

337. Will you give me your reasons for objecting. If you said you understood it was a fair, honourable, and legitimate way in which your paper got the information, and that there was no breach of trust, what made you form such an idea?—You could not form any other impression after reading the paper. I have read the paper closely since my return, and I feel certain that the information was obtained in a journalistic manner, and in such a way as would not disgrace any journalist. That is all I can say.

338. Had you any conversation with Mr. Gillon as to the fair and honourable manner in which it had been obtained?—No.

339. Had you any conversation with Mr. Hoben on the fact that there was no breach of trust in getting the information?—I have had no conversations with Mr. Hoben on that point.

340. As an experienced journalist would you give me a definition of what you consider a fair, honourable, and legitimate way. What is the usual procedure, or who would you first approach in order to get such information as that?—Certainly, I should go to one of the principal parties concerned.

341. If you got an inkling of a piece of public news that would be of interest to the public, and which the public should see, who would be the first person you would approach in the matter?—The person most concerned.

342. I mean, a piece of official public information of that nature. Would you go first to the junior clerk of the department?—Certainly not. I always believe in going to the fountain-head.

343. Whom do you consider the fountain-head in a case like this would be—in a letter from a Minister to a Minister?—One of the Ministers, I suppose. I should make an effort to get it from a Minister.

344. And if the Minister was not in you would go down the scale, I suppose, to the Under-Secretary or the head of the department, I presume?—Yes, that is the method I should adopt personally.

345. You consider it perfectly fair and legitimate first to approach the Minister, if it was a letter from a Minister to a Minister?—Yes; they being the parties most concerned.

346. And do I understand you to say you believe, from conversations with people who ought to know, that the information obtained by your paper was obtained in that way?—I cannot answer that question.

347. But the impression upon your mind was that your paper did get it in an honourable and legitimate way, and that there was no breach of trust on the part of your representative in the manner in which he obtained it?—I have every reason to believe that he got it in a proper manner, and that there was nothing unmanly or dishonourable in the way he got it.

348. You decline to say whether you formed that idea from conversations with Mr. Gillon or Mr. Hoben, either or both?—Yes.

349. I would like to put this question again in another form: Did you understand that there was no breach of trust on the part of the party. Do you think that stands to reason if, as you say, there was no breach of trust or unmanliness, to the best of your belief, in the manner in which the *Post* got the information?—I cannot answer that question.

350. Have you any reason to believe that it was obtained in any way other than the way specified?—I have no means of answering that question.

351. You read the paragraph on your return?—Yes.

352. Will you look at it again and refresh your memory. As an experienced journalist and press-man, do you think this paragraph could have been compiled as the result of a mere conversation?—I cannot say, but I should think it possible that it could be obtained as the result of a simple conversation, by a smart man. It is not a very long article.

353. Do you notice that the reasons are definite and precise, and are stated with an air of authority?—I cannot say that.

354. Would it appear to you that the man who wrote that either had the original or a copy of the letter before him, or that he took it down from dictation from some one who had a copy or the original before him?—Any intelligent man making himself acquainted with the contents of a document could easily do that.

355. Not having the original paper to compare with this, you could not exactly say?—No; but it would not take an intelligent man long to master the contents of a document like that, and give it, virtually, in the paper.

356. Could he give it in the precise words?—That is another matter.

357. Did you notice any difference in the publication between that in the first edition and that in the second edition of the *Evening Post*?—I only saw the second edition, I think, not being in Wellington at the time.

358. If in the first edition of the paper the statement was made to the effect that the Premier sent the Acting Under-Secretary for Defence to make extracts, and in the second edition it stated that an officer of the department was sent to make extracts, what conclusion would you draw from that?—Alterations of that kind are frequently made. They might find out that the first information was not quite correct.

359. Or was it possible that the first information might be correct, and it was altered in the second edition to tone it down a bit?—It is possible either way. I do not know about this case.

360. What was the first intimation you received of Colonel Fox's resignation?—I cannot recollect anything prior to the paragraph I saw in the *Christchurch Press*.

361. Do I understand from you that an officer of your staff would be expected to follow the usual course adopted by you in obtaining information of this nature, by going first to the Ministerial head, and then to the permanent head, of a department?—I think that would be the course adopted, as a rule, by any reporter.

362. You believe any other gentleman of your staff would follow a similar course?—I think it is likely he would. I know that would be my method.