

extension of the system. The 1896 Act gives to the Board of Trade¹ certain powers of negotiation and arbitration in case of labour disputes. Its application was not limited to the coal-mining industry.

The Act provided for the registration of such Boards or of new Boards which might in future be established, and required the Boards to furnish such reports of proceedings and other documents as the Board of Trade might reasonably require.

By Sect. 2 of the Act of 1896 it was provided that—

1. “Where a difference exists or is apprehended between an employer, or any class of employers, and workmen, or between different classes of workmen, the Board of Trade may, if they think fit, exercise all or any of the following powers, namely,—

- (a) inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference ;
- (b) take such steps as to the Board may seem expedient for the purpose of enabling the parties to the difference to meet together, by themselves or their representatives, under the presidency of a chairman mutually agreed upon or nominated by the Board of Trade or by some other person or body, with a view to the amicable settlement of the difference ;
- (c) on the application of employers or workmen interested, and after taking into consideration the existence and adequacy of means available for conciliation in the district or trade and the circumstances of the case,

¹ Such powers are now vested in the Ministry of Labour by the New Ministries and Secretaries Act, 1916.