

Court where it had foundered on the questionable constitutionality of a free pardon offered to a sub-editor of the *Otago Daily Times* so as to force him to attest to G. B. Barton's authorship of the articles in question.

The abandoning of proceedings was generally regarded as a victory for the *Otago Daily Times* and a vindication of its stand. It also pointed to an increasing separation of press and Government interests. The earlier identity of interests between press and Government began to crumble once some of the major papers began to lose access to the Government through editors and proprietors who held high Government office. The *Otago Daily Times* was not the first to find itself in this position, but it was the first to find itself the object of Government antagonism and vigorously and successfully to defend itself by defining the Government action as improper.

Beginning in July 1872 there were major changes to the New Zealand press agencies which led by November 1872 to their amalgamation into the Holt and McCarthy agency. The only public acknowledgement of the amalgamation appears to be a passing reference by Vogel in his 1873 report. After discussing the problems faced by the Telegraph Department from two competing press agencies, he writes: '... the special pressure before mentioned has ceased because one of the Press Associations has ceased to exist'.<sup>40</sup>

Holt is referred to as 'Captain Holt' and had a maritime career. During this period and especially prior to the 1876 laying of the Australia-New Zealand cable, his type of expertise was necessary for a successful press agency. Florence Romauld McCarthy (1834-1914), the better known of the two, had worked as a compositor in New York and arrived in Otago in 1861 as part of the great influx of gold-seekers. He later obtained work in Otago as a printer. The final 35 years of his life, from 1880-1914, were spent as editor of the *Grey River Argus*.<sup>41</sup> During the lifetime of the Holt and McCarthy agency, McCarthy's journalistic connections were with the *Wellington Independent*. When the agency began the *Independent* was still owned by Thomas McKenzie, but McCarthy is named as one of the quartet who controlled the paper.<sup>42</sup> The Holt and McCarthy agency was run from Wellington with the locus of control and co-ordination being the *Wellington Independent*.

The major impetus behind the formation of the Holt and McCarthy agency, however, was Julius Vogel, a politician always supported by the *Wellington Independent*. Vogel, in 1872 when the agency began, was Colonial Treasurer, Telegraph Commissioner and Postmaster-General as well as proprietor of the *Southern Cross*. As had happened previously, his involvement in the formation of the Holt and McCarthy agency, was to provoke large scale discussion on the propriety of the close connections between his press and