

90. Your Association is not registered?—No; there was some talk of registering under the Joint-Stock Companies Act.

91. That would be better. I do not think you are legally constituted at all, because your number is more than seven?—The Act does not forbid more than seven carrying on business.

92. You say the Association does not make profits?—Yes; no individual profits can be made by the members of the Association.

93. Do you think the special-wire business effects a saving generally to the Press?—A very large saving; and, I think, to the public too. By the special wire the papers get a good deal more for their money than they otherwise could. Any increased rates would not lead to increased revenue, because the papers now spend every sixpence they can afford. I do not think another £200 or £300 could be squeezed out of them.

94. Is it absolutely necessary to keep the office open till 1 o'clock at the end of Parliament?—We do not find it too much.

95. Do many papers take advantage of the clause that all messages unfinished at 1 o'clock may be finished at Press rates?—The two Dunedin papers, the *Timaru Herald*, the *Lyttelton Times*, the *Canterbury Press*, the *New Zealand Herald*, Auckland, and the *New Zealand Times*.

96. Then I think you said, with regard to extra copies, two were as many as you asked for?—Yes.

97. *Mr. Ireland.*] Has the Association any power whatever to exclude a paper wishing to join?—No, not if it paid the entrance fee. It was fixed by the committee, and a circular was sent to each of the papers, and only two or three refused to pay the fee.

98. *Mr. Shephard.*] I should like to ask Mr. Gillon as to what existed before the Press Association came to life, under the Press Agency. There had been for years a growing dissatisfaction with the management in several ways. The news was bad, and it had a strong party taint?—I do not like to express any opinion upon that.

99. You know complaints were made very generally from one end of the colony to the other as to the management?—Yes.

100. Then, after that, a number of papers which previously subscribed to the Press Agency seceded, and the present Association is the outcome of that secession. If the Press Agency at the time had had exclusive right to the special wire, could that secession have worked?—I do not think it could. I think there is a mistake in the way you use the word "exclusive." It means exclusive to us as far as the particular wire is concerned, but not exclusive of others having similar privileges. The wire shall be for our exclusive use, but not to interfere with any wire which others may obtain.

101. That would be very expensive—to put up an additional wire. Is there anything to prevent the present Association drifting into the same mismanagement, or doing things which we know very well were done by the late Press Agency?—I think there is—a very strong reason. The former Agency was a business firm beyond all control by its clients. It simply sold the telegrams, and the purchasers could take the messages or leave them alone as they liked. There was no control over the management. But the present Association is not one formed for profit, and is entirely under the control of the papers themselves. A committee of five is chosen to represent all the papers, and it is very improbable that all would be on one political side. Besides, all the members have a say in the management; and, unless you can conceive a case in which the whole of the members would be united with one party, there could be no danger.

102. A majority would be sufficient to determine that?—I do not think so. The rules are very strict that nothing of a political or party character should be sent.

103. Is there anything to prevent these rules being altered by the members of the Association? Can the Government have any control?—No; it would not be desirable to give them control.

104. Is there nothing to prevent this Association deteriorating?—I think it is possible; but precautions are taken to prevent it.

*Mr. Shephard:* Yes; but changes may take place.

105. *Hon. J. Hall.*] You say the Association is not incorporated?—No.

107. Then with whom would any agreement on the part of the Government have to be made?—I apprehend with the five members of the committee.

108. Then practically they would have absolute power in their hands to do what they liked with the special wire?—That was talked of, and the chairman was requested to see if the Association could be formed into a joint-stock company. We found a difficulty in the matter of suing subscribers, from being an unincorporated Association, and also in making agreements. In fact, all the agreements have had to run in my name as manager.

109. The present agreement rests with three members, and if it were made with the five practically everything would be left in their hands?—I do not know whether it would be possible to include all the papers; it might be possible to include all the special-wire papers.

110. *Mr. Fisher.*] I understand from you, Mr. Gillon, that things work very satisfactorily, and that you do not want any more concessions?—Only in the small points of which I have spoken. If the Government had power to enter into an agreement there would be very little difficulty as to the details of it.

111. Did I understand you, in your answer to Mr. Fulton, to say that the Association had not considered the third clause of the last report—that the representatives of the various morning and evening newspapers in the colony should be invited to unite in making proposals which would warrant the department in providing a wire specially for the use of the Press night and day?—I do not think it has ever been brought before them particularly, and I am afraid at the present time the Press would not be able to bear the cost. The question was discussed of putting up a fresh wire when times were brighter; but I do not think the Press could now bear the cost. It has not been taken into consideration by the committee as far as I know.

112. *Mr. Murray.*] I do not quite understand your statement with reference to the charges made by the Association. Are they fixed by the size of the town, or by the wealth or circulation of the paper?—In a town the charges are uniform—morning and evening papers, however, pay separate