

worked all the day, he may have, on the ship's departure, to keep the bridge until 12 o'clock turns; and I am sure that anybody who has had a shop life and so forth, and experiences the pleasures of the eight-hours movement, being able, when 5 o'clock turns, to go home and do just what he pleases, if he were told, after having had his evening meal, to go and keep the bridge in this way, he would feel a great amount of irritation. This is one of the great points of the difficulty between the Shipowners' Association and the officers. In some ships, as we all know, long-voyage officers have three watches. There it is scarcely necessary, for the simple reason that they keep watch-and-watch, and there is no going in and out of ports. It is on the coastal boats that the officers require more rest. There are some instances in which, if the officers' evidence were taken, and the logs we have now in our possession were produced, we could show that the officers have worked, as I say, sometimes eighteen, twenty, or thirty hours at a stretch; and that is against all human endurance, and I assert, sir, that it is inhuman to ask your brother human beings to do that sort of thing without the slightest consideration. In conclusion I may say that the majority of the officers now who are out of their employment—and I believe that there are a big majority of the officers out—they, at a meeting we had in Dunedin before we came north, passed a resolution that they themselves, until the settlement of this difficulty, will not under any circumstances go on board the ships to work with those people who have supplanted other people's places, and those men who have taken their places, on the broad basis of unionist principles. They have unionised themselves together, and they mean to stick together, and will not in any way detract from that principle; and I express strong regret for those men who so far have shown a sense of weakness which I am sure the Union Steamship Company, or any other company, cannot admire in a man. From the fact of these men having left their ships, they must have understood what they left them for. They must have remained out to a certain extent, and then, by pressure, and possibly by such telegrams as one which I have in my possession, you have brought them to reconsider their situation, and to return to their ships. The act of sending out these telegrams is one of coercion and an act of boycott: "If you don't return to your ships you are out of the world altogether." I should like to draw the attention also of the different delegates to the manning of the Union Steamship Company's ships as they are now running. I myself, as a seaman, might safely say that the ships are not manned, nor are they well officered; because there is a clause in the Red Book of the Union Steamship Company which says that they will not take officers over a certain age, and I see some very old, Methuselah sort of officers in the employ of the Union Steamship Company now. And I can substantiate what Mr. Millar said: when going up in the "Te Anau" the sailors there were all adrift and did not know what they were doing, and one person in particular who was referred to as the son of a resident in Wellington, who certainly had no more the appearance of a sailor than one of these chairs has, was placed in the important position of driving the winch, in which he was supported by the chief engineer, who gave him constant instructions as to which way he should turn the handle, and so forth.—(Laughter.)—As I say, in conclusion, we have met together here in this Conference in the hope that something will be done by way of a settlement. And, as Mr. Brown has said, it is affecting both sides. There is no doubt about it. Independently of what Mr. McLean has said, there is a great amount of feeling. It is all very well for him to say that he owes us no animosity, or no quarrel, or anything of that sort—it is all very well to say that, but we must express the broad fact that there is a quarrel, and that there is something to settle, and the sooner we come to the main point at issue and face the broad facts of the case the better.

*Mr. Millar:* Referring to the last remark of Captain Highman's, I was not present at the early part of the Conference, in the morning, and I did not know that Mr. McLean had said he had no quarrel. If there is no struggle, if there is no quarrel, what are we here for, I should like to know? If there is no quarrel it is idle our sitting here, because there is nothing to settle. If the whole thing is going on, and they have ample men, and do not require our services, what are we here for? I fail to see the necessity of sitting here any longer if this is the position.

*The Chairman:* You must bear in mind that we are here at the invitation of the Government, and, of course, the Government acknowledges that there is a quarrel, even if both sides represented here do not; and the Government brought us together for the purpose of getting us to exchange views in the hope that we might adopt some conciliatory course. So far some good has been done by the discussion, and, if it continues in the same strain, I feel confident we shall come to some understanding.

*Mr. R. P. Johnson:* I am sure Captain Highman has scarcely interpreted what Mr. McLean either meant or said. I am rather anxious that we should get out of this present aspect. Mr. McLean's chief point, as I take it, was this: "I have no personal quarrel with anybody; I do not intend to quarrel with any one; it takes two to make a quarrel, and I will not be one in a quarrel." Mr. McLean, I take it, was speaking of his personal presence as against twenty-five other people here.

*Captain Highman:* I take exception to the remarks made by the last speaker. Mr. McLean is here representing a body. Letters read here show that he is representing the Northern Steamship Company and the Union Steamship Company. I am not in any way addressing the Hon. Mr. McLean personally, but simply as a delegate from the particular companies he is here to represent.

*Mr. Millar:* I may explain that I said those few words just now because I understood the very fact of our sitting here, and of Mr. McLean's coming here, recognises that there is something to settle. That was the reason I rose. I have no desire to burke conversation.

*Mr. Hutcheson:* I am sorry any feeling of irritation should come into our discussion, and I should like to recall members' attention to the fact that the Hon. Mr. McLean certainly prefaced his remarks with the desire that we should not fall out, because he said "I am not going to quarrel; you know it takes two to quarrel" more by way of remark, as I understood it.

*Mr. Johnson:* A mere personal expression.