

That the New Zealand Company owned the types and the press was a general belief among the early settlers. In a letter to the editor published on 3 April 1847, C. A. Dillon accused Elliott of biased reporting in favour of the New Zealand Company because his hands were tied by financial obligations to the Company.

With the single exception of one or two articles, denouncing the New Regulations, has anything condemnatory of their conduct towards the settlers appeared in your paper? . . . As to the *interest* you may have in keeping up the delusion in favour of the New Zealand Company, public report says, and I believe with perfect truth, that the types with which the *Nelson Examiner* is printed, were given, or lent to you by the New Zealand Company. It is generally understood that your leading articles are written by persons in the Company's employment, or by those who have been or hope to be again in it. Who were for a long time your greatest subscribers? Who the principal advertisers in your paper? Was it not the New Zealand Company? . . .

In conclusion, let me assure you, that as long as your journal continues, what is now universally believed to be, the organ of the New Zealand Company, it will never command the respect or confidence to which it, in other ways, is fully entitled; for I must do you the justice to say, that in all other matters, public opinion gives you full credit for having always conducted it in an upright and gentlemanlike manner.⁹

In his response to Dillon's charges, Elliott was at pains, as he had been on previous occasions, to explain that his connection with the New Zealand Company was an ordinary business transaction.

There is, perhaps, no position more unpleasant than that of an individual who is conscious of being the subject of idle and unfounded rumours, which, without appearing obtrusive, he cannot refute, however deeply they may affect his character and interest. Such has been in some measure our own case, and we are therefore greatly indebted to the Hon. C.A. Dillon for his letter, which appears in this day's paper, as it enables us, without incurring the imputation referred to, to clear up the misconception which exists respecting the present editorship of this journal, and the supposed connexion between the proprietor and the New Zealand Company. It was for the purpose of getting from Mr Dillon a distinct statement of the rumours afloat respecting ourselves, which evidently had led that gentleman to make some of the remarks regarding us in his letter to the Company's Agent, that we waived our reply to them at the time they appeared.

Before noticing any of the public questions touched on by Mr Dillon, we shall direct our attention to those which more immediately affect ourselves. Taking 'public report' for his authority, Mr Dillon tells us that the types with which the *Nelson Examiner* is printed, were given or lent to us by the New Zealand Company. We assure Mr Dillon that in this instance 'public report' is grossly at fault. The types and printing materials used by us were never the property of the New Zealand Company, but were our own long before we even knew the existence of that body. It is quite true, and so far from making a secret of it, the fact was broadly stated in our very first number, that we were under a pecuniary obligation to the Company, incurred indeed through the deception of a person [Frederick Cooper] who originally embarked with us in our enterprise, and whose liabilities fell upon our shoulders. Our transaction with the Company was a perfect matter of business—a loan, chargeable with interest, of which only a small part now remains unpaid. It is not pleasant to have to trumpet forth our private affairs in this manner,