

to misrepresentation of the causes of the war. Elliott at first favoured the Northern States which he saw simplistically as prosecuting an anti-slavery war.²⁹ But when it became evident during the war that the North was fighting to preserve the union of the United States, Elliott accused the North of 'waging a wrongful war . . . a needless war',³⁰ and opined that 'the idea of re-establishing the Union is simply chimerical, and that the sooner the American statesmen reconcile themselves to the permanent separation between the Federal and Confederate States the better.'³¹ Though he found reports on the war in *The Times* authoritative, Elliott was sceptical about the reliability of his North American sources, including the *San Francisco Bulletin* and the *Richmond Observer*, from both of which he lifted extracts. What further shifts occurred in Elliott's editorial opinion towards the close of the war, I have been unable to trace.

Elliott blamed the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871) on the 'dictatorial bearing'³² of Napoleon III and his 'intolerable interference with the domestic affairs of other nations'.³³ France had warned Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen not to accept the Spanish crown offered to him by General Prim with the secret encouragement of Prince Otto von Bismarck of Germany. The possibilities of war between France and Prussia would seem to have been averted when Prince Leopold first accepted but subsequently rejected the offer. When France demanded a guarantee, King William, who regarded Prince Leopold's renunciation of the throne and subsequent resignation as the end of the matter, refused to see Benedetti, the French Ambassador, again: a refusal Bismarck maliciously exploited.

In publishing the telegram containing this information Bismarck altered it so that the King's refusal to see the Ambassador again appeared to arise from the nature of the French demands. The altered telegram was received by the French as an insult, which had to be avenged.³⁴

Bismarck's skilful machinations had thus misled many journals, including the London *Times* and the *Nelson Examiner*, into presenting France unsympathetically as the aggressor. Though Elliott saw a victory for Bismarck as a chance for all Germany to be reunited,³⁵ he interpreted defeat for France as 'a humiliation to Europe and to us'.³⁶

Such was Elliott's treatment of news reporting. From being a self-sufficient pressman and reporter, Elliott slowly developed a corpus of reporters, both locally and abroad. To improve news gathering he formed Nelson's first newspaper press association with Nation and Lucas. Steam navigation speeded files of contemporary newspapers and the telegraph brought the news more