

241. What is your view as regards the interests of evening papers?—The evening papers are very difficult to supply. There is a great deal of public work which interferes with the Press work, which is no doubt very heavy. I am not able to speak of the facilities which the department is able to give.

242. What would you consider would be the best form of meeting the requirements of the evening papers?—There would require to be some limit as to what they would require in the shape of telegraphic intelligence. It would be advisable to facilitate the transmission of their news between 2 and 3 p.m. They would require that more than any other concession.

243. Do you think it would answer the purpose if they had a right to have, say, 100 words between 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon, with perhaps an occasional extension up to 2.30 p.m.?—I do not know how that would work.

244. You have not considered that question?—No, I have not.

245. Do you consider it would be necessary to have an extension after midnight for morning papers?—I do not think there is any necessity for it; as I have said before, very little news transpires after 10 or 11 at night.

246. Do you think it advisable that any special arrangements should be made at the request of papers?—That is a matter for the department. I have heard a suggestion that the offices should be kept open till 12 o'clock, and that some person should sleep in each office and receive messages up to the limited extent after that hour.

247. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Do you as a telegraph agent think that the news has deteriorated since the special wire?—It has in every respect.

248. Do you find that at some stations from which you desire to get news the messages do not come through?—Very frequently.

249. And matter of inferior quality does get through?—Sometimes.

250. You have been sub-editor of a newspaper?—Yes.

251. Do you think it would be fair that the newspapers that have a special wire, and desire to abandon it, should be allowed to put in telegrams up to the time that the wire now closes?—Yes, at a word rate.

252. Your association is largely supported by evening papers?—Yes.

253. Are they not very large customers of the Telegraph Department?—They are.

254. Do you think they usually exceed the 1,500 words given them during the day?—On an average they do not come up to it. There are only probably two papers in the colony that come up to that limit. I am speaking from the knowledge I have, and I include the cable messages and other telegrams.

255. Do you not think it is a matter of public importance that evening newspapers should be well served?—I think it is a matter of public importance that all should be well served.

256. Do you think that evening papers or morning papers pay most to the department while the special wire exists?—That I cannot say.

257. What do you imagine?—It would be difficult for me to say. I fancy one pays quite as much as the other in the long run.

258. But you think evening paper telegrams sent at a word rate are much better compiled?—Most decidedly.

259. *The Chairman.*] Are the Press Association and the Press Agency at the present time on an equal footing? Have they equal privileges?—So far as I am aware.

260. Has the Press Agency an agreement with the department?—Yes, I believe so.

261. Is it the same as the other one?—I believe it is.

262. Who signed it?—I signed it on behalf of the Press Agency.

263. When was it signed?—I cannot tell you the exact date.

264. Have you any fault to find with Dr. Lemon personally?—No, I have not.

265. Would you be willing to give up the agreement you have signed with the Government provided you get a fair arrangement and the office were kept open at a word rate until midnight?—Yes, we would gladly give it up. It would never have been entered into but to prevent certain papers being placed at a disadvantage.

266. You would rather go back to the old plan?—Certainly.

267. Was this concession which was made to the Press Association, and the manner in which you were handicapped by having to enter into this agreement with the Government, the cause of your partnership with Captain Holt being brought to an end?—Yes, it was. I thought if the personal hostility to Captain Holt were removed I might struggle on and be able to survive.

268. Then, through the concession given to the Press Association, you lost money personally.—Yes.

269. What leads you to think that any person entertained personal hostility to Captain Holt?—Well, the general impression got abroad. That was the idea I had, and many others had the same. I knew there were not very amicable relations between Sir George Grey and Captain Holt, and one circumstance that I may mention assisted in creating this feeling. A few years before Sir Donald McLean died he came to Captain Holt and asked him if he knew anything about the Omaramui transaction, and if he would have any objection to supplying the information. He gave it on a piece of paper, and Sir Donald McLean made no use of it whatever; but, in a debate which occurred after his death, Mr. Ormond made use of it, when political feeling was running high, and from the paper having no date upon it it appeared as if it had been just supplied, whereas it had been supplied to Sir Donald McLean a year before. I have often thought that the misapprehension which the fact of the date being omitted created did Captain Holt a great deal of injury, and indirectly, of course, it injured me.

270. *Mr. McLean.*] That was your feeling with reference to the matter?—That was the only feeling I had. I proposed to Captain Holt that it would be better, under the circumstances, if he withdrew, as there was nothing for it but loss, and Captain Holt had something to occupy him, and I had nothing but to stick to the Agency, or to throw it up altogether.

271. Was there a living in the Press Agency before the Government gave this concession to the Press Association?—There was just a fair living in it, for which we worked hard.

*Mr. McCarthy.*

August 6, 1879.