

some question upon it, and, as this is going to be an official report, I wish it put in—that is to say, that men were provided with “discharges” in Dunedin. It shows how some of our so-called “able seamen” were made competent. A man called Worthington, a painter, in South Dunedin, gave discharges to any men who applied for them; and another man at North-east Valley, who keeps a grocer’s store, also supplied discharges to any person who asked for one. They had not only one or two, but this man Worthington had a cigar-box full of them. When we heard of this we sent three men out to see if they could procure discharges. One man, who was thirty years of age, asked for a discharge, and, after a lot of talking and one thing and another, the man put his hand in the cigar-box and took out a bundle and gave him out one for a man thirty-three years of age. Another was a lad of seventeen years old, and he had not a discharge to suit him, so he said he would meet him opposite the Bank of New Zealand the next day at 3 o’clock and he would drop him one on the pavement. He would not take anything for it, but said, “If you get a permanent billet with the Union Company you can give me something for it.” A gentleman to whom I went said I must make the men ship before I could take any action. Now, were all those discharges given to one individual? There is only one of three places they could have come from—either from the Union Company’s offices, or one of the Foreign Consuls’ offices, or the Customhouse. There is no other place they could have possibly come from, because no man could have got the bundle of discharges this man had if they had not been supplied from one of those sources. The grocer at the North-east Valley told the man who applied to him that he could not give him one, “as they were called back to the office,” but he declined to state which office. Witnesses I have can prove what I have stated. This is how some of the so-called “able seamen” have been made able seamen at the present time. Mr. McLean said the Act did not work well here, because there was a most unjust clause in it.

*The Chairman:* He said one clause was good.

*Mr. Millar:* Yes, that was the qualification for the firemen. On the other side, in Victoria and New South Wales, no man is allowed to sign on a ship’s articles until he presents his discharge and shows just cause why he should get permission, and he has to present his discharge when he ships. The moment he ships it is crossed in red ink and is cancelled, and it leaves only one discharge for one man, and you see the reason of the difficulty in procuring competent men on the other side. That is why Victoria and New South Wales have not been able to man their boats in the same haphazard way as in New Zealand. There is an English Act which covers the matter altogether—viz., the Passenger Act of 1885. This throws the onus of responsibility on the Collector of Customs, or the officer in charge who looks after the vessels leaving, of permitting any ship to go to sea except under proper conditions. If this responsibility had been resting on the shoulders of some of our Collectors of Customs here they would not have allowed some of the boats to go out; but, having no responsibility, they have not troubled their heads. There is another thing I take exception to, and intend to bring prominently before the Premier and the public. There has been a new society formed, of ships’ officers, and so forth, and they have a perfect right to do this, but I object to a Government servant taking an office in it. At the present moment Captain Edwin, who is an examiner of officers, is president of this society, and I protest against that—not that it will ever affect me, because I have my master’s certificate, and will not go before him—but whilst he occupies the office of president of this society no man outside that society will obtain justice.

*Hon. Mr. McLean:* He is not president. Mr. Levin is president.

*Mr. Millar:* He is a vice-president, or one of the officers; and I maintain that no Government official should hold office in a party society such as this—because there is no denying it is a party society. Both the examiners in Dunedin and Auckland have likewise taken office, and it is scandalous to the country if they are allowed to do so. Now, gentlemen, the real point at issue Mr. McLean has touched on very lightly—namely, the question of unionism and non-unionism working together; and the argument adduced by him in favour of unionists and non-unionists working together is that ten years ago there was no union of the stewards and cooks, and that the Seamen’s Union had no objection to sailing with non-union men; but since that time the stewards and cooks have formed a union, and so have most other bodies. I would like to inform Mr. McLean, if he is labouring under a misapprehension, that we do not decline to work with non-union men providing there is no society governing the branch of trade they are working for, nor do we decline to work with non-union men if no members of the union are available; but we protest against working with non-unionist men whilst there is a society governing the branch of trade those non-union men belong to. If there was no society of stewards and cooks, we should not say we would not go to sea with non-union stewards and cooks, because this would be folly. But there is a society of stewards and cooks. We have gone to sea with non-unionist men when it would not be infringing any society’s rule. It seems to me to be a bogey altogether, this cry about union and non-union labour. I say emphatically that where a society is in existence, and has a rule saying its members shall not sail with non-union men, we will not do so; but if a society has a rule permitting working with non-union men, we will work with them as long as it is under the rules of the society. If men are working against the interests of the rules of the society, we have a right to say if we will work with them or not. We are prepared to go into this question to any depth they like, but Mr. McLean has not gone into it to any depth at all. It has been explained why we will not work with non-unionist men. We do not see why we should make continual sacrifice of ourselves for their benefit. They ought to deny themselves as much as we had to if they intend to get the same privileges; and until they are prepared to do that we decline to work with them. This we maintain is a fair contention; and we are prepared to substantiate it before the most unbiassed persons that we have no right to sacrifice ourselves to non-union men. It is said that non-union men are in the majority; but I challenge any one to show that there is a majority of non-union men in any trade they like. I contend that we are in the majority, and that the minority ought to bow to the majority, as they do in all other cases, and as we are compelled to do in regard to the laws of the country. One objection raised to affiliation has not been touched upon to-day—namely, that the discipline is interfered with on