

reports which were wholly or partially inaccurate were corrected in subsequent editions of the paper and the editor often answered correspondents' complaints of misprints and other forms of misrepresentation.

One of the popular sections of the *Nelson Examiner* was the Letters-to-the-Editor column: a public forum in which a variety of personal and public views were freely expressed. As a rule, the editor would not publish letters 'unless made acquainted with the name of the writer'¹⁴ but many letters were signed with names such as S. Secrecolo, Ouvrier, A Working Man and Memorandum which were unmistakably pseudonyms. Each letter was inserted as and when space was available, but letters rejected by the rival management of the *Nelson Colonist* and the *Nelson Evening Mail* were very often published while correspondence on controversial religious and similar issues was often excluded. The *Nelson Examiner's* generosity knew no bounds when it came to publishing letters to the editor which were often numerous and lengthy.

The length of our correspondence, and the reports of Public Dinners, leave us no space for editorial observations. In one sense we are sorry for this, as there are several questions of local, as well as general interest, which we desire to bring before our readers' notice. If however our correspondents insist on monopolising all our paper to themselves, we must not quarrel with them, for they too are discussing questions which bear immediately upon the welfare of the community. When they begin to tire, we shall resume our task.¹⁵

Local news

In its news reporting, the *Nelson Examiner* was essentially the colonial settlers' mouthpiece, recounting a mixed bag of local and foreign news not unlike its American predecessors of the 1770s.

Being the medium of the leadership, colonial newspapers normally contained what its members wanted said. And this, it appears, was a very mixed bag indeed. Advertisements, literary essays, political polemics, and news filled pages studded with everything from an account of violence in Britain over a 'buxom country wench', to a locally composed elegy on the death of a favourite cat, to the proceedings of the Continental Congresses.¹⁶

The *Nelson Examiner* reported all matters of socio-economic and political interest to the settlers: the waste land regulations, the politics of provincialism and separation, the New Zealand Wars and the Maungatapu murders among others. While not often critical of the New Zealand Company, the *Nelson Examiner* was a champion of the settlers' interests. The Wairau Affray in which several Europeans were killed at the mouth of the Tuamarina Valley received extensive coverage to which the paper's first supplement was devoted. So sensitive was this issue that the settlers petitioned Parliament in London on 15 June 1844 when Governor Fitzroy