

Mr. G. Bell.

198. Was there any at all?—Yes.

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199. Was there half?—My memory is not sufficient to enable me to say. I decline to pledge myself as to the amount, whether a-half, a-fourth, or otherwise. I am unable to say what proportion of news under the head of the "New Zealand Telegraph Company" was received by the *Star*, or taken from the *Daily Times*.

200. Was the correspondent of this Company the editor of the *Southland Times*?—Yes, so far as I know, but he might be a reporter.

201. Can the witness tell me which telegram was sent to the *Independent*? Whether the *Daily Times* or *Evening Star* telegram?—I am informed that it was a copy of that which was published in the *Evening Star*. Cut out from it altogether. I did not do it myself.

202. One sentence in the paper produced appears to be a copy of the telegram that appears in the *Times*, and not in the *Star*?—Yes, I think that is likely under the circumstances.

203. By Mr. Bathgate, through the Chairman.] How do you account for it?—It is not for me to account for it. From what I heard in the Magistrate's Court, I think it is easily accounted for. I understand the *Wellington Independent* received a telegram independently of the *Daily Times* and *Evening Star*. Such a thing may be easily accounted for.

204. Mr. Webster.] What do you understand by the wires being kept for you?—Merely in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

205. Mr. Bathgate.] Is it a regulation of the Department that you can have wires kept for you? I do not know what the regulations are, but that was the purport of the message.

The witness then withdrew.

FRIDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 1871.

Present:—

The Hon. Mr. Stafford in the Chair.

Mr. Farnall,
Mr. Pearce,
Mr. Rolleston,

Captain M'Pherson,
Hon. Mr. Vogel,
Mr. Webster.

Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. Christopher Francis De Salis O'Toole in attendance, and examined on oath.

6th Oct., 1871.

206. The Chairman.] You were Sub-Collector at the Bluff on the 30th September, 1870?—Yes.

207. Do you remember the arrival of the "Gothénburg"?—I do, on the 29th September.

208. What took place upon that occasion?—I went on board. It was late in the evening. I went on board as Custom-House Officer immediately upon arrival, and after doing the Customs business I made inquiries of Captain Pearce for a paper.

209. Where was the ship when you went on board?—At the wharf. [Witness here read a letter dated 20th August, 1870, received by him from his superior officer, Mr. Seed, giving instructions to send a telegram of 100 words upon the arrival of English mails. Vide Appendix.]

210. The Chairman.] You went on board the "Gothénburg" when she was alongside the wharf. Will you say what took place then?—After I had done the Customs business I went to obtain a paper containing the latest telegraphic news.

211. Who did you ask for a paper?—The last person I asked was Captain Pearce in his cabin.

212. Did you get a paper before you asked Captain Pearce?—No, it is very seldom you are able to get a paper. There was a great difficulty that evening.

213. What did Captain Pearce say?—He handed me a paper. The second edition of the *Argus*.

214. Did you ask Captain Pearce for any other information besides that contained in the paper?—I asked him for the third edition, and told him I would be extremely obliged if he would give me one as it was important I should have it.

215. Do you recollect the exact words you made use of?—I said to him "Have you got a copy of the third issue, and he said "No, there is not such a thing to be obtained on board the vessel." I think I said "Did you hear anything respecting the third edition before you left?" He replied that he had not. "All that he knew was from reading or hearing read Mr. Nicholls' telegram." Mr. Nicholls was agent for the Press Association.

216. Did Captain Pearce give you any particulars of that information?—Yes he did. He told me pretty nearly all that I afterwards saw printed in the paper that contained the full information. I have since ascertained it was from the third edition of the *Argus*.

217. Do you remember any of the particulars?—I only remember one, and only remembered one next morning. He said he did not know positively that the information was true. I recollect one thing was that "France was declared a republic." Next morning I sent that news added to the other, and I also put the words "more astounding information will be supplied for publication." I thought I was justified in that course, because Captain Pearce said he could not exactly recollect whether it was right or not. He just told me in a careless easy manner. I put my telegram in at the office at 9 o'clock next morning. The message was hurriedly sent away the moment the door was opened.

218. When Captain Pearce told you that France had been declared a republic, you understood he had that knowledge from the telegram that he had heard read?—Certainly. He said all that I recollect, "I read it in Nicholls' telegram, or heard it read." I knew that Nicholls had been on board before me.

219. Do you remember the words in which you communicated the information which you received from Captain Pearce?—In the telegram to the Commissioner of Customs, the last two words were "money market;" and after that I added the words "From information not directly received, France reported declared republic, more astounding information supplied for use of papers." I did not think it right to send that information, because Captain Pearce was not certain of it.

220. Why did you use the words, from information not directly obtainable?—I meant it was not