

89. So that the newspapers using the special wires may often find themselves without news?—They do under some circumstances.

90. *The Chairman.*] Would one wire be sufficient for the purposes of the Press?—No.

91. You think it requires absolutely two?—Yes; during session time we use three and four.

92. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Do you think the persons who are associated in the special wire would be disposed to put an end to the arrangement if they had the opportunity?—I think both sides are heartily sick of it. Last session we had a real special wire between Wellington and Auckland, and we gave the Auckland *Herald* more matter than it could print every night. They used sometimes to telegraph back, asking how much we had got, and when the reply was 5,000 or 6,000 words they would say "Condense it." When this special-wire system commenced, Mr. Horton and others thought they were going to get more, but they forgot that a wire was nothing less than a see-saw, and they could only get 700 words in the hour, and not that sometimes, because between the points one man would block the wire completely, and nobody in the system would have any control over him, and that a man in Wellington would not have the slightest idea of what quantity would be given in at Christchurch or Dunedin.

93. *Mr. Stevens.*] You say that in the case of evening papers you would allow a telegram not exceeding 100 words?—If that were done all the papers would pay wire charges independently.

94. *Mr. Feldwick.*] In your recommendations you evidently desire to force the papers to compress their matter, and give the same information in less space?—I have repeatedly made remarks to the gentlemen who supply the telegrams, and they say it is easier for them to write the telegrams out at length; so that the newspapers have to pay for the extensions. Those who pay 1d. per word for telegrams know the difference.

95. Do they wire an extra amount of rubbish at night?—Yes.

Mr. E. T. GILLON sworn and examined.

96. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Gillon?—Manager of the New Zealand Press Association.

97. Have you any statement to make to the Committee?—I wrote a note asking to be heard before any report was made affecting the interests of the papers included in the Press Association.

98. We will hear what you have to say.—Allow me to say, first of all, that I am at some disadvantage. You have examined the General Manager of the department on questions affecting our interests, and I think I should be allowed to see his evidence. The question is between the Press and the department. I should state that I represent thirty newspapers of all shades of political opinion in the colony, morning and evening, weekly and others. I also represent the contractors for the Association special wire, and I would ask the Committee whether they have a copy of the special-wire agreement before them. I should like the Committee to have a copy, because, I believe, a great deal depends upon it. I have a copy here certified by the Assistant Secretary of the department. [Agreement produced.]

99. Where is the original?—The Telegraph Department has it.

100. Was this signed while the Marquis of Normanby was here?—It was signed by us, but I believe the department neglected to get the Marquis of Normanby's signature to it, though I frequently applied to them for the counterpart, which I never got.

101. And now I understand a new agreement has been made out?—No; not a new agreement. It is in precisely the same terms. I would ask that I might see any statements that have been laid before this Committee affecting our interests. I am aware that two members of this Committee represent papers whose interests are strongly adverse to the interests of the papers I represent.

102. *Mr. Stevens.*] Before we proceed any further I desire you, Mr. Chairman, to ask Mr. Gillon who are the members who represent papers whose interests are strongly adverse to those which he represents.

*Mr. Wakefield:* I for one shall leave the Committee-room if such evidence is to be given.

*Mr. Stevens:* I now call upon you to request Mr. Gillon to state the names of those members.

*Mr. Gillon:* I do not object to the constitution of the Committee.

103. *The Chairman.*] Who are the two members to whom you allude?—Mr. Stevens and Mr. McLean, one being chairman of directors of the Canterbury *Press*, and the other largely interested in the Dunedin *Morning Herald*, and both concerned in the lease of the second special wire.

104. Upon what grounds do you assert that they are antagonistic to you?—I do not know whether Mr. McLean will permit me to use a private conversation that took place between us a few months ago.

105. *Mr. McLean.*] Are you aware that two members of this Committee are connected with your Association?—I believe they are connected with papers included in it.

106. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Is it not a fact that the paper with which I am connected, and that with which Mr. Wakefield is connected, are included in your Association?—Yes.

*Mr. Wakefield:* Mr. Gillon says he represents thirty papers. I should like to say that he does nothing of the kind. He is their agent for a particular purpose; but to say that he represents them, and is qualified to come before this Committee and to speak on their behalf, is entirely to misrepresent the facts.

*Mr. Gillon:* I say that the Association, of which I am manager, includes thirty papers.

107. *The Chairman.*] You are here now to make a statement. State what you desire.—In addition to what is comprised in the agreement, I wish to explain that we have had a number of additional stations opened in connection with the special wire. We have had the special-wire system extended by the department to Greymouth, Hokitika, Blenheim, Ashburton, and Grahamstown, and for these stations we pay £70 a year each, in addition to the £2,000 a year for the main wire. The special-wire agreement is made with the proprietors of three newspapers only, and is at the rate of £2,000 a year for a wire from Auckland, with the offices at Napier, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Invercargill, and the Bluff connected. The condition of the agreement is that the contractors for the wire shall make no profit out of the transaction whatever. They may be required to make a return to the department of what they receive from other papers towards the special wire.

*Dr. Lemon.*

August 6, 1879.

*Mr. Gillon.*

August 6, 1879.