

viduals and gentlemen travellers as well as by the generosity and goodwill of captains of passing ships who brought with them news from other colonial settlements and files of contemporary newspapers. This method of news gathering was made difficult by the poor and painfully slow infrastructures of communication and transportation. Intra-settlement transportation was for more than two decades on foot.⁷ Coastal sailing vessels were slow and made unreliable by the vagaries of the weather. It took anything up to eight days to travel by boat from Wellington to Nelson.⁸ News often did not reach Nelson from the seat of government, then in Auckland, for 'nearly four months' and often arrived indirectly from Sydney.⁹

Some time ago, when communication by vessel between Auckland and the southern settlements of the colony was so infrequent, that we occasionally had news of a later date from England than from our own seat of Government, and when our intelligence from Auckland often came to us by way of Sydney, the Government established a fortnightly overland mail between Auckland and Wellington, which, although the transit was somewhat tedious, occupying as it did about a month, still a regular communication was established, and when no direct conveyance by sea offered, letters and papers could be forwarded by this channel, slow and tedious as it was.¹⁰

News collecting techniques improved slowly. By the close of 1849, Elliott started to use reporters in the field. With the introduction of steam navigation to Nelson on 28 August 1853,¹¹ Elliott received with greater regularity correspondents' reports from Dunedin, Greymouth, Wellington, Auckland, Sydney, London, Paris and Rome. But it is not known how many of these correspondents were paid reporters. Reports from correspondents were mostly published anonymously under the caption 'from our own correspondent', or 'from our special correspondent'. These reports were supplemented with texts of government bills and acts, public lectures, poems, reprints from books and contemporary newspapers whose sources Elliott had the courtesy to credit. Most of the bylines from contemporary newspapers appear to be lifted verbatim without any modification. In 1867 Elliott joined Nation and Robert Lucas, proprietor of the *Nelson Evening Mail*, to form what was a short-lived press association¹² to receive telegraphic news that arrived at Bluff Harbour and Wellington from England via the Suez and Panama. When unsatisfactory service led to the breaking up of the association, Elliott appointed a private agent to provide the service, but the New Zealand government's monopoly of the telegraph service forced him to cancel this private arrangement and to rely on the government service.¹³ News