

were then telegraphed to the various New Zealand newspapers. This was a somewhat cosy arrangement. Vogel, FitzGerald and Ward, all newspaper proprietors, were also all members of the House of Representatives. The Postmaster-General was John Hall, who was regarded by Canterbury journalists as the doyen of their craft,²⁹ and Crosbie Ward had himself served as Postmaster-General from 1861 to 1863. The fact that the Government provided a telegraphed news summary was not publicised and came to light only in 1868 when, after the ousting of Vogel from the *Otago Daily Times*, that paper complained of the arrangements. George Barton, Vogel's successor as editor, wrote of the arrangements as follows:

The General Government virtually compels the leading newspapers of the colony to accept such telegrams as it may please to send them. . . . In doing so it inflicts a wrong upon the public as well as upon the journalists. It undertakes a duty which it is not competent to perform, which it is not asked to perform and which it has no moral right to perform.³⁰

In 1869 Stafford, the Premier, himself took over Hall's portfolios of Postmaster-General and Electric Telegraph Commissioner and began to dismantle the Government-operated system. But before he had completed this, his Ministry fell; Vogel became, as well as Colonial Treasurer, Postmaster-General and Electric Telegraph Commissioner, and the system continued.

Vogel's newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, received little benefit from the summaries. Being an Auckland newspaper it did not, at the time, have access to the telegraph network. Vogel, however, was considered to gain political advantage and the news summaries were frequently criticised by his opponent journals after the first complaints appeared in the *Otago Daily Times*. By 1870 dissatisfaction with the government service had become general among newspapers. Many complaints were in regard to the quality of journalism evident in the telegraphic reporting. Even Vogel's supporters complained:

We had hoped that the repeated complaints made by almost all of the papers in the colony would have led to some improvement in the compilation of the telegrams of English news which the Government practically compels the newspapers to take and pay for. We have, however, been disappointed, for the telegrams received on Sunday last, and published in our last issue are even worse than usual.³¹

No official explanation for the ending of the government service was published. Vogel had no desire to end the Government's role in news collection and dissemination. The management of most newspapers, however, were to refuse to continue their purchase of the news summaries. Vogel was left with no choice but to close down the operation, and it ceased at the end of July 1870. While he