



Hodgson's prescient 1985 cartoon—Equiticorp and Chase took legal action but were then major sharemarket crash casualties. Trace Hodgson, *New Zealand Times*, 14 July 1985.

In 1911, in the one court case involving political cartoons, William Massey, then leader of the opposition, sued the *New Zealand Times*, claiming he had been portrayed as a liar and responsible for mean and despicable acts. The jury agreed the cartoon did so depict Massey but, being political comment, was not libellous.

Two 1913 cartoons landed William Blomfield in court. One, captioned 'Justice is Not Blind', depicted Mr Justice Edwards, who had shown distinct partiality towards a pretty female witness in a divorce case, peeping slyly at the lady in the box. The *Observer* and Blomfield were arraigned for libelling a judge. A procession of cabs and a brass band accompanied Blomfield to the Auckland railway station prior to the case being heard in Wellington. The ruling was that 'the cartoons, although of an objectionable character and although probably of a libellous nature, were not calculated to interfere with the due administration of justice and did not therefore amount to contempt of Court'.

New Zealand companies have regularly brought legal cases against publications, if not cartoons. Nevertheless, a cartoon by Trace Hodgson in the *New Zealand Times* in 1985 led to a claim for \$10 million in damages. The cartoon, based on a Middle Ages legend, portrayed a number of fast-growing 1980s companies as voracious rats with entwined tails. The case petered out with the demise of many of the companies after the 1987 sharemarket crash.