he believed in an attempt to conciliate differences between masters and men in the first instance, and if no such attempt were made, he thought it would be doing a wrong both politically and socially. The issues ought to be narrowed down as far as possible, and then submitted to arbitration, or failing this, to an umpire. He did not think that the number of cases in which the men and masters had repudiated the award when given, ought to lead them to despair of the remedy of arbitration. He thought employers ought to be the first to welcome it, because as a class they were more intelligent than the employed, and able to take a broader view of the thing. The onus ought to be thrown upon the men if they were stupid enough to refuse to submit to arbitration. It had been the worst feature in the arbitration question, that most of the strikes were those that had taken place



on the most trivial subjects. He could only hope, in conclusion, that the discussion on the paper, and on others of the same kind carried on elsewhere, would lead to justice being done on both sides.

Mr. NEWMARCH was glad to see there Mr. George Howell, who as parliamentary secretary of the trades union societies, had acquired a high reputation. Mr. Howell had written several books and articles of great merit, all or most of which Mr. Newmarch had read with interest and profit. Mr. Howell's article in "*Fraser's Magazine*," for December last, was temperate and very ingenious, but the premises were assumed with considerable freedom, and there was good reason to doubt whether, as Mr. Howell represents, the strikes of very small numbers of men had procured solid benefits for the great and large numbers he set out in his tables. The legislation of the last few years had entirely abrogated the repressive features of the old combination laws, and the law had now most properly left both masters and men to form any combination they pleased, so long as absolute freedom on the part of each individual is not impaired. In the case of trades union societies, the legislature, by means of an Act, which Mr. Howell had a leading hand in procuring, has granted to trade societies a degree of license very hard to defend: inasmuch as such societies are permitted to mix in the same fund, contributions received by them for purely life insurance, annuity, and sick purposes, and contributions received for strike and trade purposes; and the courts of law are forbidden to give any remedy to contributors unable to procure the fulfilment by any such society of its life insurance, annuity, or sick obligations. The grievances arising out of this extravagant liberty are by no means speculative, as was shown in the painful case of the South Yorkshire Miners' Fund two or three years ago, in which some hundreds of claimants, rendered widows and orphans by a colliery accident, could not get either money or redress. Mr. Newmarch had never heard any reason even decently tenable advanced in favour of the confusion of contributions, and denial of legal remedies, to which he had referred, and until this scandal be removed, the trades unions will most properly be open to severe criticism.

Trade contentions, like all contentions between buyers and sellers, were inevitable, and in themselves wholesome. But contentions about wages were more intrinsically difficult than bargainings about goods. Hence it was matter of real congratulation to both men and masters, that latterly the subject had been treated in many cases by both sides with eminent moderation, intelligence, and care. Both sides seem to be now sensible that whether it is a strike or an arbitration, there is, and must be, unrepresented at it, that important third party—the public—and the willingness or unwillingness of the public to pay higher prices, which in reality controls both wage payers and wage receivers. It may be assumed that the bad days of trades unions were over. We cannot suppose the encouragement by respectable men of violence or intimidation; but even greater order and peacefulness cannot remove from trades unions their fundamental defect, viz., that in their essence they seek to place checks and difficulties in the way of superior skill,

intelligence and industry, for the benefit or supposed benefit of the men who are inferior in all or most of the qualities which enable men to raise themselves in the world. With the growth of education it is inevitable, taking human nature as it is, that the superior, active, ambitious working men, will more and more refuse to be put under disabilities for the supposed benefit of their inferior comrades and competitors.

Mr. Bevan's paper was a very intelligent and praiseworthy attempt to collect and classify the facts of a very difficult subject.

Mr. WALFORD thought the international aspect of the question ought not to be lost sight of, because there could be no doubt that during the continuance of strikes in the last ten years, our international interests had been suffering. A large proportion of certain branches of trade had gone from this to other countries, and would no doubt continue to do so if the strikes continued. Belgium had been considerably benefited in this way; and still more so the United States, who had supplanted our cutlery over the entire continent of America, was usurping our former supremacy in plated wares, and also seriously threatening our iron industries generally. He could give further instances of it if it were necessary to do so.

Mr. PHILIP VANDERBYL said the author of the paper had omitted to give a definition of the term *strike*.

If the refusal of a clerk to perform his duties without increase of salary, or the objection of a merchant to sell his goods below a certain price, were to be considered as strikes—as suggested by two of the speakers—it is clear that the tabular statements of the author would have to be greatly altered, in fact it would be impossible to consider the subject statistically.

In his (Mr. Vanderbyl's) opinion, a *strike* might be defined as the refusal of a number of persons to perform certain customary work or duties, not only to the disadvantage of the employer, but also to the injury of the general community.

In referring to the causes of strikes, the author had omitted one which he (Mr. Vanderbyl) thought very important, viz., the stupid desire of workmen to be placed on an equal footing with regard to pay, and although certain men were infinitely superior to others, they insisted that the inferior workmen should be paid the same as the best men. If the employer were allowed to classify his men, and pay according to merit, it would not only be a great advantage to the intelligent workmen, but would tend to prevent strikes.

The CHAIRMAN thought the idea of a strike was shown in Table IX. In upwards of a hundred cases the minimum number was 150 men.

Sir EDMUND BECKETT, Q.C., thought that the only thing that would put an end to strikes was that those who conducted them, should be made to understand, better than they do yet, whether they were really injurious or not. Mr. Howell, and those whom he led, were in the habit of coming to very rough and ready conclusions about cause and effect in a manner perfectly illogical. They continually said that the condition of the working man was



improved, and then jumped to the conclusion that that must be due to strikes, whereas it might just as well be in spite of strikes. The condition of every class has improved, of those which strike, quite as much as of those which do not. The condition of school boys and domestic servants has improved immensely, and he did not know that strikes could be credited with doing any great benefit to either of them. That sort of reasoning is mere begging of the very question in dispute. Then Mr. Howell assumed that because strikes are most numerous in the north, and because intelligence chiefly lived in the north (which compliment he [Sir E. Beckett] gladly accepted), therefore strikes must be right. But this summary kind of logic is not altogether convincing. Mr. Howell might perhaps reflect with advantage that great labouring masses are vastly more numerous in the north than the south. Another still more amazing fallacy which Mr. Howell persisted in, was that those who strike, being only a small proportion of the whole number of workmen, and spending only the money they already have, was analogous to an insurance company against fire. A more unlike analogy was never put forward. People do not make fires on purpose, as they do strikes. The loss by fire is inevitable, what is called in law, the act of God, and the object of insurance is to distribute that inevitable loss over as many people as possible. But a strike first wilfully makes a universal loss of all the labour and its produce to everybody, and then consumes all the savings of the working class alone to maintain it as long as possible. So long as Mr. Howell deludes his followers with reasoning of that kind, the visions of working men having learnt more wisdom than before these bad times, are altogether baseless; and he was sorry to say he could see no evidence that they had yet learnt anything.

So far as he had heard this evening, no notice seemed to have been taken that mere striking for money was not by any means the most important part of what is called the labour question. At a meeting of the Architects' Institute, two years ago, Mr. Lucas, the great builder, said, "I pay for labour half as much again as I did some years ago, and I do not get half as much done, in other words, the same amount of work costs three times as much as it did. I could stand paying more, if I could get the work done;" and many other employers of all kinds say the same. Until Mr. Howell, and those whom he leads, learn that all the riches the world enjoys come from two things, namely, from the earth itself, and the labour spent upon it, all their other reasoning would be in vain, and only lead to mischief. With regard to the present prospects of trade, although it was a dangerous thing to connect causes and effects, he was struck with the fact that immediately there was a good harvest in America, trade began to revive here in consequence of increased demands from America. The fundamental thing was to get as much work out of the earth as the world could do without doing itself any harm, *i.e.*, working too hard for health; and the question of how much was to be paid for it, was a minor one, though of course all important in competition. Referring to trade outrages, it was obviously the spirit of unionism that caused them. Every man who destroys another's tools, or breaks his head, because he disobeys union rules, or works for lower wages

than are resolved on, is *ipso facto* the agent of unionism, whether he has had any special orders from a union council or not ; and it is mere absurdity to deny them, when we are reading them continually in the newspapers, which of course only record a very small proportion of what really happen.

It was very easy for Mr. Howell to say that Mr. Brassey, or somebody else, has proved that strikes had nothing to do with the driving away of shipbuilding from the Thames. That is a very common desire of reasoners on many subjects who have awkward facts to deal with, or arguments that they cannot answer, viz., to say that somebody else has answered them completely. Nobody who is versed in the ways of controversy, accepts statements of that kind, except as proving that the man who makes them, really cannot answer the arguments himself. Has Mr. Howell forgotten that Messrs. Burns of Glasgow wrote to the "Times" two years ago, that they were getting carpentry for their ships from Japan ? The union orators and reasoners never seemed to take any account of foreign competition, aided by English strikes, carrying off whole trades, except, indeed, when they try to get up grand international unions for universal strikes.

Mr. POCHIN said that the constant differences that arose between masters and men, were very deeply to be regretted. The effect was very injurious to all the interests concerned. Arbitration as at present conducted, was very unsatisfactory, as it had no settled basis on which to act. Arbitrators and umpires in nearly all cases had confined themselves to an inquiry as to the amount of wages the masters could afford to pay on the one hand, and the men afford to work for on the other hand ; that, he thought, could never be a satisfactory basis. He knew a case where one company was working six collieries ; in some of those collieries the coal was very good, commanding a high price in the market, and was easily raised ; in the other collieries, the coal was inferior, and commanded a far less price in the market, and the raising was attended with many mining difficulties. Arbitration, on the terms on which it was usually conducted, would, under those circumstances, decree, that two colliers, working at less than a mile distant from each other, should have different rates of wages, for precisely the same amount of work. Until wages were settled purely on the question of supply and demand, and without combinations of workmen on one side, and masters on the other, he did not think that the three great interests concerned would have reason to be satisfied with the results. These three interests being the masters, the workmen, and the public.

Mr. BEVAN, in reply, disclaimed having used intemperance of language in treating the subject. Mr. Howell had spoken of the violence of masters, and the intemperate spirit of the employed. He (Mr. Bevan) thought the one was as bad as the other. To discuss the question with bias, would be as bad as to discuss it with temper. The evil was a terrible one. It was no use discussing what caused it, but they ought to seek to remedy it.