

144. Have you had any personal quarrel with him?—I do not know of any. I do not think so.
 145. I suppose because you cannot get all you want you think he is throwing obstacles in the way?
 No, I do not.

146. You made some statement about 1,500 words?—I say that the evening papers are really in a worse position with 1,500 words at day rates than they were when they only got 200 words.

147. Do you mean to say that none of the papers get 1,500?—I say very few of them get anything like it.

148. Suppose one witness were to give evidence that he gets more, would you contradict him?—Yes. So far as our Association is concerned the messages all come to me, and I can produce a record of the number of words of each day since the Association started.

149. *The Chairman.*] Are you the agent referred to in the 15th clause of the contract?—I am.

150. *Mr. McLean.*] Then, is it a fact that several of the papers connected with your Association have got independent sources of news?—I believe nearly every paper has.

151. Then, how can you say that no paper connected with the Association can get 1,500 words?—I am speaking of Association messages.

152. We are not examining you as to the amount got by the Association, but as to how it is that no evening paper gets more than 1,500 words?—I believe the *Auckland Evening Star* probably gets more, but I do not think any evening paper connected with our Association receives an average of anything like 1,500 words from all sources. The *Star* does get a large amount through.

153. These thirty papers all pay something?—They pay from £10 upwards as subscription. The highest that any pays is £50. I think the lowest is £10. The special wire is a matter entirely separate. We draw on the special-wire papers for their contribution in advance every first of the month.

154. Suppose it turns out that the *Lyttelton Times* only pays £325, while the *Canterbury Press* pays £1,500 towards their special wire, do not you think that is wrongly handicapping the *Press*?—No, I do not.

155. You think if the Government compels them to pay £1,500, and the *Lyttelton Times* only pays £325, that that is a fair arrangement?—The *Lyttelton Times* pays that because it has sub-let its wire to other papers. The *Press* had an equal opportunity.

156. If it turns out that the *Lyttelton Times* pays £325, and that the *Press* has to pay £1,500 to be in the same position, do not you think that an oppression?—I think it no more oppression than if I were to buy 50,000 acres of land from the Government and had partners with me, and if you were to buy the same quantity with your own money. It is a business competition. They have entered into a speculation to rent a wire. The *Canterbury Press* might take away every paper from us to-morrow, so far as the Government is concerned, but we have agreements with them.

157. *Mr. Stevens.*] Is it not a fact that, owing to the action of the Government at the start, the papers connected with the Press Association were enabled to make such advantageous terms?—It is not a fact. Last session Mr. McLean brought the matter up in the House, when the whole question was discussed, and it was stated that any other paper might get a special wire on the same terms as ours.

158. *Mr. McLean.*] Is it not a fact that, before I brought it out in the House, the matter was only discussed by the three papers?—I do not think it was a secret. I consider it was a business arrangement entered into by the papers.

159. Is it not a fact that none of those papers entered into business arrangements with other papers until this agreement was signed?—The agreement was not signed for months after the thing came into force. None of the agreements with other papers were made till long after last session.

160. From what reasons can you state that?—I made the whole of the arrangements with the papers. We had a meeting in Dunedin, I think, on the 17th October. That was the first meeting. At that time I was appointed manager *pro tem.*, and had to go round the colony to see all those papers and arrange terms with them, which I did.

161. Suppose it were stated in evidence that the *Lyttelton Times*, *Dunedin Daily Times*, and *Auckland Herald* were arranging terms before that with other papers; could they not have done that without your knowledge?—They had been in communication with other newspapers, which were dissatisfied with the system, but nothing was settled about terms. I did not go to Invercargill; but Mr. Fenwick went there at the same time as I went to the North.

162. You say no positive arrangements were made by the contractors, now called the Press Association, with any of their present customers; then, at the time when the arrangement was made with the Government by the contractors, nothing was definitely arranged with the papers?—No, nothing beyond the intimation that they were trying to obtain a special wire, and establish a Press Association.

163. Are you prepared to state distinctly that there was no arrangement between the papers that, if this concession were obtained from the Government, they would be prepared to give certain terms?—So far as I know, there was not. They said, We are trying to get a special wire, and if we get one, will you share it? They said, If you get the special wire, we are disposed to do so, if the terms suit.

164. Suppose the Government was prepared to enter into an arrangement by which all these thirty papers contributed to a special wire, and two other papers were shut out, do you think it would be right that those two papers should remain under that disability?—I do not think it is right for me to express an opinion as to the policy of the Government.

165. Suppose you found those two papers obtained such a concession, and you did not, would you think it fair?—I should try to get a better arrangement if I found myself at a disadvantage.

166. Would you think the conduct of the Government was fair?—I must decline to express any opinion with reference to the conduct of the Government.

167. Do you know from your own knowledge that you do not get sufficient use of the special wire?—I find that constantly every day.

168. You put the blame on Dr. Lemon. Do you not know that he has had nothing to do with it?—Recently he has not, since Mr. Maginnity took charge.

Mr. Gillon.

August 6, 1879.