

71 So that there was no attempt, so far as the Government authorizing advertisements for your paper, to buy the support of your paper, and so create a system of "Tammanyism"?—Absolutely none, sir. I simply applied for the advertisements, and we received them, and there was no condition laid down at all.

72. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Would you mind reading out that memorandum in the corner of the letter from the owner of the letter?—"Kindly return this after you have perused it and shown it to Mr. Copping.—Kind regards, J. McC."

73 Then how does that letter become the property of the *Stratford Evening Post*?—The letter itself says, "You may make use of this privately with the manager and directors."

74. That is from Mr. Symes to Mr. McCluggage?—Yes.

75. And Mr. McCluggage sent that on to you with the memorandum in the corner?—Yes.

76. Why was that not carried out?—I do not know. If anybody had asked me what was in the corner I should have said, "Kindly return that after having shown it to the directors." Now I see it is to Mr. Copping. Anyway, I took it down and showed it to the solicitor of the company.

77 What was done with it afterwards—was it left with the solicitor to the company?—Yes.

78. And the solicitor to the company retained it, notwithstanding that memorandum in the corner?—Yes. I pointed out that it had to be returned to Mr. McCluggage, and he said he would see to that.

79 Was it not returned to Mr. McCluggage?—Evidently not. I thought it was.

80. Did you think any honourable body of men would retain such a letter as that, containing such a memorandum on it?—It is not my business. Mr. McCluggage is one of the directors.

81 With a memorandum like that sent to you direct, you were asked to show it to Mr. Copping, the editor, and return it?—Mr. Copping was editor of the paper, and had nothing to do with the commercial side. This being so, it was natural for me to assume Mr. McCluggage intended me to show the letter to some one who assisted me with the management. Hence I showed it to Mr. Anderson, not in his capacity of solicitor to the company, but as director, and one whose advice I usually sought.

82. You admit you had permission to tell the directors in addition, but after the directors were told, ought not the letter to have been returned?—Either returned, or Mr. McCluggage written to and his permission to keep it obtained.

83. That was not done, so far as you are concerned?—No, it was not.

84. *Mr. Massey*] I have not heard the whole of the evidence, Mr. Whitlock, but the first question is whether the interview that took place between yourself and the Minister in charge of the Government Advertising Department was prior to or after the election of 1905?—Prior to that.

85. What year was the *Stratford Evening Post* started?—1904.

86. A year prior to the election?—Yes.

87 Were you connected with the paper at that time?—Yes.

88. Would you mind telling us what was its attitude politically when it was started?—It was declared an independent paper.

89 But "independent" is a somewhat comprehensive term. Was it independent with Opposition leanings or independent with Government leanings?—They were freeholders. I think the cause of the company being floated was to advocate the freehold policy.

90. May I take it that at that time it was an independent paper with Opposition leanings?—Yes, I should say so.

91 And has it changed its attitude since the election of 1905?—I do not know. I have not seen much of the paper since I left in 1906.

92 But you have seen the paper occasionally?—We have it as an exchange, yes.

93. Well, would you take it that it is an independent paper now with Government leanings?—No, I would not.

94. Since the election of 1905?—I have not given it sufficient notice.

95 You are not prepared to answer the question?—No, I am not.

96. *Mr. Allen.*] I am not quite clear as to the absorption of the two previous papers. The two papers at first were the *Egmont Settler* and the *Egmont Post*?—That is so.

97 Did the *Egmont Post* absorb the *Egmont Settler*?—It was arranged between the two proprietors of both papers that a separate company should be formed to purchase the two papers.

98. And neither paper was leader in the matter?—No.

99 I presume the two papers, the *Egmont Settler* and the *Egmont Post*, took opposite sides in politics?—I think the *Egmont Post* did when it started, but it was a strong Government paper when it closed. It was a Government paper just before it ceased publication and for some time before.

*Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward* You will be glad to know it was not on the Government list for advertisements.

100. *Mr. Allen.*] What was it before that—did it change its politics?—Yes, it changed its politics.

101 When?—I think, before I went to Stratford.

102 What year?—In 1899 I think it was.

103. What were the politics of the *Egmont Settler*?—It was a Government paper.

104. Was the *Egmont Settler* on the list for Government advertisements?—Yes.

105. And was the *Egmont Post* on the list for Government advertisements?—No.

106. Are you quite certain?—I am not quite certain, but I understood it was not on the list. I think Clayton told me it was not on.

107 When was this paper absorbed by the *Stratford Evening Post*?—In 1904.

108. The *Stratford Evening Post* started as an independent paper with Opposition leanings, you say?—Yes, the *Stratford Evening Post*.