

stores. I now come to the question which has been brought up as to the affiliation of the officers to the Maritime Council. There is no doubt that at one time Captain Highman was opposed to an affiliation, but he found it advisable to change his ideas. The Union Company, in order to get peace, would have done everything possible to avoid any difficulty. We have given way even when we could not afford it. No doubt there was reason for it in this way: if you had the Officers' Association in the Maritime Council, they would have representatives there; if you had the Seamen's Union there, they would have representatives; if you had the coal-miners there, they would have representatives. With all these representatives, no doubt, if it was a question of increase for one union, they would very likely not agree to it unless all got it alike, so if they agreed to a rise all round the expenditure would be increased to such an extent that the ships would not pay and the owners would have to stop them, unless they could increase their revenue. But if people do not wish to travel you cannot make them travel, and so there must be a limit to your expenditure. With regard to the affiliation of the officers with the Maritime Council, I did not at first look on it in the same light as the Shipowners' Association did, but agreed to submit the matter for their consideration and discussion. When the Maritime Council came to me about the officers' difficulty, I told them I had no power to submit the matter to them without the consent of the Shipowners' Association, but that I was willing to show them what the Shipowners' Association and ourselves were proposing to pay the officers. With that proposal they appeared well satisfied, and it was then that I wrote the letter that has been referred to by Captain Highman. The Maritime Council said they were satisfied with our proposals, but they also said they were not satisfied with the demands which were made by the Officers' Association, and had previously admitted that the demands were excessive. It had been endeavoured to put the company in a corner, but in a corner we would not be put. I am not going to stand here and let any one take vengeance upon us because we hold out for our own, or upon those who stood by us at a critical moment. Let us discuss everything fairly and openly. Let us try to lead each other to do the proper thing; and what we know to be an improper thing, let it stand down.—(Hear, hear.)—I now come to the question of union and non-union men. Let me first take our own case. A man came down from Melbourne—I forget his name—to organize the Seamen's Union as a separate union here. It was some time after that it was affiliated to the Australian Union. The firemen and seamen were in the union. The cooks and stewards had not a union then, neither had the officers. They were not contaminated by working with non-unionists then; why should they be now? The statement has been ridiculed that we were every day getting the flower of the young men of New Zealand into the service of the Union Company. I repeat it that within the last fortnight or three weeks we have been getting the very flower of the young men of New Zealand into our service—I do not care who contradicts it—that we are putting into our boats men who are tried and found to be very fit for the employment. One class of men we cannot get as many of as we wish, but they are coming. We have plenty of officers; we have plenty of cooks and stewards. Now, I ask Mr. Millar, I challenge him, to take the embargo off the seamen and firemen, and you will see that within a fortnight the whole of them will be coming back too. Many of the men thrown out of employment by the strike have gone into the country, or other parts of the colony, in search of work; but take the embargo off them and you will find them coming back in numbers to our service. I say, once more, that we never lifted a finger to harm them or their union. Even when we were attacked, we would only seek for the service of other men after the seamen were called out of the ships. This was done, not to injure the seamen, but to defend ourselves. It is also nonsense to say that we have done anything to attack the seamen's or any other union. I must now come to Mr. Millar. You all see that we need have no great hope to expect mercy from him. He has been very busy to get afloat a National Commercial and Industrial Co-operative Steamship Company. He is anxious to get it done on the co-operative principle. I, for one, am glad to see people co-operating for such a good work. I do not blame them in the least. Some time ago, during the dispute with the Northern Steamship Company, he tried to run a steamer upon the same principle. Did he show the balance-sheet of this company, so as to enable people to see what it cost to run against the Northern Steamship Company? How much did he lose by the "Bellinger"? Gentlemen, he has been unfortunate with his steamers, for, although the "Bellinger" was run with all the experience and intelligence of the Seamen's Union, they ran her on the rocks. Those whom we employ have never put our steamers on the rocks.

*Mr. J. A. Millar:* The "Taiaroa." Do not say that your steamers were not on the rocks.

*Hon. Mr. McLean:* The "Taiaroa" had union men in her.

*Mr. J. A. Millar:* The "Rotomahana." The "Maitai."

*Hon. Mr. McLean:* They were manned with union men, not with free labour. I am referring to the period during which we have had to employ non-union men.

*Mr. J. A. Millar:* The "Te Anau" was very near the rocks, if not quite on them; hold an inquiry and you will see that was the case.

*Hon. Mr. McLean:* The "Te Anau" was not near the rocks.

*Mr. J. A. Millar:* We have letters from passengers. We can prove it by passengers' sworn testimony.

*Hon. Mr. McLean:* My good fellow, we are quite up to all the statements used against us, and circulated under such circumstances. I say, if you had letters from twenty passengers, she was not near the place where she was said to have been, and I make that statement positively. I do not mind people writing to the newspapers. The Union Company has never cared to contradict any of them. But we were told that we should in a fortnight be in a corner for want of coal. Now, if the National Commercial and Industrial Co-operative Steamship Company's promoters are wise men, and there is likely to be a scarcity of coal, they will prepare for their steamers. Let them, then, come to the Union Company and they will sell them a thousand tons of coal if they require it. We have coaled the "Doric;" we have coaled the "Tongariro;" we are coaling the