

far as its enforcement was concerned, was a dead letter; so much so, that for the statutory regulations, was substituted a system of private contractual relations between master and servant, or employer and employee. This statute was in force two centuries when it was construed as affecting only those industries existing at the time of its passage in 1563.

The next enactment on the subject in point of time, was the "Combination Act" passed in 1791, and re-affirmed in 1800, making unlawful any combination to secure an advance in wages, changing or decreasing the hours of labour, or preventing an employer from hiring anyone else, or whom he chose to hire, or inducing workmen to leave their work, or to attend a meeting to advance any of these purposes.

In 1825 was enacted "The Molestation and Obstruction Act," and in 1859 an Act was passed more clearly defining "Molestation and Obstruction," as contained in the Act of 1825, and this defining Act of 1859 was construed in 1867, by the Queen's Bench, through Cockburn, C.J., as follows:—"I am very far from saying that the members of a trade union, constituted for the purpose not to work except under certain conditions, and to support one another in the event of being thrown out of employment, in carrying out the views of the majority, would bring themselves within the criminal law, but the rules of the society would certainly operate in restraint of trade and in that sense be unlawful."

Through the efforts of the labour unions themselves was enacted in 1871 a provision that "the purposes of any trade union shall not be deemed to be unlawful so as to render any member of such trade union liable to criminal prosecution for conspiracy or otherwise."

The above Act was the result of long agitation of the subject of trade unions and their relations to the public in particular, which brought about the appointment by Queen Victoria, in 1857, of a Royal Commission, which made ten preliminary reports, its final one being on March 9, 1869; as a result, the Government introduced a bill legalizing these unions, in so far