

Mr. Gillon.
August 6, 1879.

169. Has there been any improvement since Mr. Maginnity took charge?—There has been a much greater willingness to meet our requirements; but I do not think Mr. Maginnity is sufficiently independent to do what the occasion demands. I believe Dr. Lemon still controls the business.

170. Are you not aware that these mistakes you complain of are made under Mr. Maginnity's charge?—Yes; but I could bring a hundred and fifty other instances. These are only recent instances.

171. You said in your remarks that you considered the second special wire to be a breach of the original agreement with the Association?—No. It was only provided that they were not to get better terms.

172. Mr. Feldwick.] Are you working the central system, receiving messages from all quarters, and then sending out?—No.

173. Would you, as manager of the Association, object to a word rate to 1 a.m., in preference to a special wire?—That would depend a great deal upon the rate; if it were a favourable rate, I would not. I would not limit it to one association. I think during the session the wire should be open for half an hour after the House rises—up to 3 o'clock for instance—so that the news might be sent out. There should also be a large reduction on "vides." I think a great concession might be made in a word rate on those terms. The true solution of the difficulty is to encourage "vides" of messages which only go once along the wires; encourage one transmission, and allow a large rebate on "vides;" instead of charging eight papers full rates each for a message, one full rate only should be charged.

174. It strikes me you put matters unfavourably for evening papers. How do they subscribe to your Association?—They subscribe towards the general expenses of management, correspondents, &c.

175. Do you not secure to evening papers the right to copy from morning papers?—They do it, but they have a legal right to do it even if they were not in the Association.

176. Is it not a matter of agreement?—No, it is not included in the agreement; but we do not repeat to the morning papers what is sent to the evening papers, and *vice versa*, where we have both morning and evening papers.

177. Then, do the evening papers diminish the expenditure of the contributing morning papers?—No, I hardly think they do. In Auckland and Napier we have no evening paper, and we send everything to the morning papers there.

178. Is it not a fact that, under this special-wire arrangement, a Government department is farmed like a private company?—No, the special wire is kept entirely distinct. The wire is let to a company, practically.

179. Have not the evening papers power to send messages by the special wire during hours at which the special wire is available?—No.

180. Suppose an evening paper puts in a telegram of their own, would you not send it through?—No, I would not. I could not, without informing Dr. Lemon, to whom I have to give a list of agents authorized to use the wire. I keep the two distinct.

181. Mr. Wakefield.] I should like to get from Mr. Gillon whether there is any means of communication between him and the Government as to the transmission of information by telegraph at the instance of the Government?—No, certainly not. I never had telegrams sent down for me by Ministers. There was one exception—a letter addressed to me by Colonel Whitmore to correct an error. I sent that out. I think the same information which I get from Government is also sent to the other Agency. Every month we get information from the Post Office about the sailing of the mail steamer, and I know that this is sent to both parties. I, as a newspaper man, very often wait on Ministers, and ask them if there is any information; and sometimes I get it, and sometimes do not.

182. You mean to tell me that the Association does not send anything away for the Government as a means of colouring the public intelligence?—I say, most positively, that the Government does not exercise any influence over the Press Association. My instructions to every agent are to carefully avoid sending any opinions, or anything which can be construed into an expression of opinion. I may say that last night I had to send a telegram on this subject to my agent at Christchurch. He stated in a message that Sir George Grey would be sure to be returned for Christchurch, and I told him I did not want any speculations on the result, but would wait to see what the result of the election would be. Again, in consequence of another message, I sent to Timaru to-day, stating that I did not want any information as to the chances of candidates, that it was an improper thing to send. Agents have sometimes sent out extracts from leading articles expressing strong political opinions, contrary to my instructions, which are not to send telegrams which can possibly have any colour in them whatever.

183. Are you aware that on one occasion a leading article was telegraphed from Christchurch all over the colony on the night before it was published?—I am; and I should be very happy to show you my telegram in answer to the one sent by the agent excusing his action in the matter.

184. Can you understand how a leading article could be telegraphed all over the colony so as to appear simultaneously with its publication in the *Lyttelton Times*?—Yes; my agent is a newspaper man. He telegraphed to me, stating, "I have sent 800 words of a leader which will appear in the *Lyttelton Times* to-morrow morning. This I have done at the expressed wish of the editor." I telegraphed back to the effect that I could not sanction his acceding to such requests. I consider it wrong for an association such as ours to send out any telegram that has any party colour at all.

185. Would such a thing be done but for the existence of the special wire?—I believe it would.

186. Do you mean to say that any one would send a telegram of that kind as a Press telegram?—I have known it to be done before.

187. Does it not, going through the Association, go with a certain imprimatur?—Yes; and I was very sorry it went. The best I can do is to give special instructions against such things. I consider it was a most improper article to send out.

188. Suppose there was no special wire, would the Telegraph Department allow a leading article to go as a Press telegram?—The department would have allowed it if it had been commenced, the *Lyttelton Times* says.