

had not done so, and that he had no discussion with any member of that Department during the day about any phase of the matter. He said he could think of only two occasions that he had a call from the Prime Minister's Department with a message. To the question as to whether, in his message, in the words used ("concerning recovery of bodies, &c."), the "&c." was invented by him to mean work that was incidental to recovery of bodies, he answered, "Purely bringing out of bodies and possible state of mutilation." To the question, "If a member of the rescue party was informed that he must give no information of any kind whatever to the press under threat of arrest, would your Department in Wellington be party to any such instruction?", his answer was "No." Behind the whole thing was, in my mind, the facts were to be given to Mr. Nash and National Airways. It is customary to inform the next-of-kin before the bald facts are given to the newspapers." To the question, "As far as you know, were any members of the police instructed to withhold from the press information other than that which might have to do with the recovery of bodies?", he answered "No."

The Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. Gibson, said that he was aware of the message shown in the log having been received from Mr. Scott at 4 minutes to 3 and conveyed to the Superintendent of Police. "At that time I knew nothing of the message until it was drawn to my attention a couple of days ago, nor is that surprising, because Civil Aviation activity in this search ceased on the Friday morning, and the Deputy Director, who was extremely busy with other matters, did not think it was of sufficient importance to mention it. Apart from the instruction given to Mr. Hayman on the 28th October to allow an opportunity of notifying the relatives, my Department gave no instructions for withholding news from the press that I know of." In cross-examination by Mr. Leicester, he was asked whether he had an understanding with the Acting Prime Minister that on the plane being found he was the one to make the announcement; he answered, "No, there was no understanding." To the question as to whether he understood from the Acting Prime Minister or his Department he desired to make the announcement, he answered, "No. The only understanding was that National Airways Corporation was to be given an opportunity of notifying the next-of-kin before the information was broadcast, and we would comply with a request from the Acting Prime Minister that he himself would like to know personally."

While it is unfortunate that Mr. Scott cannot recall who it was that telephoned to him, its only importance in this inquiry is the effect it had, if any, on ground operations at Ohakune, Karioi, or Covern's Mill. At Ohakune it was received by Constable Phillips and was put on his file. He says he regarded it merely as a message to be recorded as received, not to be passed on, and that he neither passed it on to any one nor made use of it. A reporter, Mr. Ellis, who was in Constable Phillips' room, took the liberty of looking at the Constable's file and read it. Whether or not Mr. Ellis used his knowledge thus gained and sent it to his own newspaper in support of allegations that the Prime Minister's Department had issued instructions that news should be withheld from the press, I do not know. Mr. Wall, who was the author of the Press Association report, did not see it, and does not directly rely upon it in support of his allegations that Wellington was imposing secrecy on the disclosure of information analogous to that imposed in wartime. In this inquiry, however, it has been used to support the inferences Mr. Wall drew from hearing a telephone conversation Constable Phillips was engaged in when Mr. Wall was in his room, and his account of a statement he said was made to him by Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen that he could give him no information because high authorities had ordered information was not to be given out, and that he, Wall, should apply to Wellington for information if he wanted information. It has also been used to support allegations that restrictions on their activities in the pursuit of information were imposed by Wellington.