

personnel, and he is almost certain these men were civilians. He saw one of them again next day—that would be Sunday—and he was then in civilian clothes. These men declared most emphatically that they would not discuss any of their experiences on the mountain. He was unaware at this time of the message coming through shortly after 6 on the Saturday that there was to be no restriction on them interviewing.

*McCrone, reporter, "Southern Cross,"* on the 26th October was assigned to do a special article on the work of the Air Control Centre in connection with search for the missing aircraft. He went to Air Search Headquarters in Wellington on the Tuesday. He said, "My main objection was that I was not allowed into the Air Search Control room and it prevented me doing the special article." He said that was the only criticism he had. On Friday, the day the aircraft was discovered, he went to Ohakune as sole representative of *Southern Cross* to cover the recovery operations. He got to Ohakune about 3.30 on Saturday morning, and was told by Constables Auld and Phillips that he could join a rescue party leaving at 7 o'clock on Saturday morning. He was fully equipped for the particular job, had food for three days, and sleeping-bag and waterproof gear. He arrived at Plateau Camp shortly after 11 and reported to Senior Sergeant Taylor; told him he wanted to go to the scene of the crash. Senior Sergeant Taylor told him he was sorry he could not let him go. Senior Sergeant Taylor said to Ellis and himself they must have annoyed somebody in Air Department because instructions had come through no reporters allowed on scene of crash. Senior Sergeant Taylor, when asked if any reporters had gone up to the scene of the crash, said, "No reporters are allowed to go on." Later he discovered that Christie, of *Taranaki Daily News*, was actually up there. He protested to Wing Commander Kean, and as a routine check asked if he had any information for the press, and he said, "No information," and in very heated words criticized the way the press in New Zealand had handled the crash story that week. He asked what time the aircraft clock stopped, but Kean would not tell him, and a large number of other persons also refused. He says that just before he left at about 4 Sergeant Taylor approached Ellis, of the *Daily News*, and himself asking if they would go up the mountain and act as stretcher-bearers. He took that to mean that they could not have objections to their going up as stretchers-bearers, but there was some obstruction to stop us reporting. He gave us a general view of search recovery operations from 9 that morning. He heard by radio news that no restrictions were to be placed in the way of reporters interviewing returning stretcher-bearers. In answer to Mr. Cleary he said he was not personally interfered with in any way in interviewing returning stretcher-bearers. When he was asked, "Is it correct that you yourself met with no obstruction in interviewing returning stretcher-bearers?" he said, "I was able to get, not through help of the police or anybody else, a considerable amount of news from returning stretcher-bearers."

*McMillan, senior reporter, "Auckland Star,"* arrived at Cowern's Mill at 7.30 on Saturday morning. He drove into the yard, but was told he must put his car out on the road, and that he could go no farther towards the mountain. However, he decided to go up the mountain, and went up a track. He met some people returning from the search and sought information from them. They declined, saying, "We cannot tell you chaps anything," or words to that effect. Shortly afterwards they reached the plateau forward camp and were there when the first body arrived. He was speaking to Mr. Godfrey, of Ohakune, when Sergeant Carlyon came over and asked who they were. He told him he was a pressman. On hearing that Sergeant Carlyon warned Godfrey to say no more, then turned to me and said, "If you ask any more questions we will have to send you away from camp. The Air Force doesn't want any information out about this. That is Government instruction." He went back to Horopito and phoned his paper of these facts. At about 6 o'clock that day he spoke to Captain Slade-Jones, who told him the restriction on pressmen had shortly before been lifted. "Until then as far as I knew," he said, "that restriction had been imposed by someone—that is, the restriction interviewing rescuers, civilian, or soldier."