

- Q. I just want to recall what was said. [*Editorial of Dominion of 2nd November read by counsel ; Taranaki Herald of 30th October—passages of editorial read ; Greymouth Evening Star, of 2nd November ; Hawera Star, 1st November.*]
- Q. Now, you realize, don't you, that it was the reference in your message to the Publicity Section of the Prime Minister's Department that caused a good deal of indignation in press ?
- A. Not aware that specifically Publicity Section. Understood general attempt to channel news that caused indignation.
- Q. I am suggesting to you that the words " Publicity Section " were your gloss on what you were told by Jacobsen ?
- A. I say definitely, Sir, they were not.
- Q. [*Counsel continues reading from Press Association message.*] In sending that message, did you intend to imply that news of the discovery of the wreckage was deliberately withheld to allow Mr. Nash to make announcement in the House ?
- A. I simply stated the facts as I knew them. I intend no implication.
- Q. Then what was your purpose in mentioning matter ?
- A. We were under difficulties relating to getting news ; I was giving facts, and that was one of the facts as I saw it there at the time.
- Q. You intended no implication that the news had been withheld for two hours deliberately ?
- A. No.
- Q. You are aware that in the editorial comment following the sending of your message newspapers referred to the intentional withholding of news from wreckage for two hours ?
- A. That is a fact, and the comment is newspapers comments on fact ; I am not concerned with that.
- Q. The message goes on : " Instructions were also issued to the police from Wellington to-night that no information relating to to-morrow's activities was to be given except direct to the Prime Minister's Department in Wellington. What was basis for that statement ?
- A. The message Constable Auld received in police-station, Ohakune, some time on Friday night. I cannot recall the exact time.
- Q. Let me recall your evidence then. This is at page 174. [*Counsel reads from page 174 : " I was present . . . to Wellington ".*] Is the account you gave in your evidence of what you heard of Constable Auld's phone call a complete account ?
- A. Not necessarily complete, but at this stage I speak some months after these happenings. Cannot recall in detail, but what I put in Press Association message at that time was checked and is correct.
- His Honour :* Who checked it ?
- A. Checked by myself.
- Mr. Cleary :* Where do you tell us to-day that instructions came from the police at Ohakune on the Friday night that no information relating to to-morrow's activities was to be given except to Prime Minister's Department, Wellington ?
- A. There must have been—
- Q. " Must have been," otherwise statement is quite wrong.
- A. The statement is not wrong, Sir.
- Q. Having sent this message to Wellington by telegraph, who decides on its promulgation there ?
- A. That I do not know.
- Q. Do you know who decided to promulgate this particular message as a Press Association message ?
- A. No, I do not know.
- Q. Did you, with your talk with Hewitt or Muir or any one else in the Press Association, suggest that any check should be made to confirm the facts stated in your message before promulgated ?
- A. No, it is not my position to suggest to my superiors what should be done.
- Q. Is the answer, No ?
- A. The answer is, No. I did not suggest it.
- Q. Did it cross your mind as to whether there should be confirmation made of the statements ?
- A. So far as facts I stated myself I thought no further confirmation necessary.
- Q. Did either of these gentlemen, Hewitt or Muir, say anything about confirming or checking message before released ?
- A. Not that I can recollect.
- Q. You have told us your recollection of conversations is not very good, but give particular attention to this one, please. Was any mention made by any one in the course of your conversations with Wellington relating to your first Press Association message as to the advisability of checking with any of the authorities as to correctness of allegations ?
- A. Authorities or Departments in Wellington ?
- Q. Was any reference made by any one to a question as to advisability produce or necessity of checking any of these allegations ?
- A. I do recollect Hewitt asking me was I sure of facts, and I told him I was.
- Q. But no reference to any question of checking facts ? Isn't it a common practice for one to read in the paper some statement reflecting upon a person, institution, or Department, and in the same paper to read, upon above being referred to person, &c., the following—
- A. That is common, but it is equally common for it to follow the day after.