

I am much obliged to you for the hearing you have given me. I hope I have not said anything to tread on your toes. If I have said anything it is in self-defence; and I will not leave this room having a grudge against any man that is in it.—(Applause.)—My friend Mr. Hoban, who is fond of misrepresenting things, says we preferred to employ union men. We have had to employ union men, and for this reason: if we put in a non-union man all the other men would have been taken out of our ships. It was Hobson's choice with us. Talking of the two thousand men that are now at work, it is simply an exchange, as there are a good many sailors, I hear, up the Wairarapa looking for employment. But coming back to the main question, what is the use of staying here if we cannot agree? I am not the dictator of New Zealand, like Mr. Millar. Mr. Millar says he will not agree to this; he will leave New Zealand before he will do it. Very well, that is his own opinion. I do not make any statement of that nature. I always discuss matters with my directors and carry out their wishes. I have now to repeat that we will stick to the two thousand men we have in our employment. We do not want to compel them to go into the unions. You say there is no compulsion. It is compulsion to be obliged to do anything you do not want to do, and we do not want to exercise any compulsion, as many of the men may positively object to join a union. As to working with non-union men, I think you will find that you will have to work with non-union men. If the unions are such good things they will draw men to them without compulsion. But the fault of all unions has been that they have compelled men to join them through fear. That has been their weakness. Every man who joins a union of his own freewill will be a source of strength to his union, but if he is compelled to join he can only be a source of weakness. As for sailors becoming agriculturists, the idea is not at all so ridiculous as it appears to some. Sailors are good men for farmers if they once go into the country. They are all handy men: they can turn their hand to any kind of labour: they can do almost anything that turns up on a farm. It may be said there are married men among them, but I am quite satisfied even these will be quite able to make their way in the country. What I want you to do is to keep to the point. Seeing that I have come here to meet you in good faith, I do not want to stay here and be attacked in the way I am being attacked now. I have a good deal of important business to do. If I leave the room I do not want you to think that I do so from any discourtesy to you. But of all things I do not want to make a quarrel: we came here good friends; I do not wish that we should part bad friends.

*Mr. Winter:* The few remarks I wish to make just now are simply in regard to questions raised by the Hon. Mr. McLean. First of all there was a distinction drawn between the old and new unionism, and I think it should be clearly understood what the old and new unionism means. When the old unionism is referred to it is generally with the idea of annoyance. The old unions are those which have stood on their own ground without affiliating with other unions, and they have from time to time been found to be easily dealt with. When those unions affiliated one with the other, and one colony with the other, it was found they had received additional strength. That is the difference between the old and the new unionism. The employers do not object to the old unionism so much—they rather foster it—but they do object to the new unionism, because it is too powerful. Mr. McLean asked how it was that the other unions outside the maritime bodies had been brought into this dispute; and it was pointed out here by Mr. Sandford this morning that they were simply drawn into it because, as unionists, they had to fight for a principle; and had it not been for the manifesto that unionism must not affiliate, but must be crushed out, I do not believe so many unions outside the maritime bodies would have been drawn into it. But when it was understood that the employers had made up their minds to crush this principle of the affiliation of unions, it then behoved all unionists to take their places in the ranks and fight for their principle. The Railway Servants' Society, as one union affiliated with the Maritime Council, was drawn into it simply because on the one hand it was affiliated, while on the other hand it was pushed and driven into it by the action of the Railway Commissioners. That is all the explanation I wish to make here now, Mr. Chairman. If I were to occupy the time of the Conference any longer, perhaps it would cause unnecessary delay. But it might be asked, "How did the Commissioners force the Railway Servants' Society into the strike?" and in reply to that I may say that if the Commissioners had not forced their men to go and take the places of other men who were out on strike, and with whom they were affiliated, thereby making, not free labourers of themselves, but thorough blacklegs—had the Commissioners avoided doing that, and listened to our pleadings as an executive when we begged them not to do so, in all probability the railway servants would not have been included. But when they insisted on sending all their men whom they could spare down to Lyttelton to take the places of wharf-labourers who had come out, and with whom their men were affiliated, there was no other course open for the railway servants' executive than to call those men out. That is our explanation.

*Mr. Millar:* As Mr. McLean brought in one or two matters partly foreign to this dispute, I would take the opportunity of referring to them and to one or two other matters he has brought forward. In the first place, I think Mr. McLean carefully avoided the real point at issue. He passed over with a very few remarks the question of the officers, and pointed out that the action of the wharf-labourers in Sydney was really the cause—or led the people to believe they were the primary cause—of the present struggle. I wish to say, whilst not upholding the wharf-labourers altogether in their action in Sydney, the dispute with the wharf-labourers was settled some time before this trouble took place. That an agreement had been signed for twelve months we admit, and also that the men broke that on the New Zealand wharves. But the reason of their breaking that agreement was that the other matter was introduced, in the shape of a contractor on the wharves to which they objected. I think Mr. McLean will admit that had it not been that the Seamen's Union was in conference in Sydney, and decided to deal with the matter, the question whether the dispute would have been settled in the quiet manner it was is an open question. The association themselves at that time, had the seamen's delegates agreed not to support the wharf-labourers, might willingly have conceded the demands made by the Seamen's Union. But, because