

public opinion, and under the influence of that pressure, the award has been practically acquiesced in. While on that point, just to encourage my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, to believe that there is something good in that measure, I will read what Mr. Francis Adams has said with reference to the Massachusetts railway strike :

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I am afraid I did not make myself clear. I endeavoured to say as distinctly as I could that I think the object to be aimed at in efforts of this kind is to get the parties to agree to a tribunal whose award they will respect.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Quite so. I quite agree with my hon. friend (Mr. Borden, Halifax) that it would be most desirable if we could get them to agree in the first instance. But that is not possible. When they are at war and holding each other at arms' length, an agreement is difficult to obtain. If, at that stage, some third party intervenes and brings them together, by degrees the pressure of public opinion and of the situation brings about peace. In the case in question, with which I am going to trouble the House, the strike on the Boston and Maine Railway, neither party consented. But the board of arbitrators for the state of Massachusetts had power to hold an arbitration. This is the history of the proceedings :

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 12th of February, 1877, all the locomotive engineers and firemen in the employ of the Boston and Maine Railroad Company stopped work in a body, abandoning their trains. The move was not altogether unexpected, but the operation of the road was seriously interfered with. The commissioners did not at first intervene, neither party calling upon them. Indeed, both parties were unwilling so to do—

I commend this to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition :

—for each was apprehensive, apparently, of adverse action. During several days, accordingly, the commissioners preserved an attitude of silent observation. After the lapse of a reasonable period, however, the board concluded that it was plainly time to recognize the fact that the public was suffering serious inconvenience ; for then the Boston and Maine Railroad was, as it still is, one of the principal arteries of eastern New England. The president and directors of the company and the employees of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers were accordingly notified that the board proposed to take a hand in the business. This it proceeded to do, and immediate investigation was notified. Both parties appeared, for, without confessing itself in the wrong, neither party could help doing so, and professed a perfect willingness to submit their cases. No suggestion of a readiness to abide by any decision that might be given thereon was either asked for or given ; but the board proceeded to hear witnesses and to elicit the facts. The inquiry was continued through three days ; and, on the 21st of February, the report of the board was made public, appearing in full in all the newspapers of that date. In it the commissioners, after carefully and judicially sifting

out the essential facts from the evidence submitted, placed the responsibility for the trouble where the weight of evidence showed it belonged ; and thereupon proceeded to make such recommendations as in its judgment the exigencies called for. The effect was immediate. An authentic record was before the community, and public opinion, crystallizing, made itself decisively felt. It is not necessary to enter further into the history and merits—the rights and the wrongs—of that particular struggle. My object is merely to call attention to what was then done, and done successfully, as constituting the nearest practical approach consistent with our American political and social system to what is known as ' compulsory arbitration.' It was compulsory inquiry only, and an appeal thereon to the reason and sense of right of all concerned. Reliance was placed in an enlightened sense of right of all concerned, and an informed public opinion.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. There was no power, I suppose to enforce the decision ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. None whatever.

Mr. INGRAM. Only public opinion.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Nothing but public opinion. Neither party was willing and neither party consented. But the board at the right time, at the psychological moment, intervened, brought about an inquiry, made recommendations, gave them to the public and threw the responsibility for further trouble upon the party who refused to act upon them.

Mr. BROCK. After both parties were financially exhausted.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Brock) may have information on that point, but I have none except what appears here.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). How long had the strike continued ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The strike began at four o'clock on the 12th of February. Action was taken after ' several days ' according to the report. A strike lasting several days would hardly have ruined the Boston and Maine Railway, one of the main railways of New England.

Mr. BROCK. I thought the hon. gentleman (Hon. Sir William Mulock) was speaking of the great coal strike in which the President of the United States intervened.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. No ; I was not referring to that.

Mr. BROCK. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. He had been speaking of President Roosevelt and I thought he was still referring to that case.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I quite understand the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Brock's) mistake.