

though you told us just now that a man kept on going round and suggesting the men should sign it: do you wish to withdraw the word "compel"?—I will just tell you now about that compulsion. When that telegram was sent down Mr. Miller drew up a petition to repudiate it, and he sent round a man with it, and he got very few names. The following Friday was our pay-night, and Mr. Miller had the petition in his office, and the names of those who had not signed it. As the men came into the pay-office to be paid they were told Mr. Miller wanted to see them, and Mr. Miller asked each man was he going to sign this petition. Well, several men who came out said it was compulsory. They reckoned it was compulsory for the manager to have that in his office, and to ask them to sign it.

251. *Mr. Fisher.*] You leave that paragraph as it is?—Yes.

252. *The Chairman.*] Then the petition goes on, (5.) "Letters and petitions against the Bill were drawn up by the employers and brought to us to sign, and when there was any demur to signing we were taken in one at a time to the manager's office, handed a pen, and told to sign. In my case I told the manager that it was against my convictions and will that I was signing, but he said I must sign, and I signed the first lot of papers, but refused to sign the last lot, and, on the contrary, I signed a telegram to the Premier congratulating him on the success of the Bill." Is there anything you would like to withdraw?—Yes, there is one thing I would like to withdraw, and that is where the manager asked me to sign the petition. I referred then to the time when he called them into his office.

253. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is that what you referred to just now?—Yes; but he did not ask me to sign it. I signed a great many of them first; perhaps there was a petition every time the Bill came up.

254. *The Chairman.*] You thought in signing that you would suffer if you did not sign: was that the reason you signed?—Yes.

255. At last you got that you did not care?—Yes. I have heard the men say when the Bill was first brought up—when Sir George Grey brought it up—that they would not disgrace the "old man" by signing the petition.

256. Then the petition goes on, (6.) "For this the manager called me up and informed me I was dismissed, and that I would have to go at the end of the week. Later on he called me up and said that I could wait till the end of the month, as he did not wish the public to say that I was dismissed for sending the telegram to the Premier. Later on he again called me up and said, 'After what you have done in regard to the Bill it will be impossible for you to stay on here any longer.'" You want to withdraw that?—Yes.

257. It was you who asked to be discharged?—Yes, I asked him to discharge me. When I told him I would rather be put off now than when things were dull, he said, "Well, yes, Harry, it will be impossible for you to stay here now."

258. *Mr. Fisher.*] You are aware of the effect of what you have told us now—that you have, intentionally or unintentionally, attempted to deceive Parliament with this petition. Which is it to be: is the petition true or untrue? Does it express partly what you intended to express?—Yes, partly.

259. In the main or in the minor part. Is the petition, in the main, correct, or does it misrepresent you only on subsidiary points?—That is all.

260. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Then, is it a subsidiary point in the statement in the petition that the manager told you you could not stay after what you had done, whereas the real fact now is that you told the manager you wanted to leave, and on being pressed he said, "Well, it would be impossible for you to stay now"? Do you not see the difference in the position?

261. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is it so that the manager told you, "It will be impossible for you to stay on here any longer"?—When I asked the manager to discharge me, as I would rather go now when things were good and I could get other employment than for them to find fault with me later on and put me off then, he said to me, "Yes, Harry, it would be impossible for you to stay here now."

262. *The Chairman.*] You say in the next clause, "(7.) This is the system of coercion used in regard to the whole of the employés in reference to the above Bill. Your petitioner prays that your honourable House will pass some law similar to the Corrupt Practices Act, to insure that the Parliament and the people will not be coerced in regard to any legislation that the majority of the people (represented by the Parliament) may desire to pass. And also that you will grant an inquiry into the circumstances of your petitioner's case." Well, upon this petition the inquiry you pray for is being made?—Yes.

263. And you withdraw a material and considerable part of your petition. You see the position you have placed yourself in, and this Commission too?—Yes.

*Hon. Major Steward.*] The whole point of the thing being the compulsion, on which point your evidence fails, you alter it, and on the point of being discharged you alter that too. It turns out that you pressed to be discharged.

264. *The Chairman.*] Do you know of any other man who has been discharged because he refused to sign this petition?—No, I cannot remember any just now.

265. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Were there other persons who joined you in your action?—The majority of the men joined me in my action.

266. Was it known to the employers that they had so joined?—They did not know.

267. You were the only one known to the employers as acting in the matter?—Yes.

268. *Mr. Fisher.*] Then, why did not a number of the others, or any of the others, sign this petition which you sent individually to the House of Representatives?—I suppose they were frightened.

269. What is the feeling of the men as a body in the refinery-works with regard to this society, apart from any question of signing petitions or letters: what is the inward feeling of the men?—They want to see the society "broke up"; they actually pray for the Bill to pass.

270. *The Chairman.*] That is how they represented matters to you?—Yes.