



Alderman W. F. Cotton, M.P.

Date

1910

Primary Maker

Dermod O'Brien

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

Framed: 95.5 x 83 x 6 cm 72.4 x 62.2 cm

Description

William W.F. Cotton was one of Dublin's richest men and was M.P. for South County Dublin. His views were so conservative that many Unionists preferred him over their own candidate Horace Plunkett. Cotton was the first

chairman of Hibernian General Insurance Ltd (now Aviva). He was also the managing director of the Alliance and Dublin Gas Consumers Company Limited and held directorships in the Hibernian Bank and the Dublin United Tramway Company. William Martin Murphy was the chairman of the United Tramway Company and it was the strike by workers from that company that was the catalyst for the bitter and prolonged Lockout dispute which ran from August 1913-January 1914. On 21 August, Murphy sacked about 100 employees in the Tramways Company stating: 'As the Directors of the Tramways Company understand that you are a member of the ITGWU whose methods are disorganising the trade and business of the city, they do not further require your service'. While the Dublin United Tramways Company was a profitable and technologically advance transport system, many of its employees worked extremely long hours and lived in terrible living conditions. The central crux of the dispute was the right of workers to join a union, a proposal which Murphy and the collective of 300 employers he formed, vehemently opposed.