

of some eighteen miles. Colonel Pleasants would not give him any information about Army's part in rescue operations. When the first mountain party returned he was again at Cowern's Mill. He is certain that four of them were civilians, and from them he sought information as to their experience in the mountain, and they said, "Sorry, there is nothing doing." He asked what he meant by "Nothing doing," and one explained that the Sergeant at the advance station plateau had instructed them to give no information whatsoever to the press. I told them they were free citizens and no police officer had authority to issue such an instruction. They still declined to say anything. Captain Slade-Jones, who was in the vicinity, came up and said the camp area was Army territory and he could not interview any one there. He said he didn't question Captain Slade-Jones' authority to prevent him interviewing Army personnel, but it didn't extend to civilians. Captain Slade-Jones said it applied to everybody, patted his pocket, and said, "I have this authority here." I said I would take up the matter with Wellington, and asked him to show his authority. He refused. I telephoned Auckland, suggested the chief reporter should get in touch with Mr. Nash, and advise him that a police officer at the advance base had instructed civilians to say nothing to the press. He said that he found later that the editor, Mr. Munro, had telephoned Mr. Nash. Shortly before 6 o'clock he said the police constable at Cowern's Mill advised him that a message had been received on the radio from Mr. Nash's Department stating that there was to be no interference, that members of the press should be permitted to interview—I think the words were—members of the recovery party.

The Army's accounts of the matters raised by reporters' complaints are set out in the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Pleasants, Commandant of the Waiouru Camp, and Captain Slade-Jones. His evidence is that the assistance of the military at Waiouru was offered to the police if required. On the morning the plane was discovered at about 11 o'clock he was asked if he would now provide assistance. Assistance was provided in the form of transport to take search parties from Ohakune and the provision of wireless sets and operatives. Approximately fifty to sixty Army personnel gave assistance to work on the mountain-side. He went up to Cowern's Mill because some difficulty had arisen about communications and he wanted to see if anything could be done to improve the situation of the radio van. While there he saw Constable Roscoe and a Transport Department official. The yard where the radio van was parked, although not very congested, was very narrow and vehicles were restricted in movement, so that although not crowded a few places that could be used by vehicles were occupied. In conversation with Constable Roscoe and the Transport Department official both expressed concern that at the week-end there would be a large number of sightseers, that there would be danger of their going up the mountain, possibly being lost if the weather turned bad, and to prevent that some form of control should be adopted. As it appeared Cowern's Mill would be the base for people going up and coming down and that hot food should be provided for those returning from the mountain, a cook-house was set up. A cook obtained field cookers and food sent forward. I appointed Captain Slade-Jones to be in charge of all Army personnel in that area and co-operate with Constable Roscoe in any action required. He (Colonel Pleasants) left Cowern's Mill in the evening, called at police-station at Ohakune, and there discussed with Constable Phillips the matter of controlling the area around Cowern's Mill, saying that he fully agreed with Constable Roscoe and the Traffic Inspector that an effort should be made to control that area. I undertook to provide the personnel for that duty. I told Constable Phillips I had no authority to take these steps, and he should see that authority was given to me to take action as proposed. That was Friday evening. On Saturday morning he returned to Ohakune and saw Constable Phillips at approximately 8 to 8.30. Constable Phillips advised him that the requisite authority to put control scheme into operation at Cowern's Mill had been obtained. He then proceeded to Cowern's Mill. On arrival there he received a message confirming what Constable Phillips had told him. Apparently it