

of the English cables that appear in the New Zealand evening papers do not arrive in Australia till about 9 a.m. Australian time, and some of them not till the middle of the day. So you will see that the addition of 2 hours 35 minutes on to that time makes a very great difference indeed. The effect would be that many of the evening papers would not get the cables into their first editions, and the cables that arrive in Australia later would probably miss them altogether. It would also make it extremely difficult to get Australian news arising during the day into the evening papers. I would add that if the Commonwealth Government were to adopt a similar scheme the difficulty would, of course, disappear. We should be then exactly as we are now. With due deference to the Committee I should like to suggest that if the Bill is passed into law the New Zealand Government should be asked to earnestly press Australia to follow suit. There is only one more thing I want to say, and it is with regard to some remarks made by Sir William Steward in the debate on the Bill in the House. He made a statement with regard to the effect of the Bill on the newspapers which is not correct—quite inadvertently, I am sure—and as he is an old newspaper man himself it would, of course, carry weight with his hearers. What he said, according to the report in the local papers, was that “the morning dailies that would be most affected would be those of the four cities, where the telegraph-office was open all night.” Well, the telegraph-office is not open all night; and all morning papers are affected, because, as I have just explained, all the telegraph-offices are specially opened, by arrangement with the Government; so it would not affect the papers in the large cities only, but all the morning papers. That is all I wish to place before the Committee.

1. *Mr. Sidey.*] Speaking of the general principle involved in the Bill, do you think it would be a good thing for the country if such a proposal were given effect to—I mean, apart altogether from the effect on the newspapers?—I would rather you did not ask me that question, because I am here in an official capacity on behalf of the newspapers, and, whatever my private opinion may be, it has to be subsidiary to my official opinion. You would put me in a rather awkward position. Supposing that I were in favour of the measure as a private individual, it would look inconsistent if I were to say so, in face of the very grave circumstances that I have had to lay before the Committee. I would rather you did not ask the question.

2. Let me put it in this way: Supposing Australia were brought into line with us, as you suggested, do you think such an innovation as is proposed would be a good thing for both countries?—I think that if Australia came into line it would be a very good thing indeed.

3. You think it would be of great advantage to the people?—Yes.

4. Do you think there would be any scientific objection?—I can hardly speak from a scientific point of view, but I cannot really see what objection there could be to it at all if everybody were placed on the same footing; but if Australia were on one footing and we on another, then you would be very much in the same position as if Wellington adopted local time and the rest of the Dominion did not. Everybody would be at sixes and sevens. Where a whole community adopt it, then everything is on the same plane; it does not affect the steamer-services, or train-services, or anything at all, because the clocks are all the same.

5. I understand that your chief objection to the measure is as to its effect on the newspapers: is that so?—Yes, that is the objection I have to lay before the Committee—that it would very gravely affect the newspaper services of the country, and indirectly, therefore, the public.

6. Can you explain how it is that a number of the papers, which might be supposed to be alive to their own interests and to the interests of the public whom they serve, are supporting the proposal very heartily?—It may be that they are prepared to put up with the disadvantages because they think the advantage to the community at large would outweigh them. I think that was the line the *New Zealand Times* took. But my own private opinion is that when once the Bill got into operation they would see how it would work, and would all very quickly alter their opinion. You know that editors very often do not see eye to eye with their managers.

7. You think that much of the Australian news would be cut out of the morning papers?—I think it would cut out a good deal of Melbourne news. The news we should get would be almost confined, I think, to New South Wales, unless it arose, say, in the afternoon; then there would be time to get it through to the morning papers. But the delays in Australia are very great indeed already. The Federal Post and Telegraph service is very badly disorganized, and it is very difficult to get news promptly now, and often very expensive too.

8. Is there not a large quantity of the news already cut out of the newspapers? Is it not only a question of degree?—Well, we just barely squeeze it in as a rule now—the news that we want. Some, of course, is cut out by the 1 hour 35 minutes difference in time.

9. But, taking the cables from England, are there not a number at the present time excluded simply because they arrive too late?—Yes, but then, you see, messages are arriving from time to time, at different hours, and they are timed to arrive in Sydney for a special purpose—to suit the Australian papers.

10. Is it not possible that before long arrangements may be made to get the English news out the other way—by the Pacific cable?—I do not think that would make any difference; whichever way the news came, there would still be 11½ hours difference in time.

11. You say that the news is sent to Australia specially to suit the Australian newspapers: now, that particular feature would be removed if the cables from England did not come to us through Australia?—But it would not get over the difficulty with regard to Australian news. It is not the English messages that would be affected so much as the Australian.

12. Do you think that, in the event of the messages coming by the Pacific cable, we should be able to get all the English news?—I could hardly foresee what the effect would be, because things would be on a totally different basis, and we should get the messages earlier in New Zealand.

13. Probably in sufficient time?—Earlier, undoubtedly.

14. Does the Pacific cable touch New Zealand first?—No, it branches at Norfolk Island.