

6. Were you an ordinary director or managing director?—At that time an ordinary director. The managing director then is now dead.

7 Who was he?—Mr. Curtis.

8. At that time who was the member for your district?—Mr. Symes.

9 Do you know whether he held any official position—such as Government Whip?—I could not say

*Right Hon Sir J G Ward*: I think it is only right to say that Mr Symes was never Government Whip at any time.

10. *Mr Myers* ] He was member for the district at that time?—Yes.

11. How many newspapers were there in September, 1905, published in Stratford?—One only.

12 That was your paper?—Yes.

13 Had there previously been more than one?—Yes, there had been two.

14. What happened to the other?—The company bought both out.

15. When was that?—That, I think, was in 1904—about October or November

16. Prior to September, 1905, had your newspaper been on the list of newspapers to which Government advertisements were given?—No.

17 In September, 1905, did a letter from Mr Symes come before your directors?—Yes.

18. Have you the letter here?—Yes.

19 Do you mind showing it to me?—[Letter produced.]

20. Was that year 1905 the last year of the then existing Parliament?—I could not say—it may have been. There was an election in view

21 And which was held at the end of the year?—Yes.

22 Do you remember whether the House in September was actually sitting?—I could not say that.

23. Well, a letter was received addressed to Mr McCluggage from Mr Symes?—Yes.

24. Was Mr McCluggage one of your directors?—Yes.

25. Did he subsequently take part in the election—actively supporting anybody in particular?—I could not say that.

26. This is the letter: "House of Representatives, N.Z., Wellington, 4th October, 1905.—J. McCluggage, Esq., J P, Whangamomona.—DEAR MCCLUGGAGE,—I am duly in receipt of your confidential letter *re* getting the paper put on the list of Government advertisers. This will depend entirely on the treatment that is meted out to me during the election I believe that I could fix this matter up, but will not do so until after the election; and as I am treated so will I treat the paper You are at liberty to make use of this privately with manager and directors, but not for publication.—With kind regards, yours faithfully, WALTER SYMES" That letter came before the directors?—Yes.

27. Did Mr McCluggage bring it before the directors?—No, he sent it through the post to the manager of the paper

28. Well, a letter appears to have been sent by Mr McCluggage. Have you seen that letter?—No. I can explain why the request was made through Mr McCluggage, if you like.

29 Why?—The paper was off the list. The previous paper had been on, and Mr McCluggage was asked to send in an application through Mr Symes to have it put on. That is how Mr McCluggage came to write the letter

30. You were going to say why?—First, Mr McCluggage was a director, and was personally known to Mr Symes, and that is why he was asked to make the request to him.

31 Did your directors do anything in consequence of that communication?—Yes.

32 What did you do?—As soon as we found out that the member for the district would not help us, we instructed the manager of the paper to see the Minister in charge of the Department.

33. Did the manager take that letter with him, do you know?—I could not say, I did not go with him. In all probability he did.

34. Who was the Minister at that time?—I am not quite certain.

*Right Hon. Sir J G Ward* I was the Minister

35. *Mr Myers* (to witness).] And as a matter of fact I think you were put on the list?—Yes, put on straight away

36. Before the election?—I think it was before the election As soon as we made the request direct to the Department, it was acceded to without any trouble.

37 *Mr Skerrett* ] I understand that prior to the formation of your company there were two existing newspapers in the Township of Stratford?—That is so.

38. Will you be kind enough to give me their names?—One was called the *Egmont Settler* and the other was called the *Egmont Post*. The name was slightly altered.

39 Do you happen to know whether both those papers were on the list of Government newspapers for the receipt of advertisements?—I do not know personally, but I believe they were.

40. Your company was formed for the purchase of those two newspapers and the issue of a new paper to be called the *Stratford Evening Post*?—Yes.

41 And the two existing papers therefore ceased to exist?—Yes, that is so.

42 And a new newspaper called the *Stratford Evening Post* came into being?—Yes.

43 Do you know that, upon the two newspapers ceasing to exist, the Government Department would in the usual course strike their names off the list?—I would assume they do.

44. Will you be kind enough to tell me whether, prior to Mr McCluggage being deputed to interview Mr Symes, your company had made any application to the Government to be placed on the advertising list?—It had made none.

45. Written or verbal?—None whatever None of any description.

46. The directors thought fit to ask Mr McCluggage, a director of the company, to write