

PP/EW.

May 8th 1922.

Copy of letter sent to
G.G. Jobbings
W.O. Strengward
H.S. Dix
A.D. Murdoch.

Dear Mr.

I enclose you a copy of the Ballarat "Courier" which deals with the Conference running into 4½ hours which I had on Friday last. It also sets out in a fuller degree than is given in the Melbourne papers our reply on the whole dispute. I purposely held this back until after the Conference so that they should not know what our points were.

All the newspaper reports are incomplete and therefore misleading. The "Courier" is the same because the agreement that was entered into on the vital point is not included.

There should be something in the "Argus" and "Age" to-morrow further dealing with this.

I think it will be a very long time before our men will be desirous of starting another strike as the lessons they have learnt from this have not been very pleasant.

You will remember they said that rather than work the one-man cars they would carry their swags through Australia.

Yours faithfully,

Kidd regards.

PRIVATE.

P.O.Box. No. 46

PP/LD.

11th May, 1922

Fred. Thonemann Esqr.,
395 Collins Street,
MELBOURNE.

Dear Mr. Thonemann,

I had a pretty strenuous day yesterday - two hours in the morning with the Registrar, Mr. Stewart, and a further two hours in the afternoon.

He decided in our favor in regard to the fact that we have full powers to run the Gardens and Sebastopol routes with one man. I told you that I was quite sure of the position, and that I knew that conceding this point to the men, which was given them as some sop to get them back, could only be a matter of a few days.

The Registrar has seen Justice Powers, and he is prepared to come down here on Saturday week to deal with the one man question.

Mr. Home was present at the Conference and said that we could not give our consent to this, and that we must reserve our full legal rights in the matter.

The agreement arranged with the men last Friday was then repudiated by them. I produced a letter from the Town Clerk confirming the agreement, which I have stated was the one arrived at. The Registrar then made the most extraordinary proposal, viz., that we should continue to run the above two routes with two men until such times as the Judge had dealt with the one man car question.

I stated that I would stick to the agreement arrived at, and that I intended to get a special meeting of the Ballarat Council called last night to get their views on the position.

His suggestion might mean running with these two men for perhaps three or four weeks. We must have the right to call witnesses and deal with the whole matter in the fullest possible manner if the Judge is determined upon dealing with the matter.

I told him definitely that we could on no account agree

to his suggestion. The matter, which was left to him to decide, had been settled in our favor, and it was unfair to these men in the other Departments to expect them to work early and late, Saturdays and Sundays to assist in these routes being run by two men. It would also cost about £50 per week, and it was prejudicing our position.

The Reference Board then broke up and was adjourned until Saturday morning.

I was able to get a full meeting of the Council on my return to Ballarat last night, at which three of the local Union Representatives were present, and we sat from about nine and finally adjourned at ten to twelve.

I told them about the repudiation of the agreement and said I desired an expression of their opinion. The majority of the Councillors agreed that there was no doubt that the agreement arrived at was the one referred to in the Town Clerk's letter, which I had shown the Registrar. I then said I was satisfied with the position. The Union Secretary then demanded that, notwithstanding all that occurred, we should continue to run the Gardens and Sebastopol routes with two men.

A number of the Councillors took up the weak-kneed position that we should meet the men and save any possibility of trouble. I emphatically refused to give any consideration to their proposal, and stated that if further trouble ensued, the full responsibility of this must be on the Union's shoulders. Two of the Councillors, after the meeting, said to me privately that they quite agreed with the position I had taken up, and that no other course was open, as it must prejudice us.

I have asked the Union to give an immediately consideration to this proposal, and a massed meeting is being held at 12 o'clock to-night, and I am to have their reply to-morrow morning. I feel quite sure you will agree with the position I have taken up. The attitude of the Registrar is to say the least most

(3)

unsatisfactory and one sided. He gave them the very strongest warning against any further strike, and personally I do not think there will be any further trouble. If there has to be, then I think the only course is to face it.

I am convinced that we have the Council as a Body entirely with us in this matter. They appreciated the small concession I made last evening, which prevented the strike continuing, and I believe that a majority approve of the stand now taken. Repudiation is in the air, as the daily papers now show.

I enclose you the "Star" cutting of to-day.

Yours faithfully,

P.S. Since dictating the above I have had time to read the paper reports. Councillors Bell and Levy were not present at the previous Council meeting, therefore, know nothing about what transpired. Councillor Harrison and Cooke have been working the men's case up. The Mayor's opinion of the agreement is for some reason not made clear. When he first spoke he was quite definite that the agreement was properly arrived at. He then authorised copies to be made by the Town Clerk at the end of the Conference, and distributed to the press and their Solicitors. He was the one who asked Jewell, when the meeting terminated, whether he would sign it and he stated he did not think it necessary as he quite understood it. These local papers in their reports frequently do not properly deal with the subject.

and that I intended to get a special meeting of the Ballarat Council called last night to get their views on the position.

His suggestion might mean running with these two men for perhaps three or four weeks. We must have the right to call witnesses and deal with the whole matter in the fullest possible manner if the Judge is determined upon dealing with the matter.

I told him definitely that we could on no account agree