

Wall's Press Association message sent out on Friday night could not have been founded on what happened on the Saturday following. It was despatched at a time when no search party had returned from the mountain, and when there was no news as to the fate of the occupants of the plane. The incidents therefore on the Saturday, which I will refer to next, can have had no influence on the composition of the Press Association message.

I listened to the evidence of both of them with great care, and if there is a conflict between them as to what took place or what was said in their conversation, and I have to prefer the evidence of one rather than that of the other, I prefer the evidence of Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen. In coming to that conclusion I think it fair to recollect that Wall was a pressman seeking for information from an officer busily engaged in dealing with the coming and going of aircraft and the remission of messages from farther afield to headquarters of the Air Department in Wellington. Jacobsen was bound by Service regulations not to disclose the contents of those messages and told Wall, who one might expect to be aware of that Service condition, that he was bound by his Service not to disclose information. It is not uncommon for a man who is busily engaged to lose patience if he is pestered by reporters, and Jacobsen, after repeated efforts by Wall to obtain information, may have lost his. Jacobsen, in telling Wall that he could get his message from the Air Department in Wellington, or the Prime Minister's Department in Wellington, went, I think, as far as he could probably do. His doing so does not imply that he had instructions of any kind from Wellington, either the Air Department or the Prime Minister's Department, in regard to news. All he knew was that all messages being remitted by him were remitted to Wellington. That he received instructions from Wellington not to disclose information to the press is difficult to suppose, and in any case he denies that he received such instructions. Wall relies on a conversation he was not supposed to hear that Constable Phillips was holding with some person, unknown to Wall, in Wellington. His message, on his own showing, could not have been founded on anything that took place before Friday, for up to that time he says he was willingly given all information that he asked for. That information, related to search operations before the plane was located. The Press Association message therefore cannot, I think, be termed a fair objective account of conditions obtaining in the area he visited on Friday, the 29th October. His statement that it was known in Wellington at 8.40 that when he called at Karioi landing-ground as from this morning instructions had been issued by Air Department, Wellington, they were to be excluded from the ground and no information given them, is, in my opinion, not correct. Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen says that directly he knew of the finding of the plane he put the Karioi landing-ground out of bounds to all people, and did this because he expected an influx of visitors and planes, and that children and others using the ground would be a source of danger to themselves and planes. No instructions from Wellington came about the ground. Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen says that he did it on his own initiative and on the grounds of safety. I do not question that his reason for closing this small ground was not a wise precaution to ensure safety and prevent accidents to planes and public. Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen says that he had no instructions not to give any information. His reason for not giving information was as he disclosed to Wall—namely, that Service regulations prevented him doing it. That information was to be issued through the Publicity Section of the Prime Minister's Department did not, Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen says, come from him, nor in as much as he was unaware that there was a Publicity Section in the Prime Minister's Department, could anything he said lead to the inference that information would come through the Publicity Section of the Prime Minister's Department. Wall's statement that the missing plane was discovered at 8.40, as was immediately known to Air Control, is incorrect. In his statement that "Instructions were issued to police personnel from Wellington to-night that no information relating to to-morrow's activities was to be given except direct to Prime