

THE BROOKLYN STRIKE.

Mayor Schieren had a conference yesterday with the representatives of the striking employes of the trolley companies, and afterward with the representatives of the companies. The strikers agreed that, if the old men were taken back in a body, they would leave to the Mayor, or to three arbitrators selected by him, the question of subsequent discharges, whether of old men or new, and all questions out of which the strike grew. President Lewis of the Brooklyn City Company was willing to accept this proposition if the other companies would do so. The representatives of the other companies refused.

The Mayor thereupon issued the usual proclamation requiring all persons to refrain from unnecessary assembling, and giving notice that the police have been ordered and the militia requested to disperse any unlawful assemblage. Then, in co-operation with Sheriff Butting, he secured from the Governor an order calling out the First Brigade of the National Guard in this city, which, to the number of some 4,000 men, is under arms and ready for any service that may be required.

Meanwhile two facts are clearly established by the events of yesterday. One is that the trolley companies have not shown the ability that they professed to have to provide their cars with new men. The second is that the cars which have been manned and sent out have not been properly protected. The second fact is of the greater immediate importance, and concerns most nearly the authorities of Brooklyn, the decent people of that city, and the people of the whole State. The peace has not been preserved. Order has not been maintained. Violence has not been promptly or thoroughly suppressed nor punished sharply on the spot, nor has there been adequate attempt to arrest lawbreakers. We cannot say whether the police are strong enough for their share of the work now imposed on them or not, for they have not used the strength they have. A part of the force has been well handled and has acted vigorously, especially the mounted men. But a large part—apparently the larger part of the force—has been handled with strange weakness and irresolution. We hope that this will be changed to-day. It is wrong, and fatally wrong. No amount of military force can do the work of the police. The police can do its own work only under firm, energetic, and determined guidance. Will the Mayor see that this is given? It is his first duty. No matter what the trolley companies may do or fail to do, how many men they have or how they use them, the Mayor is bound to see that every car that goes out is unmolested, or, if molested, that the offenders are swiftly and severely clubbed or otherwise forced into complete submission to the law.

That done, the courts will deal with the companies. If they can run their cars in peace, they will be compelled to run them. Disputes with their men as to wages or hours or distribution of employment, or any other matter incident to the operation of the lines, are no excuse, and will not be accepted as excuse for their failure to comply with the conditions of their charters and to render the service for which they are chartered. On this question the law is perfectly clear, and there will be no difficulty in enforcing it. Obviously, the condition precedent is that the public peace and order shall be restored and maintained. That is the only way to settle the trouble. The lawless violence inflicted with impunity upon men engaged in operating the cars is the chief obstacle. That stopped, the settlement will come immediately. If the companies can go on with new men they will do so. If they cannot, they will have to go on anyway. From every point of view the first, imperative, absolutely indispensable condition is to restore order and maintain it at any cost.