

members rising in their places.

STRANGE STORY FROM FARNHILL.

THREATS TO TRIBUNAL MEMBER.

An extraordinary case arising out of the war came before the Skipton Magistrates on Saturday, when Albert Rhodes, wheelwright, of Farnhill, was summoned by Mr. George Bottomley, of Farnhill, for using threats. Defendant did not appear. P.S. Flannery formally gave evidence as to the serving of the summons personally on Rhodes on the previous Thursday, and said that no reply was made by defendant.

Mr. M. R. Knowles, who appeared for Mr. Bottomley, explained that the latter was a member of the Skipton Rural Military Tribunal. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-chairman, Mr. Bottomley was called upon to preside over a sitting of the Tribunal on March 13th, when defendant appealed for exemption on behalf of his son, a lad of 18 years of age. As a result of the hearing the appeal was dismissed, and the youth was ordered to join up. From that day to this defendant had made Mr. Bottomley personally responsible for his son having to join the Army, and had told him more than once that if his son was sent abroad he would hold Mr. Bottomley responsible. He had further told complainant that he (defendant) was not afraid to die and that he would "do Mr. Bottomley in."

Mr. Knowles added that the matter was very serious for complainant. Defendant was a big, able-bodied and strong man of between 40 and 50 years of age, and Mr. Bottomley was afraid of the consequences. Defendant was taking

the matter of his son having to join the Army very seriously, and under the circumstances he was a very dangerous man. On August 1st last year he went to Mr. Bottomley's house and told complainant that if his son had to winter in the trenches he would "do him in." Then on January 3rd Rhodes stopped Mr. Bottomley in the street at Kildwick, and after stating he had had a letter from his son to the effect that he was leaving the country on the 14th inst., he added "I shall go mad. I give you fair warning that I shall have my revenge. You will have to suffer with me—I will 'do you in.' My son would never have joined the Army if he hadn't been sent; and you are the man that sent him and I shall hold you responsible. The Tribunal is like the war—a—fraud." Mr. Knowles said that all Mr. Bottomley asked for was that defendant should be bound over. He did not think that defendant would appear at the Court unless he was made to come, and, therefore, he asked for a warrant for his appearance.

Mr. Knowles further stated that he had had a lengthy correspondence with defendant with a view to pacifying him. He had pointed out to him the unreasonableness of his attitude, as the decision in regard to his son was agreed upon by all the members of the Tribunal. The correspondence, however, had had no effect upon defendant. The matter was a serious one and it was one of those things that had not been provided for under the Defence of the Realm Act, and Mr. Bottomley's only course was to bring the case before the Magistrates. Defendant's son was an able-bodied A man, and there appeared to be no reason why he should not serve, but apparently nothing except absolute exemption would satisfy the father.

Mr. Bottomley corroborated Mr. Knowles' statement, and added that defendant had threatened to "swing for him" if his son was sent to face the winter in the trenches.

The Bench issued a warrant for defendant's appearance at Court.

DEFENDANT'S "JUSTIFICATION."

The magistrates present on Monday, when the case again came up for hearing, were Lieut.-Col. Tottie (Chairman), Mr. F. Driver, and Mr. R. G. Rankin.

Mr. Knowles read correspondence which had passed between defendant and himself, and Mr. Bottomley again gave evidence as to the threats used against him by defendant.

Defendant admitted that the "sum and substance" of the evidence was correct. He had written to the Army authorities and "one body and another" asking for his son to be placed in some unit where he could make use of his trade, but he had received no definite reply. Mr. Bottomley and Mr. Knowles had both promised to help him, but nothing had been done, and he considered that he had been made a "mug" of for week after week and month after month.

The Chairman: There is no question about these threats having been made, and they cannot be allowed to continue.

Defendant: I don't say they haven't.

The Chairman: It is probable they were made in great heat, I admit, and we ask you to give us an undertaking that you won't repeat your previous conduct to Mr. Bottomley, whatever your feelings about your lad may be. Mr. Bottomley has only done his duty as a member of a public body.

Defendant: There is a certain amount of justification for what has happened. A man cannot swallow everything and not retaliate; it's not human. Proceeding to justify his action he said that he had brought his lads up for ten years without their mother and that he had had a lot to do for them. He considered that he had received scant treatment at the hands of the Tribunal, and he was only defending his boy, who was only a stripling.

The Chairman: We are in the midst of a very serious war and we have all to do our duty.

Defendant: I have no malice against Mr. Bottomley.

The Chairman: Can you give us an assurance that you will not molest him? That will help us to help you.

Defendant: I have no more malice against him than I have against any other man in the world, and Mr. Knowles has a letter from me to that effect.

The Chairman: The magistrates would like to know why you particularly picked out Mr. Bottomley rather than any of the other members.

Defendant: I don't think I have threatened him as an individual. I cannot control my feelings; I have been worked up to that extent. It was not as an individual that I stopped Mr. Bottomley but because he was looked upon as one of the leading men. He was chairman that day.

The magistrates agreed to consider the case and on their return the Chairman said that those who were administering the affairs of the land in these very difficult times must be protected. They had carefully considered all that defendant had said and were going to deal leniently with him. They were going to bind him over to keep the peace towards Mr. Bottomley for six months in a personal surety of £50, and in the surety of another person of £25, or two other sureties of £12 10s. each.

Defendant: I shall not find any security. I shall ask no man in the world. I plead justification, and whatever the decision I stand by it. I have no wish to go against the law. The only interest I have in the case is as a humanitarian from the boy's point of view. He added that he did not care a rap for the surety; his word was his bond.

The Chairman: That is a point we have nothing to do with.

The Magistrates' Clerk (Mr. Edgar Wood): You will give your own recognisances?

Defendant: I don't mind, but I am not sure whether they will be binding or not.

The Chairman: Take my advice and give the assurance. I am trying to help you.

Defendant: I don't expect any help from anybody. I am not actuated by malice at all against Mr. Bottomley.

Subsequently, the magistrates agreed to bind defendant over in his own recognisances for £50, but Mr. Knowles pointed out that defendant had not definitely promised that he would not interfere with complainant. Mr. Bottomley also said that he did not feel safe as matters stood.

Ultimately, on being pressed by Mr. Knowles, defendant gave an undertaking that he would not interfere any further with Mr. Bottomley.