

Mr. Gaw said he could not discuss that question with them.

Mr. Owen could not understand what the Commissioners wanted them to do.

Mr. Ronayne said, to undertake not to interfere with the men in future. Mr. Gaw had sent the men to work, and they had been taken out by their orders as the executive of the society.

Mr. Gaw said they would give the men ten minutes to consider the question, and they could go away into another room and discuss the matter amongst themselves. Let them distinctly understand what they had to consider. The Commissioners asked them to say whether they would sign an undertaking to abstain from inciting any of their fellow-employés to rebellion against the orders of the Commissioners and to express their regret for having done so, or in the event of refusing they would be called on to resign, or be dismissed.

The men then retired, and at the end of the period returned. In answer to Mr. Gaw they declined to sign the undertaking, which was in the following words:—

"I hereby undertake for the future to abstain unreservedly and unconditionally from inciting any of my fellow-employés to disobey any orders of the Railway Commissioners, or to refuse the duties required of them provided by the rules and regulations under which they were engaged, and I desire further to express my regret for having done so in the past.—Christchurch, 10th September, 1890."

Some objection was taken by the men to the wording of the undertaking, especially the last clause of the document, expressing regret for having incited their fellow-workmen in the past. This, they said, was not what they should be called upon to sign, as they had not done so, and this conveyed the impression that they had and were sorry for it.

Mr. Gaw said he would be quite willing to take that clause out, which was done.

The men were then asked severally whether they would sign the undertaking, but they declined to do so whilst the men called out the other day in Lyttelton were still out.

Mr. Winter mentioned that, at a meeting here the other night, it had been decided to send a telegram on the matter to the Commissioners, asking for a conference on the question of these men. All then declined to sign the declaration under these circumstances.

Mr. Gaw then asked them whether they would resign from the service. To this they all, except Mr. Owen, returned an immediate and decided negative.

Mr. Owen asked for time to consider the position.

Mr. Gaw declined to give any further time. They had refused to promise not to incite their fellow employés, and now they declined to resign there was nothing to be done but to dismiss the whole four at once. Before doing so, however, he would once more ask them whether they would sign the undertaking he had read or resign. The men all declined to do either. Mr. Gaw said that, in that case, they would be dismissed. A fortnight's pay would be given them in lieu of notice, and they would have to report what had taken place to their respective foremen. The proceedings then terminated.

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