

careful in the matter. They do it in other cases, and why not in this one? Well, with one slight intermission—when he was ashore for a month or so—he remained in the service of the company until I wrote this letter, in May, 1896. My reason for writing was that I considered the man was trying to humbug us. He had remained in the service of the company for eight months, and I thought that if I wrote a sharp letter it might bring him to the scratch to join. I may say this: It is the only letter of the sort I have ever written, as the letter-books will show, threatening a man with dismissal from the service. I had no authority from the company to write that.

16. *The Chairman.*] Nor suggestion?—Nor suggestion.

17. Nor private instructions?—No. I am quite confident on that point. In fact, I was very much surprised that I had written in this strain, as I could almost have sworn I had not done so.

18. Do you mean that you have never written in that strain?—Never excepting this one letter. Since that occurred I have in all instructions to the purser, as the letter-books will show, always stated, in regard to the enrolment of members, that the men should be enrolled “if not members of any other society,” so as to prevent any error of this kind occurring again, or any use being made of any other letter that might be stolen, as this one must have been, from the Union Company’s boats.

19. *Hon. Major Steward.*] But you have written letters instructing that those not members of other societies should join?—Oh, yes.

20. That is in accordance with the rules?—Yes. The first intimation I received that this man was a member of the Druids was in a letter handed to me by Mr. Kirby, and written by Dorling to Kirby on the 29th May, 1896, as follows: “S.s. ‘Grafton,’ Wellington, 29th May, 1896.—To Mr. Kirby.—Sir, I have been informed by the purser that I have to join the society or be discharged. The reason I have not joined it before is because I am a financial member in the Druids lodge, Patea. Of course, if you insist on my joining it I will have to do so, as it is not convenient for me to get discharged at present. Hoping you will let me know by the time I get back, I remain, your obedient servant, E. DORLING, s.s. ‘Grafton,’ Wellington.” That was the first intimation I had of this man being a member of the Druids. Following up that letter, I then wrote to the purser of the “Grafton”: “Dorling has written Mr. Kirby stating that he is a financial member of the Druids. Kindly let me know per return mail whether Dorling can furnish any proof of this statement, and also of the date of his joining the Druids.—18th June, 1896.” In answer to that I received a reply from the purser of the “Grafton,” dated the 11th June, as follows: “Re E. Dorling: I have seen his receipts for premium paid, and I also forward you enclosed telegram from secretary of the date of his joining.—Yours truly, E. MULQUEEN, Purser, s.s. ‘Grafton.’” The telegram referred to reads: “Edward Dorling, steamer ‘Grafton,’ Wellington: Joined 7th March, 1894.—JOHN BOYLE, Star of England Lodge, Patea.” I then wrote to the purser of the “Grafton” as follows: “Why have you always reported Dorling as ‘nil’ when he has been a member of the Druids ever since he joined your ship? In future his book must be examined at least once every quarter, to see that his payment is kept up.—18th June, 1896.” In connection with the question of the treatment of members of other societies, I should like to put in evidence extracts which are printed in the sixth annual report from my correspondence to the pursers and chief officers regarding men belonging to other societies. They are as follows: “To Purser, ‘Ovalau.’—If Wilson can satisfy you that he was a member of the Foresters before he joined the company’s service he need not join our society, but if he cannot do this enrol him forthwith.—14th August, 1895.” “To Chief Officer, ‘Poherua.’—To see that contributions of Hardinge and Lawson to Oddfellows society are kept up.—18th August, 1895.” “To Chief Officer, ‘Ohau.’—Cannot admit O. Johnson to the society, as he is a financial member of the Druids.—14th November, 1895.”

21. *Hon. Major Steward.*] In regard to the last letter, I would like to ask one question. You used the words “cannot admit” this man: we have it in evidence that men have been admitted although they were members of another lodge?—I may say, in that matter, not since I have been secretary of the society. If I found a man to be a member of another society I have always instructed the purser or chief officer not to take him in, for the reason that so much had been previously made or talked about of members of other societies being compelled to join.

22. Yes; but is it not within your knowledge that, notwithstanding that letter of yours, men have been accepted who have been members of other societies?—I believe some joined at the inception of the society, but I cannot speak of any who have joined since. This is another letter: “To Purser, ‘Rotokino.’—Do not wish Denny to join society if he satisfies us that he is a financial member of Oddfellows.—20th November, 1895.”

23. Might I ask why you have used in two cases “cannot admit” and in two other cases “do not wish”? There appears to be a difference?—Well, of course, correspondence is written hurriedly, and one does not study his phrases with a view to their being dissected before a Royal Commission. In one case the man has probably asked to join; and in the other case he may have been returned as “nil,” and has been requested to join; and then the purser replies he is a member of another society, and that it is not his wish to join. That is the probable explanation. The rest of the letters I wish to read are as follow: “To Chief Officer, ‘Oreti.’—O’Brien must produce evidence that he was proposed as an Oddfellow before joining your ship, and also that he is now a financial member.—11th December, 1895.” “To Purser, ‘Moa.’—If C. Anderson is a financial member of the Oddfellows we cannot admit him into the society.—18th December, 1895.” “To Purser, ‘Talune.’—If Pimley satisfies you he is a financial member of the Hibernians we do not wish him to join the society.—7th March, 1896.” “To Purser, ‘Upolu.’—If Ashbury was a member of the Buffalo Society before he joined our society he need not continue his subscriptions, but, if otherwise, he must pay up.—24th March, 1896.” “To Chief Officer, ‘Pukaki.’—Unless the four men in the engine-room claiming to be Oddfellows can satisfy you that they are financial members of some lodge they must join.—22nd April, 1896.”