

news arrived. After arriving at the office at about 11 o'clock, I enquired in the office below if a reply had been sent to the *Southland Times* directing them to forward a message at once, and I was told it had not. That, of course, threw the use of the wires into the hands of the *Daily Times*, and the consequence was, they had the wires until their extra had been completed. But there were other consequences. I telegraphed at once to the *Southland Times* to forward a message as soon as possible, and waited until about ——— the exact hour I cannot remember. It must have been about half-past (12) twelve. Then the foreman of the printing room said "If we don't get this telegram we shall not be able to get our paper out in time." I said, "I don't know what to do, we have telegraphed to the *Southland Times*." He said "We must be on with the work some way or other." I said "There is no help for it; the *Daily Times* gets their telegrams from the same source as we do—from the *Argus*—and I do not see that we shall be doing very wrong to go on printing the telegrams from the *Daily Times* until we get our own." And so we did. I forget the exact hour at which we began to receive telegrams, but the telegraphic intelligence we had, varied somewhat from that of the *Daily Times*. We had some items that they had not, and they had some I did not get. [The witness stated the telegram he referred to in this statement was the one received after he had commenced to copy from the *Times* extra, and was his own telegram.] It could not be imagined for one moment that I would exclude the news already set up in type from the *Daily Times* extra, so we published all; that which we had received, and that which we had copied from the *Daily Times* extra, and embodied both. In consequence of the arrangement made among the papers to telegraph to each other, I think, but am not positive: and although perhaps not strictly correct, it is in the main correct—instructions were left to send a telegram to the *Wellington Independent*, and several other papers. I think my clerk came up stairs to me and asked what he was to do, and I said "Oh send the *Daily Times* extra to the *Wellington Independent*. Instead of doing so, he did—as he told me afterwards—send the news published in the *Evening Star* that night.

184. *The Chairman.*] Was that the published news? Are the Committee to understand that it contained the whole news in the *Daily Times* extra and some other items besides?—To the best of my recollection. I will tell you one thing that was not in the *Daily Times* extra—something about some engagements with some Prussian vessels. I am making a general statement of facts, but at this distance of time I cannot state accurately as to the hours or minutes at which these transactions took place, or the precise items that the *Daily Times* had not received and which were published by the *Star*, and those which were taken from the *Daily Times*. When the articles were published endeavouring to explain to the public what really took place I had not been able to unravel the whole of the affair, and I was thoroughly determined to investigate the matter. Since I published those articles in the *Star* I have discovered the whole history I have given you. One clerk had left me, and he had some difficulty in remembering what actually took place.

185. *The Chairman.*] It just appears to me that you published everything that was in the *Daily Times* extra and some other additional particulars of news which you received from the *Southland Times*, but you are not able at this lapse of time to say what those additional particulars were?—I should not like to lend myself to them.

186. *Mr. Steward.*] I would like to ask the witness in connection with the statement that he published in the *Evening Star* certain items he had received and certain items he had not received directly, whether the telegram was headed "from our own correspondent," or whether the telegrams were acknowledged in any way?—Headed "New Zealand Telegraph Company," but I do not know by whose authority.

187. There were certain items not acknowledged as taken from anywhere else?—Not acknowledged.

188. *Captain M'Pherson.*] I would like to know what the different items were, so that we may recognise them again?—The telegram to the *Independent* was the telegram that was published in the *Evening Star*. Nothing else was sent by us.

189. *Mr. Webster.*] Did you say just now that you instructed the Clerk to send the *Daily Times* telegram?—So far as I recollect, but he, instead of sending the *Daily Times* telegram, sent ours that was published and printed.

190. The first telegram, which the *Southland Times* sent offering to send news, you said contained some items of news, and you incorporated those items with the *Otago Daily Times* telegram?—I do not recollect I said so, but probably we did. There is no doubt that we should. There were some items received in the first telegram.

191. *The Chairman.*] Was the taking of Sedan one of the special items that were in the first telegram that you received before the *Daily Times* published the extra?—To the best of my recollection it was. That was some of the intelligence.

192. *Mr. Webster.*] In the telegram sent to you by the *Southland Times* offering to send you news—in the first telegram of the 30th September—were there any items conveyed to you?—Yes.

193. *Mr. Lemon.*] Was the telegram you received about the important news—the first telegram—a private message, or would it be a press telegram?—I do not recollect. I did not notice.

194. Have I your permission to get that telegram?—Certainly.

195. *Mr. Bathgate.*] I wish to ask Mr. Bell if he does not recollect that it was nearly 3 o'clock in the day when the *Times* extra was published?—My recollection is that it was not 3 o'clock in the day. If I am not very much mistaken, the *Times* extra was out before 1 o'clock. As far as I recollect, but I would not be positive of that.

196. What is the meaning of the phrase "New Zealand Telegraph Company"?—The meaning was that "Greville's" were just forming, through Mr. Montrose, the "New Zealand Telegraph Company," professing to be under Greville's auspices. The name was changed afterwards to "Greville's Telegraph Company," if I recollect right. A part of the agreement amongst the papers was that they should telegraph to each other.

197. How much of that telegram was received from the *Southland Times*?—I am sure I cannot tell you.

Mr. G. Bell,
5th Oct., 1871.