

or injure them in any way, I have simply to refer to a couple of cases to show you that we have worked for the company's interest as well as our own. Not long since a gentleman in Dunedin, Mr. Guthrie, chartered a vessel called the "Gerda," and had made arrangements for three more to come. The "Gerda" was completed, and came down here and had firemen and trimmers engaged on board of her at £3 10s. per month, and they were signed on articles for three years. The captain was a foreigner and so were all the rest of the officers. The Union Steamship Company wanted to know if the Seamen's Union would allow that boat to be run in opposition to them, and, if so, how could they compete with that boat while the wages paid on her were half what they paid. In justice to the company, and also from our own point of view, we interviewed the captain of this vessel and asked him to put his men on the same rate of wages as the members of the Seamen's Union; but he declined to do it, saying he could not. "The men," he said, "had signed for three years, and he should put them in gaol if they refused to work." He left Port Chalmers, and went down to Greymouth—

*Mr. Seymour*: It was Wellington she came to. I was secretary of our branch at the time.

*Mr. Millar*: She went to Greymouth for a cargo of coal, but on arriving there she was met by the union, and the captain was told that no coal would be supplied to her until she had complied with the rules of the Seamen's Union, and before he got an ounce of coal he had to sign a written guarantee that he would make all his men join the union and put her on the same rates as the Union Steamship Company's boats. Then, there was another hardship which militated against the interests of the Union Steamship Company. The Chinese Navigation boats were bringing down tea from China. Sometimes four or five of them came down during the season to Sydney, and the first three boats would discharge their tea for New Zealand, and it would be stored in Sydney, and the fourth that came down would discharge the tea for Australia, take in the balance of the New Zealand tea, and distribute it themselves. The matter was pointed out to me, and I negotiated with our secretary in Sydney and asked him to interview the proper authorities, requesting them to prevent this; otherwise, if this sort of thing was insisted on, we should consider they were working against the interests of the Seamen's Union. That interview had such good effect that they have never carried tea from Sydney since that time to New Zealand. Then, there is another case: the "Janet Nicol" was running across here, chartered by C. W. Turner, carrying three firemen and a donkey man—two men less than other boats were carrying. The secretary of the Union Steamship Company came to me and said it was unjust that this vessel should run with such a complement of men, whilst his company's boats were compelled to carry six. I admitted it, and set myself to work, with the result that six men were ultimately put in the "Janet Nicol," and they were all on the same footing. We have endeavoured to do all that we could, both for the Union Company's benefit and our own, being perfectly willing to give them every assistance, and determined that no one else should come on this coast to handicap them. When the "Centennial" came down here I had a complaint from Lyttelton from the Union Company's officer, in consequence of which I compelled them to either employ labour to work down the hold or have seamen for the winches, as I would not allow firemen to work the winches here, whatever they did in New South Wales. Mr. McLean talked about the Co-operative Steamship Company, and said I was trying very hard to work this up; but I have nothing to do with it, and shall say little or nothing to-day about it. It is purely a business venture on the part of other people, and I may possibly take an interest in it or I may not. I have nothing to do with it whatever. But, in connection with this, he mentioned the splendid way in which we managed to work the "Bellinger," and the great success we made of the shipping venture up North! I am not ashamed to say what loss we sustained, or what was the loss of the Northern Company. When we started to run in opposition to them it was not with an idea of making money, nor on commercial principles, but to make the Northern Company's losses as heavy as possible. We started with a cheap boat, knowing that we lost £200 a month, and that they were losing £400, and we kept that going until the Northern Company had enough of it, even after the Shipowners' Association allowing them £1,000 a month.

*Mr. McLean*: They never allowed them that.

*Mr. Millar*: They allowed them £500, with a guarantee up to £1,000, if required. If you say they did not do so, I can only state that Mr. Mills said they did. Anyhow, the association gave them a guarantee for £500 per month, but I am given to understand there was a guarantee to increase it to £1,000, if necessary. They told us they were a body representing eight millions of capital, but they did not succeed in doing what they intended.

*Hon. Mr. McLean*: Oh, yes! they did.

*Mr. Millar*: I beg pardon. Every man belonging to the union went back into the boats with an increase of wages, and it cost the Northern Company £22,000, while our loss was £14,000; and if every venture of ours turned out as successfully as this did we should not mind spending another £14,000. Then, you ask if there had been any balance-sheet of the expenses submitted. I think every gentleman in this room on our side has received a balance-sheet. They used to receive monthly balances of the whole expenditure and receipts for the month, and also one of all moneys received from the beginning, and it was vouched for by two of the principal accountants in Auckland.

*Hon. Mr. McLean*: I never said there was any doubt about Mr. Millar submitting balance-sheets to his own people, but I ask, did he submit that good balance-sheet to the new Colonial Industrial Co-operative Shipping Company to induce people to take shares?—(Laughter.)—I never insinuated that he did anything wrong with the balance-sheet. As to a new steamship company being started under the Seamen's Union, if they like to go in for a new steamship company I shall hail it with delight, and if they do not I shall not grieve. I do not suppose it will do us much harm whether it comes or does not.

*Mr. Millar*: You told us just now that if I took the embargo off the seamen and firemen they would go back in a fortnight. I would not give them a fortnight; in twenty-four hours they would go back, and be very glad to do so. I have never denied it. I have never said that they came out