

Q. That is what I mean by checking or confirming, suggesting it would be prudent for Press Association to ascertain the views of those against whom they were making these allegations before they were broadcast. Was anything said by any one on that ?

A. Not that I can recall. It would not be, for the reason that it did not concern me.

Q. This is your first Press Association message ?

A. May I explain, Sir ?

Q. Please answer my question.

A. I think when in Tauranga I sent out Press Association messages there.

Q. How many ?

A. I can't recall, but not first occasion on which I have sent Press Association messages. I might explain Press Association Office, Wellington, being headquarters, would not discuss with me, an agent in the field, whether they thought it necessary to refer a story to Departments in Wellington.

Q. You mean that it a matter they would decide themselves ?

A. Exactly.

It is advisable now to compare the answers given by Mr. Wall with the evidence of Flight Lieutenant Jacobsen, who on the 27th October was put in charge of the Air Force detachment at Karioi Airfield and remained there in charge until the 31st October. He says the purpose of the detachment at Karioi was to service aircraft based upon the small airfield there, to receive reports and transmit them to Wellington, to obtain all debriefing reports from crews and forward them to Wellington. An Air Force radio van was on the airfield at all times operated by himself and two Air Force wireless operators. After the discovery of the wreckage, the detachment at Karioi had a further duty of arranging for dropping of supplies to parties on the mountain. After the discovery of the wreckage an Army wireless van arrived at the airfield. It was supplied by the Army at Waiouru. He says that on Thursday, the 28th, he was visited at Karioi by a pressman who wanted to know exactly what the Air Force were doing. "I told him we were just there to carry out search operations and that is where the conversation finished, after asking if the pressman would have a cup of tea, which was accepted. The pressman then asked permission to use the telephone. I granted it, but am not sure to whom he telephoned." It is not suggested the pressman was Mr. Wall. On the Friday morning, he says, he did not handle the report from the Dakota as to the sighting of possible wreckage at 8.40 in the morning, but says that, in discussion with the Operations Office at Ohakea, and the members of the crews, not in an official capacity, it transpired that the report of finding wreckage about 8.40 was very doubtful. He subsequently handled the report from the Auster shortly after 10, and at 6 minutes past 10 transmitted the report to Squadron Leader Robbins at Air Control by telephone. He expected the finding of the plane would result in an influx of visitors to his airfield, and on his own responsibility issued an order placing the airfield out of bounds to all civilians. The reasons he gave for this instruction satisfied me that this was a wise order. In the course of the morning, and after closing his airfield to civilians, he says he had a conversation with Squadron Leader Robbins as to the release of information to the press, and the substance of that talk was that the Squadron Leader instructed him not to make any statements to the press, as all vital information re the state of bodies, &c., had first to be conveyed to the next-of-kin through the Prime Minister's Department. "This," he said, "I naturally would not have done anyway, as to me all signals were of a Service nature, and personnel of His Majesty's Forces are not permitted by King's Regulations to grant interviews or make statements to the press." He says that, apart from the conversation with Squadron Leader Robbins at approximately 10 minutes to 11 on Friday morning, he received no instructions whatever touching on his dealings with the press, and that his order closing his airfield to civilians, which was given before his conversation with the Squadron Leader, was no more directed against the press than any one else. Late on the Friday afternoon he said he was again visited by the same pressman who had seen him on the previous day. He said he was then engaged in handling messages for the necessary organization for supply dropping on the following day, and had the greatest difficulty in receiving messages from Horopito by