

The letters are signed by D. F. C. Saxton, managing editor.

I turn now to an outline of the actual complaints the reporters gave evidence of.

*Ellis, Henry John, of "Taranaki Daily News"*: This is the reporter who read the message Constable Phillips had on his file. He got as far as the plateau, didn't mind being told not to go further as Christie, of his paper, was up with the search party, but says that Sergeant Taylor, when he told him this, said, "I'm sorry, chaps, but you seem to have annoyed somebody at Air Department."

*Hetherington, David William, "Taranaki Daily News"*: He is the chief reporter. He said what they hoped for was a story from the pilot who sighted the wreckage. He couldn't obtain that information from Karioi. He didn't arrive at Taumarunui till after 6 p.m. on the Friday. He met his colleague, Mr. Ellis, there, who told him that he could not obtain the information and told him it was no use going to Karioi for interviews. Next day, about 9.30 a.m., he went to Ohakune and saw Constables Auld and Phillips. After some discussion he got a pass to go to Cowern's Mill. When he got to Cowern's Mill he entered the yard, and Mr. Semple, of the Transport Department, advised Mr. Steer, of *Wanganui Chronicle*, and himself to keep away from the radio van. A similar instruction was given by a soldier. While standing some distance from the radio van and other trucks a man arrived who was apparently one of the searchers. He could not say whether he was a soldier, but sought to interview him. Captain Slade-Jones interrupted him and said that no interviewing could be done in the yard. He questioned Captain Slade-Jones on the value of the pass or permit that had been issued by the police. He replied that it was to admit him to the track. He next asked Captain Slade-Jones whether the ban applied to Army personnel only. Captain Slade-Jones replied that he could do nothing about it. He had his instruction from Colonel Pleasants, and Colonel Pleasants had his from higher up, and, with emphasis, very much higher up. Later he and Mr. Steere asked Captain Slade-Jones if he could give any information about the part the Army had played in the search operations. Captain Slade-Jones said that Colonel Pleasants was the only officer who could do so. Mr. Hetherington's complaint is that he was prevented from interviewing civilians in the yard. Shortly after 6 p.m. he was told there was no restriction on interviewing searchers. In cross-examination he said that if the man he wanted to interview was a soldier he wouldn't complain at not being able to interview him.

*Mr. Hill, employee "Photo News"*: At the plateau on the Saturday. Met Senior Sergeant Taylor and overheard him telling other reporters that no reporters or photographers were allowed to the wreckage. He said, "I went some 200 yards past the camp towards the wreckage and took photographs of bearers returning. That photograph was taken at such an angle that no bodies or parts of bodies would be seen." The photograph produced. He said, "I was questioned by Sergeant Carlyon, who said that there had been instructions from the Prime Minister's Department that photographs could not be taken. I told him I had taken a party coming through rough country and there was no sign of body in photograph. He told me to submit the photograph to police before publishing it. I declined. He took my name and address and told me not to leave camp without permission from him." From cross-examination it appeared that many photographs were taken quite openly.

*McClenaghan, "Taranaki Daily News,"* says he arrived at Ohakune Police-station at about 5.30 on the Friday, where Constable Auld and Constable Phillips did all they could to assist him, but they told them—that is, he and other reporters—information received had to be telephoned to Wellington before it could be released to reporters. He went on to Cowern's Mill on the Saturday and saw some members of the first search party coming down from the mountain. He and two other reporters approached them for information, but they were not prepared to give any at all. They said they had taken up that attitude because they had been instructed by police officials on the mountain not to give information. He said you could usually distinguish those who were Army