

INTIMIDATION CHARGES.

RUARDEAN DEFENDANTS BEFORE LITTLEDEAN MAGISTRATES.

At Littledean Petty Sessions on Friday last, Cyril Tippins, Lloyd Watkins, Victor Hyett, Ewart Nelmes, Frank Miles, and Elizabeth Watkins (wife of Ernest Watkins), all of Ruardean, were summoned by Inspector Gardiner for intimidating Samuel Kibble, Ernest Kibble, and William Hughes, contrary to the Conspiracy and Protection Act, 1875, and Trade Disputes Act, 1906. In another information defendants were alleged to have used violence towards the three men above named, on the 28th September.

Mr. Harold Langley Smith appeared to prosecute and Mr. G. Frever Wellington, acting under instructions from the Forest of Dean Miners' Association, defended.

All defendants pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Langley Smith stated that on Tuesday, September 28th, about 9.15 p.m. Samuel Kibble, of Hope Mansell, William Hughes, of Cinderford, and Ernest Kibble, also of Cinderford, were leaving the True Blue Colliery at Ruardean, where they were employed as colliers, and they were accompanied by a police escort. As they approached the church at Ruardean they saw a large crowd collected, who commenced booing and shouting, "Blacklegs." That was bad enough, but it did not end there, because stones were thrown. One of the stones struck P.C. Varney's motor cycle. He admitted that the prosecution were not in a position to call evidence to say that either of the defendants threw the stones or any other missile, but having regard to certain decisions in the Courts it was not necessary.

Samuel Kibble, William Hughes and Ernest Kibble bore out the advocate's opening statement.

P.C. Keeley said in consequence of what came to his knowledge he proceeded to True Blue Colliery and escorted the three men. It was a dark night. Witness had a flash lamp, which he put on all the defendants. Witness warned them against their conduct of booing and shouting and ordered them from the spot. They all went with the exception of Mills, who stood against the church wall for some time. Witness proceeded up the village in the side car of P.C. Varney's constabulary and one or two stones were thrown.

Cross-examined: Witness did not think any of the defendants had been that evening to a choir practice at the Chapel near. Certainly no light was in either church or chapel at a quarter to 9 that evening.

P.C. Varney, one of the constables escorting the men, said a stone was thrown from behind and from where the defendants were congregated.

Mr. Wellington said he hoped to shew by the evidence he should call that the statement of P.C. Keeley was impossible of acceptance. The defendant Tippins was already under a bond to keep the peace, therefore it became a very serious matter to him. Neither he nor any of the other defendants had part or lot in the demonstration against these three men, and did nothing which, directly or indirectly, was likely to create a disturbance.

Defendant Cyril Tippins said he lived opposite the Congregational Chapel at Ruardean, and on the evening in question attended a choir practice there, which he left at 8 o'clock. After going home he went up the main road to meet his mother and other relatives. P.C. Keeley flashed his light on him and said, "You here again, Tippins." Witness made no reply. He did not know that there was going to be any demonstration that evening. Since he was bound over in that Court he had done everything to keep his recognisances.

Elizabeth Jane Tippins, mother of Cyril Tippins, corroborated her son's statement as to his taking no part in the disorderly conduct.

ated. She saw the constable throw his flash-light on to her brother, when he said, "You are at it again." She took no part in any disturbance. She heard no booing or shouting, although she was within 20 yards of the spot where it was alleged to have occurred.

Aubrey Jones, husband of the last witness, gave similar evidence. In cross-examination he said he saw the two Kibbles pass, but though there was a crowd of 20 or 30 people there was no booing or shouting.

Gertrude Ellis, wife of Amos Ellis, said she was organist at Ruardean Congregational Chapel, and the practice on the night in question was over at 9 o'clock. Tippins and Mrs. Watkins were amongst those who attended the choir practice.

Lloyd Watkins, one of the defendants, said he had returned to work as a collier. On the night in question he had been to a man's house to borrow a mattress in order to get some coal. He left there shortly after 8 o'clock and saw the three men pass. As they approached P.C. Keeley flashed his light on witness and Nelmes, but he (defendant) swore that he never said a word to any one. He was absolutely innocent. He had no idea there was going to be any demonstration. There was a crowd of 30 or 40 people there, but he had no idea what they were there for. There was no shouting or booing.

Nelmes, Hyett and Miles also denied committing any act of intimidation. The last named said he was a married man with four children and had something else to do than to prevent men going to work. He was under the church wall that evening, which was practically his nightly custom. Mrs. Watkins said though there was a crowd there was no demonstration. She was 15 yards away from the crowd and saw them when she came from the chapel choir practice.

Horace Watkins, a Ruardean collier, said he saw no stones thrown that evening, neither did he hear any shouts of, "Blacklegs." P.C. Keeley ordered them to disperse. Witness said he saw nothing of Tippins or Mrs. Watkins.

William James, another Ruardean collier, said he was in Hyett's company. He did nothing "and did it well." Hyett took no part in any disturbance. Witness saw no stone throwing.

The Bench, after a lengthy deliberation of the case in private, found all the defendants guilty. The Chairman said they regarded it as more serious than any of the kind which had yet occurred in the Forest, the stone throwing in the dark adding to the gravity of the offence. Each defendant would be fined £5, and they would have to pay between them the costs of the prosecution, amounting to £16. Each defendant would also be bound over in the sum of £10 to keep the peace for a period of 12 months. Defendants were allowed a month in which to pay.