

81. How were they obtained?—They were taken from the large daily papers and sent up to us by a correspondent.

82. They were sent up by the Country Press Company?—When I first went to the Wangaratta paper that company was not yet formed.

83. Cannot you say that the cablegrams are forwarded through a regular agency?—I am under the impression that they are.

84. But there is the greatest difference between the Press Association and the Country Press Company, Victoria. One is a private concern and is run on private lines, the other is worked on the co-operative principle?—That is as it seems to me.

85. Will you explain?—In Victoria every newspaper connected with the agency becomes a shareholder. There were seventy-six shareholders at one time. I believe that three or four have withdrawn, leaving seventy-two still.

86. From what you have told us of the relationship that subsists between the large metropolitan papers and the country papers in New Zealand, it is something like that between Lazarus and Dives. The country papers receive the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table?—That is my impression.

87. *The Chairman.*] You are acquainted with the Act under which this copyright is granted?—I have read the principal clauses.

88. You do not disapprove of having protection for their cables?—No, I do not.

89. You think that is a fair thing?—Yes, that is a fair thing.

89A. Do you think that this society would be likely to ask for these enormous fees for entrance if it were not for the copyright clauses in the Act?—I do not think so.

90. That is what gives them their great power?—Quite so.

91. You say that when you saw the manager of the Association you asked him what the entrance-fees were, and he told you £176 for a tri-weekly; £250 for a daily?—He said the minimum was £250, but it might be £300.

92. But it would be a minimum of £250?—For a daily; £176 for a tri-weekly.

93. Supposing a man starts a paper, whether daily or tri-weekly does not matter—but let it be a daily—he pays £250, but eventually he finds that he cannot make his paper do, and he has to leave the business: what becomes of the £250?—He gets none of it back. I remember when I paid a small entrance fee of £15 at Opunake, and closed up the paper, I got none of it back. I never heard of these fees being returned. On the other hand, in Victoria, when I was leaving I was able to transfer my shares, and I got every penny of the money I had paid for them.

94. In the event of your wishing to change into another district, could you transfer your right into another district?—I do not know about that. I could not give a decided opinion; that has never cropped up with me. I have never considered that point.

95. *Mr. Carnecross.*] I have heard it stated that if a man shifts into another locality he is treated by the Press Association as a new subscriber?—I cannot tell you anything about that.

96. *The Chairman.*] Can he sell his right to any one?—I cannot tell you; I do not know.

97. Have you any idea in what way the Act could be amended so as to secure fairer treatment if that should be found necessary?—My opinion is, or, rather, it is my impression, that, as the country gives special privileges in the shape of cheaper wire-charges to this or any other company, any person wishing to join this or any similar society—any association of the same kind—should have the same rights or privilege. But, so long as the present Act is in existence, I do not see how any other association would be likely to start.

98. It has created a monopoly?—Yes; and, in my opinion, a very strong one. If I might be permitted to make a further statement, I might perhaps throw some fresh light on the matter. When the Press Association was started I knew Mr. Florence McCarthy, who was the manager of the Press Agency. I was sub-editor of the *New Zealand Times*. Mr. McCarthy was greatly disgusted at the way this Bill was passed. He offered to give me the papers adhering to the Press Agency if I would take them up. But I did not see that I had the best qualifications for the duties; and I then expressed my opinion that he could not cope with the new Association, for it was too strong, as they had all the big papers at their back.

99. Have you any knowledge who were the projectors?—I could not say who were the individuals, but it originated with all the large papers, or the proprietors of the large papers. The *Canterbury Press* was not in it at first—it adhered to the old Press Agency; but it joined the Press Association eventually. The sympathies of the *New Zealand Times* were with the Press Agency.

100. Mr. Reeves, of Christchurch, was one of the projectors, was he not?—Yes.

101. You said you had no objection to the annual subscription?—I have no objection to an annual subscription being charged; but I think, if you give the right of charging an entrance-fee, that fact lays the society open to the charge of being exclusive, and opens the door to monopoly. Whenever people charge an entrance-fee there is a tendency to make it larger.

102. Have you any fault to find with the general fees?—No; I have not found fault with that.

103. Then, your objection to the operation of this Act is that it enables the Press Association to charge a huge entrance-fee, which blocks out other people from the advantages which they ought to obtain if this large entrance-fee were not charged?—Quite so.

104. *Mr. Massey.*] When you referred to your tri-weekly paper at Hawera, is that the same paper that Mr. Ivess referred to in his evidence given to the Committee yesterday?—Mr. Ivess, when he went there, started a paper at Stratford; he also started this paper at Hawera. He was going to have a syndicate of papers. The entrance-fee was paid to the Association; but when they found that the news they sent was being used for a syndicate of papers they refused to wire to him any more. The name of the paper to be run at Stratford was the *Elmont Post*.