

DEAF AND DUMB.

ANGRY MEETING.

Executive Officer's Dismissal.

POLICE SUMMONED.

Strange scenes were witnessed in the main hall of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society's building, Kilnsworth-street, city, last night.

Members of the society vigorously protested against the dismissal of the welfare director (Mr. H. V. S. Herssee), who, it was alleged, had been discharged during the afternoon.

To a mute audience, the members of which, however, stamped and threw their hats in the air, various speakers delivered bitter speeches by sign language on their fingers.

There was strong criticism of the deputy chairman of the society (Mr. A. L. Lonsdale), and at one stage there was a concerted rush to his enlarged photograph hanging on the wall. The glass was broken and the photograph disfigured. An enlarged photograph of Mr. William Brooks, M.L.C., chairman of the society, was turned with the face to the wall.

Fists were flourished. Men and women made what noise they could and one man, the only opponent of the opinions that were being expressed, had to flee. Later he had to shelter behind a burly policeman. The silent antagonism of the gathering towards him was more effective than shouted vituperation.

In response to an urgent summons by the caretaker for police aid, Constable Coghlan arrived at the hall, tried to make himself understood, and finally called for reinforcements. A sergeant and four other constables then arrived.

The demonstration commenced when someone wrote on a large blackboard at the end of the hall the announcement that Mr. Hersee had been dismissed. The writer added: "We must fight," . . . "Mr. Lonsdale thinks that we are kids, but he is worse," . . . "We want Mr. Hersee to stay with us." Hats were thrown into the air. Those persons who were not entirely voiceless shrieked with excitement. Others stamped and clapped their hands. The noise could be heard out in the street.

Mr. F. E. Booth, vice chairman of the general committee and a councillor of the society, in an address which he delivered with the aid of his fingers, said: "We protested to the executive three weeks ago against the dismissal of Mr. Hersee, but there was no result to our appeal. We have no time for Mr. Lonsdale. Mr. Hersee was the best leader we ever had. His sympathies were with us, and he has done more for us in the short time he has been with us than Mr. Lonsdale has ever done. I am worried and upset that we have lost such a great friend—if he is lost. (Disorder.) I cannot say more. My feelings will not allow me. (Applause and continued uproar.)

At this stage Constable Coghlan entered the hall. "You have been ordered to leave this hall," he said, and although nobody could hear him, everyone understood his mission, and displayed hostility. "I say," said the

near him, everyone understood his mission, and displayed hostility. "I say," said the constable loudly, "that I have been instructed that you must leave this hall." In reply someone wrote on the blackboard "We are a hundred to one," and those present showed the constable that they intended to stand their ground.

This was too much for the constable, so he retired, and called to his station for reinforcements. Two more constables arrived. Then a sergeant and two more constables entered the hall. They could not speak to the gathering, nor could the people make themselves understood to the police—and so the meeting continued until 10 o'clock, when it disbanded. The police thankfully left.

Mr. Hersee, who is alleged to have been dismissed, came to the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society from England about twelve months ago, and it was understood that his appointment as welfare director had a three years' tenure. His dismissal was unexpected by a large number of deaf and dumb persons, and at last night's demonstration it was decided to make a definite effort to have him reinstated.