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THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

OF

THE PRESS IN NEW ZEALAND

by

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A B S T R A C T

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESS

This thesis describes the general functions of the New Zealand news media system and the structure, organisation and control of both the daily press and broadcasting and television services in New Zealand. In order to analyse the performance of daily newspapers in detail, a methodology is laid down for the quantitative description of the subject content of newspapers. A sample of the wire copy transmitted to daily newspapers in New Zealand by the New Zealand Press Association is analysed and a study is made of the news-selection and display practices observed by 16 daily newspapers in their handling of this material. Further samples of the content of the same 16 daily papers are then analysed in order to obtain characteristic subject content descriptions and to provide material for a generalised discussion of the way in which the newspapers appear to be exercising their functions. This leads to a treatment of the problems facing the New Zealand daily press and a brief outline of the role of the New Zealand Press Association in the New Zealand news media system, as well as a discussion of the possibilities that exist for the improved education and training of journalists. The work then concludes with a set of appendices in which the full texts of various documents are reproduced, as well as a bibliography of literature relevant to the general field of research on the New Zealand mass media.

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May 8, 1970.

INTRODUCTION

The object of this study is first to outline a methodology for the comprehensive analysis of the editorial content of newspapers, then, more particularly, to describe the structure, organisation, content and functions of the New Zealand daily press and to undertake some assessment of its responsibilities and performance. The New Zealand daily press is well suited to such an enterprise. Its collective news-sharing practices, its dependence on only one wire service, and the typographic and stylistic similarities of its individual newspapers lend themselves to systematic description and analysis. Furthermore, the importance which both the daily press and the broadcasting service have as agencies of communication in New Zealand raises questions of role definition and responsibility, as well as problems connected with the power and influence of central government and the existence of formal legal constraints, which are typical of all modern democratic political systems and which invite urgent investigation. As against this, it must be recognised that the lack of diversity of news sources and the conservative attitudes of most New Zealand newspapers towards news-gathering and presentation may make them uncharacteristic in comparison with the press of other democracies. But this is an area of inquiry which calls for detailed comparative study: the immediate object of this particular work is to provide some essential descriptive information about the structure, content and performance of the New Zealand daily press. Without this any serious research into its activities cannot proceed.

Daily newspapers have been selected for study because both in circulation and in range of editorial content they are a most significant section of the New Zealand mass communications industry and certainly the most important section of the New Zealand press. However, in order to see their activities in better perspective, a discussion of the general functions of the major New Zealand news media has first been attempted. This required the inclusion of a brief outline of the organisation and control of the broadcasting service and the nature of its interaction with the newspapers before proceeding to describe the activities of the press.

An attempt has been made to put these in perspective in a simple conceptual framework which asserts that the press (in conjunction with broadcasting and television, the other major news media) has a responsibility not only to convey useful service information to its mass audience, but also to act in their interests as a watchdog and critical analyst of public affairs. In this way it supplies an important functional service to the political system because it is a major source of the kind of feedback information which political decision-makers require for the more precise and sensitive regulation of their conduct of affairs. Such a view of the functions of the press is unashamedly prescriptive. It assumes that the news media, and particularly the press, have a form of responsibility which can properly be called 'political' because of its importance for the political process in a democratic society. In this study, the functions of the news media system are defined in these terms, and the performance of the daily press as a major part of the news media system is discussed in detail in the light of this approach.

At the same time, it should not be entirely overlooked that the daily press is only one agency in a complex, multi-purpose system of mass communication. Ideally, an analysis of mass media functions and responsibilities would include a close examination of all significant elements of the mass media, but such a labour was beyond the resources available in the present project which, of necessity, had to attach priority to the preliminary task of content description of the daily newspapers. Research is obviously needed into the content and activities of the weekly press, and in particular into the significance of papers like N.Z. Truth, The New Zealand Listener, The Bulletin, The Economist, Time, and Newsweek, as well as a great variety of financial, commercial, professional and trade publications, the religious press, the student press, and a number of academic journals. Any inquiry into the scope and effects of the general flow of information and comment in the mass media would also have to take account of the operations of libraries, bookstores and film distributors. In addition, inter-personal networks of communication are important in New Zealand (as data from at least one voting survey has shown) yet at present we know almost as little of what

people talk about as we do of what they read in newspapers and other publications, or attend to in the public affairs and news content of radio and television programmes. Because finding out would involve costly, large-scale audience research, such questions remain largely unanswered in New Zealand. In the meantime, the present study has focused mainly on the part played by daily newspapers in the news media system. The details of news media organisation and structure are described as they were up till February, 1970, but inevitably there have been subsequent changes and developments, particularly in the rapidly evolving field of broadcasting and television. Allowance should be made for any shortcomings of this nature due to the march of events. The general description of the structure of the new Zealand daily press that has been given is followed by a very close analysis of the flow of news in a sample of daily newspapers. This was submitted to content analysis so that a detailed study of its editorial content could be made, along with an analysis of the patterns of news selection and treatment shown by individual papers.

In this it immediately becomes clear that the New Zealand daily press, like the channels of most modern mass communication systems, is labouring under the difficulties of information overload. Even though, as a system, it might have the technical resources to publish a large amount of material with regularity and economy, its individual units are supplied with far more subject matter than many of them can hope to use in full. Problems of newspaper performance are discussed in the light of this situation, and finally, an attempt is made to evaluate the capabilities of the New Zealand daily press, and to outline some of the important issues now facing its working journalists and management.

Detailed studies of news flow are still rare in the literature of the mass media. One reason is that the quantitative analysis of newspaper content presents methodological difficulties and is enormously time consuming. Because no work of this kind, on any significant scale, had been attempted previously in New Zealand, a great deal of time had first to be spent devising adequate content-measuring categories and testing them. A prominence index was also

adapted from United States sources to establish a method for the comparative study of variables like headline size, page position and the use of illustrations and typographical devices in the treatment of news.

The project that emerged was concerned with the analysis of two large samples of the editorial content of 16 daily papers. There are 39 daily newspapers published in New Zealand, and the 16 that were selected for analysis consisted of the eight metropolitans that are published in the four main cities, plus a selection of eight provincial papers with circulations of 10,000 or over. One sample of editorial content was obtained from the issues of these 16 papers published during the period May 1, 1965, to April 30, 1966. Only the subject content of this sample was ascertained. The other, smaller, sample consisted of all the issues of the same 16 papers that were published during the week June 14 to June 19, 1965. This latter sample was analysed in very close detail. Altogether, this work involved the coding of more than 50,000 items of subject content in 288 copies of newspapers and this required the recording of about 650,000 observations. This was a severe-enough task, but in addition, the source documents for 2063 news items transmitted to the daily newspapers of New Zealand by the New Zealand Press Association during the week of publication of the papers in the smaller sample were analysed in depth so that a study could be made of the way in which the newspapers treated this material. The descriptive part, alone, of the entire project absorbed every hour of the writer's time that could possibly be spared from teaching and other duties for about three years.

In addition, some primitive physical difficulties had to be overcome. Heavy bundles of newspapers had to be moved from an awkward city location and manhandled to the fifth floor of a university building to which satisfactory access could not be obtained by motor vehicle. Large decks of punched cards also had to be shifted continually from there to the city and back. This was unavoidable because access to the kind of data processing equipment essential for this project could not be obtained on university premises, and commercial resources in city installations had to be used. This

introduced a piecemeal progress into the research programme. It involved many delays and it meant working extended hours late at night during week-ends and at off-peak periods for a long time.

Initially, the data from coding sheets were punched into cards by commercial operators, but this was only the beginning of a prolonged sequence of operations on a large scale. Many hundreds of hours had to be devoted to data correction and editing routines so that a high standard of accuracy could be obtained in subsequent computations. The writer, personally, had to punch all corrections and additions into the data file, as well as carry out some complicated reproductions and reorganisations of data in large decks that at times contained more than 19,500 cards. These labours would have been even more severe without very generous assistance from Salmond and Spraggon Ltd., a Wellington commercial firm. Essential assistance with data processing and programming problems was received from R.A. Pointon, of Tawa, and valuable help in coding samples of newspaper content was obtained from the sixth form pupils of Tawa College as well as from the writer's wife who has met the prolonged and at times exhausting demands of this project with patient understanding.

A grant for materials and other essentials was received from the internal research committee of Victoria University of Wellington, and the writer is also indebted to the management of the New Zealand Press Association for co-operation and advice in the project.

Wellington, February 1, 1970.

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESS IN NEW ZEALAND

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I	THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW ZEALAND NEWS MEDIA	1
1.	Media Responsibilities	1
2.	The News Media System	5
3.	The Control Function	7
4.	Technical Difficulties	9
5.	Gatekeeping Problems	12
6.	The Thomson Takeover Attempt	14
Chapter II	BROADCASTING IN NEW ZEALAND	20
1.	The News Service	21
2.	The Broadcasting Act	23
3.	Balance and the Public Interest	30
4.	Controversial Items	34
5.	The Broadcasting Authority	41
6.	The Functions of a News Media System	51
Chapter III	THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS	55
1.	The Daily Newspapers	55
2.	The Suburban Press	60
3.	The New Zealand Press Association	61
4.	The Press Gallery	68
5.	The Newspaper Proprietors' Association and Public Relations	69
Chapter IV	METHODOLOGY	72
1.	Multi-level, Subject-content Categories for Newspaper Quantitative Analysis	72
2.	Coding Procedure	84
3.	A News Prominence Index	86
4.	Data Processing and Editing Routines	90
5.	Sampling Procedure	92
Chapter V	THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS ASSOCIATION SERVICE	98
1.	The Subject Content of a Week's News	98
2.	Regional News Sources	105
3.	Inland News	108
4.	News Source Authority	110
5.	News Generating Sources	115

Chapter VI	THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NEWSPAPER SYSTEM	120
1.	System Characteristics	120
2.	Other Editorial Content	131
3.	Total Editorial Content	134
4.	Comparative Performance of the Newspapers	142
Chapter VII	PATTERNS OF NEWS SELECTION	144
1.	The Values of the System	144
2.	The Performance of the Newspapers	150
3.	Gatekeeping Decisions	155
4.	Patterns of News Selection	169
Chapter VIII	SYSTEM CAPABILITIES AND PROBLEMS	180
1.	The Role of the N.Z.P.A.	180
2.	The Newspapers	185
3.	Competition with the Electronic Media	189
4.	Conflict or Consensus	196
5.	The Education and Training of Journalists	206
6.	Conclusion	211
Chapter IX	APPENDIX	218
1.	Concordance Test	218
2.	The Nordmeyer-Marshall Exchange	219
3.	The Vietnam Protest Movement	220
4.	N.Z.B.C. News Service Memoranda	221
5.	N.Z.P.A. Messages	222
6.	Multiple Layout Card Form	224a
7.	Security H.Q. Fire	224b
Chapter X	BIBLIOGRAPHY	225
1.	Audience Research	225
2.	Bibliographic Studies	227
3.	Broadcasting	228
4.	The Control and Responsibility of the Mass Media	229
5.	Content Analysis	230
6.	Economic Studies	232
7.	The Education of Journalists	233
8.	The Freedom of the Press	233
9.	Gatekeeping Studies	235
10.	Historical Studies	236
11.	Other Media Studies	237
12.	The Organisation of the Media	240
13.	Personnel Studies	241
14.	The Press Council	243
15.	Relations with Government	243
16.	Space Communications	246
17.	Television	246

CHAPTER I.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW ZEALAND NEWS MEDIA

1. MEDIA RESPONSIBILITIES

The news media provide a forum for critics as well as for reporters of government. This responsibility is traditionally accepted by the press¹ and is implicit in the activities of radio and television journalists designed to provide news services and public affairs programmes that are useful as well as entertaining to mass audiences. As service agencies assisting the political process the news media are useful channels in a massive exchange of information between government and citizens. For many purposes they can be considered as 'common carriers of information'² whose employees need show little concern about the content of what they carry, except to see that it conforms to acceptable standards of propriety, fairness, scope and accuracy. However, the media are also expected to be guardians of public welfare, charged with the responsibility of speaking critically on their audience's behalf about the activities of government, and with placing checks on its scope by drawing attention to important issues or by threatening to mobilise opinion against it whenever in their view the situation needs it. In the first role, journalists are, in effect, participating in one of the everyday functions of government, and hereby they might even have something in common with the civil service which is primarily an instrument for the execution of the policies of decision-makers. In the second, they are potentially able to take up positions of disagreement and opposition which may be denied the civil servant, and which may depend, in the last resort, on their ability to maintain themselves in some degree of independence from governmental authority. This can be summarised by saying that in a democratic political system the news media not only supply useful services by reporting the activities of government, they interact with it by criticising it and seeking to keep its power within bounds.

- 1 William H. Hachten, 'The Press as Reporter and Critic of Government', Journalism Q., 40:1, Winter 1963, 12-18, puts this succinctly: 'A fundamental basis of freedom of the press is the press' right and obligation to report and criticise the activities of the government'.
- 2 V.O. Key, Public Opinion and American Democracy, New York 1964, 395.

According to Dan D. Nimmo³ the reporter's role is inherently 'political' but there are three different dimensions of activity to it. Some reporters are recorders who simply transcribe the facts of a given event or situation and limit their discretion to the task of sorting from encyclopaedic detail the material for a short article. Others are 'expositors' who are specialists searching for stories that may serve to convey depth and understanding to a reader by interpreting the facts they have reported. Finally, there are 'prescribers' who state what they think may or may not have gone right or wrong, and suggest future courses of action. Prescribers act as self-conscious watchdogs in the news media. In such an analysis, the reporter could even be described as an agent of those who are governed, representing his mass public just as a popularly elected representative does, performing the functions of issue articulation, scrutiny of official actions, transmission of information and forming of opinions.

Such an elevated view of the journalist's responsibilities may owe a good deal to the special status of the Washington press corps (from whom Nimmo obtained much of his material) and it may be dependent to some extent on the guarantee of press freedom which has been built into the United States Constitution by means of its First Amendment, but in practice much the same range of activities characterises the press of any democratic society. For example, that the press has a responsibility to scrutinise the actions of government has been acknowledged at the apex of the New Zealand political system. T.P. Shand, the then Minister of Electricity, in the course of an explanation of government policy said it was not only the duty of the Parliamentary Opposition to criticise the activities of government, but that the real advantage to the political system was lost unless this could be followed up by the press in hard-headed and unbiased assessments of what had occurred.⁴ In the case of the British press, it has been argued that it has political power as well as responsibilities.⁵ This is because it can shape or influence

³ Newsgathering in Washington, New York 1964, 36.

⁴ Reported in The Evening Post, November 21 1965, 18.

⁵ Colin Seymour-Ure, The Press, Politics and the Public, London 1968, 307.

the opinions of readers, it can have an effect on the people and institutions it singles out for attention or puts pressure upon, and it can influence government decision-making. The essential principle behind the British system of democracy has been that a strong central government is responsible through Parliament to electors who shall have power to change their government by electing a different one. However, for this to work requires that at all times the government of the day shall be opposed by an effective opposition which sets itself up as an alternative government and demonstrates its capability for office by vigorous criticism of current administration. One defect of this scheme is, however, that Parliament and opposition in the 20th century may have lost much of their traditional control over administration because of the enormous growth in the power of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.⁶ Consequently, some of the constitutional functions of watchdog and guardian of the people's interests may have devolved on the press for lack of a better champion. Whether the press recognises it or not, in countries where there is a Parliamentary democracy it has a political responsibility not only to act as a channel of observation and record but also as a mechanism of control in the political system, a custodian of the people's welfare and a check on legally constituted authority.

In daily practice it is very difficult to distinguish between the varied tasks of the journalist. The publication of a verbatim report of the proceedings of Parliament, for instance, may seem an uncomplicated enough example of the service function in which the particular newspaper or electronic medium acts as a neutral, common-carrier of information. But supposing the effect of a Parliamentary report or broadcast is to promote increased political participation or even protest on the part of citizens receiving this service; in such a case, merely by providing an account of statements made by political decision-makers the medium might find itself acting in a more responsible and significant way because it had made it possible for popular attention to be focused on a significant issue, or for criticism of a policy to be stimulated in the minds of its audience. The result is that Cabinet ministers, departmental heads and administrative officials generally are involved in a constant dialogue with journalists and their mass publics over matters

⁶ Seymour-Ure, loc. cit.

to which the media may have drawn attention in the first place, or which may have suddenly acquired significance by virtue of being singled out for media attention. It is not difficult to find almost daily occurrences of this kind, and so considerable is the power of the news media to focus attention on public affairs and to delineate the areas for critical inquiry that it has even been claimed that they constitute 'a fourth branch of government'.⁷

This claim has long been implicit in the traditional libertarian theory of the freedom of the press.⁸ It rests upon a constitutional analysis of the relationship between citizen and state in which the press is considered to be a protector of individual rights against the power of the state. The role of the citizen in the state is not always consistent with his potentialities as an individual,⁹ and sometimes the press is the only channel readily available to a person who wants to make a protest, advance a cause, or complain about an injustice. Consequently it can be argued that the press has several major responsibilities. It should provide a two-way informational exchange between government and citizens for their mutual benefit, and it should also be competent to crusade on behalf of the rights of minorities, or to intervene in public affairs under its own motivation whenever it judges it necessary. But the legitimacy of such claims is not always recognised by governments, particularly when they find themselves exposed to public criticism or ridicule as a consequence of

7 See Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government, Boston 1959.

8 'The characteristic of the libertarian concept of the functions of the press in society ... is the right and duty of the press to serve as an extra-legal check on government'. F.S. Siebert, T. Peterson and W. Schramm, Four Theories of the Press, Urbana 1963, 56. See also Eyvind Bratt, Journalism Q., 21:3, September 1944, 185-199. Bratt says the press has a function comparable to those fulfilled by public administrative organisations and the political parties. It must provide indications as to the state of public opinion and it must also watch the activity of administrations and by scrutinising how laws and administrative rulings take effect, give impetus to necessary modifications or innovations. For this reason the press can be considered as a 'whool in the machinery of government'.

9 'Both Pericles and John Stuart Mill might remind us that states should not merely be evaluated in terms of their ability to function efficiently as states, but far more in terms of the types of personality and character they produce among their citizens, and of the opportunities they offer to all their citizens for individual development'. Karl W. Deutsch, The Nervos of Government, New York, 1963, 191.

media attention. In New Zealand, the daily press and the broadcasting and television services may prefer to see themselves as custodians of approved social values, accepting the responsibility to inform people so that they can play an adequate part in the affairs of the state - a very different matter from seeking to remind them of their rights as individuals. In this view, the journalist's relationship to the state resembles that of a well-behaved draught horse rather than a vigilant watchdog.

2. THE NEWS MEDIA SYSTEM

Whatever the approach that is made to the problem of describing the diverse activities of the mass media in the political system, and whatever the idiom employed, no simple formula is adequate to describe the complex interplay and interdependence of public officials, political leaders, and journalists themselves who have to assume the multiple identities of reporter-critic-watchdog-entertainer under varied and complicated circumstances. The news media and all the multifarious agencies of government are linked together in complex fields of interaction as an essential accompaniment to the political process. This complexity is reflected in the range of metaphors which writers in the field of mass media studies have employed to illustrate their descriptive analyses: common carrier, conveyer belt, watchdog, mirror of society, forum, teacher, and latterly a variety of electrical and mechanical systems models. Perhaps the master analogue which conveniently embraces this descriptive terminology is 'the nerves of government' used by Karl W. Deutsch.¹⁰ His model has the advantage of implying not only a capacity for growth on the part of a particular system but a sophisticated ability to formulate goals and direct itself by a corrective, self-steering process of adjustment and adaptation in response to a flow of information about the environment. Any such organisation can be studied as 'a self-modifying communications network.'¹¹ Hence Deutsch looks upon government as involving less a problem of power than a problem of steering on the part of political systems which can consequently be thought of as networks of decision and control. These are highly dependent on the processing of information. The 'nerves' of

¹⁰ ibid.

¹¹ ibid. 81. Such a network would be 'any system characterised by a relevant degree of organisation, communication, and control regardless of the particular processes by which its messages are transmitted and its functions carried out - whether by words between individuals in a special organisation, or by nerve cells and hormones in a living body, or by electric signals in an electronic device.'

government are the channels along which information of use to such a political system can flow. The news media are a highly influential part of any informational network of this kind.

This study describes the daily press (and also broadcasting and television news services) as news media channels by which a flow of information about political affairs is directed at mass publics in New Zealand. This is one of the important tasks of the mass media.¹² In discussing the work of these news media channels as agencies of political communication¹³ it is convenient to regard them as constituting a news media system which not only services the political system with essential information, but is inevitably involved in interactions with it.¹⁴ Throughout this study, then, the term 'news media system' is used to describe the information-handling channels, and the processes connected with them, of both the New Zealand daily press and the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation. The processes of this system include all behaviour associated with its operations, and particularly the interactions which journalists and managements have with their news sources and audiences on questions of a political significance. The term

-
- ¹² Thus, '... the general effect of exposure to the media is a politicising one'. Robert E. Lane, Political Life, New York 1959, 288. 'The system of mass communications certainly has import for the political system both in its role as a neutral transmitter of intelligence of political relevance and as an independent source of outlook towards politics'. V.O. Key, op. cit., 170. 'Since few citizens ever have much immediate experience in politics, most of what they perceive about politics is filtered through the mass media'. Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? New Haven 1961, 256. In New Zealand, the study of mass media influence is scarcely in its infancy, but survey data from two urban electorates after the 1963 New Zealand general election showed that 'at least four-fifths of the electors came into contact with the campaigns (if at all) mainly by means of the mass media of communications (the press, radio, television and pamphlets), supplemented by the network of personal relations in the community'. See A.D. Robinson and A.H. Ashenden, 'Mass Communications and the 1963 Election: A Preliminary Report', Political Science, 16:2, September 1964, 7-22.
- ¹³ The phrase 'political communication' is 'a shorthand way of referring to that subset of communicatory activity which is especially relevant to an understanding of political life'. Richard R. Fagen, Politics and Communication, Boston 1966, 18.
- ¹⁴ 'Communications as a process pervades politics as an activity', ibid. 8.

'political system' is used very broadly to refer to the total complex of institutions, and their accompanying processes, that are concerned with the affairs of government and the general conduct of political activity.

3. THE CONTROL FUNCTION

The interaction between the news media system and the political system takes many forms, but one of its most important requirements is that the media should act as part of a feedback network¹⁵ by means of which political decision-makers can receive up-to-date information about the effects of policies and actions and can be stimulated to introduce useful modifications into their performance. Viewed from the perspective of political communication, all political systems, no matter what their philosophy, or what their stage of development, have self-regulating capacities which derive ultimately from some degree of sensitivity to the demands of their clientele. A modern political system will be likely to keep informed about these through such channels as interpersonal relationships, elections and election campaigns, political parties, pressure groups, a variety of representative and legislative institutions, and a multitude of administrative agencies; but one of its most important sources of feedback will be the news media and their representatives. The existence of regulatory feedback networks implies some measurement and adjustment of goal and purpose¹⁶ and therefore may be thought of as exerting a degree of control¹⁷ over the operations of the political system.

In communications theory, government itself becomes a vast array of communication networks, with the mass media acting as important and

15 Deutsch defines feedback as 'a communications network that produces action in response to an input of information, and includes the results of its own action in the new information by which it modifies its own subsequent behaviour'. op. cit. 38.

16 ibid. 9.

17 'The control of a machine on the basis of its actual performance rather than its expected performance is known as feedback and involves sensory members which are actuated by motor members and perform the function of tell-tales or monitors - that is, of elements which indicate a performance ...' Norbert Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings. Boston 1950, 12.

influential intermediaries between decision-makers and their publics.¹⁸ In this study it is argued that one of the responsibilities of the news media is to convey regulatory information about political affairs to government in such a way that it contributes a steering or controlling influence to the political process. For this reason, the relationship between the New Zealand news media and government will be discussed at some length, with the underlying assumption that it should not be seen entirely as one of passive articulation of news and information on the part of the media, but that journalists themselves can also be expected to play a self-conscious part in the activities of government by acting as prescribers and controllers as well as recorders and expositors. The term 'control function' is used here to refer to these regulatory and prescriptive capacities on the part of the news media system and it comprehends not only the transmission of service information, but the interpretation and criticism of public affairs by journalists.

In discussing the responsibilities of the news media it must not be overlooked that people are not entirely dependent on newspapers or on electronic journalism for their information about public affairs. They may learn a great deal by talk or by listening to the conversation of others, and they can, if they wish, augment their information by reference to a range of weekly periodicals and journals. Magazines of comment and interpretation like Time, Newsweek and The Reader's Digest¹⁹ which have comparatively large circulations in New Zealand may have some influence in shaping the opinions of their readers about current issues in international politics, to say nothing of the value of more specialised publications like The Economist. Nevertheless, by reason of its massive daily circulation and its deliberate and systematic coverage of a very wide spectrum of public affairs, the daily press is

18 See Lester W. Milbrath, The Washington Lobbyists, Chicago 1963; Dan D. Nimmo, op. cit.; Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy, Princeton 1963; Douglass Cater, op. cit.; and William L. Rivers, The Opinion Makers, Boston 1965.

19 According to New Zealand Focus, 3:4 April - May 1969, 20, The Reader's Digest has sales in New Zealand of more than 150,000 a month, Time has a circulation of 30,000 per week and Newsweek, 8,500 per week.

enormously influential as an information source, quite apart from any powers it might have as a controlling influence in the processes of government, an allocator of publicity, a delineator of what is of public significance, and even a creator of what D.J. Boorstin has called 'pseudo-events'.²⁰ These are synthetic novelties prescribed by journalists for popular consumption rather than passively recorded by them. Furthermore, it must not be overlooked that even in supplying service information with any range and detail, the press is likely to encounter considerable technical difficulties.

4. TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Not the least of these difficulties are concerned with the physical capacities of news channels. Some of the most important channels of the New Zealand news media may be afflicted (like most modern mass communication systems) with the problem of information overload,²¹ a condition in which a communications system cannot handle all the input messages available to it. For this reason it is technically impractical for most news media channels to attempt to transmit the full quantity of information available to them in any one period of operation. The total amount of material potentially at their disposal is likely to be so voluminous that it has to be accommodated to the output dimensions of the particular channels in use. In the case of newspapers, the amount of written matter available has to be drastically reduced to fit the available page space; in the case of radio and television stations, the verbal and pictorial content at the disposal of the staff has to be organised with some precision to suit the transmission time and the channels available. Consequently, a good deal of content selection and compression takes place. For instance, not all the footage of newsreel film the N.Z.B.C. buys or obtains by its own resources will actually be used in programmes. Similarly, about 600 stories a day are handled by its national news service, but only about 100 are actually used in news bulletins. Nor does the daily press reproduce all the wordage

20 The Image or what Happened to the American Dream, London 1962.

21 Richard R. Fagen, op. cit. 91.

of news matter it receives each day through the channels of the New Zealand Press Association.

Every mass communication system has a certain amount of information-loss or wastage. Journalists and others have the task of deciding what to discard and what to select in accordance with whatever working conventions they are able to devise, or whatever principles happen to be laid down by their managements. This responsibility has been thrust upon them largely by the sheer growth in volume of mass communication content. Because a mass communication channel cannot publish the entire volume of news and other information theoretically available to it, the 19th century ideal of a free market place for information, in which citizens could make 'purchases' from rival firms supplying alternative 'brands' of information, has suffered the fate of most free markets in the 20th century. The market has become regulated or managed to suit the capabilities of the communications industry. Not only does it have physical limitations of output, it is also afflicted with the problems of large-scale production. Its output has to be designed to suit the needs and demands of very diverse consumers, ranging from infants to the adult and elderly, from the scarcely literate to the highly educated and informed. It is inevitable that quality and complexity of content may have to be sacrificed to brevity and simplicity if any wide degree of audience attention is to be attained.²²

Next an even more severe difficulty presents itself. In practice, the operators of mass media networks are liable to be faced with irreconcilable demands if they insist on supplying citizens with clear and truthful accounts of events and their backgrounds and causes at the expense of more entertaining content. Mass audiences who prefer pop music to Beethoven, and reports of murders to sermons and editorials,

22 See Zechariah Chafee Jr., Government and Mass Communications, Chicago 1947, 18. The drift towards concentration of power in the industry discourages the 'self-righting process' in which truth is supposed to emerge from the clash of opinions, and the onset of large-scale communication methods reduces 'the common interests of a community to the lowest common denominator'.

can generally find ways of demonstrating their preferences and putting pressure on management to give them lowly entertainment rather than uplifting instruction. Media operators who accept some kind of 'social responsibility'²³ to try to give unwilling or indifferent audiences what they think is good for them are always likely to be forced into a compromise with the realities of audience response. The supply of informative fact has to be watered down with popular amusement. This still further limits the amount of useful information or instruction that can be relayed by the media unless it can somehow be dramatised or disguised. The result is likely to be that specialised publics who require reportage and commentary in depth on public affairs rather than human interest stories and soap operas, may be obliged either to consult other resources or to take pot luck in a massive hotch-potch of trivia and sensationalised light entertainment, eked out with whatever concessions the media can make towards the treatment of difficult or controversial subjects. Here broadcasting has a considerable advantage over the press because it can diversify its programmes and place them at different times, on different channels, according to the merits of their subject matter and the demands of different segments of its mass audience. Those needing specialised instruction can always turn to periodicals and libraries, both of which are of enormous importance in any mass communication system, but generally speaking, newspapers and the popular channels of broadcasting and television stations act as hosepipes showering nourishing drops of information along with much waste matter on the clean and the unclean, the blessed and the profane, the initiated and the ignorant alike. Whether the amount of discussion of controversial events, informed criticism, and truthful reportage of occurrences mixed into this crude discharge is adequate is largely a matter of individual opinion, because the criteria for determining a proper level of public affairs content are unconvincing and largely subjective.²⁴

23 J. Edward Gerald. The Social Responsibility of the Press, Minnesota 1963.

24 'On the whole, the talk about press functions and duties is not fruitful and turns out to be mostly what someone thinks the press should do, and is quite arbitrary.' Henry Mayer, The Press in Australia, Melbourne 1964, 53.

5. GATEKEEPING PROBLEMS

The theoretical aims of the news media are of necessity idealistic and generalised rather than specific. The tattered remnants of the open market place theory of information flow have as their basis the proposition that liberty of opinion depends on the citizen's opportunity to try many viewpoints in order to select the one best suited to the time and circumstances. But so that citizens may know what brand of information they are trying, news media channels handling news and information are advised by most democratic theorists to label fact and opinion so as to keep them clearly distinguished, even though it has to be recognised that 'all facts have contexts that need to be explained and explanations cannot entirely be uncoloured by the opinions of reporters'.²⁵ Furthermore, the gatekeeper studies of White, Breed, Gieber and others²⁶ demonstrate that objective, impersonal, unbiased reports in the scientific sense of the term, are a journalistic fiction. Whatever journalists and their employers might profess about working principles, news is what newspapermen (and electronic media journalists) make it; yet even that degree of choice has some further limitation imposed upon it. 'News does not have an independent existence... it is the product of men who are members of news-gathering and news-originating bureaucracies' in which journalists tend to become dominated not so much by their subjectivity as by the values and expectations of the

25 Gerald, op.cit. 165

26 See D.M. White, 'The Gatekeeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News', Journalism Q., 27:4, Autumn 1950, 383-390; 'Mr Gates' Revisited: A 1966 Version of the 1949 Case Study', Journalism Q., 44:3, Autumn 1967, 419-427. Walter Gieber, 'Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors', Journalism Q., 33:4, Autumn 1956, 423-432; 'How the "Gatekeepers" View Local Civil Liberties News', Journalism Q., 37:2, Spring 1960, 199-205; 'Two Communicators of the News: A Study of the Roles of Sources and Reporters', Social Forces, 39:1, October 1960, 76-83; 'News is What Newspapermen Make it', in People, Society and Mass Communications, L.A. Dexter and D.M. White (eds.), Glencoe 1964, 173-182. Warren Breed, 'Newspaper "Opinion Leaders" and Processes of Standardisation', Journalism Q., 32:3, Summer 1955, 277-284; 'Social Control in the Newsroom', Social Forces, 35:4, May 1955, 326-335. Robert Judd, 'The Newspaper Reporter in a Suburban City', Journalism Q., 38:1, Winter 1961, 35-42. Lewis Donohue, 'Newspaper Gatekeepers and Forces in the News Channel', Pub. Opinion Q., 31:1, Spring 1967, 61-68. Roy Carter Jr., 'Newspaper Gatekeepers and the Sources of News', Pub. Opinion Q., 22:2, Summer 1958, 133-144. Abraham Z. Bass, 'Refining the "Gatekeeper" Concept: A UN Radio Case Study', Journalism Q., 46:1, Spring 1969, 69-72.

particular organisation in which they are employed.²⁷ Many journalists are so task-orientated by the requirements of their jobs and the expectations of management in certain areas of news-gathering and news selection that they perform negative processes of selection against certain classes of potential news material quite automatically. In response to cues from management they simply omit some items, or give them such delicate treatment that they are in no position to 'tell the story as they see it' but are in fact handling it in a prescribed way. What a newspaper prints has been described as a function of many factors.

The events which 'make' the news, the material which is channelled into the paper by wire services and by other news sources, and the pressures for publicity exerted by organised groups are examples of influences over which the paper has little, if any, control. How a given story is 'played' is also dependent on the news judgment of one or more editors and upon the common context provided by the other news of the day. Sometimes a newsman may be subject to policy pressures from within the newspaper organisation, and inevitably his news-gathering and news treatment are affected by his own associations, his own beliefs, attitudes and values.²⁸

Add to this the fact that in any news-gathering structure a chain of people open and close selective 'gates', allowing some messages to pass, others to be discarded, and it can be seen that what finally gets chosen may be a very arbitrary selection indeed from the total available material. It may be that journalists by experience and training can generally agree on the major newsworthy stories that are available to the system,²⁹ so that their audiences are not being deprived of much of major importance; but there is no such agreement about the submerged part of the iceberg of less spectacular material. What one gatekeeper rejects, another might welcome. News selection for some of the content of the media can be just as subjective a process as buying a new suit or frock. For this reason, the variables of individual sensibility strongly affect

27 Walter Gieber, 'News is What Newspapormen Make it', *op. cit.*

28 Roy E. Carter, 'Segregation and the News: a Regional Content Study', *Journalism Q.*, 34:1, Winter 1957, 3-19.

29 See David L. Sanders, News Story Evaluation and Newspaper Readership, Cincinnati 1961.

many of the processes of news-gathering and news-writing. Nevertheless, however uncertain the reality, many theorists continue to urge that information provided by the news media should be treated with so scrupulous a regard for the wholeness of truth and the fairness of its presentation that 'people may make for themselves by the exercise of reason and conscience, the fundamental decisions necessary to the direction of the government and their lives'.³⁰

These are brave words, but what in practice do they signify to newspapers and radio and television stations heavily engaged in retailing advertising material and popular entertainment as well as news and useful information? The few pronouncements made by New Zealand news media managements about their working conventions and social responsibilities show some uncertainty over the key problems of function, role definition and responsibility.

6. THE THOMSON TAKEOVER ATTEMPT

The New Zealand newspaper industry seldom makes public statements about the functions of the media. As one spokesman for a section of the industry put it: 'The only time I read about journalists is when they're being buried'.³¹ When journalists' employers theorise about the activities of the media they tend to see themselves mainly in the service perspective, supplying a news service which earns community respect³² and which takes precedence over the critical, interpretative role.³³ Their employees for the most part accept this view, but sometimes complain that the press does not always offer enough leadership in local

³⁰ Gerald, op. cit. 166.

³¹ J. Turnbull addressing an annual conference of journalists in Wellington, reported in The New Zealand Journalist, 28:9, 1963, 4.

³² P.R. Sooble, then president of the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association, reported in The Dominion, March 2 1963, 10.

³³ G. Freeman, retiring editor: 'There is a place for interpretative writing, but news must be paramount'. Reported in The Evening Post, April 30 1965, 12.

or national affairs, and is too pre-occupied with a determination not to give offence and not to take too big a part in community projects.³⁴ Other criticisms are that the New Zealand press does not investigate public affairs in sufficient depth or with sufficient skill.³⁵ Does this mean that the press is to some extent failing in its control functions?

The belief that it is, lies behind some of the conflict between journalists and newspaper managements, and between a variety of interests and the government, which took place in 1965 when Lord Thomson, the Canadian newspaper magnate tried to buy Wellington's morning newspaper, The Dominion. The takeover was prevented by legislation passed at the request of the newspaper proprietors by the National Government. The News Media Ownership legislation of 1965 was intended to keep newspapers, radio and television stations out of the hands of overseas owners by imposing statutory restrictions on shareholding. Theoretically, no overseas concern can now hold more than a 15 per cent. shareholding in any New Zealand news companies. The government thought that too much overseas control of New Zealand's news media was in principle undesirable, not so much because it could disturb the equilibrium of the present industry, but because it could place a powerful instrument of mass communication in potentially dangerous hands.

Journalists, minority political parties and many private citizens considered that Thomson should have been encouraged, in the belief that the entry of any new operator into a field that was only nominally and sluggishly competitive could be expected to bring refreshing consequences. Some journalists thought it might give them freedom to write more critically and to exert their control functions with more

34 J.A. Kelleher, then president of the New Zealand Journalists' Association addressing a conference in Wellington, September 21 1965.

35 See 'Our Daily Press', Consumer 26, March 1966, 5-25, for a discussion of the qualities of the New Zealand daily press. The material for this article was obtained from 1,510 respondents to a survey conducted by the Consumers' Institute. To a question, 'What are its main defects?' over 90 per cent. of the respondents are reported to have complained about 'sameness, timidity of controversy and a lack of writers with personality'.

vigour;³⁶ others could see opportunities for better jobs and greater advancement. Most of the champions of Thomson accepted the proposition that more competition in the New Zealand press would lead to better service to the consumer because there would be more choice in the kinds of newspaper offering. That, in fact, competition does not necessarily raise the quality of material published by a newspaper but may drive it into increased sensationalism has been shown by one study,³⁷ while others indicate that there may be no great differences in content and quality of what is published between papers in a competitive situation and those which are non-competitive.³⁸ As against this it was argued that Thomson was known to give his editors a great deal of autonomy, providing their activities continued to be profitable. This, it was felt, could mean that journalists in such an organisation would be more free to write critically about current issues than they had been under existing media ownership and control. Such a prospect gains some support from evidence that big newspaper units are less subject to employer-publisher direction and bias than small ones.³⁹

Discussions about the amount and degree of political bias actually shown in New Zealand news media are no more sophisticated than they have been in the case of the Australian press; they generally consist of allegations that not enough of a certain kind of news has been published or that a calculated and excessive distortion has been

36 See L. Cleveland, 'How Secure is the N.Z. Press?' Comment, 7:1, December 1965, 7-9.

37 G. Rarick and B. Hartman, 'The Effects of Competition on One Daily Newspaper's Content', Journalism Q., 43:4, Autumn 1966, 459-463.

38 Stanley K. Bigman, 'Rivals in Conformity', Journalism Q., 25:1, March 1948, 172-131; Westley F. Willoughby, 'Are Two Competing Newspapers Necessarily Better than One?' Journalism Q., 32:2, Spring 1955, 197-204; Gerard H. Borstel, 'Ownership, Competition and Content in 20 Small Dailies', Journalism Q., 33:2, Spring 1956, 220-226; Raymond B. Nixon and Robert L. Jones, 'The Content of Non-Competitive vs Competitive Newspapers', Journalism Q., 33:3, Summer 1956, 299-314; Alex S. Edelstein, 'Content of Competitive vs Non-Competitive and Chain-Owned Newspapers', in Perspectives in Communication, Copenhagen 1966, 27-28.

39 D.R. Bowers, 'A Report on Activity by Publishers in Directing Newsroom Decisions', Journalism Q., 44:1, Spring 1967, 43-52.

introduced by means of presentation and display.⁴⁰ Thus, the New Zealand Labour Party consistently maintains that its affairs are given unfavourable publicity by a hostile press biased in favour of the National Party.⁴¹ This more than anything else, was what led the Labour Government of 1935 to introduce the broadcasting of Parliamentary debates which it thought were being 'scantily and tendentiously reported in the press'.⁴² During the Thomson takeover dispute the Social Credit League claimed that 'almost every daily newspaper supports the National Party, whether in or out of office, and because there is no real competition in news or in news comment and presentation, minority groups or minority points of view receive scant if any treatment'.⁴³ The League thought competition would bring less of the 'gentlemen's club atmosphere' of the existing daily press.

Such allegations of bias (when they concern the treatment of news as distinct from editorial opinion and comment) ignore the technical problems of news selection and presentation that exist in the production of newspapers, and they take little account of the fact that news sources are not all equally accessible, vocal or reliable. There is a differential factor in the supply of news. It means, for example, that some of the Labour Party's difficulties in obtaining what space and attention it thinks its views and activities should command might stem from the possibility that on some occasions and on some issues it may have been far easier for journalists to obtain information from its rivals. Newspaper editors and managements usually try to rebut charges of bias with an equally subjective rhetoric in which it is claimed that the

40 Henry Mayer, op. cit. 12. 'Hardly an organised interest in society has not at some time or another simply equated its own demands with unbiased truth, and, finding a different scale of values in the press, has not failed to denounce it as biased.'

41 N.V. Douglas, president of the New Zealand Labour Party, stated that 'the development of the mass media in this country constitutes a threat to democracy'. He added that 'it was important to his party to find a way round press bias'. Reported in The Evening Post, May 4 1967, 17.

42 Dean E. McHenry, 'The Broadcasting of Parliamentary Debates in New Zealand and Australia', Political Science, 7:1, March 1955, 20.

43 The Evening Post, March 1 1965, 12.

New Zealand press is free, balanced, reliable and non-sensational. One former editor has repeatedly stated: 'I am not subject to any directive as to publication of news in my paper. A liberal policy is followed and all news considered suitable is published.'⁴⁴ Perhaps this assertion derives some flexibility from the implications of the words 'considered suitable'. It seems to take little account of the generally-accepted fact that in every news channel, no matter what its claims to objectivity, news selection is inevitably the subject of partisanship and of disagreements about news values and is accompanied by many kinds of subjective and institutional preferences. Perhaps the view that the Thomson organisation would be benevolently free from such imperfections was, under the circumstances, a Utopian illusion rather than a hard-headed calculation. On this question, Thomson himself seems to have held views of a naivety and insignificance matched only by those of some of his lesser contemporaries in New Zealand.

If those newspapers and magazines and television stations which I own or control are making money, then I know they are rendering a social service. The bigger the operation grows, the greater the service being rendered.⁴⁵

Much though New Zealand managements might have admired such entrepreneurial vision and forthrightness, they expressed no little unease at the proposed intervention of Lord Thomson and the hopes of salvation held out by his admirers. The industry saw his entry into the New Zealand field as a threat to its corporate structure, which is held together largely by the membership of its individual units in the New Zealand Press Association. It was thought that 'once a huge overseas publishing empire acquires control of a large New Zealand newspaper the economics of the industry would inevitably result in the expansion of that empire within New Zealand.'⁴⁶ Although it was admitted that

44 George Burns, then editor of The Christchurch Star, reported in The Evening Post, June 19 1962, 8.

45 Address to the New York Audit Bureau of Circulation, reported in The Times Literary Supplement, October 21 1965, 937.

46 H.N. Blundell, president of the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association, reported in The Evening Post, March 4 1966, 14.

competition within the industry was not in itself undesirable, it was thought best that New Zealand viewpoints on all major issues should be presented 'fairly' to the nation and the world by keeping control of the media in local hands.⁴⁷

Government, mindful of this problem, may have been in a dilemma. Let Thomson in, and the possibility of the press intensifying its control function by encouraging journalists to write more critically and with less restraint about government and politics might have emerged; there could also have been a lowering of standards generally in the news media if the newcomer, or some of his competitors, had resorted to increased sensationalism to gain circulation. There could also have been an intensification of newspaper monopoly if he had absorbed competitors. Keep him out, however, by restricting the freedom to publish, and something like a local monopoly would have been enshrined. To some extent this was the effect of the News Media Ownership Act of 1965, but whatever special consideration in this affair may have been extended to the New Zealand newspaper proprietors by a sympathetic National government, the problem was the familiar one of trying to decide on an adequate policy amid a welter of complexities. To some extent, its discussion was impeded by a failure to consider the newspapers as only one part of the entire news media system. To the fear of foreign monopoly, and for that matter, loss of restraint over journalists hoping to exert themselves more militantly, government in New Zealand has for many years had a powerful answer. Its control and influence over broadcasting and television services.

47 J.J. Sinclair, chairman of directors of the Otago Daily Times and Witness Company Ltd., reported in The Dominion, February 28, 1965, 3.

CHAPTER II

BROADCASTING IN NEW ZEALAND

Broadcasting in New Zealand has been under some form of public control since 1931. Before then, from 1925 to 1931, a national radio service was operated by the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand Ltd., but this was succeeded by the New Zealand Broadcasting Board which extended the national system and also supervised the programmes broadcast by some 30 privately owned stations that were operating in areas where reception of the board's stations was unsatisfactory.¹ In 1936, however, the board was abolished and its property was transferred to the Crown. For the next 25 years, broadcasting in New Zealand was administered by a government department, and control was formally in the hands of a Minister of Broadcasting.

The Broadcasting Act of 1936 provided for the programmes of all² privately-operated stations to be subject to Ministerial scrutiny. Advertising was prohibited except from commercial stations and was controlled by the Minister.³ In 1937, a commercial broadcasting service was introduced, to be financed from the sale of advertising time. Revenue from this source was soon sufficient to make the commercial service financially independent and to augment the income from licence fees. Finally, in 1943, the Commercial Broadcasting Service was established as a separate entity. Both it and the National Broadcasting Service passed to the administrative control of a single director of broadcasting under a Minister of Broadcasting who was responsible to Parliament. In 1939, a weekly periodical, The New Zealand Listener, was started by the Broadcasting Service. It carried the full programme schedules for each week, but more important, it provided an avenue for the publication of short stories, book reviews, correspondence, feature articles, and occasional editorial commentaries on public affairs from a variety of sources and viewpoints. The New Zealand National Orchestra was also established under the control of the Broadcasting Service.

From 1943 to 1960 there were no important changes in the administrative structure by which radio broadcasting was carried on, though

¹ See 'Radio and Television Broadcasting' in the New Zealand Official Yearbook, Wellington 1968, 368-375; also 'Broadcasting and Television' in An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Wellington 1966, 247-252.

² Section 15(1).

³ Section 14(1), (2).

considerable progress was made with the development of programme services and the improvement of station coverage. Some attention was devoted to television services, though it was not until 1950 (after a private experimental company had been carrying on regular transmissions in Auckland for some time) that the New Zealand Broadcasting Service began its own regular television service. However, during the 1960 election campaign there was widespread dissatisfaction with the way in which both television and radio news services were being run under government control. The National Party promised that television would be transferred to some form of corporative control, and in the event, when the new National government was formed after the election, both radio and television services were brought under the administration of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation which was set up in 1962 to operate 35 radio and four television stations. There followed a vigorous programme of expansion of television services (which is still in progress) and the establishment of a full-scale news service.

The present corporation consists of seven men: a former Major-General of the New Zealand Army, four businessmen, a retired lawyer, and a former general manager of a provincial newspaper. It is a policy-making body; responsible to it for the running of the service is a Director-General (at present an ex-accountant) and to him in turn, the various heads of the different branches within the service itself are responsible. In 1969 there were 47 medium-wave radio stations and a single-channel television network operational throughout most regions of the country. Two low-powered shortwave transmitters also broadcast programmes to the Pacific islands and Australia.

1. THE NEWS SERVICE

In the days of departmental and formal Ministerial control, the news service consisted of scarcely more than one employee whose job was to edit a brief file of items provided by the Government Tourist and Publicity Department and to append this to a recording of the BBC overseas news which was then re-broadcast over the national programme at 9 p.m. each evening. Often the New Zealand content of this service

consisted of little more than thinly disguised Ministerial handouts. Following the change to corporation control, the news service has been greatly expanded to the point where it can now compete vigorously if need be with other news media. Its main material comes from a staff of more than 130 journalists and cameramen who do the basic work of interviewing and reportage. This is supplemented by news film from overseas agencies, by the monitoring of news broadcasts from overseas sources, and by an overseas cable service obtained from the New Zealand Press Association.

News bulletins are prepared by a central staff in Wellington, with branches in the other main centres. These serve three levels of interest: the national, the regional and the local. National bulletins for radio are prepared in Wellington and are supplied to an immediate link of stations to which the news is read from a central point. The case of television bulletins has been more complicated because until recently, for technical reasons, regional television stations could not be operated continuously on one national linkage. Consequently, news officers throughout the country would send stories they considered of national interest to Wellington where gatekeeping decisions about their use could be made by news supervisors. The texts of centrally prepared bulletins were then sent from the central newsroom in Wellington to the regional stations by teleprinter. These allowed for the insertion of items of regional interest only, as well as for local film shot that day. Film news of national interest was shown as soon as possible from all channels, but because copies had to be made for each one, some viewers would see a film a day later than others, depending on the originating point of the film, on the day it arrived, and on the speed with which it could be processed and then distributed by air. However, by late 1969, the corporation had succeeded in linking its television studios in the four main centres so that national newscasts, and certain other programmes like, for instance, the coverage of the 1969 general election night results, could be transmitted simultaneously throughout New Zealand.

In addition to newscasts, a considerable variety of news support and public affairs programmes, as well as discussions and talks, are prepared by the corporation's staff, with the assistance of contributors who are, if necessary, consulted by long distance telephone.

2. THE BROADCASTING ACT

The Broadcasting Corporation Act 1961 attempted a comprehensive definition of the tasks which the newly formed corporation was supposed to perform by reproducing much of the terminology of the British Television Act of 1954. It laid down the 'functions' of the service and defined the relationship between the N.Z.B.C. and the government. Under section 11 the corporation was obliged to 'comply with the general policy of the government of New Zealand with respect to broadcasting' and to 'comply with any general or special directions given in writing by the Minister pursuant to the policy of the government in relation thereto'. Under a subsequent amendment a copy of every such notice was to be laid before Parliament within 28 days if Parliament were in session, and, if not, within 28 days after the start of the next ensuing session.⁴ Formal Ministerial directions have been rare, though one reason for this may well be the obvious one that negotiation and consultation at many diverse levels between corporation and government has been the convenient custom. According to a former N.Z.B.C. producer, Gordon Bick, this is a subtle process:

In New Zealand, political interference is made easy. It can take more subtle forms than the written directives which a Minister of Broadcasting is required to make to the N.Z.B.C. if he wants to influence programming. In a small, intimate society where relationships are very informal, pressures can easily be applied on a friendly basis by a mere telephone call. Ministers, the Director-General, and departmental heads are all on first name terms. They have to live with each other and depend on each other's co-operation. The N.Z.B.C. wants a quiet life, even if it does mean bowing a little this way or that in the political wind.⁵

The Minister of Broadcasting is also obliged to answer questions in Parliament about his administration of broadcasting; consequently, on many aspects of its activities, the corporation may be just as much under this form of political surveillance as an ordinary government department. For example, during the 1963 Parliamentary session, questions were answered on subjects involving television translators

4 Section 11(2).

5 Gordon Bick, The Compass File, Christchurch 1968, 104.

in Taranaki,⁶ equipment for new television studios,⁷ television reception in Nelson,⁸ television advertising rates,⁹ the production of television plays in Auckland,¹⁰ the coverage of cricket tests,¹¹ the provision of a satellite receiving station,¹² liquor advertisements,¹³ television advertising by the Egg Marketing Authority,¹⁴ weather reports,¹⁵ and the adequacy of programmes about politics.¹⁶

A 1967 amendment to the Broadcasting Corporation Act allowed the Director-General to be appointed by the corporation itself rather than by the Governor-General in Council on the recommendation of the corporation, but the amendment specified that he was to be paid out of the consolidated revenue account 'such salary as may from time to time be appropriated by Parliament.'¹⁷ This means that his salary, and presumably his activities as head of the service, are subject to Parliament's scrutiny just as much as if he were an officer in a government department which was dependent on the granting of funds through the normal mechanism of the Parliamentary estimates. Indeed, a further form of control over the N.Z.B.C. is to be found in Cabinet's supervision of its expenditure. Under section 29 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act the corporation is obliged to prepare estimates for its yearly expenditure 'in a form approved by the Minister of Finance, of the amount of the expenditure for all purposes and the receipts of the corporation'. In recent years the resources of the corporation have

6 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 355, July 10 1968, 315.

7 ibid. vol. 355, July 17 1968, 524.

8 ibid. vol. 355, July 16 1968, 473.

9 ibid. vol. 356, September 6 1968, 1585.

10 ibid. vol. 355, July 24 1968, 703.

11 ibid. vol. 355, July 17 1968, 528.

12 ibid. vol. 355, June 28 1968, 24.

13 ibid. vol. 355, July 18 1968, 579.

14 ibid. vol. 355, July 10 1968, 317.

15 ibid. vol. 356, August 14 1968, 1324.

16 ibid. vol. 356, September 11 1968, 1686.

17 Section 16 (2).

been very greatly increased and the profits from its operations have been substantial. During the financial year ended March 31 1968, for example, the N.Z.B.C. had a net revenue of \$19,576,014. After paying taxation, and allowing \$2,113,519 in depreciation, it had a surplus of \$2,567,031.¹⁸ According to one critic¹⁹ this represented a 19 per cent. rate of profit. The N.Z.B.C. claims that it needs such substantial surpluses because it is financing capital works out of its own resources and is faced with some very heavy demands in its attempts to complete projects like the extension of television coverage to all parts of New Zealand, the building of television studios, and the provision of facilities for the reception and re-broadcast of satellite-transmitted programmes. Obviously a corporation involved in costly developmental projects of this kind is not likely to risk arousing the antagonism of a Cabinet which virtually holds the purse strings. Furthermore, the legacy of the corporation's years as a government department may have a considerable influence on its councils. Many of its top officials have been trained in the administrative environment of the public service. According to Bick, at the time of the change-over they were:

... the same faithful, loyal, devoted crew, rowing with the same cautious, obedient minds in the same direction ... from habit and years of conditioning these men wanted a quiet life free of any controversy likely to offend the politicians. None of them had a clue about television production, and pictorial journalism was as unknown as the other side of the moon. The news department grew out of Tourist and Publicity Department handouts, and the public affairs department developed under the safe guiding influence of an agricultural officer.²⁰

In its treatment of high-ranking government officials like the Prime Minister, the N.Z.B.C. has customarily tended to take a soft line. Although a standing instruction to its journalists says that statements by Ministers or other government authorities should be treated on their merits as news items, the actual method of treatment is often cautious and deferential. Thus in 1967, when the Prime Minister (K.J. Holyoake)

¹⁸ Report of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation, Wellington 1968.

¹⁹ C.G. Costello reported in The Dominion, November 14, 1968, 3.

²⁰ op. cit. 96.

returned from an overseas trip, the corporation's staff had to make several takes of a television interview at Wellington airport. These were subsequently shown to him so that he could select the best for subsequent telecasting. According to Dick, Holyoake always wanted to learn his lines in advance and sometimes obtained advance lists of questions from the N.Z.B.C. to prepare himself for an interview. No sticky questions were allowed to be slipped into the interview at the last moment to catch him off guard.²¹ The result of such practices has been that topical programmes have sometimes seemed 'too cautious and deferential'.²² For example, one television viewer complained about an interview with a Cabinet minister in these terms: 'What I found most noticeable was the treading with caution on every question put to the Minister.'²³ The corporation's official reply to this criticism was: 'The N.Z.B.C.'s approach in all news interviews is to seek significant information with due impartiality, respect and courtesy'.²⁴

The nature and extent of the informal influence of government circles in the programme content decisions made by corporation management have been discussed in the course of a number of public controversies over the selection of programme content and the desirability or otherwise of changes in the system of licensing for broadcasting and television stations. The N.Z.B.C. has been heavily criticised for its timidity and deference, but when accused of unnecessary or sinister deference to government interests, its management has generally defended itself by falling back on the terminology of the Broadcasting Corporation Act. This states in section 10(1) in very general terms that the corporation 'shall carry on a broadcasting service within New Zealand, and from time to time develop, extend and improve that service in the public interest'. If it is assumed that these words mean that the service itself, as well

21 ibid. 21. But according to a Wellington journalist writing in The New Zealand Listener, (December 20 1968, 5) this has not always been the case and Holyoake has proved himself 'as willing to answer difficult questions without pre-knowledge as any politician.'

22 Ian Johnstone, The Right Channel, Dunedin 1968, 38.

23 The Evening Post, July 1 1969, 10.

24 loc. cit.

as the extensions, developments and improvements, is to be carried on in the 'public interest', the only additional directions that give any guidance as to how that interest is to be served are the provisions of section 10(2) which declare that the corporation is bound to satisfy itself

- (i) that, so far as possible, nothing is included in the programmes which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to incite to crime or lead to disorder or be offensive to public feeling;
- (ii) that the programmes maintain a proper balance in their subject matter and a high general standard of quality; and
- (iii) that any news given in the programmes (in whatever form) is presented with due accuracy and impartiality and with due regard to the public interest.

In a sense, the N.Z.B.C. has been granted a large amount of autonomy, but its extent remains speculative because the Act does not attempt to define any of its terms. 'Public interest', 'good taste', 'decency', and what constitutes 'incitement to crime', and what kind of programme content could 'lead to disorder' or be 'offensive to public feeling' have so far been left largely to the administrative discretion of the N.Z.B.C. itself to determine. Similarly, 'proper balance' and 'general standard of quality' have been interpreted to suit circumstance rather than defined in accordance with exact principles. This may be why, according to Johnstone, 'in a sense, there is no need for the country's "establishment" to try to influence programmes. Left to itself, New Zealand's television system will err on the side of caution, will prefer the safe to the touchy, will feel more at ease with a report about harbour facilities than with one examining abortion'.²⁵

In the case of the provisions concerning news, the interpretation of the all-important phrase 'due regard to the public interest' is also largely a matter of discretion. How the corporation and its officers interpret these words in their daily activities is consequently of decisive significance. The Act merely lays down some broad standards which the N.Z.B.C. is expected to maintain without any formal direction as to how it is to interpret them. The social purposes which these standards are intended to promote, and hence the degree of rigour which

²⁵ op. cit. 39.

is to be inferred from a term such as 'proper balance', are not made explicit and depend on whatever construction is placed upon the amorphous expression 'public interest'. Similarly the Act uses the term 'function' as a synonym for 'operations'. It makes no attempt either to concern itself with problems of service and control as such, or even to recognise their existence. Nevertheless, such activities are implicit in the notion of public interest, and as a matter of working practice, something of the kind is recognised by the N.Z.B.C. when it states that its aims are 'to provide the community ... with entertainment, information and service which is desired by the audience, is presented in a manner acceptable to it and is practicable within the available finance.'²⁶ This definition, however, has the shortcoming that it tends to see the N.Z.B.C. as the passive creature of its audience rather than an innovator or even instructor. Some broadcasting systems have taken a more adventurous view of their responsibilities.

Thus the Australian Broadcasting Commission has no hesitation in asserting that one of its most important objectives is 'to make people think'.²⁷ Along these lines the British Broadcasting Corporation Board of Governors regards itself as not only the 'trustee of the national interest' but as the custodian of the kind of 'moral and social values' which it thinks should characterise 'good' public service broadcasting.²⁸ In their pursuit, however, it claims to exercise its authority largely by a pragmatic process of discussion and retrospective review of programmes rather than the drawing-up of broad codes of ethics. The Federal Communications Commission (the United States broadcast licensing authority) in its not always successful struggles with this question has sometimes tried to go a long way further by arguing that the emphasis should be upon the service which the community actually receives, and that the standard of 'public interest, convenience or necessity' should

26 Aims and Objectives of N.Z.B.C. Programming, N.Z.B.C., Wellington 1969.

27 The Australian, September 10 1969, 2.

28 Lord Normanbrook, The Functions of the B.B.C.'s Governors, London 1965.

be construed accordingly. In this conception a broadcasting station becomes a 'mouthpiece of the air' for the community it serves, and recently the Commission has claimed that it has a right to instruct radio and television stations under its control to devote equal time to the presentation of controversial issues featuring in programmes.

Some overall concept of function in this sense of community service is necessary to the news media. Without it their managements are likely to find themselves devoting technical resources and talent to building services that may be technically and commercially successful, but undistinguished by any other purpose than the filling of their channels with whatever material comes to hand in order to satisfy the demands of the bulk of their mass audiences. That something other than the satisfaction of mere crude appetite for popular entertainment was intended by the New Zealand Broadcasting Act can be inferred from section 12 whereby the corporation has power to use its facilities in such a manner as might be thought fit for the promotion and assistance 'of the arts and cultural pursuits which are usually included in the purpose of broadcasting'. It is also authorised to publish periodicals and do things 'in the interests of the community for the purpose of developing and improving broadcast talent' but here again this is only general authority without very specific guidance.

Lack of definition of what criteria should be invoked when considering the public interest does not, of course, stop the corporation from developing its own standards in the course of daily experience. Indeed, only those involved in the day-to-day operation of a mass media system can determine how much or what kind of news, editorial comment, cultural education or entertainment should be disseminated, because they are the only people who are in any position to estimate the quality and calculate the possible effects of the material at their disposal. The public interest can never be defined in so many words because it depends on unpredictable circumstance. The social responsibility theory of mass media operation places the onus for this kind of awareness, and acceptance of the responsibility for making such pragmatic calculations, squarely in the hands of the journalists and media programmers themselves.

So the question arises: how does N.Z.B.C. management interpret the administrative discretion it has been granted?

3. BALANCE AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Firstly, like most media operators in democratic political systems, the N.Z.B.C. is determined to obtain a secure basis for its operations by making a profit. It has been assisted in this by being granted what has, until 1969, been virtually a monopoly in broadcasting in New Zealand, and it has collected substantial revenues from licence fees and the sale of advertising time. Nevertheless, it has been strongly apprehensive of the conditions so ambiguously laid down in the Broadcasting Corporation Act, and it regulates its programme content in accordance with some cautious interpretations of them. In its news services it accepts a version of the traditional free-market-place-for-information objective, but limits this with some important qualifications.

The aim of the N.Z.B.C. news service is said to be to 'provide a service of information upon which the people of the country can form reasonable judgment on world affairs and their own affairs.'²⁹ But in carrying this out the N.Z.B.C. has not only had all the usual difficulties of trying to present news with reasonable impartiality; it has been involved in uncertainties over the meaning and application of the words 'proper balance'. Most newspapers and news agencies are able to avoid such difficulties of definition by aiming more modestly at the production of fair and accurate reports. All news media proprietors, broadcasters as well as newspaper publishers, find themselves under an obligation to publish fair and accurate reports because, among other things, failure to do so can result in legal proceedings for defamation. They also have qualified privilege to publish fair and accurate reports about a great many public affairs and legal and Parliamentary proceedings on the understanding that these reports are subject to subsequent explanation and contradiction. They may also, themselves, make fair comments in good faith on matters which they consider to be of sufficient public interest. The N.Z.B.C., however, considers itself to be more circumscribed than this. With commendable propriety and prudence it seeks to maintain a careful neutrality in the handling of controversial news items,

²⁹ RPC7, News and Commentaries (Sound and Television), N.Z.B.C. mimeograph, Wellington 1967.

particularly in the case of controversies between political parties, or attacks on the policy of government, but in its treatment of this material the standards of impartiality, accuracy and good faith are not sufficient: reports must also be 'balanced'.

The meaning of this term has been interpreted by the N.Z.B.C. to be firstly an absence of distortion or sensational emphasis, and secondly something especially applicable to what is considered to be 'political' reportage and discussion. This approach requires that a kind of verbal ping-pong shall be umpired by the N.Z.B.C. gatekeepers. The rule has been that statements made by one faction in a controversy should, where possible, be countered by any alternative viewpoints that are available. These considerations are not very different from those normally attaching to the writing of a fair report, but the danger with the N.Z.B.C.'s approach to the reportage of political affairs is that in the pursuit of the elusive niceties of balance, controversy might be damped down.³⁰ This, of course, may well be the N.Z.B.C.'s intention on some matters, particularly those touching the sensitivities of politicians and interest groups, some of whom are notoriously prone to accuse the news media of bias on very slight pretext. But if politician A cannot or will not balance the utterances of politician B, what happens to the news item, or to the commentary? Is it cut, or is the programme abandoned altogether to avoid accusations of bias and imbalance? In such case, what has happened to the public interest and the need to interpret public affairs as well as report them? Is it in the interest of every individual member of the mass public which the medium purports to serve that statements or viewpoints of any reasonable kind should be suppressed, particularly if they happen to concern matters of public importance? If by silence or evasion a politician, a political official or a prominent personality can ensure that an issue is not fully reported, or is not discussed fully and publicly, does that mean that some potential news sources can

30 R.S. Clark, 'Broadcasting and Private Enterprise --the Proposed Broadcasting Authority', The New Zealand Journal of Public Administration, 30:2, March 1968, 29-50, suggests that balanced subject matter provisions could be interpreted to mean that radio and television operators are common carriers of information who could be required to give time to all comers in much the same way that the common carrier in the field of transport must take any passenger who presents himself. Consequently, a broadcasting station might even be under the duty, not necessarily shared by newspapers and other media, of being fair to all views on controversial issues of importance.

manipulate the N.Z.B.C. by hiding behind the skirts of the corporation's own narrowly interpreted conventions? Which is more important to the maintenance of the public's interests -- suppression to serve administrative convenience and to avoid injury and inconvenience to the few, or publication so that conflict of opinion will be maintained in a controversial area of public affairs? How can people form 'reasonable judgments on world affairs and their own affairs' if relevant information is withheld from them?

The answers to such questions depend on how management construes the fundamental but ambiguous term, 'public interest'. If it be taken to mean 'benefit to the public considered as a whole', perhaps on some issues there may well be justification for silence or omission; but if it be thought to mean 'response to the needs of the community considered as a complex series of publics', then surely a free market place policy of instant disclosure of all information, and the vigorous discussion of all issues, should follow. This may not be as difficult to manage as might be thought. The silence of a news source under interrogation need not always result in the failure of communication on the part of a responsible news service. Journalists often take the initiative in such situations by substituting their own explanatory comment on a source's behalf, giving an honest rendering of what the position is, so that a fair report in good faith on a matter of public interest can still be published. In other words, both sides of a controversy can be canvassed in depth, whether or not one particular news source authorises it.

However, this requires that journalists should be encouraged to carry out their interpretative roles and should not be expected to behave as mechanical and neutral processors of quasi-factual material on a perfectly balanced assembly line.³¹ It is important that journalists

³¹ Interpretative reporting is described in J. Edward Gerald, The Social Responsibility of the Press, Minnesota 1963, 154, as requiring the journalist 'to fill in through investigation and truthful report, facts overlooked or not stated in the public discussion -- that is, to supply the truth about the facts'. He defines objective reporting as requiring the writer 'to keep neutral his wants, tastes and moral and religious beliefs; moreover he must curb wishful thinking and concern himself with proof based on first hand comparison of reports by credible witnesses'. Warren Breed, 'Analysing News: Some Questions for Research', Journalism Q., 33:4, Autumn 1956, 467-477, describes objective news reports as reliable in the sense that if tested against a second or third story about the same event, all would convey the same essential information.

who wish to discuss public issues should be able to do so with some degree of interpretative freedom under their own names, or under pseudonyms or bylines. It is not enough to present a version of the basic facts, they must often be interpreted so that the issues of the day are made understandable. However, the N.Z.B.C. practice has been that in the selection and presentation of news there is to be no influence 'by editorial or management policies on topics that may be contentious'.³² N.Z.B.C. news staff are to treat content 'objectively' on its merits as news. This means that authoritative sources have to be found to substantiate comment or criticism, and if they are not forthcoming, the service must remain silent. This could result in a failure of the control function, either through the enforced silence of an informed but impotent journalist in the service's employ, or through the virtual gagging of a minority group in the event of its opponents preferring to remain silent on some controversial issue.

Recently, however, the N.Z.B.C. has begun to face up to the problem of balance by admitting that the various arguments in a controversy need not be aired in the course of a single programme and that opportunity for all significant viewpoints can be presented within a reasonable period of time.³³ It has been showing greater readiness to allow journalists and specialists to comment on public affairs in television programmes like 'Gallery' and 'Compass' and in radio programmes like 'In the News', 'Checkpoint', 'Viewpoint', 'Aspect' and 'Feminine Viewpoint'. It has also set up a much-needed radio documentary unit to deal with subjects of topical interest and examine social problems in depth. In the N.Z.B.C.'s public affairs programmes, people with some special or expert insight are asked to comment on events. In some cases the commentary comes from the N.Z.B.C.'s own staff, in others it is obtained from casual contributors or even by long distance telephone call, often at considerable expense. Nevertheless, this aspect of electronic journalism seems still in its infancy in New Zealand, partly because of the shortage of suitable

32 RPC7, News and Commentaries (Sound and Television), N.Z.B.C. mimeograph, Wellington 1967.

33 Aims and Objectives of N.Z.B.C. Programming, N.Z.B.C., Wellington 1969.

talent for this exacting type of work, and partly because of the failure of the N.Z.B.C. always to devote sufficient resources to it. Furthermore, such programmes have largely been restricted to radio; the discussion and interpretation of public affairs on television, for the most part, has been carried on at a level of cautious mediocrity that is frequently neither entertaining nor instructive. Certainly few televised public affairs programmes have yet approached the standard of, for instance, some rural broadcasting sessions in which criticism and debate have a naturalistic vigour that stems from their concern with the farming industry and the frank discussion of the administrative and policy-making realities that are central to it.

The continuation and improvement of programmes that are critical of public affairs is important because if for any reason the press is reluctant to exert its control functions and give liberal access to dissident or protesting minorities, extra onus falls on the N.Z.B.C. to see that its news support service does so. This would require management to think of 'balance' in a very general sense rather than in the extremely narrow perspective to which it has been accustomed, but such a change of policy seems unlikely without fundamental alteration to the composition of the corporation's present membership, and perhaps some substantial changes to the Broadcasting Corporation Act.

4. CONTROVERSIAL ITEMS

In the case of the N.Z.B.C. news service, controversial items, particularly those concerned with political and industrial news, are customarily referred to the news editor or his deputies who in appropriate cases consult the Controller of News and Current Affairs, or the Director-General. This procedure is similar to that adopted by all news organisations and in effect delineates a responsible hierarchy of authority which presides over the news-gathering bureaucracy. Experienced news officers are expected to use their judgment, but when in

doubt they are required to refer to their superiors.³⁴ This can easily be done by means of the teleprinter circuit which links all N.Z.B.C. regional news offices to the head office of the service in Wellington. Thus the Auckland office asked head office to investigate a rumour that a meeting of prison chaplains at Mt. Crawford prison had passed a resolution urging that homosexuality in prisons should be condoned, and that legislation should be introduced accordingly, but it was told; 'We would not use the story in any event'.³⁵ When the Governor-General indicated he would not like to be televised during a church service, the assignment was dropped.³⁶ Before interviewing a Maori member of Parliament on his return from an overseas conference, the Auckland news section found it necessary to consult its head office as to 'whether it would be in order'.³⁷ A statement issued by the Auckland Peace for Vietnam Committee had to be 'cleared by the head office editor' in Wellington before any part of it could be used,³⁸ as did another sensitive item announcing the sighting of several Japanese fishing vessels off the North Island coast.³⁹

34 Similarly, producers must have a delicate degree of semi-autonomy. 'A producer must know his administrators...and knowing them, how far he can go within their framework. Then he can begin to nudge.' Reported in The Dominion Sunday Times, January 19 1969, 27. But the nudging process has obvious limitations which were demonstrated in 1969 when Keith Aberdoin, a member of the 'Compass' team, was dismissed for refusing to accept editorial changes to the script of a controversial programme on the attitudes of Chatham Islanders towards the New Zealand Government's administration. He claimed that the changes were demanded 'because of a fear on the part of N.Z.B.C. officials that there could be political repercussions if the script was used as written', and that 'censorship by supposition was all too prevalent in the N.Z.B.C.' In answer to this, the Director-General of the Corporation, G.H. Stringer, stated that instructions were given to alter the script firstly to avoid editorial comment as distinct from a presentation of facts on a controversial subject, and secondly to improve balance and impartiality in their presentation. Reported in The Dominion, September 19 1969, 1.

35 See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 4, 'N.Z.B.C. News Service Memoranda'.

36 ibid.

37 ibid.

38 ibid.

39 ibid.

(a) Radio Hauraki

These examples suggest that the N.Z.B.C. news service may be highly sensitive to the implications of broadcasting news of an unusual or controversial nature, particularly if it could have political repercussions. This sometimes results in highly newsworthy events being treated with conservatism. For example, the news service imposed measures intended to play down a public controversy which took place over the activities of an Auckland pirate radio company in October 1966. During the height of the general election campaign that year, an unlicensed radio station known as Radio Hauraki had begun transmission from a small vessel in the Hauraki Gulf, near Auckland. Its programmes consisted mainly of pop records, and the enthusiasm with which they were received by a young segment of the broadcast radio audience drew attention to their dissatisfaction with existing N.Z.B.C. programmes. The Minister of Broadcasting used his powers under section 11 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act to write to the corporation asking it to put on 'brighter' radio programmes from the YD stations. The N.Z.B.C. subsequently put the YD network on the air for longer hours and varied its programme content. At the same time, the National Party announced in its election campaign manifesto that it would set up a new licensing authority to determine the need for additional television and radio stations, and to issue warrants to successful applicants. But before these developments took place, the crew of the pirate ship were involved in legal proceedings in the Auckland Magistrate's Court. This was because they had tried to sail the ship out of harbour where it was being held under a Marine Department detention order pending an examination for seaworthiness. These events were watched closely by the news media and were extensively reported throughout New Zealand. The N.Z.B.C. head office ruled against publicising statements made by the manager of the pirate radio station on the grounds that they were 'purely for publicity',⁴⁰ and against using an item about a forthcoming protest meeting in Auckland.⁴¹ An instruction was given not to use any news

40 ibid.

41 ibid.

items concerning the Radio Hauraki affair without referring them to the editor of the head office news section.⁴² A story concerning public sympathy for the crew was rejected on the advice of the corporation's solicitor who thought it could be construed as an attempt to influence the court before the conclusion of its hearing and hence might be considered contemptuous.⁴³

(b) Election Campaign Coverage

In its treatment of news support programmes the N.Z.B.C. has sometimes shown equal caution. It customarily takes care to see that all sides of an argument are presented, but it has sometimes gone further than this to ban programmes entirely. During the 1966 election campaign, for example, when candidates and party leaders were given time for electioneering broadcasts, a number of news support programmes were suspended on the grounds that speakers might have allowed partiality to enter programmes at an inconvenient time. However, this policy was vigorously criticised, particularly by the regional advisory committees which have been set up by the N.Z.B.C. under section 8 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act to offer advice on programme content, and in formulating its 1969 election coverage policy the corporation decided to continue its current affairs and other news support programmes into the final week of the campaign.

(c) The Bick Case

The case of Gordon Bick, an N.Z.B.C. television producer, drew widespread attention to the relationship of the N.Z.B.C. to the government and the nature of the problems arising from it. In October 1966, Bick resigned from his post as producer of 'Compass' (at that time television's only critical public affairs commentary) as a protest against what he alleged was government interference that had stopped a documentary investigation of the possibility of price rises occurring when a national change-over to decimal currency took place. Bick said he was told the N.Z.B.C. had 'decided to postpone that programme till a later date'.⁴⁴

⁴² ibid.

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴ Reported in The Dominion Sunday Times, October 2 1966, 3.

and the date suggested was well after the November general election. He claimed that the programme was stopped because it could have been embarrassing to the government, and this was not the first time 'the government had got wind of a Compass story and had it stopped.'

The specific allegation of government interference was denied by the then Under-Secretary of Finance (R.D. Muldoon) who claimed that he had not been able to appear in the programme to state the government's case because there was a pre-election ban on the appearance of candidates on television. He considered that he could not authorise any of the administrative officials concerned with the introduction of decimal currency to appear in his place. The Director-General of Broadcasting (G.H. Stringer) also denied that there was any interference or censorship by the government. He said he had withheld the programme because representatives of the Decimal Currency Board were not available to appear on it to present their views. This meant that the programmes could 'not be presented 'with due accuracy and impartiality'.⁴⁵ The chairman of the corporation supported him and emphasised the N.Z.B.C.'s passive qualities. He said the job of the staff was 'to sift the views of people, check them for accuracy and to present them impartially...the corporation itself does not have an editorial opinion on particular issues. It mirrors the opinions of others.'⁴⁶

The New Zealand Journalists' Association criticised this approach to the affair as well as the over-protective attitude of the N.Z.B.C. in refusing to run programmes which they thought might offend the susceptibilities of politicians.⁴⁷ It thought the task of programme content selection was best left to the hands of an editor-in-chief who had both training and broad experience in the craft of journalism. It considered that Stringer's statement was proof of his 'inability to grasp the role of journalists in the gathering and dissemination of information to the public who are best left to judge the accuracy and impartiality of programmes for themselves'.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The Evening Post, October 4 1966, 13.

⁴⁶ The Dominion, October 12 1966, 1.

⁴⁷ The Auckland Star, October 3 1966, 3.

⁴⁸ ibid.

Other commentators claimed that the N.Z.B.C. was 'subservient to both political parties' and was imposing its own self-censorship in consequence, and that its policy of avoiding controversy because of the difficulties it caused meant that pressure groups were virtually in a position to dictate what programmes would go on and what would not.

Although Parliament discussed the Bick case, its implications were not considered because the debate lapsed into a discussion of the propriety or otherwise of Bick producing a tape recording of an important telephone conversation with an official of the Decimal Currency Board. This recording added substance to Dick's allegation that 'the government was behind the suppression of the programme on decimal currency',⁴⁹ but any discussion of the full significance of this was avoided by means of allegations made in Parliament that Bick had been acting 'unethically' in recording something that was supposed to be 'off the record'.⁵⁰ Bick replied to this attack on his character and credibility by saying that the government was merely trying to put up 'a great big smoke screen' and that what was needed was 'a few free-thinking, qualified men who could use the medium in the public affairs field to challenge authority and keep the politicians on their toes to ensure that we have the right men in public and in Parliamentary office. In New Zealand there was a great need for the expression of free thought'.⁵¹ Later he commented that 'unless an independent broadcasting authority such as the N.Z.B.C. uses its independence to question, probe and analyse whatever is proposed by government, and unless the press retains complete freedom to report, our democracy is likely to change slowly and surely into a totalitarian state'.⁵²

Meanwhile the N.Z.B.C.'s own news service had been handling the Bick affair with delicacy. For instance, the Auckland news staff submitted the text of the following statement by the Auckland Labour Representation Committee to the news editor at Wellington head office for a gatekeeping decision:⁵³

49 The Evening Post, October 12 1966, 19.

50 The Minister of Broadcasting (W.J.Scott) reported in The Press, October 13 1966, 1.

51 Reported in University Focus, 1:1, 1967, 23.

52 The Compass File, Christchurch 1968, 98.

53 On October 7 1966

The executive of the Auckland Labour Representation Committee last night expressed its deep concern at the apparent infringement of the rights of free expression dictated by the recent suppression of a television documentary on decimal currency. In its statement the Labour Representation Committee pointed out that the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation was established to remove an important organ of communication from direct political control. Any direct intervention by one political party in the work of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation not only reduces its effectiveness as an independent and unbiased voice in the community, but is also contrary to the principles of free expression on which it was established. The people of New Zealand are dedicated to these principles because our democratic way of life is dependent upon them. It is plainly the duty of the government to make it clear to the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation that there will be no political pressure brought to bear on its work. We feel that Mr Gordon Bick should be asked to reconsider his resignation and be allowed to pursue his plans for presenting controversial topics such as decimal currency to the public.

How faithfully the N.Z.B.C. 'mirrored' the opinions of a section of its mass public on this issue can be judged by examination of the full wording of the text which was subsequently approved for broadcasting.

It read as follows:

The executive of the Auckland Labour Representation Committee has called on the government to make it clear to the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation that there will be no political pressure brought to bear on its work. ⁵⁴

By omitting certain words in the statement, the N.Z.B.C. was in fact suppressing aspects of a political group's opinions about a matter of considerable public importance and interest. It may have been trying to restore 'balance' to the treatment of the controversy; it may have been trying to impose its notions of 'impartiality' on the statement; perhaps it was trying to protect itself as an economic interest group facing severe criticism in the daily press; it may have been trying to soften criticism of the government; it may even have been reducing the text to its just proportions as a news item. Whatever the reason for the cut from 190 to 36 words, the result was the loss of a certain

⁵⁴ According to a head office memorandum dated October 7 1966.

amount of information, a reduction of the significance of the statement, and a diminishment of the N.Z.B.C.'s capacity as an agency of communication.

The example of the Dick affair suggests that the real danger to the N.Z.B.C. is not that in the trial-and-error exploration of its social responsibilities, a few party politicians might complain of unfair or indiscreet treatment, an occasional citizen might consider he had been antagonised, or even that an expensive mistake might be made.⁵⁵ It is rather that any kind of omission or neglect of responsibility to publish could be covered up with the claim that silence was in the public interest.

5. THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

In accordance with the National Party's election promise, a Broadcasting Authority Bill was introduced during the 1967 session of Parliament and passed in November 1968. It set up an authority consisting of a chairman (with legal experience) and two other members appointed on the recommendation of the Minister of Broadcasting. This tribunal took over from the Broadcasting Corporation the responsibility for hearing and deciding applications for warrants to operate broad-

55 Philip Anast, 'Attitude Towards the Press as a Function of Interests', Journalism Q., 38:2, Summer 1961, 377-381, demonstrates that media operators are bound to encounter displeasure from some parts of their audience by reporting controversial news. Readers holding extreme views are likely to be antagonised at one time or another regardless of how objective the press seeks to be, indeed because the press approaches objectivity. This condition seems permanent, and remedy does not appear possible or desirable. The same conditions apply to broadcasting, perhaps even more stringently in the case of the N.Z.B.C. owing to the requirement imposed on it in section 10(2)(a) of the Broadcasting Corporation Act not to include anything in the programmes which is likely to be 'offensive to public feeling'. The existence of such a provision is likely to make heavy demands on the management of a broadcasting organisation. According to Asa Briggs it requires a man of immense courage and imagination to run a public broadcasting agency, partly because of the need to be able to stand up to people in positions of power, and partly because it requires imagination to realise that 'broadcasting or television cannot be run purely on the basis of buying other people's programmes or appeasing existing interests'. ('Quality at the Creative Level', reported in The New Zealand Listener, October 24 1969, 10.)

casting stations, and it was given a number of other important duties. It can advise the Minister on matters he refers to it, it can publish information in pamphlets and periodicals 'for the benefit of those engaged in broadcasting' and it may co-operate (presumably in cultural fields) with other people or organisations. It has been given disciplinary powers to punish licence holders who operate contrary to its rules, either by suspension or revocation of licences. Appeals against its decisions are to be referred to the newly constituted administrative division of the Supreme Court.

The Broadcasting Authority Act contains provision for the licensing of all stations operated by the N.Z.B.C. with the coming into force of the Act.⁵⁶ It repeats the provisions of section 10 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act whereby standards of good taste, decency and inoffensiveness to public feeling have to be observed in programme content as well as a 'proper balance' of subject matter and an impartiality in the provision of news which must be given with 'due regard to the public interest'. But broadcasting stations (including those operated by the corporation) are also to be given guidance in the interpretation of these vague generalities. Under section 10 of the Act, the authority has power to make rules for putting these requirements into effect, for prescribing the standards both of advertising and of programmes, and for the inclusion in programme schedules of as much matter produced in New Zealand as is reasonably possible.

Both the Broadcasting Corporation Act and the Broadcasting Authority Act contain an equally vague declaration as to the extent of Ministerial control to be exerted over these organisations. In the words of section 12(1) of the Broadcasting Authority Act:

In the exercise of its functions and powers under this Act the authority shall comply with the general policy of the government in relation to the functions and powers of the authority, and shall comply with any general or special directions given by the Minister to the authority by notice in writing pursuant to the policy of the government in relation to those functions and powers.

⁵⁶ Section 17(3)

Sub-section (2) provides for a copy of any such instruction to be laid before Parliament. The relevant section of the Broadcasting Corporation Act was amended to conform to the above wording. In view of the extremely imprecise intimation of functions and responsibilities contained both in section 10 and section 12 of the Broadcasting Authority Act it is probable that the words 'the general policy of the Government' could be interpreted to embrace almost any aspect of the broadcasting and licensing activities of either the corporation or the authority whether in the area of programme content or in the field of broadcasting technology. This lumbering, ill-defined machinery was described by a speaker in a television discussion of the Bill as 'rather like taking a shovel to squash a fly'.⁵⁷ Certainly the effect on the N.Z.B.C. of section 12, as well as section 10, of the Act may be to diminish rather than increase its autonomy by putting it under the necessity of serving two muddled masters, the Minister and the authority, where formerly there was only one. To extend that autonomy it would now be necessary to remove both the corporation and the licensing authority completely from Ministerial control, to delete the ambiguous provisions concerning offensiveness to public feeling, balance and impartiality (which have given so much trouble to N.Z.B.C. management) from both the Broadcasting Corporation Act and the Broadcasting Authority Act, and to leave broadcasting stations free to manage the content of programmes within the normal restraints imposed by the law and on the same terms as those endured by the press in its treatment of editorial content.

The incapacity of the N.Z.B.C. always to interpret the meaning of the restrictive generalities of section 10 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act with the enterprise and energy that some public issues have demanded was revealingly demonstrated during the passage of the Broadcasting Authority Act itself. The N.Z.B.C. had planned to show a 'Compass' programme on the subject of this legislation, but had, of its own volition, decided to defer the programme until after the legislation was passed on

⁵⁷ The Evening Post, November 28 1968, 22.

the grounds that 'it would have been presumptuous for participants in the programme to give their views without the full knowledge of what the final position was in this legislation...'⁵⁸ and that the corporation itself had an interest in it and might therefore come under some suspicion of partiality. Following complaints in the press, and the receipt of a letter from the Minister of Broadcasting urging that the programme should continue, a substitute panel discussion was hurriedly presented. How the Minister of Broadcasting went about influencing rather than instructing the corporation became apparent during the public discussion that accompanied these events. Questioned as to whether the corporation had ever refused to carry out a Ministerial suggestion unless it were backed up by a formal instruction, the Minister of Broadcasting (L.R. Adams-Schneider) said... 'I believe it's only necessary to indicate what the government view is'.⁵⁹

Meanwhile the corporation's own uncertainties in this affair had given rise to some sharp criticism. The Leader of the Opposition (N.E. Kirk) said it was almost tail-wagging in its desire to please the government,⁶⁰ and The Dominion commented editorially that:

...the corporation could be relied upon to shy away from anything politically controversial. Its reflexes are now so well-conditioned that it automatically runs for safety...the corporation should have learned its lesson by now. Must we wait till its public-service-conditioned administrators have gone into retirement before it awakens to its public responsibilities?...It is partly because of this timidity in its approach to news and comment... that the Bill has been introduced. The Government is of the opinion that in the public interest, competition with the corporation is desirable.⁶¹

(a) The Effects of the New Legislation

There are three main types of broadcasting control systems: firstly those in which broadcasting is carried on by a department of state (the situation in New Zealand from 1931 to 1961); secondly, those in which it

58 L.R. Sceats, then acting Director-General of Broadcasting, reported in The Dominion, November 12 1968, 2.

59 Reported in The New Zealand Listener, November 29 1968, 23.

60 Reported in The Dominion, November 12 1968, 1.

61 ibid. November 13 1968, 13.

is carried on by some sort of corporation owned mainly or entirely by the state but permitted some degree of responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the service (the situation in New Zealand after 1961); and thirdly, those in which broadcasting is carried on by private citizens

Evidence was given during the committee stage of the Broadcasting Authority Bill that The New Zealand Herald and The Auckland Star wished to combine to provide a broadcasting service which would recompense them for the losses in advertising revenue they had suffered due to the advent of radio and television advertising.⁶⁴ It was also stated that another strong applicant for a radio licence would be Radio Hauraki, the pirate station at that time transmitting to Auckland audiences from the Hauraki Gulf. News Media Ltd. (publishers of New Zealand Truth and The Sunday News) have long been interested in the possibility of entering the broadcasting field, and without doubt many other newspaper companies would be equally attracted. In July 1969, a consortium of four of the largest commercial firms in New Zealand applied to the authority for licences to enable them to set up a national radio and television network which would compete with the N.Z.B.C. But the main benefit of any competition in the electronic news media field might reside more in its effects on the N.Z.B.C. than in the actual contribution made by newspapers or any other new licence holders. The N.Z.B.C. could possibly be stimulated to a more liberal interpretation of its role. It is evident that the notions of balance, impartiality, public interest and inoffensiveness, have been interpreted by its officials in an unadventurous way. Competition could change this, but that is by no means a certainty, nor does it follow that audiences would receive a better service. There is no reason to assume that with the establishment of a Broadcasting Authority there will be any less confusion about what duties and responsibilities are implicit in the terminology of the Act, and indeed, there may be even more. Much depends on the qualities of the people appointed to the authority, how much they understand about the problems of running news and information services as well as entertainment media, and how far they are prepared to go in defining the role of the N.Z.B.C., and if necessary, upholding its independence in the face of opposition from government or from powerful pressure groups. The initial appointees, an Auckland lawyer with a Methodist Church background, a Wellington stockbroker and a Christchurch draper, may have some

64 Reported in The New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 357, September 19 1968, 1947.

representational significance of a geographic and occupational nature, but they seem to possess no special talents or aptitudes for such a potentially important post.

Experience with the government-appointed members of the broadcasting corporation itself has been discouraging, and even dismaying. The corporation has behaved largely as an administrative agency, concerned pragmatically with the technicalities of operating and extending a transmitting service, silent, if not uninterested, on the subject of some of its larger responsibilities to the community, sometimes conveniently unaware that a new media service with any pretensions to quality must be more than a mere loud-speaker, it must attempt to be an instrument of investigation and inquiry. Before the N.Z.B.C.'s control functions could be more fully exerted in the news-gathering and public affairs field it would be necessary for even further changes to be made to the Broadcasting Corporation Act. The N.Z.B.C. is most unlikely to achieve the kind of independence it needs to define and pursue its functions adequately until it is completely liberated from Ministerial supervision or influence as well as from the restrictive provisions of section 10 of the Broadcasting Authority Act and section 10 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act. It needs also to be permitted to manage its finances with more freedom,⁶⁵ and in particular, allowed to regulate capital expenditure without the prior approval of Cabinet. Under section 12 (2) of the Broadcasting Corporation Act, the corporation is obliged every year to submit a programme of proposed capital works to the Minister of Broadcasting for his approval, and under section 12 (3) it must not only have regard to any directions as to capital expenditure he might make, it is prohibited from undertaking capital expenditure for any particular purpose to an extent in excess of \$50,000 without his consent. As some items of equipment cost much more than this it means that the government has an indirect control over any substantial extension or modernisation of broadcasting. Thus the N.Z.B.C. was forced to wait several years before it obtained Cabinet approval to buy a computer, and the project to

⁶⁵ According to the Minister of Broadcasting (L.R. Adams-Schneider) the N.Z.B.C. has asked for amendments to the Broadcasting Corporation Act so that it can obtain more independence in the appointment of staff and more freedom to embark on capital works without Ministerial approval. Reported in The Evening Post, April 16 1969, 16.

install television facilities on the West Coast of the South Island (involving an expenditure of \$700,000) went before the Cabinet Works Committee three times before it was finally approved. While as a state corporation the N.Z.B.C. may reasonably enough be required to take account of the government's economic policy when determining its major capital investments, the stringency of existing controls confers on the Minister of Broadcasting, and on the Cabinet generally, an undesirable degree of influence, probably enough to ensure that on matters of significance their wishes are likely to be anticipated and obeyed, even if no fixed instruction is ever formally given.

During the debate on the Broadcasting Authority Bill, government speakers said that the Bill was intended to separate the functions of the regulation and licensing of broadcasting stations on the one hand, and their ownership and operation on the other. It is doubtful whether the legislation, in fact, does this because of the enormous residue of government influence and control which remains built into both the Broadcasting Corporation Act and the Broadcasting Authority Act. A passing reference to the control which government still retains over broadcasting services by means of the functional clauses in both Acts, for example, was made by a Labour speaker. 'Who defines public interest?' he inquired. 'This is in fact nothing more than window dressing for intervention by the government'.⁶⁶ Whether or not the authority interprets the public interest to meet every aspect of government wishes, as the N.Z.B.C. has tended to do in the past, or whether or not government policy is expressed in formal instructions or continues to be intimated in discreet Ministerial hints and suggestions depends on how the terms of the Act are applied in practical situations. In the meantime it is apparent that broadcasting (which includes both radio and television) in New Zealand remains firmly under the political control of the government. Although a good deal of time and ingenuity have been devoted to setting up a licensing authority with supervisory powers over the whole broadcasting system, nothing essential has changed. Under section 12

⁶⁶ J.L. Hunt, reported in New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol.357, October 2 1968, 2047.

of the Broadcasting Authority Act, Cabinet and the Minister of Broadcasting still have the statutory power to determine what stations shall or shall not be licensed, just as under section 11 of the Broadcasting Corporation Act they have power to prescribe what equipment and technology shall be used, and even, if necessary, what programmes shall or shall not be transmitted. In practice, a particular Minister may refrain as much as possible from intervening in detailed matters of internal administration as well as in matters of programme selection, and political considerations may restrain governments from issuing formal instructions ; but this is only the more likely to result in informal influence being brought to bear instead of direct command. The mere existence of such statutory procedures for intervention imposes substantial limitations on the freedom of the corporation.

None of the problems of government influence and control over broadcasting have been solved by this legislation, though a solution to some of them could easily be obtained by giving the government an element of representation on the corporation itself, or perhaps by reorganising the structure of the corporation so that government became a substantial shareholder with a voice in policy rather than possessing something like complete mastery of it. This is the case with other enterprises in which the state has a major involvement, for instance, the New Zealand Steel Corporation or the Tasman Pulp and Paper Company, and there is no reason why this pattern of organisation could not be followed with broadcasting. Certainly some attention should be paid to the constitution of corporation membership if it is ever to be anything but a rubber stamp for government wishes. Its composition should be varied to include working journalists (and not necessarily newspaper editors), an active writer, a painter or somebody with creative attainments in the visual arts, somebody with academic status in either the arts or the social sciences, and somebody to introduce the woman's viewpoint into its councils. ⁶⁷ A more tough-minded and better informed

67 Thus W.W. Freer, *op. cit.* Vol. 357, October 16 1968, 2383. 'The only way we can get a truly independent corporation...is for government to appoint the chairman and perhaps two members, and for organisations interested in culture, the arts, music, drama and more particularly youth activities, to nominate, in rotation, members to the governing body.' Possibly the Opposition itself could be directly represented on such a reconstituted corporation, just as it is on the Lottery Profits Board of Control and on the Representation Commission.

corporation, and one not so overwhelmingly bound by commercial and political calculations of expediency, would be more likely to know that to any suggestion of government intimidation it always has a ready weapon at its disposal - publicity.

It would also be more likely to know that the justification for broadcasting being a public utility controlled by a corporation lies in its ability to provide a better service than independent commercial management can offer. The test of performance is not necessarily engineering efficiency, profitability or even reliability or impartiality; it is the extent to which creative standards are applied to the production of programmes,⁶⁸ and it is also preparedness to act with responsibility on occasions when the public welfare requires an uninhibited treatment of problems. The alternative, the pursuit of a semblance of political non-partisanship to the point sometimes of embarrassed silence, can result in a tendency, inherent in all mass communication systems, to limit the scope of discussion about public decision-making to carefully circumscribed and relatively marginal areas of news-gathering and reportage. Any vigorous presentation of a point of view will, of necessity, annoy or offend some listeners or viewers. Consequently there may be a temptation for broadcasters to soft-pedal controversial discussion and to limit much programme content to entertainment which offends nobody. Such a policy thwarts any effectiveness broadcasting might have in a democracy.

On the other hand, it can be considered that a low level of controversy in N.Z.B.C. news and news support programmes is only a small price to pay for an accurate and authoritative service, and that any institutional inadequacies in the N.Z.B.C. coverage of public events can easily be overcome by the individual citizen wanting information. He has only to turn to a newspaper, or failing that to a periodical of some kind to obtain it. What is not provided by one channel may be found somewhere else in the market resources of the total system. This argument may be used to excuse feeble performance by one particular

68 See Alexander Macleod, The New Zealand Listener, January 10 1969, 3.

media channel, but it is not without defect. If all the channels of the system were to take such a view the citizen's chance of obtaining unpopular or elusive information would be likely to shrink disastrously with every act of evasion by gatekeepers or every abnegation of responsibility by media managements. The electronic media channels do not function in some kind of cognitive vacuum but are part of a comprehensive media system which, ideally, should operate at diverse levels in order to meet its responsibilities. The foregoing brief outline of the problems of broadcasting in New Zealand has emphasised the caution that the N.Z.B.C. has displayed towards the critical analysis and discussion of public affairs. Under such circumstances, the need for the press to perform its control functions becomes the more apparent. However, before returning to the central lines of analysis of this study, some general propositions about the functions of the news media can be stated.

6. THE FUNCTIONS OF A NEWS MEDIA SYSTEM

The task of an adequate news media system in a democratic society is not only to exercise the service function by providing essential factual information as a common carrier, but also to reproduce, and sometimes stimulate, the conflict of ideas and opinions about salient public issues. For, it is only out of the clash and diversity of opinion and viewpoint that individuality can be asserted and some degree of competent opinion reached about civic affairs. The best way for a capable news media system to exert its control function is for it to reproduce the polarities of debate as energetically as possible. Where necessary it should seek to generate and intensify conflict, not diminish or repress it, particularly on new issues, so that the individual citizen's capacity for developing informed opinions might be stimulated and society itself protected from malfunction. But the news media gatekeepers of the New Zealand mass communications system appear to be faced with a situation in which there are inherent monopolistic tendencies of organisation, resulting in a damping down of the control function in certain areas of performance. This has already been demonstrated in

the case of the N.Z.B.C.; further support for the general assertion comes from a Freedom of Information Centre report⁶⁹ which finds in a survey of the world's press that the New Zealand press rated as only 'free with moderate controls' along with countries like Austria, the United Kingdom, Japan, Malaysia, France, Italy and West Germany. This is mainly because of the negative scores these countries received for their libel laws, organised self-regulation, concentrated ownership and governmental control of foreign exchange. New Zealand in particular received poor scores on libel laws, and on local, regional and national criticism.

This draws attention to the institutional and legal restraints under which the news media of New Zealand are obliged to operate. To some extent, the values of the news media are dictated by the political culture they serve. The tendency to moderate conflict in the presentation of news and in the discussion of public affairs may be a reflection of the decorums of public life and the way in which public debate is stage-managed and some of the harshness removed from decision-making processes by political actors themselves. Nevertheless, a number of possibilities for the improvement of performance are available to the news media. Would a communications council with statutory powers to enforce standards on both the press and on the electronic media help to make the individual components of the news media system more aware of their complementarity of operation and give the whole industry some much needed guidance?⁷⁰ Should working journalists seek more representation on the boards of directors of newspapers and on the Broadcasting Corporation? Should media management be urged to inform itself with more sophistication and depth about the theoretical aspects of media system problems and responsibilities, and be reminded about the need to pay greater attention to the control function in its concept of community service?

69 The Freedom of Information Centre Report No. 181, World Press Freedom, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, May 1967.

70 According to a statement by the President of the N.Z.J.A. 'some influential men in the Labour Party plan to put forward legislation establishing a Press Council if their party becomes the government in 1969'. Reported in The Evening Post, September 21 1969, 22. The N.Z.J.A. decided at its annual conference to forestall this by exploring the possibility of setting up a press council on lines similar to the British Press Council. The annual meeting of the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association agreed to support this move. Reported in The Evening Post, March 14 1969, 15.

It must be emphasised that the New Zealand press, through the medium of 39 daily newspapers and a variety of weekly publications is already providing a detailed and widely comprehensive news service for the New Zealand mass audience. The N.Z.B.C. may well be able to augment this in some specialised news-gathering areas, but perhaps it should be recognised that its major potentiality lies elsewhere. Apart from entertaining people, broadcasting's vital task is to stimulate the discussion phase of opinion formation by means of interpretative commentary, critical analysis, and the vigorous surveillance of public affairs with the aid of talks, panels, interviews and documentary investigations. The medium is admirably suited to the dramatic presentation of conflicting opinions and personalities. Not only should a sharpening of controversy and an increased freedom of discussion be permitted in programmes, more encouragement to make individual comments and to follow them up with critical appraisals should be given to journalists and producers so that the control functions of the entire news media system can be more adequately carried out. This should apply particularly to discussion of any subjects of public importance to which the press is insufficiently attentive. A special responsibility devolves on the N.Z.B.C., as a public corporation in a monopoly situation, to subject such matters to critical scrutiny. Consequently, in its organisation of news coverage, news commentaries and public affairs programmes, the N.Z.B.C. should be concerned not so much with the reproduction of a whole encyclopedia of information and discussion as with the maintenance of a flow of material that exploits more fully the advantages it has for the vivid and rapid oral and visual presentation of conflicting ideas. Particularly, it should accept with more enthusiasm the proposition that dramatised discussion is its specialised business. Also, to reduce the likelihood of information overload in its news channels, it should aim at complementing, rather than duplicating or imitating, the treatment given public affairs by the media, with news reports and programmes intended to provoke a spirit of inquiry and involvement among its audiences.

The stimulus of the control function need not depend on the importation of foreign competitors. The existence of a timid, government-dominated, monopolistic broadcasting service could be offset by a more militantly self-conscious press. On the other hand, a sluggish press could be greatly stimulated by competition with a broadcasting service that was prepared to recognise the advantages of greater specialisation in news reportage and the peculiar facility the electronic media have for the discussion and dramatisation of contemporary social issues. However, if both major components of the system are afflicted with the same torpor, then perhaps (as many journalists argue) the only solution lies in the intervention of operators who will compete with each other more energetically. A second television channel ⁷¹ privately owned, or run by some alternative type of organisation, or perhaps privately owned radio stations suggest some likely sources of competition. Admittedly the N.Z.B.C. has shown some readiness to broadcast programmes that are critical of the press, and the press in turn has not hesitated to give ample space to the criticisms of the N.Z.B.C. that were made during the Bick affair, the Radio Hauraki dispute, and the passage of the Broadcasting Authority Bill. But not until both the press and the N.Z.B.C. regularly, and as a matter of course, give prominence to criticism of themselves on their own media channels, will it be apparent that their managements have arrived at the degree of intellectual maturity needed to sustain the control function with integrity and understanding.

71 In October 1969 the Minister of Broadcasting (L.R. Adams-Schneider) stated that it was certain that a competitive second television channel would be established 'before very long' and that he had asked the Broadcasting Authority to investigate the best way to achieve this. Reported in The Evening Post, October 1 1969, 25.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS

1. THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS

The New Zealand press has enjoyed a remarkable stability of organisation and structure since the communications revolution that followed the introduction of telegraph, railway and submarine cable facilities in the 1870's. Many of the daily newspapers that were founded in the years before 1880 are still extant, though some of their capacity for survival has been gained at the expense of many small local and rural publications which disappeared under competition (made increasingly effective through better transport) from larger units situated in the growing towns.¹ The post World War 1 boom in the motor industry had the effect of closing down a number of small provincial papers which could no longer compete with town rivals who were able to circulate with increasing efficiency in surrounding areas. For similar reasons the number of weeklies and illustrated magazines declined during this period, partly under pressure from the daily press, partly because of the more speedy and regular delivery of overseas periodicals. Yet the transport problem which lies at the heart of almost any large-scale New Zealand enterprise has also acted as a restraint on individual units of the press. No one daily has been able to grow big enough to achieve national circulation; a series of major papers in the four main centres, styled for convenience the metropolitan dailies, dominate the entire country, but to some extent they continue to compete with each other and with a larger number of provincial dailies. Altogether, there are 30 evening and nine morning daily newspapers in New Zealand. These 39 dailies have an estimated total circulation of

¹ See G.H. Scholefield, Newspapers in New Zealand, Wellington 1958, for an account of this process.

approximately 1,035,000.² The metropolitans have a total circulation of approximately 729,000, distributed according to the following table:

TABLE 1

METROPOLITAN DAILY NEWSPAPER CIRCULATIONS

N.Z. Herald	218,000
Auckland Star	138,000
Evening Post	94,000
Dominion	71,000
Press	70,000
Christchurch Star	67,500
Otago Daily Times	41,000
Evening Star	30,000

The remaining 31 daily papers published in the smaller centres and rural districts have total estimated circulations of approximately 306,000. This figure is derived from audited circulations and from estimates in the case of papers which do not disclose their circulations. The following then are the estimated total circulations of the New Zealand daily press.

Metropolitans	729,000
Provincials	306,000
Total	<u>1,035,000</u>

Thus it can be seen that the metropolitan press commands approximately 70 per cent. of the total daily circulation, the provincials the remaining 30 per cent.

- 2 These and the following circulation figures are calculated on the basis of information drawn from A Guide to the New Zealand Market, issued in March 1968 by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. They are only approximate because some firms have not disclosed their audited circulations, and these have had to be estimated. An Audit Bureau of Circulation was formed in 1966 in order to verify, by means of a standard formula, the circulations of newspapers, magazines and other publications produced in New Zealand. Membership comprises representatives of newspaper proprietors, advertising agencies and advertisers. According to the N.P.A. Guide three of the papers listed as dailies publish only five days a week instead of six. The Thames Star and Hauraki Daily News does not publish on Saturdays; The Central Hawkes Bay Press in Waipukurau does not publish on Saturdays; and The Westport News does not publish on Fridays.

Of the entire daily press, The New Zealand Herald (218,000) is the largest single publication, but The Auckland Star, published by New Zealand Newspapers Ltd., is part of a New Zealand wide chain with circulations as follows:

TABLE 2

NEW ZEALAND NEWSPAPERS LTD. CIRCULATIONS

Auckland Star	138,000
Taranaki Daily News	19,300
Taranaki Herald	12,600
Christchurch Star	67,500

Total (approximately) 237,400

New Zealand Newspapers Ltd. also owns a group of Auckland suburban newspapers with circulations totalling approximately 85,000. It publishes The N.Z. Women's Weekly (200,000), Eve (24,000), and The N.Z. Farmer (25,000). These are, of course, not daily circulations, but they indicate what a formidable range of publications this group controls. To them could also be added a further 50,000 (approximately) representing the combined circulations of the Saturday sports papers which the member dailies of the group also publish.

The New Zealand Herald group (published by Wilson and Horton Ltd. in Auckland) is another of the most powerful publishing units in the country. As well as its daily newspaper it publishes The Weekly News (115,000) and Thursday (a woman's magazine with a circulation of approximately 70,000).

N.Z. Truth (approximately 226,000) is a large mass circulation weekly which circulates throughout New Zealand. Its proprietors also publish The Sunday News, a Sunday paper, in both islands. Its circulation is in the vicinity of 120,000.³ The only other Sunday paper is The Dominion Sunday Times, published by the Wellington Publishing Company, proprietors of The Dominion. It has a circulation of approximately 117,000.⁴ The publishers of N.Z. Truth also distribute by means of a network of book-

³ Newspaper News, June 13 1969, 23.

⁴ ibid.

stalls and milkbars a considerable amount of imported pulp reading material.

The New Zealand Listener, a weekly journal devoted largely to the listing of broadcasting and television programme schedules (with some space devoted to commentaries on programmes and on public affairs in general) is published by the N.Z.B.C. It has a circulation of approximately 127,000.

Altogether, four Saturday sports editions are published by metropolitan daily newspapers in New Zealand. They have a total estimated circulation of about 290,000. Three others are published by provincial papers in New Plymouth, Nelson and Invercargill.

The Dominion passed through a series of changes after the Thomson takeover negotiations of 1965.⁵ At that time a number of New Zealand newspaper firms made takeover offers which were withdrawn when the government announced its intention of legislating to prevent overseas firms obtaining control of any New Zealand news media. But it emerged that an Australian newspaper magnate, K.R. Murdoch, the managing director of News Ltd., of Adelaide, had bought on the stock market a large quantity of Wellington Publishing Company shares, thus acquiring a substantial interest in the operations of The Dominion. Murdoch became a director of the firm on condition that News Ltd. retained a 14 per cent. shareholding in the company. It was also agreed that News Ltd. should ultimately dispose of the balance of its shareholdings in excess of 14 per cent. to New Zealand domiciled shareholders. Since then The Dominion has adopted a tabloid format and the Wellington Publishing Company has begun the publication of a Sunday weekly, and has attempted to diversify its operations by buying up a firm of stationers and taking over a number of racing journals. In 1970 it acquired The Upper Hutt Leader, a small independent suburban weekly, and after a successful takeover bid, it assumed control of Truth(N.Z.)Ltd. and its subsidiaries. This merger greatly strengthened the economic organisation of the daily press in New Zealand by eliminating an aggressive potential rival and the only other large, independent newspaper-publishing organisation in the country.

5 See Ch.I, Section 6, 'The Thomson Takeover Attempt'.

Henceforward, N.Z.Truth will be editorially controlled by a board under the chairmanship of J.H. Dunn, the former chairman of directors of Truth (N.Z.) Ltd., and the firm's legal adviser. Dunn and two other Truth appointees will have seats on the board of the Wellington Publishing Company.

New Zealand Newspapers Ltd., Wilson and Horton Ltd., and the Wellington Publishing Company are major units in the New Zealand publishing world. New Zealand Newspapers and Wilson and Horton are Auckland-based companies; the Wellington Publishing Company is centred on Wellington, though Truth (N.Z.) Ltd. machines its Sunday paper in Auckland and has been expanding its plant there. All three are interested in their different ways in exploiting the entire New Zealand

market, but none have yet found it practicable to attempt the publication of a national daily paper. Expense, and geographic obstacles to speedy and economical distribution defeat any such ambition on the part of the first two; Truth N.Z. Ltd., has never engaged in daily newspaper production though its directors have several times considered the possibility.

Even more important to newspaper circulation than geography is the distribution of population. The bulk of New Zealand's newspaper publishing enterprises are situated in the North Island because that is where nearly 74 per cent. of a total population of 2,676,919 people are living.⁶ Furthermore, the combined circulations of The Auckland Star and The New Zealand Herald represent a substantial portion of the grand New Zealand daily newspaper circulation of just over one million, because to any medium of mass communication, the Auckland region is potentially the most promising for exploitation. The urban area of central Auckland contains a population of 613,000, while more than one million out of the total New Zealand population live within the circulation area of The Herald. The pattern of daily newspaper distribution between the two islands reflects something of the population ascendancy of the north. A total of 24 dailies are published in the North Island compared with 15 in the South Island.

According to the 1968 New Zealand Official Yearbook, the total New Zealand circulations of 147 periodicals amounted to 2,026,000. Little reliable information is available about the exposure of different age groups to mass media in New Zealand, but assuming that all those above the age of 15 are a potential readership of some kind for the general content of the daily press, it can be calculated that a total audience of approximately 1,850,000 has a total circulation of more than two-and-a-half million issues of newspapers and periodicals of one sort or another at its disposal, without considering the large amount of pulp fiction, comics, and imported overseas material that is also obtainable. When the total population is used as a basis for calculation,⁷ New Zealand has

6 According to the Census Provisional Report, Wellington 1966.

7 From The New Zealand Official Yearbook, Wellington 1968

399 copies of daily newspapers per thousand inhabitants compared with Sweden 505, the United Kingdom 479, Norway 384, Australia 373, Denmark 347, the United States 310, the U.S.S.R. 264, and France 245. New Zealand, which ranks third on this list, seems well supplied with newspapers. It ranked fourth (after the United States, Canada and Sweden) in a list of 109 countries which were analysed for media usage as a factor of national development.⁸

2. THE SUBURBAN PRESS

The publication of small-circulation weekly, fortnightly, tri-weekly and monthly newspapers with a high content of local and community news has boomed in the New Zealand of the sixties. These are in direct competition with some of the large dailies in the scramble for advertising revenue, though not necessarily for circulation, as a technique of giving them away in precisely calculated areas enables their publishers to peg circulations at optimum levels. This then becomes a secure basis for obtaining advertising quotas, not only from the tradespeople of the district, but also from advertising agencies. Most suburban publishers of any competence are careful to provide detailed coverage of local affairs at grass roots level because this is what gives their product the kind of reader interest which other mass media cannot easily rival. They thrive on the detailed coverage of material that the daily press cannot always find space for, and to some extent they can be seen as carrying out an important part of the service functions of the press--the detailed surveillance of the environment at the local community level.

There are more than 70 giveaway newspapers being published in New Zealand.⁹ Twenty-one of these are Auckland suburbans, and 14, Wellington. The acquisition of a large number of these Auckland suburbans by New Zealand Newspapers Ltd. has already been mentioned. This firm has also been active in the community newspaper field in Christchurch. In the Wellington area, Blundell Bros., proprietors of The Evening Post, in 1964

8 R.V. Farace, 'A Study of Mass Communication and National Development', Journalism Q. 43:2, Summer 1966, 305-313.

9 Newspaper News, March 20 1964, 19.

bought The Hutt News, a well-established suburban weekly with a circulation of 20,000. In 1967 they bought The Petone Chronicle (circulation approximately 6,000), closed it down and merged it with The Hutt News. In 1969 they bought a 40 per cent. shareholding in The Kapimana News, a weekly with a circulation of about 10,000 in the western coastal districts of Wellington, and they also obtained an interest in Sentinel Newspapers Ltd., a publishing firm in Miramar, which has a chain of suburbans and is the largest Wellington organisation in this field.

3. THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS ASSOCIATION

The tendency of the New Zealand press is not only towards concentration of the number of units in fewer hands, it is also towards a convenient collectivism. A significant part of the news printed by the metropolitan daily papers flows through the channels of the New Zealand Press Association (N.Z.P.A.). This is a collective organisation set up by the newspaper proprietors to handle both overseas and domestic material. It tends to give the industry a co-operative basis for its activities and also imparts a certain amount of homogeneity to its product. Furthermore, the structure of the industry has produced a high degree of stability from which some of the conservative characteristics of the New Zealand press may be derived. Each of the four main cities contains two daily newspapers, one of which is an evening, the other a morning. Though they are published by rival managements, they are engaged in only nominal competition in certain news-gathering areas. Under some circumstances they are prepared to enter into a high degree of collaboration for purposes of group and mutual survival. These metropolitan pairs of newspapers are at present in an economic equilibrium which, to a large extent, is formally institutionalised by their membership of the N.Z.P.A.

The relatively high volume of production, along with the stability and prosperity of the New Zealand daily press in its present structure owe much to a technique of co-operative participation in joint news services which it introduced in 1879 after the linking of Australia and New Zealand by undersea cable. Newspaper managements established the N.Z.P.A. to collect and disseminate news for the mutual benefit of members, and this is the basic network of communication around which the

daily press continues to organise itself. Addressing the 1964 annual meeting of the N.Z.P.A., its then chairman, A.L. Cant (editor of The Press) said that New Zealand had a ridiculously small population to support its (then) 41 daily papers. The industry could maintain them only by 'quite extraordinary and perhaps unconventional measures of co-operation'.¹⁰ (The total compares, for instance, with Australia's 51 dailies for a population of over 10 million). Cant rebuked critics of the N.Z.P.A. system by pointing out that it was a complex and expensive one which no single paper, or even group of papers, could be eager to undertake independently, for the newspaper industry as a whole was balanced precariously on the knife edge between profitability and unprofitability.

In saying this Cant was applying an interest group stratagem to the situation. He was exhorting waverers to greater unity by reminding them of the possibility that any withdrawal from the N.Z.P.A. by some of its major constituents would disrupt its internal economy. Many small papers would find it impossible to pay increased operating charges and would either have to suspend activity or drastically modify the scope of their content. He explained that the system worked well because of its co-operative nature. Every newspaper contributed to it according to its news resources and its opportunities, large or small, and it benefited according to its readership. He claimed that the service supplied its members with reports of 'every significant happening elsewhere in New Zealand in the previous 24 hours, together with a supply of overseas news as complete, up-to-date and authoritative as that printed by the world's newspapers, and this was no small achievement'. He warned that if this system broke down, the public in small towns would lose the 'complete up-to-date news service their local papers now provide and they would lose their local papers themselves'.

What are the mechanics of the N.Z.P.A. system? Traditionally it is a co-operative, non-profit making agency founded so that members could exchange news items from one part of the country to another and could also obtain a world news service using the best communications available. Today it gets this from Reuters, the Associated Press of America, United

¹⁰ ibid April 3 1964.

Press International and the Australian Associated Press agencies as well as from The Times of London and The New York Times. Each of these major agencies, from the total wordage of messages reaching its editorial offices in London, New York, Singapore, and other clearing houses, sub-edits and distributes reports to members and clients. In turn the edited reports of the main agencies are compared and the best from each is used to give the final New Zealand Press Association report. This process is carried out mainly in the Sydney newsroom of the Australian Associated Press.

Conversely the N.Z.P.A. has the function of supplying New Zealand news to Reuters and the Australian Associated Press. Since 1947, both the N.Z.P.A. and the Australian Associated Press have been partners in Reuters, with some say in its management.

Each day the central Wellington bureau of the N.Z.P.A. transmits as much as it can of the content of what it receives to the offices of its members before their deadlines. Operations are divided into morning paper and evening paper shifts so that by using the teleprinters installed in most of their offices, members can conveniently make available an account of any event of importance in their circulation areas to other publications with similar deadlines. Specific members of the sub-editorial staffs in the various offices are designated Press Association agents and are responsible for acting on this agreement. They use an economical method. Reporters are obliged to make carbon copies of any significant or important story they write so that the agent can transmit it (or a condensed version of it) on one of the metropolitan newspaper teleprinter circuits, or can use the New Zealand Post Office telegraph system if his office is one of the very few not so connected. Thus, it is claimed, the N.Z.P.A. is served by hundreds of delegates throughout the country, even if their services are sometimes rather unwilling and sometimes of uneven quality.

Recent years have seen big changes in N.Z.P.A. methods of operation. Before 1950, messages were handled through the conventional channels of the New Zealand Post and Telegraph service, and many a cadet reporter did his preliminary training as an auxiliary messenger, between the local

telegraph office and the sub-editor's desk. Then exclusive channels were leased from the Post Office, with teleprinters in virtually all the daily newspaper offices. In 1954, leased circuits were also applied to the delivery of overseas news into New Zealand by radio teleprinter beam from Australia, but the big break-through came in December 1963, with the change-over to the Commonwealth Pacific Cable Service. This brought not only more reliability into overseas traffic, but more speed and flexibility. The Wellington newsroom can now be receiving copy from London or New York at about the same time as it is coming off the teleprinters in Fleet Street with the result that newspaper services gained a useful injection of immediacy just at the time when they were coming under increased competition from the expanding radio and television newscasts of the N.Z.B.C.

One of the consequences of such extra efficiency is that daily newspapers can receive their copy earlier and in increasing quantity. This is beginning to produce problems. At present the N.Z.P.A.'s daily relay of about 78,000 words (about half of it international news, the rest national) is far more than any one newspaper can reproduce without being forced into drastic curtailment of local news coverage. In practice, papers make selections which amount in some cases to only about one-third of the total available N.Z.P.A. content. The problem of making the most useful and meaningful selections in the time available falls heavily on the sub-editorial staff of the particular newspaper -- it might perhaps be only one man in the case of a small provincial paper. This is a classic problem of all modern mass communication systems: how, and on what grounds, to make the selections from the total available news flow which technical innovation is constantly increasing.

Under the terms of the N.Z.P.A. agreement, all local news stories considered sufficiently newsworthy have to be submitted to the network for general use, with the result that individual newspaper managements have been known to show reluctance to embark on ambitious news gathering ventures because they might have had to share the result with rivals on their circulation borders. At one stage, individual newspapers could not send correspondents overseas without the specific consent of the

association. This was criticised on the ground that it tended to keep the processes of news reporting geared to a somewhat unimaginative and humdrum level,¹¹ though it is doubtful if, as a consequence, any undue interference with the flow of communication concerning major news events has resulted, at least inside New Zealand. Some restriction may have seemed necessary, but increased liberality in interpreting it by the association's directors has removed many of its objections. All N.Z.P.A. members are now completely free to send staff correspondents abroad either on special assignments or on permanent station. They may receive from those correspondents, or from special correspondents who are not staff men, as much material as is desired for the exclusive use of the paper which employs them. Thus, by special arrangement, The Otago Daily Times, The Press, The Evening Post, and The New Zealand Herald maintain a correspondent-business agent in London. One of his tasks is to send extra background material on the European scene to New Zealand for the exclusive use of these newspapers. Some of the larger metropolitans, The New Zealand Herald, The Auckland Star, and The Evening Post, have been able to send their own correspondents abroad to cover official events, and they have been able to publish their cabled reports as exclusive stories. This, and the general content of the cable and feature pages of the contemporary daily New Zealand press, suggest that it is increasingly sensitive to international affairs. This may owe something to a general sharpening in news presentation that has followed the introduction of television and the development of N.Z.B.C. news services. It may also be connected with the actual expansion of overseas news services which the N.Z.P.A. has introduced. In the past there has been criticism of this overseas content mainly on the grounds that it tended to become unduly uniform in viewpoint and monopolistic in origin. A poll of members of the Consumer Institute in 1965, for instance, produced some strong opinions on this subject. A majority thought that overseas news was 'adequately selected', but a minority thought there should be more of it and it should be better presented. A strong majority agreed that

11 Elizabeth Warburton, 'A Study of the Press', Landfall, 8:3, September 1954, 167-202.

more New Zealanders should be posted to key centres overseas so that 'New Zealand newspapers did not have to rely on foreign press correspondents'. In response to such complaints (justified or otherwise) the N.Z.P.A. has taken steps to increase its overseas representation. A special correspondent was dispatched to cover the activities of New Zealand forces serving in Vietnam, a Singapore bureau has been opened with a highly experienced New Zealand journalist in charge, and more important, a full-time correspondent is to be stationed in Washington.

In March 1967, George Burns, then the chairman of the N.Z.P.A. and editor of The Christchurch Star, answered criticism of the N.Z.P.A. in these terms.¹²

Through our association with the Australian Associated Press and our partnership in Reuters...we have the rights to news from no fewer than 60 agencies, both national and international, government and co-operative. Reuters itself has a staff of 400 journalists at posts throughout the world. Some of these are New Zealanders and it is not uncommon to find three or four of the Asian posts directed by journalists from this country who have had their training here and have subsequently joined Reuters. In addition, Reuters has twice as many part-time correspondents. That figure is supplemented by the 20,000 who work for 60 agencies with which there are agreements for the supply of news. In the last three years, Reuters has itself opened up new posts at Abidjan, Addis Ababa, Caracas, Havana, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Lima and has revitalised the whole of its South American service. More than that, additional correspondents have been posted to Athens, Moscow, Saigon, Singapore, Brussels, the United States, New Delhi, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Madrid and Nigeria. Their work from all these countries comes to us.

Burns also pointed out that in every country where Reuters maintained a bureau it had the rights to the work of the local news agency. He concluded that the N.Z.P.A., far from being a monopolistic body, was supplying a well-rounded service to the newspapers and through them to the people of New Zealand.

Criticism of the N.Z.P.A.'s handling of international news has also been met by the association's own management with the assertion that the service has in fact grown so full and diverse that it is possible for

¹² The Evening Post, March 2 1967, 21.

two newspapers drawing upon the same teleprinter service to produce widely different news selections and presentations. This question will be taken up at length later in this study. Meantime, it can also be noted that the service extends on occasion to illustrations material. Nearly all the New Zealand metropolitan dailies are equipped with the means to receive pictures by wire, and some are also able to send them. The N.Z.P.A. does not yet supply a regular photographic service by wire, but on special occasions it can provide it.

The N.Z.P.A. operates its central Wellington bureau with quite modest resources. In June 1969 it had a staff of 22, consisting of a managing editor, a news editor, two deputy news editors and 18 journalists, including one cadet. Two staff journalists are maintained in the Parliamentary Press Gallery throughout the year with a third, and sometimes a fourth, added to the team during the Parliamentary session. They report political news. The association keeps two full-time correspondents in London, one in Sydney, one in Singapore, and it will shortly have one in Washington. It has part-time correspondents in Canada and various parts of the Pacific, and it can commission special reports from other sources if it thinks this necessary.

Criticism of the N.Z.P.A. has sometimes been directed towards the long-standing problem of improving the news gathering standards of the association's internal structure. There has, in the past, been some evidence of a need for more goodwill and understanding of national, as distinct from local, interests in the operation of the news service agreement. This applies particularly to individual journalists. Two things have lately drawn attention to this. Production schedules in the association's system have become tighter and more exacting, and this demands the earlier filing of messages if a good service is to be maintained. The increasing frequency of radio and television newscasts means that readers with alternative sources of information at their disposal may be expected to become increasingly sophisticated and selective in their treatment of newspaper content. Stories that are not exclusive may, in future, need to be written not only more speedily but more sharply and penetratively, if they are going to be read by anybody.

On this subject, the association's managing editor, H.L. Verry, stated:¹³

Journalists working for papers which are N.Z.P.A. members may be asked, as part of their normal duties, to assist their papers to meet their obligations to give an efficient service of news to the N.Z.P.A..... this needs a ready spirit of co-operation by both sub-editors and reporters in each office in meeting the reasonable requirements of the service. A more positive outlook on the relationship between individual newspapers and the N.Z.P.A. is now to be found in most offices. My experience, especially during visits to a number of newspapers has been that the more perceptive journalists are taking increasing pride in the contribution their own office can make to the quality and speed of the Press Association service. I find reporters and sub-editors taking lively interest in the impact which their own news stories make in other parts of the country. They recognise that the prosperity of their own paper, and the welfare of its staff, have a direct relationship to the efficiency of the N.Z.P.A. news service. It is also a new trend, and in my view a soundly based one, to recognise that, if newspapers are to maintain their value to readers, and to maintain their news standards in competition with other media, especially radio and television, they must act together through the Press Association.

4. THE PRESS GALLERY

The Parliamentary Press Gallery is an important part of the news gathering network. It consists of a corps of newspapermen seconded to the House for duty by the major newspapers. There they come under the jurisdiction of the Speaker and must abide by the rules laid down by him. The gallery representatives go through a form of accreditation to the Speaker before each session of Parliament begins. They possess a corporate institutional identity of their own as part of the working apparatus of Parliament itself, indeed they are one of its major channels of communication. They occupy a suite of offices adjacent to the gallery of the House and they take part in its informal social life as well as reporting its debates for their various newspapers and carrying out the duties of correspondents. They are an important link between the press and the government.¹⁴ For example, the Prime Minister (K.J. Holyoake) makes an average of two public statements a day and is available at

¹³ Addressing a Commonwealth Press Union course for young journalists, on September 2, 1964, at Wellington. From a cyclostyled report.

¹⁴ 'The function of the Press Gallery as a link between Parliament and people is obviously still vital to Parliament's health'. Colin Seymour-Ure, The Press, Politics and the Public, London 1968, 242.

least twice a day if the press requires it.¹⁵ The dailies represented in the Press Gallery can also draw upon reports compiled by the N.Z.P.A. as well as on extra material written by their own men. Gallery correspondents frequently write under bylines, and so are less inhibited by the conventions of objectivity and anonymity which sometimes frustrate the ordinary working journalist with something to say and no source to which he can attribute it.

Because Wellington is the largest and most important news source in the country, its two daily newspapers, as well as the N.Z.P.A. and the Press Gallery, are major news-originating organisations of crucial importance in the New Zealand news media system. They maintain day-to-day coverage of government affairs in the fields of commerce, industry, finance and public administration, and they transmit a good deal of essential routine information to readers all over the country. This service is augmented by the activities of the South Pacific News Agency, a small, independent organisation which is also accredited to the Press Gallery and which specialises in supplying special articles and commentaries about Parliamentary and governmental affairs to the smaller dailies who cannot afford to maintain a full-time representative in the gallery.

5. THE NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The daily newspapers of New Zealand are members of the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association (N.P.A.). This was formed in 1896 and was registered in 1916 as an industrial association of employers under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Since 1921, it has acted as representative and spokesman for the industry, using a system of sectional committees to deal with advertising and industrial questions as well as paper supply and other problems. It has a permanent secretariat in Wellington and holds conferences at which officers are elected, policies and interest group stratagems endorsed and

¹⁵ Reported in The New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 360, June 28 1969, 46.

occasional public statements made. Until recently this body has made little attempt to use its own medium for public relations purposes, but faced with increasing competition from radio and television, as well as public discussion and criticism of the daily press in the course of the Thomson takeover negotiations, it launched a modest promotional campaign in the advertising columns of the metropolitan dailies. Here, in a series of house advertisements, readers were occasionally reminded of the utility of the press as an advertising medium, and of its theoretical value as a forum of public opinion and a channel of news dissemination.

The general incapacity of both journalists and their managements in New Zealand to expound their functions at anything more than the most simple levels is a commonplace shortcoming of an industry which tends to produce people who are task-bound and pre-occupied with the mechanical pressures of their work rather than with its social meaning and cultural potentialities. A comparable situation exists in both the Australian and the United States press, according to W.S. Holden.¹⁶ He considers that newspaper management should do more to tell its readers 'what they conceive to be their mission in life', and more about editorial problems, and the training and experience required to make a dependable reporter or a capable editor. This is no minor problem. As well as facing competition for advertising revenue from all the electronic media, the New Zealand press has been encountering regular critical scrutiny in televised news analysis programmes written by ex-daily journalists. These have contained much destructive criticism of the daily press which has not always been justifiable, but the industry has done little to counter the impression of incompetence and inadequacy being spread among a large part of its readership.

The struggle to persuade components of the N.Z.P.A. system to 'play the game' and give full, enthusiastic co-operation to making the system work at maximum efficiency can be seen as an aspect of this public relations problem. The internal public relations of the industry have not always been good in New Zealand, and now more than ever, with the

¹⁶ Australia Goes to Press, Michigan 1961, 219-220.

fact of competition from electronic media services, and with the N.Z.B.C. recruiting many of its best journalists and most promising trainees into its service, the industry is feeling the need for a more militant assertion of its corporate philosophy. On occasions, when the New Zealand press wishes to draw attention to its traditional libertarian ideals it has called on the New Zealand section of the Commonwealth Press Union, to which many of its editors belong. Representatives of this body hold professional consultations, attend overseas conferences, present evidence to Parliamentary select committees, and when legislation touching their interests is contemplated, they occasionally make public speeches and write editorials. The views of working journalists, who are not part of this managerial hierarchy, are not often expressed on public issues, but sometimes statements emanate from the executive of the New Zealand Journalists' Association (N.Z.J.A.), a body which has a paid secretary and an executive that meets in Wellington. In the past it has been obliged to expend most of its energies organising wage claims and negotiating industrial awards on behalf of members, often in the face of bitter opposition from segments of the employers. It publishes a modest trade newspaper of its own which is one of the few sources of any discussion of the functions and activities of New Zealand journalists. Newspaper News, an Australian fortnightly, contains coverage of New Zealand affairs but this is peripheral and concerned mostly with the technicalities of advertising and printing processes.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

1. MULTI-LEVEL, SUBJECT-CONTENT CATEGORIES FOR NEWSPAPER QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Those engaged in quantitative analysis of the editorial content of the daily press have sometimes found difficulty in coding their materials in such a way that subject content categories are mutually exclusive and clear distinctions are maintained between subject content and other dimensions of message data. For instance, the content classification scheme described in The Royal Commission on the Press 1947-1949¹ confused news sources with news content. It employed a subject content classification scheme in eight major divisions consisting of Home News, External News, Other News, Features, Other Space, Other Editorial Space, Parliamentary News, and News Features of Sex Interest. A further list of subject content categories was repeated throughout these divisions to indicate how much of this material was concerned with Politics, with Social affairs, or with Economic activity. Consequently, anyone wanting to know in general how much news about Politics, Social affairs, or Economic activity was actually published in the press (or in portions of it during the period of the particular sample under investigation) would be forced to make some lengthy calculations using the values from the sub-categories in each of the eight major classificatory divisions. Nor was the commission's attempt to differentiate between news and features of sex interest, and news from, say, the police courts, or from prominent personalities, a very satisfactory approach to the problem of classification because it confused subject content with the mode of presentation of particular items and with their sources.

Elizabeth Warburton in her study of the New Zealand metropolitan papers² attempted to use a four-division classification which divided content into New Zealand news, Overseas news, Features and Other Editorial

¹ Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1949.

² Elizabeth Warburton, 'A Study of the Press', Landfall, 8:3, September 1954, 167-202.

Items. Each of these divisions contained sub-sections consisting in the case of News items, of Political, Social, Economic, Sports and Other categories. In the case of Feature items it consisted of Political, Social, Economic, Women's, and Literary and other criticisms. In the case of Other Editorial Items it consisted of Leading Articles, Correspondence, and Pictures. Under this scheme there was no way of knowing, for instance, what subjects correspondents actually wrote about in letters to the editor, or what topics were dealt with in sub-categories like Women's Features, or Other New Zealand News. Similar objections apply to an analysis of the content of 14 Australian dailies made by Henry Mayer.³

However, a number of American studies contain subject category classifications which are more comprehensive and less ambiguous. A 1959 Scripps-Howard research project⁴ used a simple 11-category frame which contained only one difficult-to-define classification entitled 'Public Moral Problems'. A more elaborate system had been devised by the Associated Press Managing Editors' Content Study Committee in 1951.⁵ This contained 62 news-classification categories and allowed for a considerable number of low frequency items to be coded. The 55 categories for the present project were adapted from this by trial and error in accordance with the following coding scheme.

(a) Subject Content

This is the topic to which, in the opinion of the coders, the message was predominantly devoted. Coders had to answer the question: **with** what is the item substantially concerned? This required a close reading of the message text and a determined attempt to understand and weigh its content. For example, a message about the policy or activities of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation would not necessarily have been coded as War and the Armed Services unless the bulk of its content were actually concerned with military or services affairs. It is quite conceivable that

3 The Press in Australia, Melbourne 1964.

4 See G.H. Stempel III, 'Content Patterns of Small and Metropolitan Dailies', Journalism Q., 39:1, Winter 1962, 89-91.

5 Reported in S.M. Cutlip, 'Content and Flow of AP News from Trunk TTS to Reader', Journalism Q., 31:4, Fall 1954, 434-446.

such an item could have been coded as Politics if it involved policy-making discussions or speculations about decision-making strategies. The important concern was that the mere source of an item should have no automatic bearing on its subject coding. Ambiguities in the subject coding process were resolved by arbitration among coders, and notes were kept of all decision-making precedents for ease and consistency in subsequent classification. Each item was stamped with a unique number and coded in compliance with a two-level scheme. A decision was first made to attribute the item to one of the following major subject divisions:

1. War and the Armed Services
2. Politics
3. Human Interest and Social affairs
4. Crime, Disaster, Public Health and Safety
5. Economic activity
6. Sport
7. Science
8. Culture and Entertainment
9. Miscellaneous

The first digit of the subject code indicated the subject division into which the item was being classified, and in subsequent data processing it provided a convenient reference to a set of major subject divisions for the construction of descriptive tables. However, such general classifications are not always sufficiently informative about subject content to be more than broadly useful. For instance, it might be of some significance to say that 22 per cent. of a newspaper's editorial space is devoted to news about, say, Economic activity, but it could be more useful to be able to state how much of this was about agriculture, how much about industry, and how much about other areas of the general economic field. Accordingly a second digit subject coding was provided within each major division to indicate with more refinement what each item was concerned with. This arrangement could be extended a good deal further to suit the requirements of a particular content analysis. A detailed probe could be made, for instance, by adding a third digit and sub-categorising the categories; yet at the same time, total content could still be consistently described

in terms of broad subject divisions. Table 1 shows the full two-level list of subject divisions and subject categories used in this study.

TABLE 1

NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

I. WAR AND THE ARMED SERVICES

- 11 War, military, naval, air force, civil defence activities

II. POLITICS

- 21 Royalty, vice-regal affairs
- 22 United Nations, other international political agencies
- 23 Foreign relations, foreign aid schemes, diplomacy
- 24 Commonwealth affairs
- 25 Parliamentary and legislative affairs
- 26 Politics, political parties and leaders
- 27 Local government
- 28 Public administration

III. HUMAN INTEREST AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

- 31 Social problems and services
- 32 Social notes, fashion news, beauty contests, weddings, engagements, balls
- 33 Personals, obituaries, human interest stories
- 34 Lotteries, gambling
- 35 Clubs, associations, recreation
- 36 Charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian and patriotic projects and associations; education; religion
- 37 Advice to readers, philosophy and sententiae, humour
- 38 Gardening, cooking, domestic notes
- 39 Travel hints, talks and experiences

IV. CRIME, DISASTER, AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- 41 Crime, prisons, judicial proceedings
- 42 Disasters, accidents, fires, floods, emergencies, disturbances, plagues, illness, disease
- 43 Police news, mysterious deaths, missing property, animals and people, search and rescue operations; traffic problems; public health and safety
- 44 Noxious weed and animal control; animal welfare

V. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- 51 General economic activity, government expenditure
- 52 Agriculture, food production and export
- 53 Industry, labour services, power supply, industrial design
- 54 Transport, tourism, population and employment statistics
- 55 Town planning, architecture, civic projects
- 56 Mail, telephone and other communications services, metric and other systems, weights and measures

VI. SPORT

- 61 Rugby Union Football
- 62 Association football and other codes
- 63 Cricket
- 64 Horse racing
- 65 Athletics
- 66 Other sports

VII. SCIENCE

- 71 Weather reports, meteorology
- 72 Medical
- 73 Space travel, astronomy, computer science
- 74 Telecommunications, mass communication
- 75 Biology, exploration, hydrology, geology, zoology, natural history, forestry, soil conservation, agricultural research
- 76 Semantics, linguistics, psychology
- 77 Surveying, archaeology, museums
- 78 Nuclear energy, physics, chemistry
- 79 General science

VIII. CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

- 80 History
- 81 Graphic arts
- 82 Literature
- 83 Serious music, dramatic arts
- 84 Films
- 85 Radio and television
- 86 Pop music and artists
- 87 Brass, pipe and other bands, competitions festivals, musical contests, concert parties
- 88 Plastic arts, embroidery and weaving, Maori culture
- 89 Puzzles; children's features; astrology; competitions

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

- 91 Content indices, newspaper titles, newspaper imprints
- 92 Editorial remarks, commentaries, replies to correspondents

Each item was also coded for the following attributes:

(b) News Generating Source

This was an attempt to answer the question, who generates news? This is not necessarily apparent from the subject coding of an item. For instance, a message text could be concerned with discussions about the prices for agricultural commodities, the regulation of labour, or the organisation of transport, and would consequently be coded as news of Economic activity of some kind. Yet it could have originated from political, scientific, or a variety of other possible sources. This approach to the structure of the news enabled items to be coded with more refinement than had been found possible under the usual one-dimensional approach and it ultimately yielded useful information about the pattern of news sources in the editorial subject content of the sample. It was particularly useful in resolving coding ambiguities. For example, one of the commonest problems was whether or not an item of news ought to be classified in the Economic or Political subject content divisions. Thus, a statement about a government decision to begin work on the next phase of a hydro-electric scheme by the Minister of Electricity was a typical example of the subject matter of much political decision-making in New Zealand. It could legitimately have been classified as Political news, yet the content of the particular item was more concerned with the size of the project, the proposed capacity of its generators, the date of completion of the work, its costs, and similar details of a financial and technical nature. Therefore it was coded as an item of Economic activity, but attributed to a government news generating source so that its political significance was not ignored.

Table 2 shows the schedule of news generating sources. Initially this contained some 40 categories, but many of them were found to be of such low frequency that they were collapsed into the 11 major categories shown here.

TABLE 2NEWS GENERATING SOURCES

- 01 Wire services and newspapers
- 02 Journalists using bylines
- 03 Anonymous sources concealed by formulae
- 04 Government sources
- 05 Political parties
- 06 Economic organisations
- 07 Police, judicial tribunals
- 08 Sporting and recreational sources
- 09 Cultural, educational and other associational sources
- 10 Private citizens
- 11 Medical and scientific circles

(c) The Medium of Transmission

Wherever possible, an attempt was made to attribute a medium of transmission to a message text. Accordingly each item was scrutinised for information about the actual news channel whereby it might have reached either the wire agency or the newspaper. Thus, the message about hydro-electric power supply plans was attributed to the N.Z.P.A. service from Parliament because it was included in the material in the N.Z.P.A. input file that was gathered from Parliamentary sources by the N.Z.P.A. man on duty at the time. In that part of the study that is concerned with the analysis of N.Z.P.A. content, this information was readily obtainable by reference to the original source documents, but when coders were working solely from the texts of other items published in the newspapers it was found to be more elusive, as not every paper in the sample was scrupulous in attributing sources to what it reproduced, and this information could not always be ascertained by elucidation. The categories used in this part of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3MEDIUM OF TRANSMISSION

<u>Inland N.Z.P.A. Service</u>		<u>Other Channels</u>	
01	Auckland	11	Overseas N.Z.P.A. service
02	Wellington	12	Overseas feature service
03	Christchurch	13	Reprinted material
04	Dunedin		(excluding 14,16,17,18 below)
05	North Island provincial papers	14	Observer Foreign News Service and other British newspapers
06	South Island provincial papers	15	British Information Service
07	N.Z.P.A. service from Parliament	16	Australian newspapers (reprint)
		17	American newspapers (reprint)
		18	Other newspapers (reprint)
		19	Reuters' Feature Service

Reuters' Feature Service is a part of the N.Z.P.A. service by which background features and commentaries originating in different parts of the Reuter organisation are regularly received by airmail in New Zealand and distributed to N.Z.P.A. members. The origin of these items is not always acknowledged by the individual newspaper publishing them, but they sometimes appear under a Reuter credit line.

(a) Mode

A comprehensive content analysis should find some way of discriminating, even though only broadly, between the different styles in which editorial content is written and the variety of ways in which it is presented in the newspapers. Twelve inches of space devoted to an item about town planning gives no information about its context, and fails to distinguish whether it was the subject of a leading article, a letter to the editor, an illustration, or an article published on a commercial page, a feature page, or one of the news pages. In order to analyse the modal structure in which editorial content is organised in the press, a two-level classification scheme was devised. The first digit of a two-digit code gave the broad modal division into which the item was classified, and the second digit allocated it to a category within the division. (See Table 4).

The item about hydro-electricity presented no difficulty here: it was classified as a factual report written in the objective mode because it was a verbatim account of a statement made by the Minister of Electricity and clearly attributed to him in the text. For such an item to have been coded in the interpretative mode it would have had to have been written in a more speculative or conjectural style without a substantive source attribution, and it would have had to contain the writer's own comments and evaluations of the proposal.⁶

Little difficulty was found in classifying certain items as features. The editorial content of every newspaper in the sample was clearly structured around a central core of N.Z.P.A. and local news which was repeated daily. Items appearing in subsidiary areas of the paper and given extra display were coded as features providing they were not news reports and could not be classified in any of the other modal categories. Regular features included articles on cooking, gardening, and domestic activities, historical affairs, occasional short stories, religious commentaries, biographical articles and astrological predictions. Advertising promotions and trade supplements which sometimes appeared in the feature sections of newspapers in the guise of news items were classified in a special sub-category. The identifying evidence in these cases invariably consisted of an accompanying array of display advertisements dealing with the general themes of the feature articles. Provision was also made for the classification of ruminative and generalised treatments of current events by columnists, essayists and specialised writers under the sub-category of contemporary commentary.

A considerable part of the content of a newspaper consists of service information in the form of lists of names, results of sporting and other contests, price schedules, shipping timetables, weather reports, and other statistical information. It was decided to code this material in the documentary mode. Engagement and wedding notices were included here, notwithstanding that in many papers, their insertion is paid for and they are therefore a part of the advertising content. In

⁶ See Ref. 31 in Ch. II, The New Zealand Broadcasting Service, for definitions of objective and interpretative reporting.

practice however, it proved difficult to make any distinction between paid and unpaid notices. As these items were invariably published along with other editorial content it was decided to avoid inconsistency by treating them as such. Occasional articles of a factual nature (for example, detailed treatment of the performance of motor cars, and articles about sport, commerce, agriculture, politics and popular entertainment and recreation, which were sometimes generously illustrated and given extra heading space) were classified as factual articles which had been given a feature treatment.

Lists of editorial content, newspaper titles, imprint notices and miscellaneous display headings not directly related to an accompanying text were included in the informational mode.

TABLE 4
MODAL ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL
CONTENT

1. NEWS CONTENT

- 11 Factual reports written objectively
- 12 Interpretative reports.

2. FEATURES

- 20 Cooking, gardening, domestic
- 21 Factual articles given feature display
- 22 Historical articles given feature display
- 23 Fiction
- 24 Contemporary commentary
- 25 Literary, scholarly subjects
- 26 Religious commentaries
- 27 Biography
- 28 Astrology
- 29 Advertising promotions and trade supplements presented as news items

3. EDITORIAL COMMENT

- 31 First leader
- 32 Second leader
- 33 Third leader
- 34 Other editorial comment

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- 41 Letters to the editor

5. REVIEWS

- 51 Reviews of books, films, musical performances, art displays and other cultural activities.

6. DOCUMENTARY INFORMATION

- 61 Lists of information
- 62 Content indices, newspaper titles, imprints, miscellaneous display headings
- 63 Engagements and wedding notices

7. ILLUSTRATIONS

- 71 Comic strips
- 72 Cartoons
- 73 Line drawings
- 74 Photographic reproductions
- 75 Puzzles

(e) Orientation of Content

An attempt was made to determine the kind of readership or audience to which newspaper editorial content seemed directed. This could only be done by a somewhat arbitrary assessment of each item in order to reach a decision as to what area of readership it was **thought** likely to interest. Each story was assessed as having, in the opinion of the coders, either a local, national or international orientation. For instance, an item about the Wellington Young Women's Christian Association bazaar, though it stressed international themes like the conventions of Xmas celebration in the United States, was nevertheless coded as local in orientation because the story was predominantly concerned with the activities of Wellington members of the association and most of its reader interest would be likely to reside in the realm of local personal relationships inside the newspaper's circulation district where the women taking part were well known, and their social activities would be the subject of close attention. This judgment was made notwithstanding the fact that the story also mentioned the wife of the American ambassador to New Zealand and her participation in the bazaar, for it could hardly be maintained that these minor activities were of much consequence or interest to readers outside the Wellington social scene. Similarly, a report of a Victoria League function in Wellington at which the authoress of a French cookbook gave a talk on the importance of good cooking in marriage

was coded as local; but a statement about the Vietnam War that had been issued by a Christchurch protest group was coded as international because it was thought the event could perhaps be of some significance to an audience outside local and national boundaries. Table 5 shows the orientation categories. In this particular analysis, no N.Z.P.A. inland news items were coded as local in orientation by virtue of their being selected for transmission on the New Zealand-wide network of the N.Z.P.A.

TABLE 5
AUDIENCE ORIENTATION OF NEWSPAPER
ITEMS

1. Local
2. National
3. International

(f) Regional Sources

All items were coded in accordance with their origin in the following regional distribution.

0. New Zealand
1. Europe
2. The United Kingdom
3. America (including the United States, Canada, the West Indies and South America).
4. The Far East and South East Asia
5. Other Regions (including Africa, the Middle East, India and the Pacific).
6. Australia

Initially, an attempt was made to code individual countries, but this introduced so many low frequency categories into the analysis that it had to be abandoned in favour of a few very convenient aggregations of countries. Thus a regional classification was adopted by a process of adaptation to the pattern of the news in the sample rather than by conformity to any external political or geographic principle of organisation. The difficulty of arriving at a completely suitable system of regional definition was not seriously faced. In an analysis paying

special attention to international news in quantitative terms, it might be advisable to introduce a two-level coding scheme with the first digit of the code representing a 0-9 regional arrangement, and the second digit representing a breakdown by country, within regions.

2. CODING PROCEDURE

Each of the total of 2,200 messages on the entire N.Z.P.A. file of source documents for the week June 14 to June 19, 1965, was analysed and stamped with a unique-five digit number. The first digit of this number indicated the day of the week; the second digit indicated the shift in which the message was transmitted, in accordance with the following classification:

1. Morning shift	overseas news
2. Evening shift	overseas news
3. Morning shift	inland news
4. Evening shift	inland news

Overseas messages are relayed to the N.Z.P.A. office in Wellington from the Reuter organisation in which the N.Z.P.A. is a partner. Inland messages are received over the New Zealand-wide N.Z.P.A. circuit which links the daily newspapers in one network.

The content analysis data for the N.Z.P.A. register was punched into a deck of IBM cards.⁷ This was processed with the aid of an IBM 421 accounting machine to yield the initial descriptive information about the N.Z.P.A. input for the week under study. The following newspapers appearing in this week were selected for the analysis of the way in which this material was subsequently published.

⁷ See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 6, 'Multiple Layout Card Form' for details of card layouts for this and subsequent operations.

Morning Metropolitans	
11	<u>The New Zealand Herald</u>
12	<u>The Dominion</u>
13	<u>The Press</u>
14	<u>The Otago Daily Times</u>

Morning Provincials	
31	<u>Wanganui Chronicle</u>
32	<u>The Daily News</u>
33	<u>The Timaru Herald</u>
34	<u>The Southland Times</u>

Evening Metropolitans	
21	<u>The Auckland Star</u>
22	<u>The Evening Post</u>
23	<u>The Christchurch Star</u>
24	<u>The Evening Star</u>

Evening Provincials	
41	<u>The Waikato Times</u>
42	<u>The Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune</u>
43	<u>The Daily Post</u>
44	<u>The Nelson Evening Mail</u>

The N.Z.P.A. content of each newspaper was then analysed. To facilitate this, the N.Z.P.A. input deck was sorted into subject category order within days and a printed list was produced on an IBM 421. This list included a brief subject description of each item, which had been punched into a 40-column field in each card in the N.Z.P.A. input register. The newspapers were sorted into their days of issue and the sample was analysed consecutively from Monday to Saturday with the assistance of hired coders. As each N.Z.P.A. item was located in a particular newspaper it was checked against the printed list and its number was recorded, both on the coder's data sheet and on the newspaper story itself (using a ball pen). In the coding of the newspaper usage of the N.Z.P.A. input messages, the source documents on the N.Z.P.A. message files were consulted whenever difficult problems of identity occurred. As each message was coded, the following observations were recorded on coding sheets for subsequent punching into cards.

- (1) The N.Z.P.A. item number
- (2) The newspaper code number
- (3) The date of issue
- (4) The page number on which the item appeared
- (5) The total inchage of the item (space measured in column inches)
- (6) The head inchage (space occupied by the heading in column inches)

- (7) The illustrations inchage (space in column inches occupied by any illustration accompanying an item).
- (8) The number of words in the item.
- (9) The total prominence of the item.
(See Section 3, 'A News Prominence Index'.)

All space measurements were made to the nearest tenth of an inch with an ordinary 12-inch rule.

The newspapers sampled in this study employed a broadsheet format which, with one exception, had a standardised 10-em column width, enabling advertising blocks to be readily inter-changed and sheet size to be approximately the same. (There were some slight variations in the dimensions of the actual print area of the different papers. The New Zealand Herald, for example, favoured a nine-column page which was somewhat smaller than most of the others.) The exception was The Timaru Herald which used an eight-column page with a column width of 11.5 ems. In its case, column inchage measurements were converted into the standard measure at the data processing stage by out-sorting all cards bearing newspaper code 33, and multiplying the space values of each item by a correction factor and punching the resulting calculation into a duplicate deck of cards.

The newspapers employ various body types, but it was possible to calculate a words-per-line factor for each paper. Word counts of lengthy stories were made by multiplying the number of lines in the body text by this factor and adding extra counts for introductions and any other parts of stories that had been set in a different measure or type. The individual words were counted in all stories which amounted to less than 20 lines.

3. A NEWS PROMINENCE INDEX

A number of studies have used indices which measure the relative prominence or 'display' with which items of content have been treated in

their presentation in the newspaper.⁸ Such indices are useful in discussing the ways in which gatekeepers exercise their editorial functions. Martin Kriesberg used an 'attention analysis' to determine how much attention was devoted to Soviet news in a sample of the New York Times. Richard W. Budd analysed the treatment of United States news in four Australian and four New Zealand newspapers and used both space and item frequency measures. He found them inadequate for determining what differences there were in the way the various newspapers of his sample treated content. Two papers, for instance, could publish the same number of items in approximately the same amounts of space, yet one paper might have displayed its items much more prominently than the other. How can the difference be measured? Budd developed an attention index which took into account the size of the headline, the position of the item on the page, the length of the item, and its placement in one of three significant areas of the newspaper -- the front page, the editorial page, or the sports page. Points were allocated on a scale ranging from zero to five to each item according to the way it scored when examined by these criteria. Illustrations published without an accompanying article were scored in the same manner, but when they accompanied an article they were considered as part of it and were

8 See Martin Kriesberg, 'Soviet News in the New York Times', Pub. Opinion Q., 10:4, Winter 1946-47, 560-564. R.W. Budd, 'U.S. News in the Press Down Under', Pub. Opinion Q., 28:1, Spring 1964, 39-56; 'Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News Play', Journalism Q., 41:2, Summer 1964, 259-262. Lewis Donohew, 'Newspaper Gatekeepers and Forces in the News Channel' Pub. Opinion Q., 31:1, Spring 1967, 61-68, used an attention score to measure the way sub-editors handled news items about medicare in Kentucky newspapers. Chilton R. Bush in 'Content and "Mise en Valeur": Attention as Effect', Journalism Q., 37:3, Summer 1960, 435-437, reports a study by Jacques Kayser who used a method of assigning weights in the coding of newspaper content according to the size of headline, position in the paper and on the page, as well as other elements of format and typography. See also Richard W. Budd, Robert K. Thorp and Lewis Donohue, Content Analysis of Communications, New York 1967. Richard H. Thompson in 'Maori Affairs and the New Zealand Press', The Journal of the Polynesian Society, 64:4, December 1953, 366-383, used Kriesberg's attention score to determine the significance with which various items of news about Maoris were treated in a sample of newspapers.

included when calculating its total length. Using these measures, Budd was able to show that there was a high correlation between the item frequency, column inchage, and attention score of the subject matter under analysis, and he was also able to bring more sensitivity to bear on the discussion of such matters as, for instance, how individual newspapers like The West Australian and The Christchurch Star compared in their treatment of the news.

In the present study it was decided to extend the scoring range of these measures so that the treatment of individual items could be studied with even more discrimination. Instead of measuring the total space of the item and allocating points according to whether it occupied three-quarters of a column or more, the actual space of the headlines was taken into account. By sampling and testing items from the 16 newspapers under analysis it was found that there was a high degree of correlation between headline size and length of story. Consequently it was decided to use the inchage occupied by the headline of each item as the basic measure of relative prominence and to add points to the value so obtained according to the item's position on the page, whether or not it employed any special typographic devices, and whether or not it was accompanied by illustrations. The headline inchage was converted into a heading factor by multiplying the number of words in the headline by its space measured in column inches. This space measurement was made from the top of the first line of the item to the rule at the bottom of the preceeding item, or to the top of the print area of the page in the case of an item at the head of a column. Thus a very minor item with, say, only two words in a heading which occupied half an inch of space received a heading factor score of 1, while items spread over several columns with two and three column headings in bold type scored up to 40 or 50 points, and in a few cases as much as 100 or more points. In the case of multiple deck headings, however, to prevent an undue inflation of the factor calculation, only the bold part of the heading was included in the word count. Next a prominence factor was calculated as follows:

(i) Page Rating

Ten points were allocated to any items appearing on page 1. (Or on the back page of The Evening Post which when this sample was drawn had not begun to display news on its front page, or on the main news page of other newspapers which carried advertisements on the front page. The main news page in each of these cases was determined by inspection).

(ii) Page Position

Five points were allocated to any story appearing above the fold, or above the measured centre of any page. (To be above the fold, the entire heading had to appear in that area).

(iii) Typographic Devices

Five points were awarded for each of the following typographic devices:

- Varied size or style of body type
- Indentation
- Extra spacing in the text
- The use of drop or ornamental letters
- Sub-headings
- Cross-headings
- Artwork in headings or in the body text
- Overlines in headings or illustrations
- Boxing, panels and borders
- Stars, blobs, heavy rules
- Use of spot colour
- Stop press

(iv) Illustrations

Five points were allocated for every illustration appearing with or without an accompanying item.

(v) Prominence Score

The final prominence score was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Heading factor} + \text{Prominence factor} = \text{Prominence score}$$

4. DATA PROCESSING AND EDITING ROUTINES

The laborious process of locating a file of N.Z.P.A. items as they appeared throughout the pages of 16 newspapers had the advantage that the description of these items was subject to constant checking and re-checking. As a result of this very detailed working-over of both the source documents and the original N.Z.P.A. input card file, many of the initial coding and punching errors were discovered and remedied in what constituted an ad hoc editing step. Next the newspaper N.Z.P.A. message usage data was punched into a deck of IBM cards. A program was written for the IBM 360/20 to obtain a simple listing of all the information contained in this deck (referred to as the newspaper N.Z.P.A. detail deck). This list was then edited visually. All omissions, inconsistencies and obviously incorrect values were investigated and remedied.

A program was written to obtain a preliminary quantitative description of the handling of N.Z.P.A. items by subject content, but because the N.Z.P.A. detail deck contained approximately 10,000 cards it was thought desirable to obtain some economy of machine time by using the IBM 360/20 to prepare a deck of summary cards which could then be used in the further analysis of the treatment of the N.Z.P.A. material. A program was written to make the necessary calculations from the data punched into the N.Z.P.A. detail deck, and the essential quantitative information and mean values scored by each N.Z.P.A. item in its various newspaper usages were then punched into 2063 summary cards (corresponding to the number of items in the N.Z.P.A. input file). The summary deck was then passed through the machine in a series of subsequent operations to compute means and summary totals for the variables under analysis, and the data from this was used to describe the performance of the newspaper system in handling N.Z.P.A. news.⁹

While this work was in progress, the non-N.Z.P.A. content of the sample was coded, punched into cards, and edited.¹⁰ This deck is referred

⁹ See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 6, 'Multiple Layout Card Form' for details of the summary card layout.

¹⁰ See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 6, 'Multiple Layout Card Form' for details of the card layout for this operation.

to as the non-N.Z.P.A. detail deck. It was run separately through the computer to yield quantitative information and it was then merged with the N.Z.P.A. detail deck to provide information about the total content of the one-week sample under investigation. Before this deck was subjected to data processing, however, a final check-scan was made by the coding supervisor of every item in each newspaper to make sure that there were no oversights.

(a) The Major Sample

A subject content analysis of a random sample of newspapers (drawn from a year's issues of the same 16 papers, and referred to in Section 5, 'Sampling Procedure') was also carried out by a team of sixth form pupils at a secondary school. This work was done in class under supervision so that a high degree of coder reliability could be obtained. A short course of instruction on the New Zealand news media system was first given, then coders were instructed in the procedures to be followed. As difficulties arose they were solved on the spot by the supervisor who was also able to give further class instruction as required. Each night the supervisor checked the coding sheets against their corresponding newspapers and prepared lists of errors being made by individual coders, as well as notes about uncoded items and discrepancies in coding decisions. These were discussed in class next day and coders were given individual tuition to correct their mistakes. By this method the coding error rate was greatly reduced. During the subsequent progress of the work, further checks were made by sampling the items on each coder's sheets on a random basis and comparing the pupil's coding against the supervisor's. In this way the variation between the supervisor's coding and the class coding was kept below a level of .05 per cent.

The data from this major sample coding exercise were recorded on cyclostyled coding sheets and were not at that stage punched into cards. Thirty items were recorded per sheet and a fifth form class of secondary school pupils was used to tally the subject content divisions by glancing down the columns on each sheet and entering the scores for each subject division at the bottom of each page. These scores were checked by the simple expedient of noting whether or not each page tallied to a total

of 30 observations. All irregularities were investigated and corrected in a final editing step. The sub-totals at the bottom of each column on each page were then added, sheet by sheet, and newspaper by newspaper, using a desk calculator. These activities were spread over a period of about three months.

5. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

An arbitrary approach to the problem of sampling newspaper content by selecting one week's newspapers for study may be convenient for the examination of a particular sequence of messages and the performance of a specific series of newspaper issues,¹¹ but the subject content descriptions derived from this may have insufficient representational validity. To provide a more authoritative description of the total editorial content of the 16 daily newspapers under analysis, a random sample was selected from the issues published between May 1 1965 and April 30 1966. There has been a considerable amount of work on the problems of sampling in newspaper content analysis, and it has been established that increasing the sample size beyond 12 issues out of a universe of one year's issues of a daily newspaper does not produce marked differences in results.¹² Accordingly, 12 issues were selected for each metropolitan newspaper with the aid of a table of random numbers, but this selection was carried out on the constructed week principle.¹³ An artificial week consisting of

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- 11 Two large-scale attempts in this field are reported in The Flow of News, a study by the International Press Institute, Zurich 1953, and Jacques Kayser, One Week's News, Unesco, 1952. The former was carried out in co-operation with the editors, news agency executives and foreign correspondents of ten countries in order to study the flow of news into three regions--the United States, Western Europe, and India. It contains readership survey data as well as quantitative measures (in column inches) of the amount of foreign news in the newspapers under discussion. One Week's News is a comparative study of the way 17 major dailies in a variety of countries treated the news. It contains some basic statistical information about space and advertising, but its discussion of the news and its presentation is largely impressionistic.
 - 12 See Guido Stempel III, 'Sample size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies', Journalism Q., 29:3, Summer 1952, 333-334.
 - 13 See Robert Jones and Roy Carter, 'Some Procedures for Estimating News Hole in Content Analysis', Pub.Opinion Q., 23:3, Summer 1959, 399-403.

six days, Monday through to Saturday , was created by drawing calendar dates randomly from the sample universe. To obtain a twelve-issue selection, two such weeks were constructed, one from each six months of the year. Table 6 shows the pattern of distribution of subject content in the 192 issues so selected and also the item frequency distribution of subject content obtained in the one-week sample.

TABLE 6

ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF EDITORIAL CONTENT OF
A RANDOM REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF 16 DAILY NEWSPAPERS.

Subject	<u>One</u>		<u>Item Frequency</u>	
	Week Sample	%	Random Sample	%
1.	750	3.8	1261	3.2
2.	1987	10.1	3770	9.6
3.	3504	17.9	7098	18.1
4.	2480	12.7	5125	13.1
5.	4378	22.3	8956	22.8
6.	4024	20.5	8250	21.0
7.	982	5.0	1915	4.9
8.	1116	5.7	2126	5.4
9.	391	2.0	754	1.9
Total	19612	100.0	39255	100.0

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics; 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8, Culture and Entertainment; 9, Miscellaneous.

The similarities in the item frequencies, expressed as percentages, between the one-week sample and the random sample, can be noted. The null hypothesis that the two observed frequency distributions were derived from the same parent population, or from identical populations, was examined by means of a χ^2 test. (See Table 7).

TABLE 7

TEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN SUBJECT CONTENT
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS IN TWO SAMPLES OF 16

<u>DAILY NEWSPAPERS</u>								
Subject	One-week Sample		Random Sample		Total	$\left(\frac{O-E}{E}\right)^2$		$\sum \left(\frac{O-E}{E}\right)^2$
1.	750	(670)	1261	(1341)	2011	9.6	4.8	14.4
2.	1987	(1918)	3770	(3838)	5756	2.4	1.2	3.6
3.	3504	(3532)	7098	(7070)	10602	0.2	0.1	0.3
4.	2480	(2534)	5125	(5071)	7605	1.2	0.6	1.8
5.	4378	(4442)	8956	(8892)	13334	0.9	0.5	1.4
6.	4024	(4089)	8250	(8191)	12274	1.0	0.5	1.5
7.	982	(965)	1915	(1932)	2897	0.3	0.1	0.4
8.	1116	(1080)	2126	(2162)	3242	1.2	0.6	1.8
9.	391	(382)	754	(765)	1147	0.3	0.2	0.5
Total	19612		39255		58868			25.7

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics; 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8, Culture and Entertainment; 9, Miscellaneous.

From the above it can be seen that $X^2 = 25.7$ with $df = 8$. From a table of chi square values, chi square with $df = 8$ at the 1 per cent. level of significance = 20.09. As the observed value of X^2 is greater than this, therefore the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the proportions in which subject content is distributed in each sample must be rejected. However, inspection of Table 2 shows that the aggregated values of $\left(\frac{O-E}{E}\right)^2$ in each category are relatively low except in category 1 (War and the Armed Services) where a value of 14.4 was obtained.

This was due to a substantial negative deviation in calculating O-E for the random sample value and a corresponding positive deviation in the case of the one-week sample value. It can be explained on the basis that there was a bias favouring this subject division in the original one-week sample. Inspection of the data confirms this. There was a political crisis and a flare-up in fighting in the Vietnam war

during the week, and there was also an outbreak of fighting in the Dominican Republic. In New Zealand there was a discussion about the dispatch of an artillery battery to South Vietnam, a military review at Waiouru, and a Returned Services' Association conference which generated a series of messages about New Zealand's defence problems.

If allowance is made for this bias, the difference between the observed and the expected frequencies in the cells of division 1 can be reduced and a much lower value for $\left(\frac{O-E}{E}\right)^2$ obtained. A consequent value of χ^2 which is less than 20.09 means that the null hypothesis can be accepted with more confidence. If the frequency distribution of the random sample can be assumed to be typical, after allowing for some bias in division 1 the distribution of subject content item frequency in the one-week sample can also be considered to approximate the typical as calculated over a period of one year. For this reason it was decided to use the data from the analysis of the one-week sample as the basis for the calculations of this study with reasonable confidence that the description of published editorial content given in it can be assumed to follow a pattern of typical distribution as long as some reservations are made about the number of messages dealing with War and the Armed Services.

At first thought it may seem remarkable that the subject content of one week's newspapers should approximate so closely in its proportions to that of a sample drawn from a whole year, but there may be several reasons for this, some of them characteristic of the operations of all news media systems, others perhaps peculiar to New Zealand. In the first place, news is a highly repetitive commodity written to conform very closely to the stylistic requirements of newspapers and the general expectations of both staff and readers. The sheer volume and frequency of newspaper production imposes a tight discipline on what is written and how it is presented. In this sense, whatever their feelings about freedom, responsibility, and objectivity might be, journalists are process workers geared to the demands of elaborate mechanical structures which exist primarily to publish advertising. It could be argued that news is a commodity which is used to fill the blank spaces in a newspaper

after the disposition of the advertisements has been decided. There may be no great differences in the style and presentation of news between one daily newspaper and another in New Zealand, and little variation in the structure of the subject content of their news because of basic similarities in the circumstances of production.

It is convenient for most dailies in New Zealand to use a standard paper size and format because this involves less difficulty in the supply of newsprint and the exchange of stereo blocks for advertising, though the establishment of The Dominion Sunday Times as a tabloid and the conversion of The Dominion to the same format, as well as the experiments in news content and display which these publications have been making may possibly be giving them a more distinctive identity. But a number of other considerations are relevant. A considerable part of the editorial content of each particular newspaper may not vary very greatly in its subject content proportions over a period of time because it is characteristically organised around a central core of approximately three-and-a-half pages of news which does not have to be justified by advertising.¹⁴ The total number of pages per issue, and consequently the total amount of news printed, will vary somewhat according to the volume of advertising,¹⁵ but the space devoted to the central news core tends to remain constant. In general, it can be said that the news contained in a daily New Zealand newspaper tends to be structured around a repetitive core of national and international items derived from the N.Z.P.A. service; along with whatever locally gathered material is considered newsworthy enough to be displayed in one of the basic 'news core' pages. To this is appended the sports, commercial, women's and children's pages, and finally the miscellaneous material of comparatively minor newsworthiness used to fill any remaining space. This can easily be expanded in the event of increased advertising requiring extra pages

¹⁴ The Demand for Newsprint in New Zealand, a report by the Contract Research Unit of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (Inc.) mimeograph, Wellington, 1968.

¹⁵ ibid. Between 1960 and 1967 the average number of pages in New Zealand metropolitan newspapers ranged from 24.7 to 28.1. The average for the entire period was 26.2.

to be machined and consequently more editorial matter to be carried, but the existence of the 'core' pages is likely to impose a regular pattern of activity on editorial staffs who are able to approach their task of news-gathering and selection with a relatively continuous and standardised set of working conventions. Reporters have regular assignments and 'beats' to cover, and much of their work is carried out in the expectation that there will be a certain amount of space to be filled, and therefore a certain amount of copy to be written. Thus a very consistent 'fill' or 'mix' of subject content may be emerging in each particular newspaper from week to week and even from month to month in accordance with a well-tried working formula.

Furthermore, the organisation of the industry may tend to promote a substantial level of agreement about the structure of an important part of daily newspaper content. All the New Zealand dailies belong to the N.Z.P.A., and most of those studied in this sample derived 40-50 per cent. of their items of editorial content from its service. No individual paper takes any other wire agency service, and except in sports reportage, the use of special correspondents is not extensive. Comic strips and features are also bought from a limited number of syndicated sources.

These are some of the obvious factors influencing the news selection process and partially accounting for the fact that at least during the period May 1965 to April 1966, the editorial staffs of 16 daily newspapers in New Zealand appear to have shown some consistency in organising the structure of news around a core of repetitive subject matter.¹⁶ Hence it is tentatively asserted that the characteristics of the news published in 16 daily newspapers during the week covered by this study provide a demonstration of the typical workings of the New Zealand daily press, as well as a characteristic description of its general subject content.

16 See Table 6 in Ch. VII, Section 2, 'The Performance of the Newspapers' for further details of the ratio of N.Z.P.A. to total editorial content.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS ASSOCIATION SERVICE

1. THE SUBJECT CONTENT OF A WEEK'S NEWS

Any assessment of the importance of the daily press in the New Zealand news media system must start with a consideration of the New Zealand Press Association as its principal supplier of information. As no descriptive work of any consequence had previously been done in this area it was found necessary to undertake a content analysis of a sample of association wire copy. If only a simple quantitative description of wire message content had been required, the normal procedure of selecting a random sample could have been followed, but the project called for a study of newspaper performance as well as a quantitative content description. It required that some measurement of usage of message items should be incorporated in the research design. This introduced problems with message lag which could not be readily overcome by the conventional random sample approach. The agency transmits messages six days a week for 18 hours a day, from 7.30 am to 1.30 am the following morning when it shuts down. Each day is divided into two shifts, one for the morning papers, the other for the evenings. Newspapers receiving this material are faced with a considerable technical problem of utilisation in the rapidly shrinking amount of space that is available to them before deadlines intervene. The result is that some messages which do not rate highly enough to achieve publication on the day of sending may still be used on a subsequent day. Thus there is a tendency for certain kinds of news matter to lag behind material which is given greater priority. It would not have been impossible to select random days from a period of, say, 12 months, so as to construct a hypothetically typical week of agency message flow. This could then have been the object of a search in the files of the accompanying newspapers of the period, but attempting to locate and identify some of these messages in the newspapers for an unspecified period following the days of transmission

of a random sample of wire copy would have presented overwhelming difficulties. Consequently it was decided to study message flow over a continuous period. This meant the risk of sacrificing some representativeness in the sampled content for greater precision and depth in the study of message use and system performance by arbitrarily selecting a complete week's agency news from a period when, as far as could be ascertained, no abnormally sensational events were violently distorting the balance of content.¹

To begin with, the subject content of the week's messages was indexed so that a register of the agency's substantive message texts could be compiled. Each text was subject-coded in accordance with the content analysis frame shown in Table 1 and this and other information was recorded on a register of punched cards. It had been decided to measure not only the frequency of item usage in the papers, but also the amount of information attrition in the individual newspapers as well as in the various components of the system. This was done by making a word count of each substantive N.Z.P.A. message text and comparing it in the subsequent data computing stage with the wordage of the published versions. However, it was decided to exclude all documentary items from this particular calculation. These were agency messages concerned with market reports, stock exchange transactions, commercial activity of a statistical and repetitive kind, weather reports, shipping lists and sports scores. All this is an important, though unspectacular, part of the association's daily service, providing a hard core of useful factual service information which formed some 13 per cent. of the sample week's agency news.

A further problem involving message lag also presented itself. When coding the N.Z.P.A. content of the newspaper sample, 532 items were located which could not be related to anything in the N.Z.P.A. master file of input messages for the week. This was because they were a miscellany of messages which had either lagged from the previous

1 However, some of the objections to this method of sampling were overcome by also drawing a random representative sample of daily newspapers from a universe of one year's issues and subjecting it to content analysis. For details of this procedure and its significance, see Ch. IV, Methodology, Section 5, 'Sampling Procedure'.

week's operations or appeared to have been distributed by means of the Reuter's air mail feature service. No source texts were obtainable for any of these items and it proved difficult to establish their precise source and medium of transmission and impossible to determine with any accuracy the wordage of their original substantive texts, consequently they were excluded from most of the calculations which separately involved either the N.Z.P.A. or the non-N.Z.P.A. data. In the few cases where they have been included, this has been made plain in the text. All calculations concerning the total content of the newspaper sample demanded that the 532 lag messages should be accounted for. For this reason the number of items in the N.Z.P.A. content of the sample is given in the tables as 9,040, except for a few cases in which the lag messages have been included to make a total of 9,572. The total number of items in the non-N.Z.P.A. content is invariably 10,040. The item frequency of the total content of the sample is calculated by adding together 9040 N.Z.P.A. messages, 532 lag messages and 10,040 non-N.Z.P.A. messages to make a grand total of 19,612.

The analysis in Table 1 is based on a sample population of 2063 items transmitted during the week June 14-19, 1965, with a total wordage of 413,160 words (excluding the documentary messages whose wordage was not tallied). From this it can be calculated that a mean 344 messages per day were transmitted by the network with a mean content of 68,860 words per day. When this wordage rate is increased by the additional 13.33 per cent. of the documentary mode not included, the total mean word-per-day rate rises to an approximate estimate of 78,000 words.

The subject categories of the content analysis frame were developed in unusual detail because a more revealing picture of newspaper content (and in particular of its low frequency items) can be gained in this way, and because it was decided to analyse in full the editorial content of the papers using the week's wire copy with a similar descriptive purpose. No values are recorded for a few of the sub-categories of subject content in Table 1. These included subjects like advice to readers, gardening and domestic notes, travel talks, information about weights and measures and mail services, puzzles, competitions, children's features and astrological predictions. Such areas of subject content only become significant in the analysis of the non-Press Association

portion of the newspaper's content. A miscellaneous category was added to the content frame in order to account for the space given to newspaper titles, content indices, imprints and occasional editorial statements which could not be classified elsewhere. This is not shown in Table 1, but appears subsequently in the subject content tables accompanying the treatment of the newspaper system's performance.

TABLE 1

SUBJECT CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRESSASSOCIATION MESSAGES

(N = 2063)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Item Freq.</u> <u>% of total</u>	<u>Wordage</u> <u>% of total</u>
WAR AND THE ARMED SERVICES		
Military, naval, air force, civil defence activities	7.12	11.47
POLITICS		
Royalty, vice-regal affairs	1.16	.91
United Nations, other international political agencies	1.22	1.78
Foreign relations, foreign aid schemes, diplomacy	.34	.33
Commonwealth affairs	2.52	4.90
Parliamentary and legislative affairs	.58	1.04
Politics, political parties and leaders	9.98	14.17
Local government	.92	.66
Public administration	.15	.18
HUMAN INTEREST AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS		
Social problems and services	.63	.84
Social notes, fashion news, beauty contests, weddings, engagements and balls	.10	.05
Personals, obituaries, human interest stories	3.83	2.50
Lotteries, gambling	.04	-
Clubs, associations, recreation	1.02	.88
Charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, patriotic projects and associations; education; religion	1.89	1.68
Advice to readers, philosophy, sententiae, humour	-	-
Gardening, cooking, domestic notes	-	-
Travel hints and experiences	-	-

CRIME, DISASTER, AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime, prisons, judicial proceedings

7.61

8.18

Disasters, accidents, fires, floods,
emergencies, disturbances, plagues,
illness, disease

5.77

4.60

Police news, mysterious deaths, missing people,
property and animals; search and rescue
operations; traffic problems; public health
and safety

1.21

.80

Noxious weed and animal control; animal welfare

-

-

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

General economic activity; government expenditure

12.50

7.90

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

History	-	-
Graphic arts	.34	.21
Literature	.34	.19
Serious music, dramatic arts	.48	.72
Films	.34	.18
Radio and Television	.05	.02
Pop music and pop artists	.97	1.37
Brass, pipe and other bands; competitions festivals, music contests, concert parties	.10	.04
Plastic arts; embroidery and weaving; Maori culture	.05	.03
Puzzles; children's features; astrology; competitions	-	-
Total	100.00	100.00

A glance at Table I shows that many items of subject content were at very low frequency in the particular week under study. Culture and Entertainment, and Science, generally, received least attention from the agency. This is illustrated with more economy in Table 2 which reproduces the item frequency and wordage distributions of eight of the major subject divisions.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES,
BY ITEM FREQUENCY AND WORDAGE

Subject	Item Frequency %	Words %
Economic activity	26.22	17.10
Sport	19.34	20.60
Politics	16.88	23.97
Crime, Disaster and Public Safety	14.59	13.58
Human Interest and Social affairs	7.51	5.95
War and the Armed Services	7.12	11.47
Science	5.68	4.57
Culture and Entertainment	2.66	2.76
Total	100.00	100.00

In terms of item frequency, the N.Z.P.A. service concerned itself with Economic activity, Sport, Politics, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, Human Interest and Social affairs, War and the Armed Services, Science, and Culture and Entertainment in that order. The ranking by wordage, however, puts Economic activity in third position and War and the Armed Services in fifth. This is because many of the messages about Economic activity were brief, and limited to a documentary treatment of their subject matter which excluded them from wordage calculations under the indexing procedure that was adopted. Human Interest and Social affairs moved into sixth position because personal items, obituaries and other announcements about people included in this category tended to be briefer than messages about War and Armed Services activities.

It was not surprising to find that Sport ranked highly both in frequency and wordage,² though its precedence over Politics in item frequency may have owed something to the fact that the overseas portion of the agency news-matter contained generous coverage of the 1965 Springbok rugby tour of Australia, as well as accounts of Test cricket matches in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, as Table 3 shows, Sport also rates highly in inland agency traffic (messages generated inside New Zealand). In terms of item frequency it formed 7 per cent. of the inland messages, compared with 12 per cent. of the overseas and it ranked third and second respectively in each distribution. Measured by wordage it formed 6 per cent. of the inland total and 15 per cent. of the overseas, ranking third and second respectively. More will be said later about the pattern of the news and the relative importance of its subject content; for the meantime, the editorial mix of the N.Z.P.A. service indicates a substantial concern with political and economic affairs. By wordage, 53 per cent. of its content was devoted to their coverage. By item frequency it amounted to 50 per cent.

2 See L. Cleveland, 'Political Football: The Role of Rugby and the Press in the N.Z. Political Culture', Comment 7:3, June 1966, 23-30, for a discussion of the significance of the substantial attention paid to sport in the New Zealand mass media.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT
BY CHANNEL ORIGIN

Subject	Frequency		Words	
	Inland %	Overseas %	Inland %	Overseas %
1.	.87	6.26	1.13	12.76
2.	3.58	13.28	5.24	16.37
3.	3.78	3.73	2.99	2.96
4.	8.05	6.54	7.26	6.31
5.	17.65	8.58	10.36	6.73
6.	7.22	12.12	5.66	14.93
7.	2.08	3.59	1.38	3.17
8.	.24	2.43	.14	2.61
Total	<u>43.47</u>	<u>56.53</u>	<u>34.16</u>	<u>65.84</u>

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics; 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8, Culture and Entertainment.

2. REGIONAL NEWS SOURCES

Firstly, where did the international news come from? Some indication of the pattern of overseas news sources was gained by compiling an index of regions from which overseas messages were received. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF OVERSEAS
MESSAGE SOURCES

Region	Items	Words
	%	%
United Kingdom	19.10	22.84
Australia	12.40	12.87
America	10.08	12.80
Europe	6.16	5.66
Far East and South East Asia	5.42	8.61
Other	3.37	3.06
Total	<u>56.53</u>	<u>65.84</u>

A total of 57 per cent. of the agency messages came from overseas sources (calculated by item frequency). Major regional sources were the United Kingdom, Australia, America, Europe, and the Far East and South East Asia. ~~These~~ patterns of distribution may offer some support to the criticism of the Consumer Institute members who responded to a 1965 survey³ with the complaint that the New Zealand press had not realised that politically and geographically New Zealand was situated in South East Asia, and that events there were of vital interest. The press, it was argued, still reflected the older viewpoint that 'Great Britain was closer to us than Indonesia or Vietnam'.⁴

Whatever the justice of this complaint, these figures do demonstrate the quantitative importance of international news in the service that the association provides. New Zealand daily newspapers are supplied with a generous volume of overseas news, whatever its shortcomings of style, range and quality may be. Excluding all those reports concerned only with factual, documentary lists and details, a mean 45,314 words per day from overseas sources was available to all the newspapers in the system; out of that total the morning papers were supplied with a mean 22,336 words per shift, while the evenings received a mean 22,978. In other words, every daily newspaper in New Zealand which takes the full N.Z.P.A. service had available to it 45,314 words per day from sources outside New Zealand, about 36 per cent. of this material being devoted to political, economic and military affairs.

A picture thus emerges of an international daily news service which, for the particular week under analysis, and according to Table 3 (in terms of wordage), paid attention to Politics, Sport, War and the Armed Services, Economic activity, Crime, Disaster, and Public Safety, Science, Human Interest and Social affairs, and Culture and Entertainment, in that order. Table 5 shows in more detail how the relative proportions of subject content of this news

³ Reported in Consumer 26, March 1966, 5-25.

⁴ ibid. 'Our Daily Press', 16.

were distributed by item frequency among the major regional news sources. As might be expected, a much higher proportion of the news from the Far East and South East Asia dealt with War and the Armed Services than was the case with other regions (much of it being concerned with reports from the Vietnam front). There was also a steady flow of messages about a military crisis in the Dominican Republic which is reflected in the relatively high proportion of news about War and the Armed Services in the Other Regions distribution. A fairly high proportion of the news from each region was concerned with Politics, except in the case of Australia which scored only 9 per cent. (approximately). For the Far East and South East Asia the score was approximately 39 per cent. This was accounted for by the fact that a political as well as a military crisis was in progress in Saigon during the particular week being sampled. The proportions of items concerned with Culture, Science, Sport, Human Interest and Social affairs, and Economic activity in the Far East and South East Asia news were very low and in some instances insignificant.

TABLE 5

ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS OF OVERSEAS MESSAGES, BY SUBJECT CONTENT AND REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION, TO SHOW RELATIVE PROPORTIONS OF MESSAGE INPUT

Subject	Region					
	Europe	U.K.	America	Asia	Other	Australia
1.	6.34	2.53	13.03	48.66	21.46	5.48
2.	27.78	24.36	27.40	38.94	27.14	9.37
3.	7.15	8.13	7.20	0.89	2.86	7.03
4.	19.84	3.30	15.86	6.20	27.12	14.84
5.	7.15	17.26	7.68	3.53	4.28	30.47
6.	19.04	30.72	12.01	0.89	14.28	26.94
7.	9.93	7.87	10.57	0.89	2.86	1.96
8.	3.17	5.83	6.25	-	-	3.91
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture, 8.

The Australian news contained the highest proportion of items concerned with Economic activity. This is accounted for by the fact that daily reports of stock exchange and other transactions form a considerable part of the material transmitted from there. The United Kingdom news contained a substantial proportion of items about Economic activity, though this was less than the proportion concerned with Sport (approximately 31 per cent.). The proportion of items about Sport in the Australian news was also relatively high at approximately 27 per cent.

A substantial proportion of the American news was concerned with Politics (approximately 27 per cent.), with Crime, Disaster and Public Safety (approximately 16 per cent.) and with War and the Armed Services (approximately 13 per cent.). The news from Europe contained a fairly high proportion of items about Politics (approximately 28 per cent.) and Crime, Disaster and Public Safety (approximately 20 per cent.) as well as Sport (approximately 19 per cent.).

3. INLAND NEWS

The sources of inland news are less complex. In the regional sense there are only six major news-gathering sources within New Zealand. These are the four main centres, with their accompanying newspaper organisations consisting of the metropolitan papers, and the provincial papers of each island. However, news from Wellington tends to be inflated by the flow of material from Parliament, particularly when it is in session. As this was the case during the sample week, it was decided to categorise all messages originating from the N.Z.P.A. correspondents in the Parliamentary Press Gallery under a separate code. In Table 6 it can be seen that an almost equal number of newsworthy stories originated in Auckland and Wellington. The Auckland agents sent out 233 during the week and Wellington originated 231; but if the 92 messages from the Press Gallery are added to Wellington's total, this clearly gives Wellington the ascendancy as the country's major news generating source in the particular week under study.

TABLE 6N.Z.P.A. INLAND NEWS SOURCES BY ITEM FREQUENCY
AND WORDAGE

<u>Region</u>	<u>Item Frequency %</u>	<u>Wordage %</u>
Auckland	26.00	24.85
Wellington	25.78	23.78
North Island Provincial	16.07	13.39
Press Gallery	10.27	21.63
South Island Provincial	8.82	6.49
Christchurch	8.37	6.29
Dunedin	4.69	3.57

That there is a close relationship inside New Zealand between population and news events is demonstrated not only in the relatively high importance of Wellington and Auckland as population centres from which there is a ready output of news of a national significance, but also in the fact that the North Island provincial papers sent out more messages than either the Christchurch region or the South Island provincials. The Dunedin area with its five per cent. of the total (only 42 messages) may be, as far as the supply of nationally significant news is concerned, a dying territory.

When the distribution of messages by word volume rather than item frequency is considered, the picture remains the same, except that there is a substantial rise in the importance of the Press Gallery (22 per cent. measured by wordage compared with 10 per cent. by item frequency). This is because some of the content of the other categories includes part of the 13 per cent. quantum of documentary information of a mechanical and repetitive nature. All such messages were excluded from the wordage calculations, consequently the wordage distribution gives an even more significant account of the relative importance of inland news sources. As the Press Gallery messages were concerned with hard news, either of Parliamentary debates, or of allied political and economic matters, its score of 22 per cent. gives a more accurate indication of its importance as a news source.

4. NEWS SOURCE AUTHORITY

It is important to analyse the flow of news from regions, countries and even from particular geographic areas if for no other reason than to gain some view of how an agency service attempts to make available to its clients as comprehensive as possible a report on the total environment, and not just a few favoured parts of it. Yet such an analysis tells us very little about the actual sources of news items. We may discover that the agency transmitted a certain volume of information about Politics or Culture from particular countries or regions, but this tells us nothing about the reliability, quality and source credibility of this information. To a large extent this will rest on the general reputation of the agency itself for accuracy, promptness and fairness. Readers may have to take on trust much of what it puts forward. The documentary information which it transmits, and much of its factual reportage about public affairs, may reach a high level of accuracy because the agency strives to be as impartial as possible in its treatment of the news, even though the impartiality and objectivity of the journalist may be something of a convenient fiction. However, to assist itself in these aims, the N.Z.P.A. invokes the rule which is also general throughout most of the New Zealand daily press: controversial statements must be accredited to an authoritative news source. The result of this is that readers are, in theory, supplied with impartially compiled reports about news events and people's comments on them, rather than with the unsubstantiated opinions of reporters themselves. The difficulties of pursuing such a policy and the inadequate assumptions on which it is based have been discussed elsewhere in this study, here it must be observed that in practice these rules appear to have varied application. Some overseas N.Z.P.A. material contains the thoughts and speculations of individual journalists and is written in a highly interpretative style. This requires that source attributions should be made clear if readers are to be able to assess the relative merits of messages. N.Z.P.A.-Reuter texts generally contain this information, but often it is omitted during the sub-editorial process at the individual newspaper office. If readers want some indication of the source of an overseas news item, often the most they can hope for is that the newspaper will reproduce the

source-line N.Z.P.A.-Reuter, or some variant of it. Frequently even this is not done.⁵

(a) Interpretative Reports

In theory, acknowledgments as to the source authority for all opinions and controversial statements should be contained in the text of the story, but it is a commonplace of the reporter's task that he cannot always find a suitable source for what he wants to say. If he is not officially permitted by his agency to state what he knows on his own authority, or if it is not expedient for him to do so for fear of sanctions, then he can fall back on some of the time-honoured jargon of the trade. 'Informed quarters', 'authoritative government circles', 'reliable local sources', 'military officials', and other circumlocutions may be invoked to disguise what is in effect an interpretative report written by an agency correspondent. But in such cases, why should the fiction of anonymity be persevered with at all?⁶ Why should not facts be stated as facts, and opinions or speculations as such on the authority of the correspondent or of the agency itself, with the reader left to exercise his intelligence and judgment on the quality and veracity of the report as best he might?

Another device is to quote other agency reports as the source authority for the version that is being transmitted. The Vietnam war reports, constructed from various source materials in the Sydney office of the Australian Associated Press (where the N.Z.P.A. overseas service

5 The Timaru Herald was the only paper in the sample which consistently and accurately reproduced agency source indications. It also attempted to indicate the time and date of receipt of its overseas messages. Some other papers at least admit the existence of this problem by carrying a standing notice in bold type on the cable page to the effect that unless otherwise stated, all cables are supplied by N.Z.P.A.-Reuter. However, the general practice of omitting date-lines on overseas news stories causes confusion about the timing of events, particularly in the United States which is three-quarters of a day behind New Zealand time, and in Europe which is half a day behind.

6 Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government, Boston 1959, suggests that it enables 'shadings of attribution' to be given a story so that 'high government circles, informed circles and the like become part of the technique of the institutionalised leak'.

is compiled) were loaded with references of this kind, for what they are worth. Similarly, the reports from the United Kingdom, and from the N.Z.P.A. correspondents stationed there, were garnished with source references to the British press. This makes for clumsiness and may add little source credibility to the item. For example, the overseas messages during the week of the sample were well injected with various London newspapers' views on Commonwealth affairs, sometimes to the point of absurdity. The assessments of the New Zealand correspondents on the spot, and acknowledged as such, might have been more meaningful to New Zealand readers, and perhaps would have done something to counter the criticism that the service does not sufficiently select and interpret events through the eyes of New Zealand observers.

(b) The Use of Bylines

The Commonwealth conference reportage in the sample week under study reached the height of the ridiculous when it solemnly stated at the end of the week that 'informed sources' thought Mr Holyoake 'one of the strongest supporters' of a British plan for a Vietnamese peace mission. This daring assertion was cabled after many hundreds of words on previous days to the effect that Holyoake had been vigorously advocating a policy of negotiation with the Vietcong and was an ardent supporter of the peace mission plan which was then current. The proper use of bylines might reduce the amount of such verbiage because it could then be directly attributable to its source, the writer himself. It has to be admitted, of course, that part of the shortcomings of the press in this respect may be due to the treatment which individual newspapers give messages rather than to the defects of the N.Z.P.A. service.⁷ Special reports from a man flown to England to cover Test cricket matches were reproduced in most newspapers of the sample under the ordinary N.Z.P.A. source accreditation and not under the writer's byline which prefixed every one of his messages. As far as most ordinary readers were concerned these

7 H.L. Verry, managing editor of the N.Z.P.A. in an interview on June 1 1969 stated that 'the N.Z.P.A. does in fact encourage its overseas staff to use bylines. They put their names to most major stories and these names are distributed. Use of the byline is, of course, optional to each newspaper. Some encourage the use of bylines by their staff; others do not. They apply similar policies to the use of bylines by N.Z.P.A. staff correspondents.'

stories were written by somebody in an anonymous capacity in the agency network. But they were highly interpretative accounts of matters about which there was very wide public interest. Knowledge as to who wrote them could be significant to a keen reader because it could greatly affect his reception of their comments and of their interpretations of play. Similarly, a political commentary from the N.Z.P.A. correspondent in Washington was reproduced in one newspaper without any indication whatever of source or authorship. Readers should be informed as to the authorship of material of this kind, and a good newspaper would see that they were, particularly if the press, in general, was under criticism for not supplying more of this kind of reportage.

That the press owes a duty to its readers to give relevant source information can be argued very strongly in the case of international politics. For instance, an interpretative account of De Gaulle's 1965 visit to Bonn ending in 'confusion and discord' quoted a number of dummy sources (e.g., 'political observers', 'diplomatic sources') and mentioned The New York Times correspondent and the French Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the resulting story was very much the opinion and management of ideas of one man, the anonymous agency hand who formulated the text. It would have been to the advantage of the general reader to have been informed more precisely about the authorship of this message. In The Dominion, one of the few papers which happened to reproduce this text, the only source authority given was the N.Z.P.A. More precise information about authorship would help an observant reader to build up a picture of the relative merits and reliability of different news channels in specific areas on certain topics. The conglomerate approach, convenient though it may be for the bulk processing of news-matter, deprives him of this chance. More careful sub-editing of news of this kind would also benefit the discriminating reader and might help prevent the downgrading of news services by comparison with radio and television, a matter of increasing importance to the New Zealand press.

In fact, under the pressure of circumstance, news agencies are obliged to accept a good deal of interpretative reporting without any attempt being made to disguise it as anything else. Thus, the account of a boilermakers' dispute in Auckland transmitted by the N.Z.P.A. net-

work during the sample week was unashamedly interpretative because this was the only way the affair could be reported meaningfully. Sports reportage is heavily subjective and the question might well be asked: if it is good enough to permit experienced journalists wide liberty to write interpretatively and critically about sport, why should they not be granted equal licence on subjects like politics, economics, art and any other aspect of public affairs that happens to be newsworthy and about which they are adequately informed?

While coding the content of the N.Z.P.A. sample an attempt was made to classify the modes in which stories had been written. 'Straight' news reports attributed to authoritative sources were classified in the objective mode. All lists and programmes were classified as documentary items. All messages which contained statements not clearly attributed, or attributable by clear inference, to an authoritative source were carefully examined and if it appeared that the writer or writers were seeking to present their own opinions and explanatory comments, they were classified as interpretative reports. It was found that 15 per cent. of all the messages in the sample were written in the interpretative mode, compared with 72 per cent. in the objective fashion, and 13 per cent. in the documentary. Table 7 shows the distribution of interpretative reports among the various subject categories.

The subject divisions of Sport and Politics contained the greatest number of interpretative reports (approximately 6 per cent. and 3 per cent. respectively). They also contained a high proportion of the items in each subject division (approximately 32 per cent. and 18 per cent. respectively), although in proportionate terms it was apparent that War and the Armed Services also scored highly (with approximately 21 per cent.) along with Culture and Entertainment (approximately 13 per cent.).

DISTRIBUTION OF INTERPRETATIVE REPORTS IN N.Z.P.A. CONTENT

Subject	No.	Item Frequency	
		% of 2063	% of Total Items per Subject Division
6.	126	6.11	31.58
2.	62	3.00	17.81
5.	32	1.55	5.91
1.	31	1.51	21.19
4.	22	1.07	7.31
3.	11	.53	7.11
7.	7	.34	5.98
8.	7	.34	12.73
Total	<u>298</u>	<u>14.45</u>	

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

5. NEWS GENERATING SOURCES

A similar attempt was made to answer the question: who makes the news? An index of news generating sources mentioned authoritatively, or authoritatively implicit, in message texts was compiled by inspecting each item and ascertaining what persons or information sources were actually quoted in the text or could be credited as its originator.

Clearly, according to Table 8, wire services and newspapers themselves carried the authority for statements and facts contained in a considerable volume of news. Much of this was of a documentary and factual nature, and concerned humdrum, uncontroversial matters for which the agency's own authority would be adequate and not likely to be questioned. A total of 16.7 per cent. of the 2063 messages passed during the week depended on the agency's authority in this way. In 7 per cent. of these messages, however, an attempt was made to quote other news agencies as the news generating source, and similarly, in another 4 per cent. of them, various newspapers were cited as the source of the story. These reports were invariably from overseas and mostly

quoted either the London newspapers or other news agencies like United Press International, the Associated Press of America, the Australian Associated Press / Reuter service, and (with greatly diminished frequency) the Tass, China News, Vietnam Press, Kyoda News, Agence France Presse, Ghana News, Antara News, Yugoslavia News, Communist Liberation Press and North Vietnam News Agencies.

TABLE 8
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR NEWS
GENERATING SOURCES

<u>Source Category</u>	<u>Item frequency</u> <u>%</u>
Government sources	21.4
Economic organisations	17.5
Sporting and recreational sources	17.0
The N.Z.P.A., other cable services	
or newspapers	16.7
Police, judicial tribunals	8.2
Cultural, educational, associational	
circles	5.4
Anonymous sources concealed by formulae	3.9
Private citizens	3.8
Medical and scientific circles	2.9
Journalists using bylines	1.9
Political parties	1.3
	<hr/>
Total	100.0

From the above table it can be seen that government is the largest single news generating source of importance. In the inland part of the New Zealand Press Association system the significance of Government sources in supplying the Press Gallery with a constant stream of material has already been emphasised. Table 9 shows how the total of 21.4 per cent. of the news items attributed to Government sources was made up.

TABLE 9GOVERNMENT NEWS GENERATING SOURCES

	<u>Item</u> <u>frequency</u> <u>%</u>
The Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, government leaders	9.79
The armed services	2.66
Government departments	2.43
Other administrative agencies	1.31
Royalty, the diplomatic corps, vice-regal sources	1.28
Local government	1.26
United Nations, other international agencies	1.26
Parliamentary opposition sources	.68
Government private members of Parliament	.34
Parliamentary officials	.34
	<hr/>
Total	21.35
	<hr/>

The importance of government leaders as news generating sources emerges with particular clarity. They originated approximately 10 per cent. of the week's news agency reports, and nearly half the amount flowing from general government sources. Much of this material consisted of reports of Parliamentary debates in which, not unexpectedly, Cabinet Ministers were prominent. But there were a number of statements about local body problems from government departments which were issued under Ministerial authority. Thus the Minister of Works released three statements at the opening of a New Zealand Counties Association conference, the Minister of Health gave his blessing to a departmental eye safety campaign, and the Minister of Transport posed for press photographers in front of a new railway bus. The category of Parliamentary officials includes the Ombudsman, the Auditor-General, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. There were, in the sample, a number of messages about the Auditor-General's annual report, and also about plans to build a new wing on Parliament buildings. These accounted for most of the items in this category. The low percentage of messages

emanating from Opposition and private member sources cannot be explained here. Possible reasons could be attributed to a lack of news-generating opportunities in comparison with those enjoyed by government leaders, or, on the other hand, it could be due to a pre-occupation with its service function at the expense of other responsibilities on the part of the entire newspaper system. It could also be a peculiarity of this particular sample; whatever the reason, the subject calls for further content analysis and detailed investigation. The fact that Political parties ranked in one of the lowest categories, and that Opposition members in Parliament scored only approximately 1 per cent. in the analysis does not necessarily mean that the New Zealand daily press discriminates against such news sources. It might be nearer the truth to emphasise again that central government has an enormous importance as a news generating source and that the press, as an instrument for the transmission of useful information about decision-making and the processes of government, is obliged to accept the fact that a great deal of its news must come from authoritative government officials and circles.⁸ Opposition speeches in Parliament, and Opposition statements about aspects of public business may have importance in the New Zealand system of government only as appendices to Ministerial and other pronouncements. They are likely to be treated by the news media on their merits as news according to their timeliness and relevance.

Other major news generating sources are those connected with economic activity, sport and recreation, and with the N.Z.P.A. itself, as well as newspapers and other cable services. The police and the law courts were a further substantial source for much sensationally-inclined material, and are, of course, a bread-and-butter feature of any wire agency's content.

It may also be noted that in nearly 4 per cent. of the total number of items, their writers had to rely on the cliches and formulae of anonymity, either to give some shadow of substance to their own disguised assessments, or perhaps to conceal a genuine news source behind a screen of vagueness. The number of messages which owed their

⁸ Thus, Einar Ostgaard, 'Factors Influencing the Flow of News', The Journal of Peace Research, 1:1, 1965, 39-63.

authority to correspondents using bylines was small (approximately 2 per cent.) and even this may have been inflated by the presence of the special N.Z.P.A. correspondent in the United Kingdom to report Test cricket, and another one in Australia to cover the Springbok tour. During the sample week the N.Z.P.A. thus had two extra men in the field in addition to those already stationed in the United Kingdom and in Australia. Perhaps a greater readiness on the part of the New Zealand press to deploy resources to give increased coverage to important economic and political activities as distinct from sport would overcome some of the criticism that it fails to meet its responsibilities adequately in the international field.

General cultural, educational and associational circles ranked next in importance as news generators, followed by Anonymous sources concealed by formulae, Private citizens, Medical and scientific circles and then by Political parties. Other features, such as the accessibility of news sources and the techniques of display and presentation in the newspapers will be discussed later. Here it is apparent that the pattern of news handled by the N.Z.P.A. clusters to a large extent around the centres of power, and these radiate outwards from central government and its economic and commercial counterparts in the general field of business, to the law courts and the police, and then to a variety of other institutions which have received recognition by the news agency and its representatives on the various newspapers of the network as reliable and sufficiently authoritative news generating sources. The importance of government as a news generating source, along with the volume of economic and political news-matter in the sample (43 per cent. of the total number of items by subject content) indicates how active the N.Z.P.A. is in carrying out its service functions.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NEWSPAPER SYSTEM

I. SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

How did the newspapers handle the N.Z.P.A. stories with which they were supplied? What subject content priorities did they demonstrate in publishing this material? To answer these questions, a sample of daily newspapers taking the wire service during the week covered by the N.Z.P.A. material was collected and subjected to content analysis. The newspaper sample was restricted to a week's issues of 16 newspapers, partly because physical resources did not permit any larger number to be processed, but also because this number enabled a convenient representation of the daily newspaper system to be achieved. The sample included the eight metropolitan dailies, but a selection of the remaining papers was arranged so that it consisted of eight provincials with circulations of 10,000 or over-- four of them in the North Island, four in the South Island. This stratification excluded all minor users of the service from consideration, and at the same time it ordered the eight provincials into a pattern of geographic location as well as of significant circulation. A time dimension was also maintained in the sample by selecting four provincial mornings and four provincial evenings in concert with the four mornings and four evenings of the metropolitans. The analysis that follows treats these 16 papers as a daily newspaper system.

(a) Structural Similarity

On data-processing the material it was found that the stories reproduced by the newspaper system corresponded closely in their proportions of subject content to the structure of the original input materials in the wire service content. Table I shows the item frequency percentages, by subject content, of all N.Z.P.A. messages used by the newspapers of the system.

TABLE 1

SUBJECT CONTENT OF N.Z.P.A. ITEMS

(N = 9040)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Item Frequency</u> %
WAR AND THE ARMED SERVICES	
Military, naval, air force, civil defence activities	6.08
POLITICS	
Royalty, vice-regal affairs	1.38
United Nations, other international political agencies	1.03
Foreign relations, foreign aid schemes, diplomacy	.47
Commonwealth affairs	1.82
Parliamentary and legislative affairs	.71
Politics, political parties and leaders	6.61
Local government	.97
Public administration	.14
HUMAN INTEREST AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS	
Social problems and services	.63
Social notes, fashion news, beauty contests, weddings, engagements and balls	.05
Personals, obituaries, human interest stories	3.66
Lotteries, gambling	.18
Clubs, associations, recreation	1.19
Charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, patriotic projects and associations; education; religion	2.29
Advice to readers, philosophy, sententiae, humour	-
Gardening, cooking, domestic notes	-
Travel hints and experiences	-
CRIME, DISASTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY	
Crime, prisons, courts of justice, judicial proceedings	8.53
Disasters, accidents, fires, floods, emergencies, disturbances, plagues, illness, disease	7.01
Police news, mysterious deaths; missing people property and animals; search and rescue operations; road and water safety; traffic problems; public health and safety	1.21
Noxious weed and animal control; animal welfare	-

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

General economic activity; government expenditure	14.20
Agriculture, food production and export	3.63
Industry, labour, power supply, industrial design	3.80
Transport, tourism; population and employment statistics	5.38
Town planning, architecture, civic projects	.46
Mail, telephone and other communications services; metric and other systems; weights and measures	-

SPORT

Rugby Union Football	4.46
Association football and other codes	1.51
Cricket	2.44
Horse racing	4.84
Athletics	1.59
Other sports	4.80

SCIENCE

Weather and meteorology	1.20
Medical and health	1.60
Space travel; astronomy; computer science	1.19
Telecommunications; mass communications	1.06
Biology, exploration, hydrology, geology and earth sciences; zoology, natural history, forestry, soil conservation, agricultural research	.93
Semantics, linguistics; psychology	.05
Surveying, archaeology; museums	.20
Nuclear energy; physics; chemistry	.18
General science	-

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

History	-
Graphic arts	.23
Literature	.36
Serious music, dramatic arts	.47
Films	.23
Radio and Television	.04
Pop music and pop artists	.97
Brass, pipe and other bands; competitions festivals, musical contests, concert parties	.17
Plastic arts; embroidery and weaving; Maori culture	.05
Puzzles, competitions; astrology; children's features	-

MISCELLANEOUS

Content indices, newspaper titles, imprints	-
Editorial remarks, commentaries, replies to correspondents	-
	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF N.Z.P.A. INPUT WITH
NEWSPAPER OUTPUT

<u>Subject</u>	<u>% Item Frequency</u>		<u>% Words</u>	
	NZPA Input	Newspapers	NZPA Input	Newspapers
1.	7.12	6.08	11.47	9.02
2.	16.88	13.13	23.97	16.92
3.	7.51	8.00	5.95	8.95
4.	14.59	16.75	13.58	12.70
5.	26.22	27.47	17.10	20.09
6.	19.34	19.64	20.60	20.88
7.	5.68	6.41	4.57	7.89
8.	2.66	2.52	2.76	3.55

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics, 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8, Culture and Entertainment.

Table 2 compares the item frequency and wordage percentage distributions of the newspapers' wire copy usage with the item frequency and wordage percentage distributions of the original wire copy input to the system. The very close correspondence between the two frequency distributions can be easily seen and is, of course, to be expected. The content of the N.Z.P.A. service is to some extent determined by what its members require, and it is therefore probable that substantial users of the service would be likely to reproduce a more or less faithful replica of what was delivered to them, in structure, if not in actual quantity. Indeed, in quantitative terms, a small number of N.Z.P.A. items were not used at all by any newspapers in the system, and others were used at very low frequency by only a few papers. (These are discussed more fully in Ch. VII, Patterns of News Selection, Section 3, 'Gatekeeping Decisions'.) Furthermore, only a few messages were used by every newspaper in the system and only 2.5 per cent. of the total published N.Z.P.A. content achieved anything like saturation usage in 13 to 16 newspapers. Only approximately 11.2 per cent. of the total published N.Z.P.A. messages were used in 9 to 12 newspapers while 34.1 per cent. were published in 5 to 8 newspapers and 52.2 per

cont. in 1 to 4 newspapers.

Table 3 shows in detail the volume of N.Z.P.A. subject content actually used by different numbers of newspapers.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS USING N.Z.P.A.
MESSAGES, BY SUBJECT CONTENT

Subject	Item Freq. of N.Z.P.A. Input	% of N.Z.P.A. Items Used by				Total %
		1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16 papers	
1.	147	60.80	28.0	9.60	1.60	100
2.	348	61.03	31.03	6.21	1.73	100
3.	155	47.22	41.66	9.03	2.09	100
4.	301	48.03	33.33	14.34	4.30	100
5.	541	48.39	38.55	12.05	1.01	100
6.	399	54.06	29.97	11.48	4.49	100
7.	117	44.44	36.11	18.52	0.93	100
8.	55	59.18	30.61	8.16	2.05	100

Subject coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

(b) Information Overload

In fact, in simple quantitative terms, the system suffered from information overload. A total of 2063 N.Z.P.A. messages sent during the sample week could theoretically have generated a maximum of 33,080 usages in the 16 newspapers of the sample if every newspaper had been able to use every message. The 9040 items that were in fact published represented a usage of only 27.3 per cent. of this hypothetical maximum. Consequently it could be said that the system as a whole was only 27 per cent. efficient, though this is to set aside such practical considerations as the limited space available to most papers, the repetitive nature of some of the messages, and the fact that the subject matter of many of them was likely to be rapidly outdated by the movement of events.

(c) Message Lag

Another way of assessing system performance is to test the extent

to which messages lagged behind in publication. To calculate this, the date of publication of every N.Z.P.A. item was recorded as it was located in the various newspapers of the sample. This information was then punched on cards along with other message data so that the average percentage lag of all the messages in each subject division and subject category could be computed. For this purpose, messages were coded in four classes -- those published on the same day as the day of transmission, on the first day after transmission, on the second day after transmission, and on the third (or subsequent) days. A search was made of the newspaper files into the fortnight following the sample week for lagging items, but the quantity was statistically unimportant. The degree of immediacy with which all items (9040) were published was as follows:

Published	same day	70.05%
	one day later	22.44%
	two days later	5.74%
	Three or more days later	1.77%

Overseas items were treated with much the same priority as inland items, as the following table shows:

	<u>Overseas news</u>	<u>Inland news</u>
Published same day	70%	72%
Published subsequently	30%	28%

This compares interestingly with the results of a United States study of the newspaper usage of the Associated Press state wire service by 23 Minnesota newspapers during the week of January 11 - 16, 1960.¹ In that study, 92 per cent. of the wire stories used by the newspapers were published on the same day and only 8 per cent. subsequently. The inference from this is that the New Zealand papers had a more leisurely attitude towards the flow of news than some of their United States counterparts.

¹ See Robert L. Jones, Verling C. Troidhal and J.K. Hristendahl, 'News Selection Patterns from a State-WTS Wire,' Journalism Q., 38:3, Summer 1961, 303-312.

Some small but interesting variations were apparent when all items were analysed by subject content divisions. (See Table 4). The system gave same day priority to the publication of N.Z.P.A. news about Economic activity, War and the Armed Services, Sport, Politics, Science, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, Culture and Entertainment, and Human Interest and Social affairs in that order.

TABLE 4
PRIORITY OF N.Z.P.A. ITEMS,
BY SUBJECT CONTENT
(N = 9040)

<u>Percentage of Items Published</u>			
	Same Day	First Day After Publication	Second Day After Publication
1.	73.76	97.26	99.45
2.	69.06	93.26	97.81
3.	60.33	91.32	98.07
4.	67.68	94.50	98.41
5.	74.78	94.01	98.35
6.	70.19	87.69	98.76
7.	68.28	90.87	96.21
8.	64.76	92.07	96.48

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics; 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8. Culture and Entertainment.

In the same-day distribution the higher ranking of Science over Human Interest and Social affairs, and its approximate equality with Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, may be due to the fact that weather reports (which were all published on the day of transmission) formed a substantial part of the material categorised as Science. However, by the first day after publication, approximately the same amount of Science and Human Interest and Social affairs news had been published (91 per cent.) and the amount of published news about Crime, Disaster and Public Safety had risen to approximately 95 per cent. By the second day only 96 per cent. of the Science news had been published, compared with

98 per cent. of the other two subject divisions. Apart from this, the relatively low same-day rankings of Human Interest and Social affairs, Culture and Entertainment, and Crime, Disaster and Public Safety support the hypothesis that the gatekeepers collectively considered that such news could be treated with somewhat less urgency than the rest of the N.Z.P.A. content. Their priorities appear to have been applied with greater urgency to the categories of Economic activity, War and the Armed Services, Sport and Politics, in that order.

TABLE 5

RANK ORDER OF N.Z.P.A. SUBJECT CONTENT OF
NEWSPAPERS, BY ITEM FREQUENCY

<u>Subject</u>	<u>% Published by 16 newspapers</u>
Economic activity	27.47
Sport	19.64
Crime, Disaster and Public Safety	16.75
Politics	13.13
Human Interest and Social affairs	8.00
Science	6.41
War and the Armed Forces	6.08
Culture and Entertainment	2.52

(d) Subject Content Priorities

Table 5 reproduces the data from Table 2 in more concise form to show the rank order of subject content by major subject divisions. Item counts of stories published in various subject categories in newspapers are, of course, a far from complete way of describing how the material was actually reproduced. For this reason, many content analyses of the press use space (in column inches) as a measure. The more sophisticated of such descriptions also contain some indication of the degree of attention given to differing subject matter in the editorial process. In this study, several such measures of the degree of editorial attention given to items of newspaper content were developed. The wordage, space (measured in column inches) and the amount of illustration (measured in column inches) accompanying all N.Z.P.A. items were recorded but in addition each item was scored for its relative prominence in the

newspapers.² R.W. Budd has shown³ in an analysis of the content of United States news in the Australian and New Zealand press that there is likely to be a high correlation between item counts, column inchage, and attention scores. Budd's original correlation test, applied to samples of individual newspapers, measured the variations they showed in reproducing items of subject content. In this study, the degree of agreement among the variables of item frequency, story inchage, illustrations inchage, prominence, and wordage by which all the newspapers of the system reproduced the N.Z.P.A. subject content was examined by means of a concordance test.⁴ The test indicated that there was a high level of agreement among these variables. Table 6 shows the quantitative values of N.Z.P.A. material published in the newspapers and the order in which they ranked in each classification of editorial content.

TABLE 6

NEWSPAPER USAGE OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT, BY
FIVE CATEGORIES OF EDITORIAL TREATMENT

(N = 9040)

Subject	Item Frequency	Story Inchage	Illus. Inchage	Prominence	Wordage
1.	550 (7)	4,836 (6)	704 (5)	13,851 (5)	79,680 (5)
2.	1,187 (4)	10,260 (4)	1,491 (2)	18,378 (3)	149,322 (3)
3.	723 (5)	12,780 (3)	595 (6)	9,913 (6)	78,929 (6)
4.	1,513 (3)	9,165 (5)	1,030 (3)	13,917 (4)	112,082 (4)
5.	2,484 (1)	14,681 (2)	482 (7)	24,168 (1)	177,325 (2)
6.	1,776 (2)	15,726 (1)	2,153 (1)	23,084 (2)	184,229 (1)
7.	580 (6)	3,686 (7)	726 (4)	8,585 (7)	69,661 (7)
8.	227 (8)	1,275 (8)	215 (8)	3,304 (8)	31,267 (8)

$$W = .80 \quad X^2 = 28.32 \text{ for } df = 7 \text{ with } p < .01$$

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economics, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

2 See Ch. IV, Methodology, Section 3, 'A News Prominence Index', for details of this procedure.

3 R.W. Budd, R.K. Thorp, and L. Donohue, Content Analysis of Communications, New York 1976, 35.

4 See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 1, 'Concordance Test', for details of this.

The rank order of subject content in Table 6 indicates that in its treatment of the N.Z.P.A. material the newspaper system paid heavy attention to Economic activity and Sport (with the balance considerably in favour of Sport when illustrations and wordage are taken into consideration. Next it was concerned with Politics, with Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, with War and the Armed Services, with Human Interest and Social affairs, with Science and with Culture and Entertainment. Science news may have received a slightly higher prominence score in this hierarchy than it would otherwise have obtained because it included weather reports which amounted to 19 per cent. of the total Science material. These received regular treatment in positions of prominence in the news pages of the sample.⁵

TABLE 7
ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF N.Z.P.A.
CONTENT, BY REGION

<u>Region</u>	<u>Input</u>		<u>Output</u>	
	<u>Item Freq. %</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Item Freq. %</u>	<u>Rank</u>
New Zealand	43.47	(1)	57.02	(1)
Europe	6.16	(5)	5.46	(5)
United Kingdom	19.10	(2)	15.09	(2)
America	10.08	(4)	8.54	(3)
The Far East and S.E. Asia	5.42	(6)	3.69	(6)
Australia	12.40	(3)	8.25	(4)
Other	3.37	(7)	1.95	(7)

Table 7 compares system input with system output and demonstrates that there was a marked shift in the balance between overseas and locally originated news. In the input, the Overseas/New Zealand ratio was approximately 57:43, but in the output this was exactly reversed to 43:57 in favour of New Zealand news. This demonstrates that the gatekeepers of the system gave priority to the publication of the New Zealand content of the N.Z.P.A. service. By the criterion of item

⁵ For simplicity, in coding all weather items related to the N.Z.P.A. master file, the total space devoted to meteorological observations as well as to the daily Dominion forecasts, was credited as N.Z.P.A. content, along with the supporting weather maps which were coded as illustrations. This resulted in some over-weighting of this part of the analysis. In Table 6, Science ranks fourth in the illustrations in charge classification because these maps were treated as Science illustrations.

frequency, Table 7 shows that New Zealand ranked first, followed by the United Kingdom, America, Australia, Europe, Asia, and Other regions, in that order.

Table 8 indicates that the proportions of N.Z.P.A. content by news generating source were virtually the same in the newspaper output and they were in the input, the only significant differences being that the percentage of items that were generated by Political parties increased slightly from 1.3 per cent. in ~~the~~ input to 3.9 per cent. in the output, the percentage of items generated by Economic organisations rose by about 2 per cent., and the percentage of items generated by Wire services and newspapers fell by nearly 6 per cent.

TABLE 8

ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT,
BY NEWS GENERATING SOURCE

	<u>Input</u>	<u>Output</u>
Government sources	21.4 (1)	21.8 (1)
Economic organisations	17.5 (2)	19.1 (2)
Sporting and recreational sources	17.0 (3)	17.3 (3)
Wire services and newspapers	16.7 (4)	12.0 (4)
Police courts, judicial tribunals	8.2 (5)	8.3 (5)
Cultural, educational, associational circles	5.4 (6)	5.3 (6)
Private citizens	3.8 (7)	3.7 (8)
Anonymous sources	3.9 (8)	3.3 (9)
Medical and scientific circles	2.9 (9)	3.3 (9)
Journalists using bylines	1.9 (10)	2.0 (11)
Political parties	1.3 (11)	3.9 (7)

Similarly, only slight variation was apparent when the proportions of N.Z.P.A. content by mode in the input were compared with those of the output. The percentage of items written objectively rose slightly from 72.12 per cent. in the input to 73.24 per cent. in the output, while the percentage of interpretative reports dropped from 14.45 per cent. in the input to 13.82 per cent. in the output. The percentage of items in the documentary mode also dropped from 13.34 per cent. in the input to 12.88 per cent. in the output.

2. OTHER EDITORIAL CONTENT

What use did the newspapers make of material from sources additional to the N.Z.P.A.? Table 9 shows the item frequency distribution of non-N.Z.P.A. subject matter in detail. As might be expected, the content of this undergoes a marked decline in the category of War and the Armed Services, and a considerable increase in the number of items devoted to coverage of Human Interest and Social affairs, and to Culture and Entertainment. But it is also interesting to note the decline in several other categories. Using their own resources, the newspapers reported less news about Politics, about Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, and about Economic activity, while, significantly, they carried an almost equal number of items about Sport. This is obvious from Table 10 which reproduces the item frequency and rank order of subject content of both N.Z.P.A. and non-N.Z.P.A. editorial content by major subject divisions. (Note: the total item frequency of N.Z.P.A. items in this calculation has been increased from 9040 to 9572 so as to include 532 lag messages.) Table 10 indicates that the newspapers rely heavily on the wire service for much of their news about Economic activity, about Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, about Politics, and about War and the Armed Services; but they devote considerable energies to providing their own extensive coverage of Sport, particularly racing and the miscellany of activities like bowls, rifle shooting, motor racing, wrestling, boxing, basketball, hockey, tennis and other competitive games which for convenience were classified in this study as Other sports.

TABLE 9

SUBJECT CONTENT OF NON- N.Z.P.A. ITEMS

(N = 10040)

Subject	Item Frequency %
WAR AND THE ARMED SERVICES	
Military, naval, air force, civil defence activities	1.91

POLITICS

Royalty, vice-regal affairs	.40
United Nations, other international political agencies	.11
Foreign relations, foreign aid schemes, diplomacy	.09
Commonwealth affairs	.32
Parliamentary affairs, legislative business	.38
Politics, political parties and leaders	3.60
Local government	1.42
Public administration	1.15

HUMAN INTEREST AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Social problems and services	1.86
Social notes, fashion news, beauty contests, wedding, engagements and balls	1.86
Personals, obituaries, human interest stories	6.53
Lotteries, gambling	.11
Clubs, associations, recreation	6.57
Charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, patriotic projects and associations; education; religion	4.67
Advice to readers, philosophy, sententiae, humour	3.70
Gardening, cooking, domestic notes	1.49
Travel hints, and experiences	.29

CRIME, DISASTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime, prisons, judicial proceedings	4.47
Disasters, accidents, fires, floods, emergencies, disturbances, plagues, illness, disease	2.36
Police news, mysterious deaths, missing people, property and animals; search and rescue operations; road and water safety; traffic problems; public health and safety	2.00
Noxious weed and animal control; animal welfare	.21

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

General economic activity; government expenditure	4.75
Agriculture, food production and export	3.46
Industry, labour services; power supply; industrial design	3.40
Transport, tourism; population and employment statistics	3.49
Town planning, architecture, civic projects	1.65
Mail, telephone and other communication services; metric and other systems; weights and measures	.88

SPORT

Rugby Union Football	4.21
Association football and other codes	1.46
Cricket	.18
Horse racing	6.24
Athletics	.60
Other sports	7.95

SCIENCE

Weather reports, meteorology	.65
Medical and health	.93
Space travel, astronomy; computer science	.32
Telecommunications; mass communications	.20
Biology, exploration, hydrology, geology, earth sciences, zoology, natural history, forestry, soil conservation, agricultural research	.94
Semantics, linguistics; psychology	.07
Surveying, archaeology, museums	.22
Nuclear energy, physics, chemistry	.06
General Science	.20

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

History	.82
Graphic arts	.46
Literature	.67
Serious music, dramatic arts	1.76
Films	.40
Radio and television	1.79
Pop music and artists	.80
Brass, pipe and other bands; competitions festivals, musical contests, concert parties	.14
Plastic arts; embroidery and weaving; Maori culture	.31
Puzzles, children's features; astrology; competitions	1.57

MISCELLANEOUS

Content indices, newspaper titles, imprints	3.46
Editorial remarks, commentaries, replies to correspondents	.46

Total	100.00
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TABLE 10

ITEM FREQUENCY AND RANK ORDER OF SUBJECT
CONTENT OF NEWSPAPERS

Subject	Item Frequency %	
	N.Z.P.A. Content	Non-N.Z.P.A. Content
Economic activity	27.24 (1)	17.63 (3)
Sport	20.39 (2)	20.64 (2)
Crime, Disaster and Public Safety	16.42 (3)	9.04 (4)
Politics	12.93 (4)	7.47 (6)
Human Interest and Social affairs	8.21 (5)	27.08 (1)
Science	6.50 (6)	3.39 (8)
War and the Armed Services	5.82 (7)	1.91 (9)
Culture and Entertainment	2.49 (8)	8.72 (5)
Miscellaneous	- (9)	3.92 (7)
Total	100.00	100.00

3. TOTAL EDITORIAL CONTENT

Table 11 shows the detailed item frequency distribution of the total editorial content published by the newspapers of the system. Table 12 compares the rank order as well as the item frequency percentages of the N.Z.P.A., the non-N.Z.P.A., and the total subject content of the system. The item frequency distributions of the total subject content of the sample indicate that the newspapers are massively concerned with an almost equal mixture of Economic activity and Sport (43 per cent.), followed by Human Interest and Social affairs, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety (31 per cent.), Politics, War and the Armed Services (14 per cent.), and Science and Culture and Entertainment (11 per cent.). This editorial mix will be discussed in greater detail later; but it can be noted here that the system appears to be carrying out its service functions with considerable energy, at least in the field of Economic activity. To establish how well it performed in other areas requires deeper analysis

and discussion of the sample materials. However, even a brief inspection of Table 12 shows that the N.E.P.A. service provided most of the news about War and the Armed Services, and about Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; while it provided substantially more of the news about Politics, Economic activity and Science than did the newspapers themselves. On the other hand, the newspapers provided the overwhelming proportion of news about Human Interest and Social affairs, as well as most of the news about Culture and Entertainment. Significantly, the proportion of items about Sport remained constant between the N.E.P.A. and the newspapers.

TABLE 11

TOTAL EDITORIAL CONTENT OF 16
DAILY NEWSPAPERS

(N = 19612)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Item Frequency</u> %
WAR AND THE ARMED SERVICES	
Military, naval, air force activities, civil defence	3.82
POLITICS	
Royalty, vice-regal activities	.85
United Nations, other international political agencies	.56
Foreign relations, aid schemes, diplomacy	.30
Commonwealth affairs	1.00
Parliamentary affairs, legislative business	.52
Politics, political parties and leaders	5.05
Local government	1.19
Public administration	.66
HUMAN INTEREST AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS	
Social problems and services	1.29
Social notes, fashion news, beauty contests, weddings, engagements and balls	.97
Personals, obituaries, human interest stories	5.25
Lotteries, gambling	.13
Clubs, associations, recreational activities	3.93
Charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, patriotic projects and associations; education; religion	3.49
Advice to readers, philosophy, sententiae, humour	1.90
Gardening, cooking, domestic notes	.76
Travel hints and experiences	.15

CRIME, DISASTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime, prisons, judicial proceedings	6.45
Disasters, accidents, fires, floods, emergencies, disturbances, plagues, illness, disease	4.50
Police news, mysterious deaths; missing people, objects and animals; search and rescue operations; road and water safety; traffic problems; public health and safety	1.58
Noxious weed and animal control; animal welfare	.11

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

General economic activity; government expenditure	9.21
Agriculture, food production and export	3.53
Industry, labour services; power supply; industrial design	3.73
Transport, tourism; population and employment statistics	4.35
Town planning, architecture, civic projects	1.06
Mail, telephone and other communication services; metric and other systems; weights and measures	.45

SPORT

Rugby Union football	4.38
Association football and other codes	1.47
Cricket	1.28
Horse racing	5.96
Athletics	1.05
Other sports	6.37

SCIENCE

Weather reports, meteorology	.90
Medical and health activities	1.30
Space travel, astronomy; computer science	.73
Telecommunications; mass communications	.61
Biology, exploration, hydrology, geology, zoology, natural history, forestry, soil conservation, agricultural research	.95
Semantics, linguistics; psychology	.06
Surveying, archaeology, museums	.20
Nuclear energy, physics, chemistry	.16
General science	.10

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Histroy	.42
Graphic arts	.35
Literature	.52
Serious music, dramatic arts	1.15
Films	.31
Radio and television	.94
Pop music and artists	.87
Brass, pipe and other bands; competitions festivals, musical contests, concert parties	.15
Plastic arts; embroidery and weaving; Maori culture	.18
Puzzles, children's features; astrology, competitions	.80

MISCELLANEOUS

Content indices, newspaper titles, imprints	1.76
Editorial remarks, commentaries, replies to correspondents	.24
Total	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE 12

ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY PERCENTAGE AND RANK ORDER, OF TOTAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL CONTENT

<u>Subject</u>	<u>N.Z.P.A.</u>	<u>Non-N.Z.P.A.</u>	<u>Total</u>
5.	27.24 (1)	17.63 (3)	22.33 (1)
6.	20.39 (2)	20.64 (2)	20.51 (2)
4.	16.42 (3)	9.04 (4)	12.64 (4)
2.	12.93 (4)	7.47 (6)	10.13 (5)
3.	8.21 (5)	27.08 (1)	17.87 (3)
7.	6.50 (6)	3.59 (8)	5.01 (7)
1.	5.82 (7)	1.91 (9)	3.82 (8)
8.	2.49 (8)	8.72 (5)	5.69 (6)
9.	- -	3.92 (7)	2.00 (9)

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics; 3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science; 8, Culture and Entertainment; 9, Miscellaneous.

What is the pattern of editorial content when other variables are taken into account? Table 13 shows the item frequency distribution of total editorial content by news generating source. Sporting and recreational circles, closely followed by Government sources, the newspapers and wire agencies themselves and Economic organisations are the most massive generators of news, accounting for approximately 65 per cent. of the editorial content of the newspapers.

TABLE 13
TOTAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL COMMENT,
BY NEWS GENERATING SOURCE

(N = 19612)

<u>News Generating Source</u>	<u>Item Freq.</u> %	<u>Rank Order</u>
Sporting and recreational sources	18.18	(1)
Government sources	17.59	(2)
Wire services and newspapers	16.20	(3)
Economic organisations	12.75	(4)
Cultural, educational, associational circles	9.79	(5)
Private citizens	7.17	(6)
Police courts, judicial tribunals	6.71	(7)
Anonymous sources	5.22	(8)
Journalists using bylines	3.36	(9)
Medical and scientific circles	2.30	(10)
Political parties	0.73	(11)
Total	100.00	

Approximately 10 per cent. of the news was derived from Cultural, educational and associational circles. This was made up of news from educational sources (1.72 per cent.), religious sources (1.18 per cent.), charitable and philanthropic organisations (0.77 per cent.) and cultural sources (2.92 per cent.). News from a wide range of social organisations and associations accounted for the remaining 3.20 per cent. of the items in this category.

Private citizens (who figured mostly in correspondence columns and in reports of accidents) generated approximately 7 per cent. of the news; Police courts and judicial tribunals generated approximately 8 per cent; and Anonymous sources ('informed quarters', 'official circles' and the like as well as contributors and correspondents using pseudonyms) generated another 5 per cent. Journalists using bylines accounted for approximately 3 per cent., Medical and scientific circles approximately 2 per cent., and Political parties less than 1 per cent. Political parties appear to have been only slightly active in the press and

perhaps may not generate very much news in it unless an election campaign is in progress.

These data are obtained from a detailed analysis which reveals some other interesting emphases in the pattern of news. War veterans' associations scored 0.79 per cent. of the grand total, compared with 0.15 per cent. scored by anti-war associations and Vietnam war protest groups. Maori organisations scored only 0.15 per cent. Literary sources received a score of only 0.47 per cent.

Table 14 provides a breakdown of the government news generating sources. It emphasises the importance of the political and administrative centres of power and draws attention to the comparative insignificance of both private member and opposition sources in this process. The low level of activity of local, compared with central, government is also noticeable.

TABLE 14

GOVERNMENT NEWS GENERATING SOURCES

	%
Government departments, officials and circles	2.89
Government ministers, leaders, heads of state	5.70
Government private members	0.37
Opposition leaders and private members	0.45
Local government officials and circles	2.64
Other administrative agencies	1.22
United Nations and other international agencies	0.54
Diplomatic corps, Royalty, vice-regal circles	0.84
Armed services	1.53
Parliamentary, legislative officials	0.32
Public utilities	1.09
Total	<u>17.59</u>

Another source variable which is useful in describing the pattern of news content is medium of transmission, or the means indicated in the story as to how the particular item reached the newspaper. A total of 27.9 per cent. of the editorial content in the sample was clearly attributable to the N.Z.P.A. inland network, and 20.9 per cent. to its overseas channels. Another 3.8 per cent. could be assigned to

various overseas sources like feature services and reprinted material from overseas newspapers. For the remaining 47.4 per cent., no medium of transmission could be attributed.

TABLE 15
TOTAL EDITORIAL CONTENT, BY REGION
(N = 19612)

Region	%	Rank Order
New Zealand	73.21	(1)
United Kingdom	9.15	(2)
America	6.14	(3)
Australia	4.67	(4)
Europe	3.35	(5)
The Far East and South East Asia	2.20	(6)
Other	1.28	(7)
<hr/> Total 100.00		

The system appeared to place considerable emphasis on news of national significance. By orientation, only 28.4 per cent. of the editorial content of the sample was considered to be concerned with affairs of local significance, compared with 40.1 per cent. devoted to affairs of national concern and 31.5 per cent. to affairs of international significance.

It was also apparent that by far the greater part of the sample of editorial content was devoted to news and information. Table 16 analyses the mode of composition of all items of editorial content. A total of approximately 72 per cent. was written in the form of news reports, of which approximately 50 per cent. were in the 'objective' style and approximately 12 per cent. were considered to have been written interpretatively. However, to this must be added documentary reports, consisting of content indices, informational lists and accounts of weddings and engagements, amounting to approximately 15 per cent. Features amounted to only 3 per cent. (approximately), editorials 1 per cent., correspondence approximately 3 per cent., reviews of books, plays, films and various other cultural activities approximately 0.8 per cent., and illustrations

approximately 5 per cent. (This calculation does not include illustrations accompanying news items, reviews, features and documentary reports; it accounts only for material that was presented solely in visual form).

TABLE 16

TOTAL EDITORIAL CONTENT, BY MODE

(N = 19612)

<u>News</u>	%
Factual reports	60.01
Interpretative reports	12.16
<u>Features</u>	
Domestic features	.50
Factual descriptive features	.68
Historical	.25
Fiction	.07
Contemporary commentary	.70
Literary and scholarly features	.02
Religious and philosophical features	.40
Biography	.08
Astrology	.11
Advertising supplements	.23
<u>Editorials</u>	
First leader	.50
Second leader	.36
Third leader	.08
Other editorial comment	.06
<u>Correspondence</u>	
Letters to the Editor	3.15
<u>Reviews</u>	
Books, plays, films and other cultural events	.81
<u>Documentary Reports</u>	
Informational lists	13.02
Content indices	1.79
Engagements	.26
<u>Illustrations</u>	
Comic strips	1.22
Cartoons	.64
Line drawings	.09
Photographic reproductions	2.42
Puzzles	.39
Total	100.00

4. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE NEWSPAPERS

Table 17 shows the percentage item frequency distribution of the total subject content of 16 daily newspapers and the standard deviations of the various subject content categories. The remarkable over-all similarity of each newspaper's distribution of content is apparent by inspection. The newspapers of the system showed considerable agreement in their ordering of the proportions of subject matter, with fairly small variations apparent in the values for each subject category. The Evening Star gave Human Interest and Social affairs precedence over Sport, while The Evening Post and The Christchurch Star gave approximately equal rank to Human Interest and Social affairs and Sport, otherwise the only departure of any considerable consequence from the general pattern appeared in the cases of some of the provincial papers. The Wanganui Chronicle, The Daily News, The Timaru Herald, The Waikato Times, The Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune, and The Daily Post all ranked Sport ahead of Economic activity in their relative proportioning of items in each paper. This was probably because the provincial papers were not attempting to duplicate the encyclopaedic coverage of commercial and industrial affairs to be found in the metropolitans. For this reason, relatively greater dispersion is apparent in the distribution of values for Economic activity than in some of the other categories.

Another minor variation from the general pattern is apparent in the case of The Nelson Evening Mail which followed the same pattern as The Evening Star to give priority to Economic activity and to Human Interest and Social affairs, followed by Sport, in that order. Some variation is also apparent in the treatment of Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, particularly by the provincials. The Daily News, The Southland Times, The Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune, The Daily Post and The Nelson Evening Mail carried fairly high percentages of this news by comparison with all but two of the metropolitans (The Evening Post and The Christchurch Star). In over-all terms, however, the table indicates that the editorial mix of the subject content of the typical daily newspaper of the system consisted of an average of 3.8 per cent. of items devoted to War and the Armed Services, 10 per cent. to Politics, 18 per cent. to Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 21.8 per cent. to Economic activity, 20.8 per cent. to Sport, 5.2 per cent. to Science, 5.3 per cent. to Culture and Entertainment, and 2.0

per cent. to miscellaneous items. In most categories there was little departure from these figures, as the low values obtained in the calculation of standard deviations indicate.

TABLE 17
PERCENTAGE ITEM FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY SUBJECT
DIVISION IN EACH SAMPLED NEWSPAPER
(N = 19612)

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Subject Division</u>								
	5	6	3	4	2	8	7	1	9
N.Z. Herald	25.0	21.7	17.5	11.2	9.9	4.6	4.1	4.2	1.8
Dominion	23.6	21.3	15.1	11.4	11.4	6.4	3.9	4.8	2.1
Press	26.8	18.1	16.1	11.5	10.7	5.2	6.0	4.1	1.5
Otago Daily Times	25.7	18.6	17.2	10.7	11.5	5.2	4.9	3.7	2.5
Auckland Star	21.8	20.8	16.9	9.5	12.0	8.0	4.8	4.0	2.2
Evening Post	20.9	19.0	19.0	14.0	11.9	6.9	3.8	3.3	1.2
Christchurch Star	22.1	18.8	18.5	13.9	10.0	6.3	4.4	3.5	2.5
Evening Star	21.8	17.4	20.7	11.8	10.5	5.4	5.9	3.7	2.8
Wanganui Chronicle	16.6	24.1	19.4	10.9	7.8	7.5	6.0	4.3	3.4
Daily News	19.2	21.6	16.9	18.1	8.3	5.2	5.3	3.4	2.0
Timaru Herald	23.1	23.7	18.1	11.9	7.0	4.3	6.1	3.9	1.9
Southland Times	27.3	23.6	15.1	14.9	7.5	3.0	4.0	3.5	1.1
Waikato Times	17.3	23.7	20.5	11.6	11.5	5.7	4.2	3.8	1.7
Herald Tribune	18.6	21.8	18.5	14.6	10.1	6.6	5.1	3.4	1.3
Daily Post	18.4	20.3	17.6	14.5	10.4	6.1	7.3	3.4	2.0
Evening Mail	20.7	17.5	20.5	13.5	9.5	4.7	6.7	4.3	2.6
Average values	21.8	20.8	18.0	12.8	10.0	5.3	5.2	3.8	2.0
Standard deviations	3.2	0.7	0.5	2.1	0.5	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.7

Subject Coding: 1, War and the Armed Services; 2, Politics;
3, Human Interest and Social affairs; 4, Crime, Disaster and
Public Safety; 5, Economic activity; 6, Sport; 7, Science;
8, Culture and Entertainment; 9, Miscellaneous.

CHAPTER VII

PATTERNS OF NEWS SELECTION

1. THE VALUES OF THE SYSTEM

The newspapers of the system coped with the flow of N.Z.P.A. material only by discarding many items and imposing severe cuts on the remainder. What priorities did the system as a whole demonstrate in undertaking this critical task of news selection? What selection patterns emerged in the news that was published and how did the individual newspapers compare in performance?

(a) Word Cuts

When the percentage distribution of word cuts made by the newspaper sub-editors processing the N.Z.P.A. input is examined, another dimension of information overload immediately becomes apparent. Not only was the system supplied with more messages than it could use, it was obliged to cut the wordage of what it did use by more than one-third. The N. Z. P. A. messages appearing in the newspapers underwent wordage cuts to the extent of approximately 36 per cent. of their original substantive wordage. This calculation was made from the data in the N.Z.P.A. detail deck. It contained a separate card for every N.Z.P.A. message which each newspaper in the sample used, and data concerning the treatment that the message received in these usages were recorded on each card. Thus, if 16 newspapers used a particular N.Z.P.A. message, 16 corresponding detail cards punched with the identifying number of that original message, as well as accompanying information about the newspaper usage of it, were to be found in the N.Z.P.A. detail deck. Similarly, if no newspaper used a particular message, there were no cards representing it in the detail deck. Each detail card carried the number of words that had been printed in its particular newspaper usage as well as the substantive wordage of the message concerned. The computer was programmed to compare these two values and to sum them as a base from which to calculate the word-cut values for that category. Thus 'Total Words Received' in Column 2 of Table 1 is the total substantive wordage of all items in the N.Z.P.A. detail deck. Excluded from it are those

messages which were not used by any newspaper and those which were compiled in the documentary mode and for which word counts were not made. 'Total Words Cut' in Column 1 is arrived at by subtracting the total number of words printed from the total number received. Newspaper items were considered to be 'cut' messages only if they contained fewer words than the original substantive text of the message. Where newspapers originated an N.Z.P.A. message, but themselves published an amplified or variant version of what was transmitted over the wire network, such an item was credited to them as one full usage. This was done in order to give a more faithful rendering of the coverage of N.Z.P.A. news by the newspapers.¹ Similarly, when a newspaper (as was often the case with metropolitans sending their own men to cover sports events) published a report from some alternative source which, nevertheless, in substance duplicated the content of an N.Z.P.A. message, a word count equivalent to that of the corresponding N.Z.P.A. message was attributed to it.

Table 1 gives quantitative information about the extent of word-cutting in the various categories of subject content. The greatest number of words were cut in the categories of Sport and Economic activity, with Politics, with War and the Armed Services, and with Science next. Messages in the categories of Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, of Human Interest and Social affairs, and of Culture and Entertainment were cut less severely. The relative severity of word-cutting in each subject division, however, is shown in Column 4 of the table.

Here Sport again received the most intensive treatment (50 per cent. of the material in this category) suggesting that the newspaper sub-editors were faced with a situation in which they had to make some very heavy cuts. This applied particularly to some lengthy messages covering the cricket Test in the United Kingdom and the Springbok tour of Australia. They were able to deal with the remaining areas of subject content somewhat more equitably.

¹ This follows a procedure used by R. L. Jones, V.C. Trolldahl and J.K. Hvistendahl in their study of 'News Selection Patterns from a State TTS Wire', in Journalism Q., 38:2, Summer 1961, 303-312.

TABLE 1WORD CUTS IN PUBLISHED N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES, BY SUBJECT

Subject	Total Words Cut	Total Words Received	Words Cut As % of All Words Received	% Words Cut per Subject Division
6.	127,829	312,058	9.2 (8)	50.0 (8)
5.	98,167	275,492	7.0 (7)	35.6 (4)
2.	62,936	212,258	4.6 (6)	29.7 (3)
1.	60,782	140,462	4.4 (5)	43.3 (5)
7.	55,384	125,045	4.0 (4)	44.3 (7)
4.	43,815	155,897	3.2 (3)	28.1 (2)
3.	27,626	106,555	2.0 (2)	25.9 (1)
8.	24,201	55,468	1.8 (1)	43.7 (6)
Total	500,740	1,383,235	36.2	

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

War and the Armed Services, Science, and Culture and Entertainment were treated less severely with percentage cuts ranging from 43.3 per cent. to 44.3 per cent. In the case of Politics, and also of Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, as well as Human Interest and Social affairs, the scores ranged from 25.9 per cent. to 29.7 per cent. Economic activity was treated with medium severity at the 35.6 per cent. level.

(b) Prominence Values

The wordage loss incurred by the N.Z.P.A. content demonstrates only one aspect of content selection, and furthermore, may be dictated more by the relative over-supply of information in some subject categories than by any marked preference on the part of sub-editors. A more comprehensive measure of the relative preferences exerted by the system in different areas of subject content is provided by the prominence index described in Ch. IV, Methodology, Section 3, 'A News Prominence Index'. The significance in quantitative terms of the major divisions of N.Z.P.A. content when considered by this criterion has already been emphasised. (See Table 6, Ch. VI, The Performance of the Newspaper System.) It made use of a procedure for allocating points to each newspaper in accordance with the position of the item on the page of the newspaper, the relative size of the headline, the addition of any illustrations, and the use of a variety of typographical devices. In

this way each item of newspaper content was given a prominence score, and these scores were used to ascertain the performance of the system in handling N.Z.P.A. content.

The procedure for their calculation was slightly different from that followed in the calculation of the prominence values that were shown in Table 6, Ch. VI. To economise in machine time, the N.Z.P.A. summary deck was used rather than the full N.Z.P.A. detail deck of 9040 cards. This consisted of a deck of 1850 cards representing every N.Z.P.A. message which had been used by any of the newspapers of the sample. A summary of the values scored in the various parameters of message usage was punched into each card. This included the mean prominence scored by the message in its various usages as well as its mean illustrations usage. These two values were then added together in the computing stage in order to take the actual quantity of illustrations more fully into account in arriving at the final prominence score.

TABLE 2
PROMINENCE SCORES OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT

Subject	Total Prominence	Mean Prominence
5.	62,902 (1)	126.3 (8)
2.	61,615 (2)	212.5 (1)
6.	58,217 (3)	163.1 (3)
4.	40,258 (4)	144.3 (4)
1.	25,974 (5)	207.8 (2)
3.	19,209 (6)	133.4 (6)
7.	15,448 (7)	143.0 (5)
8.	6,236 (8)	127.3 (7)

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1 ; Politics, 2 ; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3 ; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4 ; Economic activity, 5 ; Sport, 6 ; Science, 7 ; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

The sum of these two values produced the 'Total Prominence' scores shown in Table 2 above. Because of the variations that have been described in the method of calculation, these total prominence scores are not quantitatively identical with the prominence scores of Table 6 in Ch. VI. However, in proportional terms, they are almost identical. The rank order of the subject content divisions is the same, except for Politics which

has moved into second place at the expense of Sport which has dropped into third place. One reason for this may have been that the mean total inchage of illustrations devoted to Politics was greater than that concerned with Sport and this has had its effect in the resulting calculations.

One defect of the method of demonstrating the relative prominence of different categories of N.Z.P.A. content by quantifying the prominence scores they received in the newspapers is that the significance of any extreme values in a series under investigation is likely to be concealed. Consequently, mean prominence scores were calculated in order to examine the values realised by each N.Z.P.A. category in relation to the number of items in it and to their range. This was done by dividing the total prominence by the number of summary cards in the particular category under analysis to give an average value which is referred to in the tables that follow as 'Mean Prominence'. Table 2 compares the total prominence of N.Z.P.A. subject content with its mean prominence and demonstrates some interesting shifts in significance. The relative importance of economic activity is drastically reversed from first position to eighth, Politics moves from second place to first, and War and the Armed Services moves from fifth to second position. Stories about War and the Armed Services, and about Politics, though not as numerous as items about economic activity, were given greater display by the newspapers than other items of subject content, and this is apparent in their mean prominence scoring. Similarly, a comparison of total with mean prominence scores for the various news generating source categories shows some interesting differences in their rank order. (See Table 3.)

Journalists using bylines, Political Parties, and Anonymous sources move from near bottom of the total prominence distribution to the top of the mean prominence list. Cultural, educational and associational circles, and Government sources (which are next in order) secure only a little more prominence than do a cluster of other news generators which are below them. Sporting and recreational circles and Economic organisations (two of the most massive categories in quantitative terms) are relegated to a position near the bottom of the list. Clearly, stories

attributed to Journalists using bylines, Political parties, Anonymous sources, and Cultural, educational and associational circles (though only a small proportion of the items of N.Z.P.A. content) often received feature treatment, and many of these items were also lengthy.

TABLE 3

PROMINENCE SCORES OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT, BY NEWS GENERATING SOURCE

Category	Total Prom.	Mean Prom.
Government sources	47,982 (1)	171.2 (5)
Sporting and recreational circles	46,957 (2)	147.7 (8)
Wire services and newspapers	44,578 (3)	153.3 (6)
Economic organisations	40,782 (4)	123.6 (10)
Police courts, judicial tribunals	24,621 (5)	151.9 (7)
Cultural, educational, associational circles	16,001 (6)	177.8 (4)
Anonymous sources	14,656 (7)	198.1 (3)
Journalists using bylines	10,489 (8)	317.8 (1)
Private citizens	8,834 (9)	123.7 (11)
Medical and scientific circles	7,415 (10)	132.4 (9)
Political parties	5,148 (11)	257.4 (2)

Comparison of the regional prominence scores in Table 4 shows that New Zealand moved from first in the total prominence list to third in the mean prominence list, while the Far East and South East Asia rose from fifth to first position. Inspection of the prominence scoring for these items indicates that this was because of the play which most newspapers gave to reports of the Vietnam war and its accompanying political crises.

TABLE 4

PROMINENCE SCORES OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT, BY REGION

Region	Total Prom.	Mean Prom.
New Zealand	134,024 (1)	154.9 (3)
Europe	15,308 (6)	130.8 (5)
U.K.	59,659 (2)	180.2 (2)
America	27,329 (4)	150.2 (4)
The Far East and South East Asia	18,792 (5)	211.1 (1)
Australia	27,478 (3)	130.8 (5)
Other	7,269 (7)	129.8 (7)

This emerges more clearly in Table 5 which analyses mean prominence values in terms of the various subject content divisions. The Far East and South East Asia scored highest in the War and the Armed Services distribution, but the United Kingdom almost equalled its score. The United Kingdom score for political news was the highest of the entire series (and may have owed much to reports of a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London which was featured in most newspapers) but New Zealand and the Far East and South East Asia were next in the category with approximately

equal scores. Australia obtained the highest score in the Sports category (presumably because of the reports of the Springbok tour). Europe rated surprisingly high in Human interest and Social affairs, and New Zealand scored well in Science, probably because weather reports, which were coded as Science news, were prominently displayed and illustrated with weather maps in most papers. Europe scored well in the Crime, Disaster and Public Safety news as well as with Economic activity. The United Kingdom obtained the best score for news about Culture and Entertainment. The Far East and South East Asia, and Other regions, scored nothing in this category.

TABLE 5

MEAN PROMINENCE SCORES OF N.Z.P.A. CONTENT, BY REGIONAL SOURCE

Subject	Asia	U.K.	N.Z.	America	Europe	Australia	Other	Total
1.	240.5	237.2	228.8	227.9	71.3	77.8	204.1	1287.6 (1)
2.	201.1	335.9	203.8	167.6	138.3	75.9	139.6	1262.5 (2)
6.	131.0	150.5	177.8	138.2	84.4	204.9	62.6	949.4 (3)
3.	102.0	115.4	138.7	136.2	171.7	121.2	160.0	945.2 (4)
7.	88.5	109.4	183.7	135.3	98.9	175.0	153.5	944.3 (5)
4.	109.6	142.5	152.0	114.8	176.5	126.4	112.2	934.0 (6)
5.	163.5	114.3	134.4	107.6	199.3	89.6	45.0	853.7 (7)
8.	-	148.9	114.0	130.7	58.5	115.0	-	567.1 (8)
Average								
Mean	211.1	180.2	154.9	150.2	130.8	130.8	129.8	
Prom.								

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

Over-all, the massive play given to War and the Armed Services and to Politics emerges in Column 8 where the means in each row are totalled. The attention paid to other subjects appears to have been remarkably even, except for a noticeable decline in the case of Economic activity, and a slump in the case of Culture and Entertainment. The average mean prominence values in the bottom row of the table are a repetition of the over-all mean prominence scores of Table 4.

2. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NEWSPAPERS

Table 6 shows the number of N.Z.P.A. items in each subject division that were used by each sampled newspaper during the week surveyed.

TABLE 6

EACH SAMPLED NEWSPAPER'S USAGE OF N.Z.P.A. ITEMS, BY SUBJECT (N = 9572)

Subject	NZ Herald	Dominion	Press	Otago D.T.	Auck. Star	Evening P.	Chch Star	Evening Star	Wang. Chron.	Daily News	Tinianu H.	South. Times	Waikeato T.	Herald Trib.	Daily Post	Evening Mail
5.	213	199	278	220	197	202	224	216	86	99	120	247	43	102	53	109
6.	153	132	144	134	163	141	160	133	93	106	96	183	69	92	67	86
4.	101	116	130	89	87	123	117	125	62	129	75	142	52	96	49	78
2.	83	91	116	95	95	105	91	94	41	65	45	87	47	74	52	58
3.	52	66	71	60	46	73	60	78	22	35	34	69	19	41	24	35
7.	40	43	55	40	38	39	39	50	29	37	40	45	16	32	33	46
1.	44	47	50	36	40	40	36	40	31	29	31	41	17	28	18	30
8.	10	25	17	16	10	19	23	17	14	12	19	16	4	17	8	10
Total	696	719	861	690	676	742	750	753	373	512	460	830	267	482	304	452
Rank Order	7	6	1	8	9	5	4	3	14	10	12	2	16	11	15	13

% NZPA

Items

Total

Editorial

Items

47.6 57.1 53.0 52.7 45.3 46.8 47.0 50.9 44.1 51.9 49.3 53.5 29.0 45.2 43.2 48.2

Subject Coding : War and the Armed Services, 1 ; Politics, 2 ; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3 ;

Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4 ; Economic activity, 5 ; Sport, 6 ; Science 7 ; Culture

and Entertainment, 8.

The metropolitan dailies plus The Southland Times used many more N.Z.P.A. items than did the rest of the provincials in the sample. The average percentage of N.Z.P.A. items in the total editorial content of each newspaper is also shown in Table 6. It ranged from 29 per cent. in the case of The Waikato Times to 58.5 per cent. in the case of The Southland Times. The average usage rate per newspaper was 49 per cent. The Dominion, The Press, The Otago Daily Times, The Evening Star, The Daily News, and The Southland Times used 50-60 per cent. and the rest used between 40-50 per cent., except for The Waikato Times.

(a) Homogeneity of Content

Table 7 uses the values of Table 6 to rank each subject in accordance with the priority that each sampled newspaper gave it when selecting items from the N.Z.P.A. input. These rankings were given a concordance test and a value of $W = .92$ was obtained, indicating a very high level of agreement among the 16 newspapers as to the subject matter of the wire stories which they published.

TABLE 7

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECTS IN N.Z.P.A. CONTENT OF EACH
SAMPLED NEWSPAPER

Newspaper	Subject							
	5.	6.	4.	2.	3.	7.	1.	8.
N.Z.Herald	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	8
Dominion	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	8
Press	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	8
Otago Daily Times	1	2	4	3	5	6	6	8
Auckland Star	1	2	4	3	5	7	6	8
Evening Post	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	8
Christchurch Star	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dunedin Star	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Wanganui Chronicle	1	2	3	4	7	6	5	8
Taranaki Daily News	3	2	1	4	7	5	6	8
Timaru Herald	1	2	3	4	6	5	7	8
Southland Times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Waikato Times	4	1	2	3	5	7	6	8
Herald Tribune	1	3	2	4	5	6	7	8
Daily Post	2	1	4	3	6	5	7	8
Evening Mail	1	2	3	4	6	5	7	8

$W = .92$

This treatment of news selection patterns is adapted from a study by David Gold and J.L. Simmons¹ who examined the proposition that there are close similarities between American newspapers in their handling of wire service news and that 'though papers differ in some respects from community to community, the news stories originating outside the community are the same, word for word'. How well-aimed, then, is the criticism often directed against New Zealand dailies that in many respects they are uniformly minded in their reproduction of news,² and that this is a defect which is made more pronounced by the dependence of some papers on the N.Z.P.A. service?

The close correlation between the subject content frequency distributions of messages sent by the N.Z.P.A. and what the newspapers of the system printed has already been observed. Here the selection patterns of individual newspapers confirm that in choosing this material there was a high degree of similarity among the gatekeepers at least as to the proportion of stories in each subject category that they used. To some extent, the criticism that the system reproduces a similar pattern of news all over the country appears justified, though whether this is considered a defect or a virtue depends on what the functions of the system are thought to be. Certainly, the over-all preference it showed for news about Economic activity, about Crime, Disaster and Public Safety (which included many reports of judicial proceedings of considerable public interest) and about Politics, indicates that it may be performing its service functions with remarkable, and perhaps commendable, unanimity.

1 'News Selection Patterns Among Iowa Dailies', Pub. Opinion Q., 29:3, Fall 1965, 425-430.

2 Elizabeth Warburton, 'A Study of the Press', Landfall, 8:3, September 1954, 199, complained that 'variety of news and opinion is the chief lack in New Zealand newspapers. The news given in the morning papers overlaps much of the news in the evening papers and vice versa. The same kind of opinion appears in both, and political interests are the same throughout'. Similarly, more than 90 per cent. of the respondents to a Consumer Institute survey conducted in 1965 agreed that the 'sameness, timidity of controversy and lack of writers with personality were the main defects of the press'. (See Consumer 26, March 26 1966, 15.)

A further test of the degree of homogeneity in newspaper usage of the N.Z.P.A. content was made by calculating the standard deviation values for the item frequency distributions of the 16 newspapers listed in Table 6. (See Table 8).

TABLE 8

Subject	Mean	Standard Deviation
5.	163.0	71.1
6.	122.0	35.8
4.	98.2	28.4
2.	77.4	22.5
3.	49.1	19.0
7.	38.9	8.6
1.	34.9	9.2
8.	14.8	5.9

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services,1;Politics,2;Human Interest and Social affairs,3;Crime,Disaster and Public Safety,4;Economic activity,5;Sport,6;Science,7;Culture and Entertainment,8.

The values obtained in this test indicate that there was a fairly consistent and compact grouping of items about the mean values of all the subject divisions except Economic activity and Human Interest and Social affairs. These two categories showed greater variation of values relative to the mean, suggesting that the newspapers demonstrated some variety in their approach to these areas of the news. Some of the provincial papers carried relatively small amounts of this material. Thus, the Wanganui Chronicle, The Daily News, The Timaru Herald, The Waikato Times, The Daily Post, and The Nelson Evening Mail reproduced Human Interest and Social affairs news only lightly, perhaps because of lack of space, perhaps because of a preference for local content. The Waikato Times, The Daily Post, and to a lesser extent, the Wanganui Chronicle and The Daily News carried relatively few items of Economic activity, preferring a higher volume of local content in their editorial mix. All the provincial papers are in competition with large metropolitan rivals, and this is one reason why some of them (and particularly The Waikato Times and The Daily Post) also carry a relatively low quantity of N.Z.P.A. material.

3. GATEKEEPING DECISIONS

Between the origin of a newsworthy event and the ordinary reader there are obviously a number of points at which a message may undergo change, delay, or even some process of rejection. These positions can be described as 'gates' where a variety of journalists have the power to make decisions about the transmission of a version of the message to further positions in the communications network. In the case of N.Z.P.A. news there are likely to be two such major gates within New Zealand where the judgments of individual newspapermen and the values of the institutions in which they are employed, as well as a great many technical considerations, are important in the selection process. One of these is the sub-editorial desk in the particular newspaper office; another is the editorial centre of the N.Z.P.A. itself.

Studies carried out in the United States have demonstrated that to a large extent the wire agency has become the recommender of news to the telegraph sub-editor who evaluates it according to the way it is sent. In a classic research project by Walter Gieber³ it was found that there were no major differences in news selection and display decisions among 16 telegraph editors. Just what differences of selection did occur among the gatekeepers of the New Zealand newspaper sample will be discussed in detail later, meantime it can be observed that the United States experience is highly relevant to the way in which N.Z.P.A. content is handled by New Zealand newspapers. The picture emerges of a highly co-operative set of newspapers making extensive use of the N.Z.P.A. service and approaching the task of content selection with a high degree of uniformity. Indeed, it has sometimes been the practice in New Zealand metropolitan centres for pairs of dailies to co-operate in the exchange of N.Z.P.A. copy. The sub-editors of some morning papers have customarily sent across to their opposites on the evenings, the galley proofs of unused wire stories with the file of unused wire messages. Similarly, the evening men have left

3 'Across the Desk: A study of 16 Telegraph Editors', Journalism Q., 33:4, Autumn 1956, 423-432.

their unused copy and galley proofs for their morning colleagues. This is convenient for several reasons. Some continuity in the flow of wire news and its treatment can be obtained between papers; furthermore, the practice provides early copy which can immediately be sent to the type-setters as soon as the sub-editorial staff come on duty. Another way of providing early copy is simply to clip from the morning or evening newspaper those N.Z.P.A. items which it might be convenient to reproduce either in full or in some abbreviated form.

On some New Zealand dailies, the flow of wire copy from the teleprinter is watched by the chief sub-editor, or by a news editor, who decides whether or not to use a particular item, where it is to be placed, and even what presentation it is to have. These men leaf through the material and allocate it to a subordinate for further treatment, or put it into the overflow. On such papers, one man may virtually decide the arrangement of all the important areas of editorial content. His decision-making may be influenced by news conferences and a variety of other factors, but for all practical purposes he is chief gatekeeper, and on all important questions of news selection and display his choice is likely to be decisive. This is not to say that on some large metropolitan newspapers a considerable degree of specialisation may not prevail to the extent that the overseas cable sub-editor or the news editor, for example, might not have considerable autonomy as to what material to reproduce in the areas of the paper under his immediate control; but for the most part, the structure of the N.Z.P.A. news as it is published in the dailies is likely to represent a conditioned response on the part of a small number of gatekeepers to the general flow of what is supplied by the wire agency.

(a) Wire Service Exclusions

Some stories, however, were not handled by the newspaper gatekeepers because the N.Z.P.A. itself decided to exclude them. Examination of the message file for the week covered by this study discloses that 137 items were not sent on to the newspapers of the system for a variety of reasons. This could be described as an initial information loss of approximately six per cent. of the grand total of 2,200 messages received for relay to the newspapers. Table 9 shows the subject content distribution of these items. The exclusions were

most heavily imposed in the subject categories of Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, Politics, Human Interest and Social affairs, and War and the Armed Services. This material constituted 70.9 per cent. of the total items excluded. Approximately 66 per cent. of the excluded messages came from overseas regions and 34 per cent. came from New Zealand sources, suggesting that the N.Z.P.A. might at times be relatively over-supplied with international news. The heaviest exclusions were imposed on Monday's messages (approximately 46 per cent. of the total number of exclusions) indicating that system capacity and message selection problems might be most troublesome at this time because of the accumulation of news matter over Sunday when most dailies in New Zealand do not publish.

TABLE 9

ITEMS EXCLUDED BY THE N.Z.P.A., BY SUBJECT

Subject	Item Frequency	%
4.	33	24.1
2.	29	21.2
6.	14	10.2
3.	19	13.9
1.	16	11.7
5.	15	10.9
8.	7	5.1
7.	4	2.9
Total	<u>137</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

Twenty-two of these exclusions can be dismissed from further consideration on the ground that their content was covered elsewhere, or had been dealt with previously. Another four were not accepted because their content was considered too local in significance, and one was written in a way which made it too difficult to follow. The remaining overseas messages that were excluded were mostly of low priority and dealt with minor events, or consisted of background commentaries on matters of no special importance. However, judgments of this kind are essentially subjective. Some of the excluded messages listed below could be considered just as newsworthy as much of the material that was in fact approved by the N.Z.P.A. for transmission to the newspapers.

Former Congo Vice-President convicted of treason.
 Nkrumah holds special course for Ministers at ideological institute.
 Dick Gregory, a negro comedian, injured in civil rights demonstration.
 South African government plan to bar communists from legal posts.
 Australian Prime Minister in the United States.
 N.S.W. Labour Party conference speculates about right wing.
 A.L.P. should adopt firm defence policy.
 Six professors dismissed from Lagos University.
 Man killed in Rabaul in argument over tin of fish.
 Jury fails to agree in London conspiracy case.
 Bank of People's China in Singapore to close down.
 Prospects for sugar industry in Papua.
 Future of Sydney Opera House.

Furthermore it could be argued that the following material about Euro-
 pean politics was worthy of transmission because of its general
 political significance.

Erhard discusses differences of opinion with De Gaulle.
 De Gaulle and Erhard agree to hold conference.
 Franco-German attitudes to summit conference.
 France may take part in next 'fallex' Nato exercise.
 Franco-British talks on international liquidity.
 Economic reforms in Yugoslavia.

It could also be contended that accounts of a United States court
 case in which a model was acquitted of a charge of wearing indecent shorts,
 an Albert Hall beat poetry recital⁴, and the 1965 San Sebastian Film
 Festival results, were all items of general sociological significance as
 well as entertainment value and were also worthy of a place in a newspaper
 trying to put before its readers a comprehensive account of world events.
 Indeed, a more sensationally-minded press than the New Zealand one might
 have featured such matters as the model, the Albert Hall, and the six
 professors of Lagos at the expense of more prosaic affairs if it had been
 given the chance.

As for the exclusions in the New Zealand material, it might be a
 reasonable enough contention that the officers elected at the Council of
 New Zealand Pig Breeders' annual conference, the results of the New
 Zealand Federation of Country Girls' public speaking competition, the
 views of New Plymouth bar room groups about increased beer prices, an
 announcement that the importation of bathroom scales would be increased,

⁴ The Press, however, published a version of this item attributed
 to its London correspondent on June 22 1965.

a report of a flaming satellite in the sky at Tokomaru Bay, the results of the New Zealand National Accordion Contest, the New Zealand Red Cross Society's shipments of milk powder to Pakistan, a Member of Parliament's adventures with the Totalisator Agency Board, the Masterton Public Relations Officer's views on licensing laws in New Zealand, or even a Dannevirke civil servant's responses to a suggestion campaign being run by the Ministry of Works, were all matters of limited rather than national interest. But the N.Z.P.A. gatekeepers also vetoed reports of six court cases. Three of these involved defendants charged with rape, the others dealt with less serious criminal matters. The agency also thought that two items of human interest were not suitable for transmission. One of them was a New Plymouth message about the award of an unusual Spanish honour by General Franco to a resident of the city, the other was an item (which was accepted as genuine by several South Island newspapers) to the effect that 'Lord Bourbon', successor to the French title of Marquis de Bourbonnais, was living in obscurity in Queenstown.

The following news from government sources was also cut, though it could be argued that it may well have had qualities of widespread interest:

M.P. calls for inquiry into mental health services
 Statement about staff recruiting for mental health services
 Whitebait research information available from Marine Department
 Department of Agriculture report on milk treatment stations
 Secretary of Industries and Commerce views on vocational training
 Academic boards and the control of teachers' colleges
 N.Z.B.C. conductor's plans for world artists

The service also killed an item to the effect that a rugby league test would not be televised direct to New Zealand, and another one giving the answers of the mayor of a North Island town to criticism published in N.Z. Truth about his alleged involvement in a land speculation.

From this it appears that the N.Z.P.A. discriminates against certain kinds of court cases, imposes some restraints on the transmission of items that it considers unreliable or too local in interest, and does not wish to act as a forum for the discussion of crusades launched by a rival to the daily press.

It is also sensitive to the activities of pressure groups. A statement by the secretary of the cycle section of the Automotive and Cycle Wholesalers' Association in Christchurch was re-written in such a way that specific detail concerning a government decision to forbid the importation of anything but token quantities of bicycles from overseas was converted into loose generality. The name of a large firm being granted a monopoly in the manufacture of cycles in New Zealand was omitted from the re-written version along with other information. A follow-up to this statement was made in the afternoon by the cycle association's president but it was cut completely. It alleged that the Minister of Industries and Commerce and the Minister of Customs were using the findings of a Tariff and Development Board inquiry to grant protection to the New Zealand industry in a manner not considered by the board and to an extent in excess of that recommended.

The N.Z.P.A. staff also re-wrote a statement by the South Canterbury Public Relations officer criticising the Mt. Cook National Park Board and the National Parks Authority for their rejection of a local company's application for approval to build a motel near the Hermitage. The re-written version toned down some criticism of the Lands and Survey Department and cut some details of the company's plans.

An item about the opening of a new factory in Wellington was excluded as 'free publicity' along with other items about the award of a New Zealand Felt and Textile Ltd., safety prize, and developments in nylon production at a factory in Sharnon. The report of the U.A.O.D. Friendly Societies' annual meeting was also excluded, and so was some of the discussion on prices at the annual conference of the dairy section of Federated Farmers. A statement by the chairman of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation welcoming an announcement by the Prime Minister (K.J. Holyoake) that he would expect negotiations in Vietnam to include Vietcong representatives, but taking him to task for calling them 'faceless men' was also excluded by the N.Z.P.A.

Such examples indicate that the wire service practises a certain amount of gatekeeping of its own accord and in the process tones down or rejects some pressure group material. However, this was not always unfavourable to the group concerned. There was one interesting example during the sample week in which the N.Z.P.A. excluded an item at the

request of a pressure group. A debate was held at Victoria University of Wellington and students voted 185 to 51 in favour of a motion 'that this house will not fight for Queen and Country'. This item was published in The Dominion and The New Zealand Herald, but student representatives complained to the N.Z.P.A. that the debate was not open to the press and the N.Z.P.A. message, accordingly, was not sent.

One further impediment to the flow of news derives from the possibility that individual newspapers themselves might fail in their responsibility to contribute an account of a newsworthy event to other members of the network. Something of this sort seems to have occurred in the case of one of the North Island provincials which ran a scoop to the effect that Mandy Rice Davies, a famous British entertainer, had been invited to sing at a Hawkes Bay cabaret. No version of this appeared, at any stage, in any other New Zealand daily paper, presumably because nothing concerning it was transmitted on the N.Z.P.A. system at the time.⁵ Similarly, a South Island daily carried a front page story of national, and possibly international, significance to the effect that there was a doctrinal split in the ranks of the New Zealand Communist Party. Yet no account of this was transmitted through the system.

(b) Newspaper Cuts

How did the newspaper gatekeepers deal with the general problem of content selection which confronted them as they processed the N.Z.P.A. material? On the whole, the sample showed little evidence of attempts to re-write or reorganise messages so as to give readers a more coherent and continuous version of events. But there were some occasional exceptions worth noting. Some papers were stimulated by items in the overseas file to inquire about their possible local significance or application. The New Zealand Herald investigated the work done in New Zealand to assist heart cases by the use of electronic devices and published a locally-orientated story about this. The Evening Star made its own inquiries as to whether New Zealand hospitals followed British practice in keeping a 'black book' in which to record the activities of chronic malingerers.

5 News of this affair was, however, eventually made more widespread when the Minister of Immigration refused to issue a permit for Miss Rice Davies to enter the country.

Some papers managed to economise on space by merging several related items into one comprehensive story. For example, both The Press and The Southland Times dealt with a sequence of reports about a shipwrights' strike in Wellington by this method. In each case, the local evening newspapers had carried very brief accounts of the affair. The mornings printed the unused parts of the texts that had been sent to the evenings the day before, along with the new material they had received. This treatment gave more continuity to the N.Z.P.A. content than it would otherwise have possessed, but recourse to it requires time (which is not always available) and a modest degree of skill on the part of sub-editors.

The Dominion carried out some extensive re-writing of N.Z.P.A. messages which it was using in lead positions, and it managed to compress a large number of items into daily columns styled 'N.Z. News in Brief' and 'News Spots'. The Auckland Star ran a similar column entitled 'Spotlight on the World'. Some of the provincial papers showed ingenuity in their use of overseas material. The Nelson Evening Mail, for instance, carried out some re-writing of introductions as well as some editorial synthesising of messages, particularly in the case of items reporting the progress of the Vietnam war. In one issue it neatly tied an item about Australian/United States accord to an account of a meeting between President Johnson and Sir Robert Menzies in Washington. This formed part of a cable page pictorial spread beside an amalgam of war reportage.

The Waikato Times, while giving a strong local emphasis to the news, was also highly consistent in its awareness of events both in the United States and in South East Asia. Letters to the editor were given double column feature treatment, and a forum on Vietnam quoted readers' views extensively. During the sample week, the paper carried a full-page display advertisement for 'Visit U.S.A. Week--Go Matson'. This was supported by an interview with a United States travel agency director. A United States policy decision to increase the forces in Vietnam was made into a front page lead, and this was followed by four other items in digest form, describing other developments in the Vietnam situation. An account of the New Zealand Prime Minister lunching with the Japanese Emperor received a big play, and it was interesting to note that this newspaper also ran background features on Rhodesia during the sample week.

(c) Sub-Editorial Techniques

In some newspapers, however, the standard of cable sub-editing was uniformly feeble. The cliches, cable-ese and banalities of the original wire copy were, in many instances, reproduced without alteration. Some papers slavishly reproduced gobbets of cable messages to give a conglomerate treatment to the Vietnam war, but the consequence of this was that parts of the resultant stories lacked coherence. In some of the published material there were too few explanatory crossheads and too little evidence of care or thought in sub-editing. Illustrations often lacked relevance to the content of accompanying messages and seem to have been used largely in accordance with some general notion that a page of newsprint requires some sort of pictorial light relief, whether or not what is provided is of importance or significance.

Some very crude methods were used to deal with the message overload problem. The most obvious of these was the decision to impose a total veto on publication of the item. For instance, only three out of 16 papers published a message to the effect that Catholic priests ought to be allowed to marry; only two published the interesting fact that the Mayor of New York had resigned; and only two the disturbing fact that swastikas had been painted on a Jewish memorial in Germany. Similarly, The Press, perhaps in deliberate pursuit of the unsensational, rejected a story to the effect that it was proposed to give dancing lessons to the inmates of Waikeria prison and instead ran an accompanying item about the possibility of release hostels being established.

Techniques of truncation and fragmentation were used by all papers, sometimes to obtain brief paragraphs for use as fillers at the bottom of a column. Occasionally this had disastrous results. Readers of The Daily Post,⁶ for example, were left in suspense over the price of Japanese cars. An item concluded with the statement that 'the models produced by the new plant will range from the Toyota 700, the lowest priced car in Canada, to' Presumably this was a case of a dropped line of type, or a compositorial error, rather than an arbitrary cut, but the effect was one of mystification whatever the reason. The device of using a large number of brief items from the overseas news gave wide coverage to world events at

the cost of severe truncation. For instance, The Dominion cut an item about the British Parliament from a 500-word backgrounder about the conflicts to be expected between the major political parties and the issues for debate to a cryptic 36-word announcement. How adequate is such treatment? Providing that in the first place the material is written in a suitably brief form it may be a convenient solution to a problem. 'Sports Snippets' were published by The Otago Daily Times in this way. Similarly, The Christchurch Star managed to extend some of its Parliamentary coverage in a column called 'Parliament in Brief'.

Some papers used a technique of fragmentation whereby portions of a story were published on different days. For instance, The Evening Post published 365 words of an 845-word overseas message about a United Nations discussion of Australia's role in New Guinea in two instalments over two issues. Similarly, The Nelson Evening Mail published an item, originally of 749 words, about people returning their medals in protest at the Beatles receiving the M.B.E., but this appeared in two segments. One part, consisting of 171 words, appeared on the front page, the other part, cut down to 74 words, was published on page 3 the following day.

There were, of course, some mysterious delays in the way in which items were published. Readers of one North Island provincial were told on Saturday that Mary Revell, an Australian long distance swimmer, was getting ready to swim across Sydney Harbour. But this was a Thursday evening N.Z.P.A. message. A further one on Friday had already announced that she had succeeded in this feat, and a Saturday one contained a 212-word interview with her on this subject. Readers of this newspaper were being regaled with stale, incomplete information.

Unfavourable placement is probably the easiest sanction to invoke against an item which is thought to be not particularly newsworthy. For some curious reason, one of the South Island provincials buried an important announcement about a 10s. drop in the price per cwt. for New Zealand butter in the British market in an obscure position at the bottom of the cable page when such an item could well have been made into a lead story. Was this an error of judgment, a failure of perception, or something imposed by the necessities of page composition and impending deadlines?

(a) Low Usage Items

Table 10 identifies the number of sampled newspapers which used each of the 1850 N.Z.P.A. messages that were published within the system during the sample period. The average number of papers using each message

necessarily a defect, but individual newspapers are by no means imprisoned inside the structural boundaries of this formula. They are able, if they wish, to exert considerable freedom as to what specific items they in fact decide to publish. It also promotes the further inquiry, what sort of items were given such low priority as to appear in only one or two papers, and why did the system appear to be so unfavourably disposed towards them? A preliminary analysis of the low-usage material shows that not only did some newspapers use a number of messages very scantily, a total of 213 of the original N.Z.P.A. messages were not used at all by any newspaper. (See Table 11.) This represents a total of approximately 10.3 per cent. of the N.Z.P.A. input file and it is roughly comparable with the wastage of 7 per cent. noted in the Jones, Troidahl and Hvistendahl study.⁷

TABLE 11

N.Z.P. A. ITEMS GIVEN LOW USAGE BY THE NEWSPAPER SYSTEM

	Not Used	One Paper	Two Papers	Total
Duplications	13	29	24	66
Documentary	46	83	63	192
Remainder	154	146	152	452
Total	<u>213</u>	<u>258</u>	<u>239</u>	<u>710</u>

Aggregating these unused messages with those used by one or two papers, the resulting total of 710 was derived and the characteristics of the material included in it were examined more closely. Sixty-six of these items were dismissed from further consideration on the grounds that they were largely duplications of material covered elsewhere in the wire agency service. Similarly, a further 192 were disposed of on the grounds that they consisted of documentary reports either about sports fixtures or commercial activities of relatively minor significance. Thus it could be said that 34 per cent. of the N.Z.P.A. input register of 2063 items was seldom allowed to pass by the newspaper gatekeepers, but less than two-thirds of this material (452 items) contained news and information of any particular significance. These items were placed in a special low-usage register and closely scrutinised. A total of 85.8 per cent. of them came from overseas sources, indicating that to a large extent their low utilisation may have been a consequence of information overload in the

⁷ 'News Selection Patterns from a State TTS Wire', Journalism Q., 38:3, Summer 1961, 303-312.

field of international news. Their distribution by day of origin shows a steady increase in the number of messages being treated with low priority as the week progressed, nearly a quarter of them originating on Saturday. (See Table 12.)

TABLE 12NUMBER OF LOW-USAGE N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES, BY DAY OF ORIGIN

Day	No. of Low-Usage Items	%
Monday	67	14.8
Tuesday	58	12.8
Wednesday	60	13.3
Thursday	72	15.9
Friday	85	18.8
Saturday	110	24.4
Total	<u>452</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 13 shows the subject content distribution of the low-usage items. Columns 1 and 2 give information about the actual number and percentage of low-usage items in each subject division, while column 3 indicates what percentage they constituted of the total number of messages in each N.Z.P.A. input category.

TABLE 13NUMBER OF LOW-USAGE N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES, BY SUBJECT

Subject	No. of Low-usage Items	% of Low-usage Items	% of N.Z.P.A. Input
2.	151	33.4	43.4
1.	55	12.2	37.4
3.	40	8.9	25.8
7.	25	5.5	21.4
4.	63	13.9	20.9
8.	11	2.4	20.0
5.	70	15.5	12.9
6.	37	8.2	9.3
Total	<u>452</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Subject Coding: War and the Armed Services, 1; Politics, 2; Human Interest and Social affairs, 3; Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 4; Economic activity, 5; Sport, 6; Science, 7; Culture and Entertainment, 8.

About one-third of the low-usage register was concerned with messages about War and the Armed Services, about Human Interest and Social affairs, and about Economic activity in roughly comparable amounts, but the proportion of low-usage items to N.Z.P.A. input items in the subject divisions varied considerably from 37.4 per cent. in the case of War and the Armed Services to only 12.9 per cent. in the case of Economic activity. The discrimination of the gatekeepers seems to have fallen fairly heavily on Politics, and on War and the Armed Services, less heavily on Human Interest and Social affairs, on Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, on Science, and on Culture and Entertainment, and relatively lightly on Economic activity and on Sport.

Table 14 emphasises that about 86 per cent. of the low-usage messages were from overseas sources and only 14 per cent. originated in New Zealand.

TABLE 14.

NUMBER OF LOW-USAGE N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES, BY REGIONAL SOURCE

Region	No. of Low-Usage Items	% of Low-Usage Items	% of N.Z.P.A. Input
Other regions	34	7.5	48.6
Far East and South-East Asia	54	12.0	47.8
Australia	100	22.2	39.1
America	63	13.9	30.3
U.K.	108	23.9	27.4
Europe	30	6.6	23.9
New Zealand	63	13.9	7.0
Total	<u>452</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Of the overseas categories, the United Kingdom (approximately 24 per cent.) and Australia (approximately 22 per cent.) produced the greatest numbers of low-usage items. Although the same number of messages came from within New Zealand as from the American region, their relative proportions (expressed as a percentage of N.Z.P.A. input in column 3) were very different. Only 7 per cent. were from New Zealand compared with 30 per cent. from America. Messages from Europe and the United Kingdom were treated with roughly the same degree of discrimination, as were those from Australia, the Far East and South East Asia, and Other regions. But items from these three latter regions were handled with more severity than were those from the former two.

From these data it can be seen that the tendency of the newspapers in reducing the volume of N.Z.P.A. output to more manageable proportions was

to discard items concerned mainly with Politics, with Economic activity, with Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, and with War and the Armed Services (subjects generously represented in the flow of news). In this process, items about Politics and about War and the Armed Services tended to receive relatively the most severe treatment. This discrimination was exerted more frequently on material from the United Kingdom and Australia, but it was applied with more relative severity to news from Other regions, from the Far East and South East Asia, and from Australia. As against this, however, it has to be recognised that the fact that some items were unused and others only lightly used does not necessarily reflect any discredit on either the N.Z.P.A. service or the individual newspapers taking it. The 'usage goals' of the service are not necessarily to get the full exploitation of every item in its files, and they may be hard to define because of an underlying paradox.⁸ If the usage rate is low, editors might think they are getting too much useless material. If it is too high, they might complain about lack of variety. The goal of the service is obviously to strike a balance between the two. The significance of the situation described here is that the newspapers of the system had considerable variety available to them in selecting material to accompany the hard core of major news items, if they wanted to exercise it.

4. PATTERNS OF NEWS SELECTION

(a) Sensational Items

Close analysis of the treatment of low-usage items is instructive because it supplies detailed information about the way in which the newspapers rejected particular clusters of stories. These included a small number of items that emphasised topics concerned with sex and violence. Towards such material the bulk of the New Zealand press customarily shows caution, partly because of the legal problem of defining obscenity and indecency, and partly out of a concern for what it considers to be desirable community values. For instance, the staff of The New Zealand Herald think that 'without peddling . . . pornography and without pandering to a morbid or lascivious interest in biological detail, a newspaper has a public

8 See Robert L. Jones, Verling C. Trolldahl and J.K. Hvistendahl, op. cit.

duty to expose sex crimes'.⁹ But the writers add a significant qualification. 'It must be remembered that if a report contains indecent or obscene material, its fairness or accuracy will provide no defence in a criminal prosecution based on its indecent nature'. The difficulties of defining obscenity or indecency are in practice great enough to cause many New Zealand editors to shy well away from the publication of anything which is likely to cause offence or embarrassment to readers.¹⁰

For one reason they are hampered by the very breadth and uncertainty of definition of the law. According to the Indecent Publications Act 1963, an indecent document is 'any book, newspaper, periodical, picture, photograph, photographic negative, photographic plate, slide or film and any print or writing, any paper or any thing which is printed or has impressed upon it or otherwise shown thereon any word, statement, sign, picture or representation' and such a document will be indecent if it includes in its qualities 'describing, depicting, expressing, or otherwise dealing with matters of sex, horror, crime, cruelty or violence in a manner that is injurious to the public good.' The 1963 Act also set up an Indecent Publications Tribunal to hear disputes as to the indecent character of books, magazines and sound recordings, though not of newspapers. What constitutes injury to the public good, therefore remains, in the case of newspapers, subject to the determination of the courts in the ordinary way. It is perhaps typical of the New Zealand attitude to authority that the meaning of the words defining an indecent document has not been very fully tested. In their daily operations, most newspapers prefer to avoid the risk of prosecution by leaving out dubious items. They are likely to be the more attracted to this course as a result of a decision which

9 John Hardingham (ed.), The New Zealand Herald Manual of Journalism, Wellington 1967, 109.

10 So, too, with the staff of the N.Z.B.C. RPC 14: Some Thoughts on the Place of Broadcasting Media in Social Changes and Conventions, N.Z.B.C. mimeograph, Wellington 1968, states: 'We do not allow the use of swear words if the context or the connotation would be smutty, and care is taken over time placement of programmes containing them. The N.Z.B.C. is more cautious in some respects, perhaps, than other media: a newspaper in reporting a trial, might print the word "bastard" if this had occurred in evidence, but it would probably not be used in news bulletins'.

involved the publication by a daily newspaper of reports cabled through the N.Z.P.A. network about a matter of very great public interest which nevertheless proved intolerably offensive to some readers.

In 1963, Taranaki Newspapers Ltd., proprietors of The Daily News, were convicted in the Hawera Magistrate's Court on a charge of selling an indecent document.^{II} This was an issue of the paper carrying an N.Z.P.A. report of the Stephen Ward trial in Britain. This report was widely published in newspapers throughout the world, as well as in other parts of New Zealand, but a private citizen in Hawera was 'so incensed' with parts of it that he instituted proceedings. Witnesses at the trial said that parts of the report had disgusted and offended many people, and they objected to details of masochistic sexual practices as well as to a statement by a woman that Ward was present while she had sexual intercourse with other men in his flat and that this was normal and she saw nothing wrong with it. The proceedings were brought under the Indecent Publications Act 1910 and its amendments prior to the 1963 Act which at that time had not been passed. The magistrate applied the tests laid down in a 1954 amendment and found that the newspaper had unduly emphasised matters of sex 'by dealing with them in a manner which offends against the standards of the community in which they are published'. He found that this would have had 'a tendency to deprave or corrupt young persons of both sexes' and that 'printing and selling the newspaper to the public without discrimination and placing this indecent material before all age groups and classes of readers must have an immoral or mischievous tendency'. This judgment was reached in spite of the fact that the report reached the newspaper through what was described as a reputable news service and that the proprietors of the newspaper had no wilful intention to offend. The defendants did not appeal against this decision, though they may well have been able to find adequate grounds.

The import of this case is to emphasise that newspapers in New Zealand, at their peril, publish matter that might be thought indecent by some sections of the community, even though it may consist of accounts

II Reported in Magistrates Court Decisions, Vol. II, 1963-66, 56-61.

of criminal activities that have world-wide political implications and repercussions and are consequently of great public interest. This being so, it was not surprising to find some items of the newspaper sample in this study heavily discriminated against. (See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 5, 'N.Z.P.A. Messages' for the full texts.)

Only one paper ran an account of a policewoman's claim for damages against the New York city administration on the grounds that she had become pregnant in response to police instructions. Only three papers used an item describing how an Italian film actress used guns concealed in her bra in a film she had just made. Six papers published a brief account of the prosecution of three women for swimming nude in a public fountain in London, but no newspaper in the sample ran a morning shift message about a British clergyman who photographed a nude actress in order to protest against what he called 'the artificial and hypocritical attitude which is so prevalent in our society, particularly in the church, towards sex'. Only one paper, The Daily Post, ran a 360-word evening shift version of this affair which contained a few more details. The only cut the newspaper made was a statement by the actress about the inconvenience of removing her underclothing 'with all those people (visiting pressmen) here'. In generally rejecting this item, the newspapers may have been playing safe and taking precautions against even the slight possibility of giving offence to some sections of their readership. They may also have been carrying out their status conferral role¹² whereby the mass media tend to protect values generally held in approval by the community and take care to show community leaders and favoured public figures only in a praiseworthy light. One of the easiest ways for them to do this is by a process of negative selection. This consists of omitting or obscuring items which might 'jeopardise the socio-cultural structure, or people's

12 Warren Breed, 'Mass Communication and Socio-Cultural Integration', Social Forces, 37:2, December 1958, 109-116. This study of 'negative screenings from news content carried out by the mass media found that 'power' and 'class' as structural strata were protected by media performance 'which tried to withdraw from unnecessarily baring flaws in the working of certain authoritative institutions and sources of cultural influence, like the values of capitalism, the home, religion, health, justice, the nation and the community -- areas of blocked communication, sacred cows'.

faith in it'.¹³

In further support of this assertion it can be observed here that no newspaper in the sample published an item which described how 'Mr Novak', an actor who played the part of a crusading high school teacher in a highly popular television series, was fined for disturbing the peace by singing loudly after midnight and deflating people's car tyres. None of the newspapers published an account of a riot following the performance in Glasgow of a pop group, the Rolling Stones. Similarly, there was no use of a story in which a British newspaper columnist said: 'Here we have a Britain which is frozen into a pattern of snobbery, class division and tuft-hunting; a Britain where your handle or your accent are more important than what you do, or say. We need to take an axe to tradition... Britain is a kind of feudal oddity'. The N.Z.P.A. itself deleted references to the Queen as a 'good skin' (Mersey dialect for somebody well esteemed) and to the Birthday Honours List as 'the Top People's Chart'. These phrases occurred in a message about the award of the M.B.E. to the Beatles.

There were a number of other interesting lapses in the coverage which the system gave to the content of the N.Z.P.A. file. Only three papers published an item complaining about snobbery in cricket and only one paper ran an account of the ejection of a native from a Port Moresby hotel for not wearing acceptable shoes. Only one paper published an account of the passing of South African legislation empowering the Attorney-General to order the detention without appeal for up to six months of state witnesses in court cases involving political and certain serious criminal charges. Only one paper published an account of an important United States Supreme Court decision which reversed the conviction of Billie Sol Estes on the grounds that the televising of the original proceedings against him had prejudiced his trial. Only two papers published a human interest item about a former body-guard of Al Capone who was trying to raise money by selling his tattooed head on a pay-now, collect-later basis after his death. Similarly, only two papers published an account of an alleged cheating scandal in a world bridge contest. Only one paper used a story about the jailing of some Russians for watering down supplies of vodka.

¹³ ibid.

(b) Australian News

The regional discrimination against news from Australia has already been mentioned. The newspapers applied this to a great variety of material some of which concerned the activities of the Australian forces in South East Asia. One stream of messages dealt with the arrival of an Australian infantry battalion on the Vietnam front, the other described the ambushing of an Indonesian patrol by Australian troops in the Sarawak area. In the course of the week the newspapers published 11 messages concerning these events and rejected two of a sensational, and political, nature. All these items were subject coded War and the Armed Services. Each message in this subject division was carried by an average of 4.3 papers, but for this selected group of Australian messages the average dropped to 3.2. Similarly, the average prominence for messages in this subject division was 25.2, but for the selected group it was only 9.9. One of the items in this group concerned a clash between Australian and Indonesian forces in the course of which the Australians ambushed and killed a number of Indonesians. Ten newspapers published accounts of this incident, but they imposed word cuts amounting to 87 per cent. of the full text of 1525 words. (The average percentage of words cut in the subject division was 43.2 per cent.)

No newspaper in the sample used anything of a 950-word follow-up in which two Australian soldiers who had been interviewed afterwards in hospital said that killing the Indonesians was 'just like shooting ducks', but two papers published part of an official comment from the Australian Government next day which said the soldiers' statement was acutely embarrassing. (See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 5, 'N.Z.P.A. Messages' for the text of the 'shooting ducks' story.) No paper used a 260-word interview with another Australian soldier who said there was no way of telling whether the Vietcong were North or South Vietnamese, that South Vietnamese troops sometimes killed civilians by 'shooting first and asking questions later', and that he personally agreed with this tactic.

In general terms, there were 89 items in the Australian low-usage file and those published scored an average prominence of 6.0 per item, compared with an average prominence of 13.1 for all the items originating in Australia that were used by the newspaper system. Some of this under-used material was of considerable interest. It included an account, which

nobody published, of mysterious plantation fires in New Ireland, and several human interest items like the trial of a Papuan widow and her lover for sorcery (used by one newspaper) and the discovery of a body at Rabaul that had been half-eaten by pigs (used by one paper). Items about an aboriginal discovering gold, and another about an aboriginal girl who was said to have acquired an education by watching television, were not used at all, while a serious discussion of an aboriginal school teacher training plan was used by only one paper, The Press.

The treatment of incidents in the Vietnam war and the Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia have already been mentioned. In addition, no newspaper used an item to the effect that Australia might not be able to rely on its allies in South East Asia. Only one paper used an authoritative statement that Australia would defend Malaysian sovereignty. Two papers published an Australian university professor's views on the Indonesian situation, and only two mentioned that the Australian Chief of Staff was touring South East Asia.

Of six stories covering the activities of the Australian Prime Minister at the Prime Ministers' Conference, three were not used at all. Two papers published accounts of his negotiations en route in Washington, two ran an item about his appointment of special press representatives for the conference, and one published a human interest item about his cricket watching propensities at Lords. Two papers also published an account of how Senator Fitzgerald chased an intruder in his home with a cricket stump, but nobody had any space for the activities of an Australian parliamentary delegation in Mexico.

A number of low-usage items were concerned with Australian economic affairs which were also of some significance to New Zealand readers. No newspaper published an announcement of a trade agreement between Australia and the Philippines and only two papers ran an item about Australian beef being rejected from the British market. Nobody published an announcement of Japanese intentions to buy Australian wheat, or a United States group's plans to buy New South Wales coal, and only two published details of another New South Wales coal deal with Japanese interests.

Three stories about the Australian wool industry were unused by the newspaper system; a story describing Australian expenditure on wool promotion was published by only one paper; another on wool sales was published by two papers, and another dealing with the Australian wool reserve price scheme was reproduced by only one paper. Two stories about the effects of a drought in Australia were ignored completely. An item about the discovery of natural gas in Brisbane was published in one newspaper; another about the discovery of methane gas was similarly treated.

Twelve messages concerned either the Australian Labour Party or the New South Wales Labour Party, both of which had been holding their annual conferences. The newspaper gatekeepers discriminated sharply against this material. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the following coverage was given these events by the N.Z.P.A.

Items Sent by the N.Z.P.A.	Newspapers Publishing the item
Calwell warns Labour Party about Communism	Dominion, ChCh Star
Youthful Image for N.S.W. Labour Party	-
Watersiders' Views on Labour Party	-
A.L.P. Conference wants wage adjustment	Dominion
A.L.P. combats faceless image	Auck. Star, Waikato Times
A.L.P. election finance	ChCh Star
A.L.P. views on ships for Vietnam	Timaru Herald
A.L.P. opposes troops for Vietnam	-
A.L.P. elections	Press
N.S.W. Labour Party suggests nationalising the waterfront	Press
Calwell's future	Waikato Times, Herald Tribune
Calwell cancels Singapore trip	-

These items obtained 11 usages in seven newspapers and scored an average usage in the entire newspaper system of only 0.7 compared with 4.0 for all the items in the general subject division of Politics. Those published received an average prominence of 5.6 compared with 15.5 for the entire subject division.

It cannot be assumed, however, that because of this dismal performance there is a calculated bias against news of the labour movement in the New Zealand press. What it does indicate is that the New Zealand sub-editors did not find this Australian material sufficiently newsworthy to justify treating it with greater favour and prominence. Nor could any evidence be found to substantiate allegations, frequently made, that the New Zealand

daily press is biased against the New Zealand labour movement. During the sample week the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, A.H. Nordmeyer, was involved in an exchange of views with the deputy-leader of the National Party, J.R. Marshall. The subject was of considerable news interest as it concerned the interpretation of a statement that had been made by the Prime Minister, K.J. Holyoake, at the Commonwealth Ministers' Conference to the effect that he favoured negotiations being attempted with the Vietcong leaders and that in the meantime he would defer sending an artillery battery to the Vietnam front. Nordmeyer made five statements outlining his views on all this. The values which these statements scored in the newspapers compared favourably with the average values for all items of political news and with the scores calculated for a lengthy statement on the same subject made by Marshall. (See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 2, 'The Nordmeyer-Marshall Exchange'.)

The Australian low-usage items also included a number of human interest stories which could easily have been reproduced by any newspaper attempting to present a type of news which was radically different from that favoured by most of the system. There were stories about a Dane caught trying to smuggle his pet cat into Australia, two shipwrecked Australians picked up on a raft, a Croat immigrant recovering heroically from bomb injuries in a Sydney hospital, the adventures of a child sent back to Britain by its parents domiciled in Australia, and the mystery of a dead skier found in Perisher Valley. In addition, no paper published an account of an Australian Anthropological Society language project, but two papers reproduced an item about a proposed new 150-inch optical telescope for Australia.

(c) The Vietnam Protest Movement

The content of the sample was examined for evidence about how the newspapers treated news which had been generated by the Vietnam war protest movement. Eight H.Z.P.A. messages were found to relate to the views and activities of various groups and individuals located in the general movement, and a further 12 messages were located which recorded either opposition to the war or criticism of its conduct. (See Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 3, 'The Vietnam Protest Movement', for details of the messages and their newspaper usage and prominence scores.) Reports of the protest

movement (which were all subject-coded as Politics) achieved only a 2.6 average newspaper usage compared with an average of 4.0 for the general subject division. They received an average prominence score of 10.2 compared with 15.5 for the general subject division. Hence it can be said that as news items, the reports of the activities of the protest movement did not interest the newspaper gatekeepers as much as other political material at their disposal. Consequently these reports were published with less frequency and were given less prominence than the average item of political news. Whether this amounts to a systematic bias or not is a matter of subjective opinion as to the merits of the news items concerned; but the fact that this material was given less than average attention by the sub-editors of 16 newspapers has obvious implications. Either they all agreed it was low-priority material with low news interest, or there were other reasons for not publishing it with greater frequency and prominence. Allegations of systematic bias, of course, could only be investigated by means of a full inquiry into the gatekeeping practices of sub-editors on newspapers and in radio and television news services in New Zealand, and no such work has yet been attempted.¹⁴ It must also be noted that only one item in this group of Vietnam protest messages was not published by any newspaper of the system and that this was an account of a protest meeting in Manila at which an effigy of Uncle Sam was burned.

A similar analysis of the items recording general opposition to the Vietnam war, or criticism of its conduct, by sources other than specific elements of the protest movement showed the equally low usage rate of 2.1 but higher prominence of 14.1 due to the fact that several items in this group received comparatively generous play. A speech by a university professor was well displayed in The Evening Post; an account of an Oxford Union debate on the conduct of the war was published in eight papers and

¹⁴ Complaints that the news media are biased against anti-Vietnam war views and activities are not necessarily valid. They may, for instance, ignore the 'differential accessibility of news sources' referred to by Henry Mayer in his discussion of bias in The Press in Australia, Melbourne 1964, 138. Another practical reality is that news from government and other institutional sources is always likely to have a considerable advantage over most other material in obtaining space.

received a relatively high score for prominence; the National Council of Women's views on Vietnam were prominently displayed in two papers; and a request for the withdrawal of Australian and New Zealand troops made by President Nkrumah was displayed on its front page by The Auckland Star (though no other paper thought it newsworthy).¹⁵ One statement by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was completely cut by the N.Z.P.A. itself. This was a comment by its chairman welcoming the Prime Minister's statement that he would expect negotiations about Vietnam to include Vietcong representatives, but also taking him to task for calling the Vietnamese leaders 'faceless men'. The statement ended with the observation that 'those people who control the war (the President and Secretary-General of the National Liberation Front) and who govern up to 75 per cent. of the land with the support of most South Vietnamese, would obviously be included in any serious negotiations. It is regrettable that we could not hear their side of the story before we agreed to make war on the Vietnamese'.

The views of the Australian Labour Party and the Australian Liberal Party on the Vietnam war went unrecorded by any newspaper in the sample, and so did a statement by the Prime Minister of India opposing the use of troops in Vietnam. In another item, the North Vietnamese high command were reported to have congratulated the United States Air Force for shooting down its own fighters, but this, too, was not published. Only one newspaper published a very abbreviated version of a Russian Government warning addressed to New Zealand about the consequences of its involvement in Vietnam.

15 It is also of importance to note that The Press, during the sample week, carried a 60-inch leader page article by a prominent United States political scientist which discussed the United States political situation and the growth of the Vietnam protest movement there.

CHAPTER VIII

SYSTEM CAPABILITIES AND PROBLEMS

1. THE ROLE OF THE N.Z.P.A.

Whenever any event suddenly threatens to disturb the equilibrium of the New Zealand daily newspaper industry it customarily reacts as a whole to preserve the status quo. An example of this was the typically sharp reaction from most members of the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association when Lord Thomson, the newspaper magnate, manoeuvred in 1964 to take over control of The Dominion, Wellington's morning newspaper. The two big Auckland units, The Auckland Star and The New Zealand Herald combined to put forward plans to forestall him, and the industry, making use of its capacities as an economic interest group, obtained assistance from the New Zealand government in the form of legislation controlling overseas takeovers. Another example of this tendency was the hasty joint planning of the daily newspapers of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin in June 1965, with the notional aim of producing Sunday newspapers on a co-operative basis in each city. This followed scare announcements that several external interests might be about to enter this field on a national scale. Similarly, the proprietors of The Auckland Star and The New Zealand Herald were the main shareholders in Radio Auckland Ltd., one of the companies which applied early in 1970 to the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority for a licence to operate a private radio station in Auckland.

The metropolitan dailies are in a strong position to combine for such mutual defensive purposes because of the two-newspaper equilibrium that exists in the four main centres. In their news policies, if not always in their circulation and advertising campaigns, these papers lend themselves to analysis as 'rivals in conformity', which perform many of their news gathering tasks with a basic similarity of

approach and presentation.¹ The tacit acceptance of conventions in the treatment of news may be imposing undesirable limitations on the New Zealand Press as a market place of information and conflicting ideas, but it strengthens its economic structure. The absence of intense competition in this part of the industry has enabled most of its newspapers to preserve conservative news presentation and display conventions along with an old fashioned broadsheet format.² Yet an important consequence for the New Zealand reader is that he may be exposed to a great deal more news content than his counterpart in countries elsewhere who may be obliged to depend on sensational tabloids. Broad-sheet publication can reproduce not only a lot more news, it also permits a large volume of classified as well as display advertising to be carried. A system with a large number of relatively small-circulation newspapers needs this high advertising content to boost its revenue from sales. Consequently, one of the strongest arguments for protecting New Zealand from the impact of overseas newspaper practices

1 Stanley K. Bigman, 'Rivals in Conformity', Journalism Q., 25:2, June 1948, 127-131. This study of two competing dailies in a medium-sized Pennsylvania city showed that the quantitative differences between them were trivial. They had similar proportions of advertising space, news, editorials and features, and there were only slight differences in the proportions of news of city, county, state, national and international origins. Many of the news stories were found to be 'verbatim twins after a sometimes rewritten first paragraph'. Until further research is carried out, some reservations must be made about the application of such an analysis to the Wellington dailies since the 1965-66 period with which the sampling data for this study is concerned. The management of The Dominion has introduced changes to its format and to the treatment of news. This includes the publication of more commentaries on public affairs. It claims to be developing 'inquiry into the news, with greater specialisation in areas of reporting ranging from Civic affairs to foreign policy'. (J.A. Kelliher, editor of The Dominion, 'The Student Press and the Facts', The Reporter, 1:1, 1969, 13-14 (an occasional publication of the Victoria University of Wellington)).

2. '... competition for business between newspapers in New Zealand is to all intents and purposes non-existent. No morning paper has to compete with another morning paper in the same town, and the same is true of the evening papers. The proprietors are banded together in the Press Association which further limits the field of competition'. N.Z.J.A. advocate J. Turnbull addressing the Court of Arbitration during award proceedings. Reported in The New Zealand Journalist, 26:4, May 31 1961, 2.

is that it enables the present relatively unsensational broadsheet newspaper to survive. Lord Thomson ~~may~~ have seemed an agreeable saviour to many New Zealand journalists hoping to liberalise news reporting techniques, and dreaming of a quality press, but the routine facts of competitive practice could nevertheless have turned him into a sensationalising ogre to be excluded in the interests of mutual survival by the majority of New Zealand newspaper owners.

One of their accompanying objects was, of course, the preservation of the N.Z.P.A. network. The description of that organisation which has been given in this study has emphasised the extensive services it supplies and the range of their content. Their daily operation to reasonable standards of speed and accuracy is a considerable achievement and one which is often overlooked by its critics. This service imposes an obligation on member newspapers to supply the association with basic news gathered in the areas for which they are responsible. But individual newspapers are by no means the prisoners of this obligation. They may send staff reporters to any part of New Zealand if they wish to obtain exclusive cover of sporting and other events, and there is nothing to stop them from opening bureaux in rival territories to gather news for their own exclusive use, as has been done in Wellington by both the Auckland dailies. One reason for preserving the present structure of the N.Z.P.A. is that it enables a large number of small papers to survive, though it can be equally well argued that their elimination might not be the disaster which is frequently assumed. Could not 15 or 20, or even fewer, large newspapers give as good a service as 39, providing they were being efficiently run and were coming under some kind of competition from somewhere in the general news media system?³

One study suggests that so far as major categories of news and editorial feature content are concerned, there are no significant

3 Tendencies towards amalgamation and more efficient plant use have begun to emerge. The Southland News, an afternoon daily in Invercargill, amalgamated with The Southland Times, its morning paper opposition, in February 1968, and is now printed as an afternoon edition of the latter. Similarly, the morning and evening papers in New Plymouth merged as Taranaki Newspapers Ltd., and the company continues to produce separate morning and evening papers using the combined plant.

differences in daily newspaper content which appear to be related to the presence or absence of local newspaper competition in cities of less than 400,000 population in the United States.⁴ Other investigators have found that newspapers which are nominally competitive often put into motion processes of standardisation rather than diversification.⁵ These findings, of course, do not necessarily apply to New Zealand conditions, and it would require research to demonstrate that they do; but they do establish that the number of papers being published in an area does not necessarily ordain the nature of their content. In New Zealand, any reduction in the number of daily newspapers would probably result in the extension of newspaper chains like New Zealand Newspapers Ltd., but it can be argued that such organisations would have every incentive to equip themselves with facilities to rival the N.Z.B.C. and they could possibly be stimulated to overcome some of the defects of the N.Z.P.A. service.

This has some typical wire agency shortcomings, including a tendency to verbosity and the occasional use of stylistic abominations (especially in the overseas material) like 'General Maxwell Taylor was reliably learned to have suggested that...' Another inconvenience is to be found in the repetition of some items from one shift to another, though this may be an inevitable feature of most wire services. Certainly one of the aims of the N.Z.P.A. is to provide new leads and fresheners for both evening and morning papers so that they are not obliged to use stereotyped reports showing little differentiation from those published 12 hours previously. An example of what seems like this kind of over-generosity

4 Raymond B. Nixon and Robert L. Jones, 'The Content of Non-Competitive vs. Competitive Newspapers', Journalism Q., 33:3, Summer 1956, 299-314.

5 Westley F. Willoughby, 'Are Two Competing Newspapers Necessarily Better than One', Journalism Q., 32:2, Spring 1955, 197-204. See also Stanley K. Bigman, Raymond B. Nixon and Jean Ward, 'Trends in Newspaper Ownership and Inter-Media Competition', Journalism Q., 38:1, Winter 1961, 3-14; Gerard H. Borstel, 'Ownership, Competition and Comment in 20 Small Dailies', Journalism Q., 33:2, Spring 1956, 220-226; Bryant Kears, 'Effects of Newspaper Competition on Press Service Resources', Journalism Q., 35:1, Winter 1958, 56-64; G. Rarick and B. Hartman, 'The Effects of Competition on One Daily Newspaper's Content', Journalism Q., 43:4, Autumn 1966, 459-463; Alex S. Edelstein, 'Content of Competitive vs. Non-Competitive and Chain-Owned Newspapers', in Perspectives in Mass Communication, Copenhagen 1966, 27-28.

towards a news item was to be found in the sample in a series of messages which gave biographical details about the appointment of Edward Clark as United States ambassador to Australia in 1965. Ten newspapers used part of an initial 182-word message, but only three used anything of a 700-word amplification that followed in the next shift, and only one paper used a 404-word repeat of that message next morning. There was also an interesting example of the tendency to play down some categories of Asian news in the sample material. On the same day, Major General Kosasih was appointed official Indonesian ambassador to New Zealand but this event was covered in a brief 39-words and reported in only five papers.

The repetition and duplication of some items may be evidence for arguing that there should be a much more critical scrutiny of the international news sent out from Sydney by the N.Z.P.A. service. The best way to upgrade this would be to arrange for its compilation by a staff of several New Zealand journalists seconded for the purpose from the sub-editorial desks of daily papers in New Zealand rather than by one Australian sub-editor. Perhaps the information overload problem could also be tackled at this point. If 36 per cent. of the wordage of what is being published is cut by the newspapers themselves, then sharper sub-editing at Sydney, the point of origin, seems called for. As against this, the sensitivity of this network when some event of magnitude is taking shape is not to be denied, and must be maintained. A good example of this occurred when New Zealand was about to devalue its currency in 1967. The system obtained an early announcement about the rate of devaluation from Tokyo where information had leaked from International Monetary Fund sources.

These are a few of the obvious ways in which the N.Z.P.A. service could be improved, but far greater improvements to the system as a whole could be carried out in the offices of the member newspapers themselves.

2. THE NEWSPAPERS

The performance of the newspapers with the sample of N.Z.P.A. material suggests that they are unsensational in style and heavily concerned with their service functions. The N.Z.P.A. itself (though not without its tendencies to circumspection) for the most part acted in an objective way as a common carrier of information; the newspapers imposed their own controls on what was published. Consequently, many readers' ideas of the capabilities of the N.Z.P.A. service may be coloured by the practices of the newspapers, some of which distort the pattern of news by omission or suppression. The toning down of some sensational items, the virtual suppression of the Australian army 'shooting ducks' story, and the bias exerted against items critical of the conduct of the Vietnam war, as well as the lack of interest in news about civil liberties or even the problems of press freedom, indicate that during the period covered by this study, the major part of the New Zealand daily press was treating the news in accordance with a set of conservative values. The remedy for some of the defects of the daily press might lie, therefore, in more thorough and sensitive use of the content of the existing N.Z.P.A. service rather than in sending more correspondents abroad and attempting to grapple with an even larger message flow.

The treatment of items of a sensational nature, and of items concerning the Vietnam protest movement, has already been discussed. There were also in the sample a few N.Z.P.A. stories concerned with the subject of the freedom of the press. Ten newspapers out of 16 published a statement of Lord Thomson's views on this subject, and 10 newspapers also used an item from the annual meeting of the Commonwealth Press Union in London at which O.S. Hintz, chairman of the N.Z.P.A. and editor of The New Zealand Herald said he would rather see newspapers taken over by the barons of London or the highwaymen of Sydney than work under government control. But only four newspapers published any details of a scheme advanced by a conference of British mineworkers for nationalising the British press, and only one paper, The Daily News, ran an account of the United States Supreme Court judgment in the case

of Billie Sol Estes in which a Texas trial verdict was reversed on the grounds that the televising of proceedings had prejudiced the defendant's fair trial. This was matter of more than academic interest to newspapers all over the world, and presumably to some of their readers, but not in New Zealand. There the papers were more interested in the conviction of a woman in a New Zealand magistrate's Court for stealing newspapers. Nine of the papers in the sample ran this salutary tale.

Nor were some of the newspapers very sensitive to direct criticism of themselves. In the morning shift news of Thursday June 17 of the sample week, the secretary of the Meat Retailers' Federation (D.J. Fyfe) said that pork sales were normal again but pig producers were blaming the press and the Minister of Agriculture for the unfavourable publicity they had received as a result of an outbreak of trichinosis. This item was reproduced in one metropolitan morning paper, one metropolitan evening, all four provincial mornings in the sample, and one provincial evening. In the afternoon shift, J.J. Parsons, the chairman of the Pig Producers' Committee of Federated Farmers (which was then in conference in Wellington) directly attacked the press. He described the publicity as 'dangerous, unwarranted and unjustified' and said it had adversely affected the industry's markets. Only two papers published this. The item was repeated in the Friday morning shift with a further and more trenchant statement by Parsons that '... the pen is a lethal weapon in the hands of people who are not aware of the likely consequences of what they write'. This, of course, amounted to a lecture on the social responsibility of the press. How did the press take it? The following table shows how Parsons' statement was reproduced by those papers that published anything further.

TABLE 1
TREATMENT OF TWO MESSAGES IN THE NEWSPAPER
SYSTEM

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Prominence Score</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
Dominion	54	Omitted social responsibility criticism
Auckland Star	39	Published full text
Wanganui Chronicle	10	Published full text
New Zealand Herald	13	Full text and leading article
Southland Times	3	Full text
Evening Post	6	Full text and leading article
Nelson Evening Mail	8	Omitted all criticism

Average score per item, 20.5.

Average score for all items in this subject division, 15.6.

It can be seen that only readers of The Auckland Star, the Wanganui Chronicle, The New Zealand Herald, The Southland Times and The Evening Post were given the full facts. In their combined columns the statement received slightly more than average prominence, though only The Dominion and The Auckland Star gave it any substantial play. Although a considerable amount of interest might be thought to have attached to the incident, the other papers in the sample either considered the affair not sufficiently newsworthy, or decided not to publish for reasons best known to themselves. As to the merits of Parsons' argument, whether or not in the national interest the press should have suppressed all news of the outbreak, it is difficult, if not impossible, to say with any certainty what the ideal course of action should have been. However, that the press does on occasion practise social responsibility in its treatment of national news is well known. The Dominion, for instance, 'at the request of the police' did not publish details of bomb threats made at Wellington airport⁶

⁶ The Dominion, September 4, 1968, 1.

and The Evening Post cut references to statements about military strategy from its report of an annual conference of the Second N.Z.E.F. Association in Wellington at the request of the then Prime Minister, Peter Fraser.⁷ In 1960, the daily press generally soft-pedalled all discussion of the dangers of insecticide poisons affecting New Zealand meat exports for nearly six months until questions asked in the House of Representatives, and publicity in N.Z. Truth made it a public issue. In 1965, some daily newspapers refused to purchase a syndicated feature story containing excerpts from Prince Charles' diary on the grounds that publication would constitute a breach of Royal decorum. Until 1965, when discussions in the House of Representatives drew open attention to its activities, the daily newspapers maintained an informal agreement not to publicise even the existence of the New Zealand Security Police. For example, when The Evening Post, in its first edition, inadvertently described an outbreak of fire in a building which used to house the headquarters of the Security Police in Courtenay Place, Wellington, instructions were given to the mechanical staff to 'bash' the stereo plate so that a reference to the fire brigade being unable to get in because of the locked steel doors which the Security Police had installed would not be decipherable in the second edition. This was done, but incompetently; a further reference in the second last paragraph of the item was overlooked. It stated: 'A police guard was placed on the entrance to the Security Police headquarters'.⁸ (See a reproduction of this item from the second edition of the newspaper in Ch. IX, Appendix, Section 7, 'Security H.Q. Fire'.)

In the present case, both The Evening Post and The New Zealand Herald were sensitive enough to publish leading articles on the subject of the trichinosis outbreak and Parsons' complaint. But neither of these articles debated the question of responsibility in the national interest which is implicit in his criticism. The New Zealand Herald argued that the news could not have been hushed up because rumours would have leaked

7 Swab, 4, July 1966, 2.

8 The Evening Post, February 1 1960, 9.

out and attempts to keep it secret would have interfered with the effort to track down and control the disease, while The Evening Post stuck to the theory of instant disclosure and held that the country had a right to be informed of this new problem (the outbreak) and the press had a duty to publish.⁹ Neither of the writers of these articles gave any serious consideration to the counter-argument that in the delicate interests of New Zealand's export meat trade, all references to the positive diagnosis of trichinosis in only two animals could have been conveniently omitted by the news media until it was apparent either that the disease was under control and harmless, or that it was spreading and there was a national emergency.

That some newspapers are socially responsible when it suits them, and omit or play news items at their convenience is not surprising because this kind of ambiguity illustrates the permanent dilemma in which a free press finds itself. On what grounds should it be prepared to publish regardless of consequence: on what occasions should it practise a self-censoring diplomacy? That there seems to be no sharp awareness of the nature of this problem among some of the daily newspapers of New Zealand suggests that their editors and managements prefer where possible to take a simple view of themselves as recorders of events rather than initiators. Perhaps, in the trichinosis affair, if the Minister of Agriculture had asked the press to be silent it would have obliged; but it probably would have needed his prompting.

3. COMPETITION WITH THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Some newspapers may be using very unsophisticated methods to put together a stereotyped selection from the wire news each shift, but they are free to treat this material as they please, so much so, that any small-town daily with only a little enterprise and ingenuity could turn out a product that was as well organised as any of the metropolitans not only in its treatment of local affairs but also as far as coverage of national and international news is concerned, though possibly on a reduced scale owing to the smaller number of news pages being carried.

9 The New Zealand Herald, June 19 1965, 8; and The Evening Post, June 18 1965, 10.

Similarly, what is discarded at the sub-editorial desks of some of the metropolitans could be used by any capable journalist as the core for a publication with a style radically different from anything else in New Zealand. The low-usage wire copy, for instance, could be raked over to construct a tabloid emphasising human interest and crime, though this is not likely to occur unless it is compelled by shrinking circulations. The most likely source of such a disturbance to convention lies in the electronic media. The N.Z.B.C. has installed microwave network facilities for the transmission of national news telecasts, and this could bring broadcasting still more into competition with the daily papers and with the N.Z.P.A. Early in 1970, the corporation took advantage of the increased flexibility of programme content which the microwave link now permits by following its national television news bulletins with brief programmes of local news and magazine items compiled by the four major regional channels to suit their own requirements. The further likelihood of private broadcasting stations operating regional and local news services has been mentioned; in addition, the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department is constructing a station to enable New Zealand to receive satellite transmissions by 1970. This may greatly extend the entire New Zealand communications system by providing channels that are alternative to those used by the N.Z.P.A. It could result in an even more rapid and voluminous delivery of wire copy to the N.Z.P.A. network, thus intensifying the information overload problem, but it could also result in radio and television news services receiving a more rapid and up-to-date world news service.

How the daily press reacts to such developments depends on circumstance, but there are various options open to it. The dailies could reduce their present coverage of international news and increase their local coverage; they could rely on the N.Z.P.A. for more specialised background commentary on the news, and they could possibly make better use of the features and supplementary materials with which they are already being supplied. The N.Z.P.A. distributes a good deal of background material each week and the dailies are not able to

find space for all of it. One reason may be that this material is not entirely suitable for their needs, otherwise some of them would not find it necessary to buy the rights to reprint gobbits of political commentary from news magazines like Newsweek. Some of the deficiencies of the N.Z.P.A. service might be corrected when the long-overdue appointment of a full-time correspondent in the United States takes place. The next project could well be the opening of a bureau in Tokyo.

It has also to be realised that there are difficulties in the actual supply of feature material. American interpretative features, especially if they are signed, are more expensive to buy than British ones because American journalists expect higher payment. The New Zealand Associated Press (The New Zealand Herald, The Evening Post and The Otago Daily Times) which is a feature-buying network, obtains airmail delivery of a clipping service from its special full-time correspondent stationed in London. This, plus the tie-up of a regular service from the British papers tends to result in a greater flow from British than from United States sources. This could be one explanation for the popularity of American news magazines like Time and Newsweek in New Zealand.¹⁰ There is no doubt that any attempt to cover international affairs with more seriousness and detail on the part of the New Zealand press would cost a lot of money, especially if it were to aim at complementing the activities of the broadcasting services rather than duplicating them or crudely competing with them. The complementary approach would require a much finer and more selective treatment of the world news and would involve the filling-in of gaps in areas where ready-made news and opinions are scarce. Their New Zealand readers might be better served if some of the larger papers tried to develop the kind of interests and areas of expertness which are so lacking in New Zealand journalism generally. This would involve allowing the N.Z.P.A. to carry out its basic task of supplying a core of hard news, but seeking to amplify this with whatever talents and resources were available to an individual paper. Certain items in the sample showed that there

10 See ref. 19, Ch. I, The Functions of the New Zealand News Media, for details of circulations.

was some wasted energy in the relationship between some metropolitan newspapers and the wire service. Most of the metropolitans employ full-time correspondents in Wellington. They sent a number of stories back to their papers that had already been adequately covered by the N.Z.P.A.

Thus the staff of The New Zealand Herald sent a 262-word version of a statement by a Cabinet Minister on hydro-electricity supply in spite of the fact that the N.Z.P.A. had already transmitted a 500-word account of this and the Herald man had nothing to add. The game of scooping the N.Z.P.A. reached the height of the absurd in this newspaper's case when on May 14 it ran a 6½ inch item from its Parliamentary staff about plans for celebrating the centenary of Parliament, only to duplicate the item on May 15 with exactly the same story from the N.Z.P.A. The Auckland Star attributed an item about land for a steel mill site to its Wellington correspondent which was also covered by the N.Z.P.A. It also duplicated the coverage of a Wellington Anzac Day observance as well as an account of New Zealand plans to build a Chancery in Washington. A variation of 'scoop the N.Z.P.A.' is even simpler. It consists of publishing the N.Z.P.A. story under a false byline. Thus, The Otago Daily Times published an item about hydro-electric power supply under the byline 'Wellington reporter', but it was a word-for-word reproduction of a text sent out by the N.Z.P.A. from Wellington.

Several metropolitans found it necessary to send their own sports-writers to cover a Springbok tour of Australia in spite of the fact that the N.Z.P.A. had dispatched one of its most experienced hands who was also an expert football writer. The Press was one of these papers, but on the occasion of the New South Wales game, it ran about half of the N.Z.P.A. detailed commentary in 6 pt. type below its own man's summary, thereby making a reasonably full use of the available resources. The New Zealand Herald obtained 19 inches of matter plus illustrations from its own resources in Christchurch to cover an international rugby league game instead of using the N.Z.P.A.'s quite competent 500-word report. On the other hand, this particular newspaper can, on occasion, bring skilled resources to bear on particular issues. It has been one of the few daily newspapers in New Zealand to publish competent criticism

of recent New Zealand Academy of Fine Art exhibitions, and in 1966 it went to some pains to deal with complaints by Peter McIntyre, a popular New Zealand painter, that Auckland art critics were 'destructive beyond belief'. It thought his particular paintings in an academy show in Wellington were outstanding in an exhibition of work which was, however, by Auckland standards said to be timid, unoriginal and downright dull.¹¹

One of the best pieces of interpretative reportage in the sample was an account in The Press of the effects of delicensing the fishing of crayfish in the Akaroa area,¹² but it must also be observed that The Auckland Star showed more sophistication than any of the other papers in interpreting the news. For instance, it cut a statement by the British Prime Minister about defence economies from 700 words to 270, but it interpreted this material with comment attributed to a Wellington correspondent. It used the same approach to statements about the Vietnam war issued by K.J. Holyoake when he was at the 1965 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. These were occasions when the paper's parliamentary and Wellington bureau reporting staffs were being used intelligently to amplify the news and give it background significance, a skill in which the New Zealand news media system is generally deficient. Similarly, the 'World's Week' and 'Our Week' features published on Saturdays and written by the staff were useful news backgrounders which contained an informative discussion of the week's salient affairs. Special articles from time to time illuminated areas of public business in depth; for instance, a 2000-word account of the activities of the Public Expenditure Committee of the House of Representatives¹³ and a critical discussion of the question of Maori representation in Parliament.¹⁴ It is also significant that The Auckland Star and The Christchurch Star, both published by New Zealand Newspapers Ltd., are among the only daily newspapers in the country to have consistently given space for the presentation of Labour Party views in a regular feature entitled 'Labour Point of View'.

11 The New Zealand Herald, November 12 1966, 3.

12 The Press, June 16 1965, 7.

13 The Auckland Star, June 22 1965, 24.

14 The Auckland Star, June 23 1965, 6.

The daily press and radio services could come into sharper conflict when a second television channel is established in New Zealand. Then it may be expected that events will tend to follow the United States experience where competition with television services has sent both newspapers and radio stations scrambling for increased local advertising.¹⁵ This has not happened yet in New Zealand because advertisers cannot buy all the time they would like on the present single-channel system. But a second channel financed by the sale of advertising time would change all that. The N.Z.B.C. commercial radio network is already vigorously in pursuit of advertising revenue; with more of that revenue going into television and with private broadcasting stations in competition with it, it would have to compete much more stringently with the press for what was left. Early in 1969 the N.Z.B.C. re-organised its top management on a regional basis in preparation for a struggle of this kind, and it began to expand its news services. Meanwhile, some metropolitan newspapers have been buying chains of suburbans in readiness for stiffer competition for circulation and advertising. If some of them were licensed to operate broadcasting stations, the conflict would become more intense. Whatever the event, however, some daily newspapers, even if they had the talent to make a better job of handling the national news, might be lacking in the managerial incentive to do so. Without some competitive developments of the kind suggested, this incentive will not automatically be supplied by the N.Z.B.C. because it has its own inadequacies. As long as it controls radio and television news services it is not likely to be a very serious rival in many important news-gathering areas, for example, the law courts. But if some of the larger newspapers are allowed to operate radio stations they will be certain to

¹⁵ Newspaper revenue from advertising has grown in New Zealand by an average of 8.3 per cent. over the period 1955 to 1965, though this growth rate has been slackening since the introduction of television in 1964. Television has had its biggest impact on the national component of advertising and has tended to affect the metropolitan papers before the provincials. See The Demand for Newsprint in New Zealand, by the Contract Research Unit of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (Inc.), Wellington 1968.

supply news services that will be in direct competition with those of the N.Z.B.C. This could lead to a general sharpening of the news-gathering practices throughout the entire media system and could be a valuable reform. At a pinch, rather than lose circulation, the daily press could venture into increased sensationalism by publishing more news from the police courts and giving greater attention to human interest material at the expense of some of its service functions. But if at the same time some of its most powerful elements are trying to obtain, or to hold, broadcasting licences, they are likely to be concerned to maintain their reputations as sober, responsible chroniclers rather than exploiters of vulgar sensation. Competition under a system of broadcast licensing therefore may be more nominal than actual in some news-gathering areas, so that a daily equivalent of The News of the World, or even of N.Z. Truth, seems unlikely.

The N.Z.B.C. itself could well afford to send its own reporting teams abroad to carry out much more investigative reporting along the lines pioneered by the Compass documentary team.¹⁶ It could also face up to the problem of reporting Parliamentary affairs on television, and commenting on them in depth and with critical insight. It needs expert journalists for this and it must either train them, hire them from overseas, or come to terms with the newspaper proprietors in order to use theirs. One of the greatest drawbacks to journalism in recent years has been the refusal of many newspaper proprietors to allow their employees to contribute as a matter of course to regular N.Z.B.C. broadcasts and public affairs programmes. All too often there has been a curtain of silence between newspapers and the N.Z.B.C. The consequence is that the N.Z.B.C. is sometimes hard put to it to find adequate people for assignments, while the journalists themselves are unable to build up the kind of experience with the handling of public affairs that they would get elsewhere.

16 Complaints by the Prime Minister, K.J. Holyoake, on return from the United States could just as well have been made against the N.Z.B.C. as against the N.Z.P.A. He criticised the fact that no New Zealand journalist was sent with him, although a reporter had been sent by the N.Z.P.A. to the Olympic Games in Mexico at the time. Reported in The Evening Post, November 23 1968, 36.

The daily newspapers are already apprehensive of the possible effects on their circulations of the build-up in N.Z.B.C. news services, and they have begun to explore the possibilities of Sunday publication and to experiment cautiously with content in the attempt to find other areas for circulation expansion should it become necessary. One likely effect of constantly improving telecommunications is that the existing operations of the N.Z.P.A. system could be strained by the difficulties of processing an ever-increasing volume of news matter. But there is a ready answer to this problem. Editorial treatment of incoming news could easily enough be instituted at the Wellington bureau so that an edited and selected version could be relayed on punched tape to members in the circuit. There the tape could operate computerised typesetting equipment without the necessity for much time-consuming sub-editing and selecting. Speed and economy could be gained with some loss of local autonomy in the handling of national and international news. Techniques of this kind are already in use in Japan, are contemplated in Australia, and are being operated by the Thomson organisation in England. There, research is also being directed to the possibility at news agency level of substituting computer-programmed, data processing routines for the time-consuming, and sometimes mechanical, editorial function itself. Whatever the outcome, such practices lend themselves to adaptation to New Zealand conditions and it is significant that a number of metropolitan newspapers in New Zealand now have computerised type setting equipment though they have not yet attempted to make full use of its potentialities.

4. CONFLICT OR CONSENSUS?

A great deal is expected from a New Zealand daily newspaper. It must carry large quantities of display and classified advertising¹⁷ and it is generally accepted that this should be combined with a selection of

17 The proportion of advertising to other space in the case of metropolitan newspapers in 1965 was 56.37 per cent. to 43.64 per cent. In 1966 this became 55.53 per cent. to 44.47 per cent., and in 1967 (when there was a slight business recession) it fell to a ratio of 53.06 per cent. to 46.94 per cent. From The Demand for Newsprint in New Zealand by the Contract Research Unit of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (Inc.), Wellington 1968.

editorial matter that ranges from the repetition of trivial local gossip to the latest reports on international affairs. Some of the best New Zealand dailies aim at being newspapers of record both inside their local communities as well as at the national level. The result is that they concern themselves with a considerable amount of unspectacular but highly detailed information. Some 29 per cent. of the total items in the sample were concerned with news which was local in orientation, while 40 per cent. was nationally orientated and 31 per cent. was orientated internationally.

Most of this local news is humdrum. For instance, some South Island newspapers still carry long lists of minor offenders in the police courts and also chronicle a great many civil proceedings, including those brought against debtors. This fulfils a number of purposes. It satisfies readers' curiosity, supplies useful information to local tradespeople and creditors and it presumably reinforces the moral web of the community by exposing offenders, and in that sense is very much a part of the machinery of punishment. Perhaps the rock bottom in this kind of parochial detail, however, was reached by The Otago Daily Times during the sample week when it published a list of recent callers at New Zealand House in London, along with a report of a local Travel Club meeting. The penetration of local affairs even permitted the newspapers of the South to indulge in some old-fashioned fine writing. 'Steam may be on its way out, but the hulking form of the steam locomotive still has an aura of power', declared The Evening Star in a front page display.¹⁸ 'The city's fine feathered friends, the Christchurch pigeons, are rapidly running out of admirers', reported The Christchurch Star.²⁰ 'The imminent prospect of the shortest day and the coldest frost this year have done nothing to quell the buoyant spring feeling of an apricot tree in Durham street which is already half-covered with fluffy pink blossoms', stated The Press.²¹ Perhaps the best piece of writing in the whole sample was, however, to be found in The Nelson Evening Mail features. Entitled 'Knight with Shining Scissors', it was an obituary written with a brilliant informality by a former wartime comrade of the local barber.²²

¹⁸ It also claimed that as a result of a paragraph appealing for male partners for the Otago Beneficiaries and Old Folks monthly dance, there was an increase of 300 per cent. in attendance.

¹⁹ June 17 1965, 1.

²¹ June 15 1965, 14.

²⁰ June 17 1965, 3.

²² June 19 1965, 22.

Nevertheless, the same enthusiastic industry is not to be found in all sections of the daily press. For example, it is often difficult to find out from a New Zealand newspaper the exact texts of treaties or of speeches made by New Zealand representatives overseas or at the United Nations. This is because the papers generally rely on abbreviated versions transmitted by the wire service rather than obtaining substantive texts from the Department of External Affairs. What is needed is one good newspaper of record which, like the New York Times, will publish authoritative texts. In the field of foreign affairs there is an urgent need for a much more sophisticated exchange of views between the New Zealand Government and interested segments of the public, but this is not likely to take place unless the press explores this field more intently. One of its serious inadequacies is the lack of a corps of informed journalists who have an intimate contact with politicians and government officials, a fine awareness of the complexities of government business, and the capacity to write informed commentaries. This is partly a consequence of not employing people who are qualified to undertake such work, and partly a consequence of devoting a large amount of space to international events, but filling it largely from wire service and syndicated feature resources.

Too much political journalism in New Zealand takes the form of sporadic warfare between government and the public, with the newspaper running along the sidelines, picking up material for headlines. This is too crude a process. Much more interaction between government agencies and journalists themselves and much better wire agency facilities are needed. The N.Z.P.A. may not have the resources to supply a quality service of background comment. It needs more of its own correspondents reporting from overseas, and perhaps it should even have a team of people (like the N.Z.B.C. 'Checkpoint' team) who can analyse what is happening in the news and organise coverage of it in depth. As for the newspapers, only the metropolitans pay any special attention to foreign affairs and their resources are likely to be no more than the cable sub-editor and perhaps an assistant, as well as a leader writer. On some papers, cable material is given to the most junior sub-editor because it is likely to be the most expertly written copy and to require the least sub-editing.

The biggest single defect of the New Zealand press is probably its fondness for the ministerial handout which gives an official, painless explanation of an issue that may often fall short of the whole truth and which is usually designed to avoid considerations that are unpleasant to the Minister concerned. Because the Press Gallery and Parliament operate under pressure, these handouts are almost invariably printed without alteration or further inquiry, or are simply abbreviated but not commented upon. There may be exceptions to this practice (and some of them have been noted in this study) but the essentially passive nature of this approach to the news may be tending to make the journalist a neutral agent of transmission in a mechanical transaction rather than an active influence in a process of discussion and mediation. The press statement is often accepted as the last rather than the first step in a newspaper's chain of inquiry. Seldom is there a follow-up which expands on the initial statement by elucidation or inquiry. Newspapers print letters from citizens and organisations, but these are liable to be cut editorially, and what is published in some cases is only a selection from those that have been written. Occasionally the press grants space to somebody who wants to conduct a crusade, but only if it concerns an issue which is fairly certain to meet with community approval. Such extreme ventures into the role of watchdog of the public welfare as setting up an extra-legal court of popular appeal to 'try' cases brought to it by readers as was done by Smith's Weekly,²³ is almost unheard of in New Zealand journalism. Perhaps the only exception to this would be the popular crusading of N.Z. Truth. In spite of its sensationalism, this newspaper is of unique importance in the New Zealand mass media system because it is almost the only channel through which an individual citizen without resources might be able to express a grievance or enlist the aid of a journalist to pursue further inquiries on his behalf. It also runs a legal advice service for readers. Radio and television are often subject to the same limitations as the daily press and are inclined to be even more inhibited in their handling of controversial subjects. The content of 'Telephone Time', a radio programme in

23 Described in George Blaikie, Remember Smith's Weekly, Adelaide 1966, 237-248.

which listeners telephone questions to a personality at the microphone in the studio, is censored with the aid of a delaying device, and its subject matter seems puerile.

The daily press has often been criticised for failing to subject New Zealand institutions to the same sort of critical analysis as is commonplace in the press of the United States and the United Kingdom.²⁴ Reasons for its inability are to be found in the monopolistic and corporative structure of the industry, the fear of sanctions against proprietors and journalists should they venture too far with criticism, the fear of defamation and contempt proceedings in the courts, and the peculiar nature of the political culture which has evolved some subtle consensus-making machinery that operates with secrecy and diplomacy rather than with publicity and open conflict.

A former member of the Press Gallery has commented revealingly on the working of this machinery.²⁵ In 1963 there was a controversy over whether or not the proceedings of the Indecent Publications Tribunal (an administrative tribunal which the government was setting up to deal with legal problems arising out of the importation and publication of books, magazines and sound recordings) should be open to the press. A small group of journalists in the Press Gallery ran a crusade opposing the secrecy provisions which had been written into the Bill. There were immediate and unfavourable reactions among government members, and from the point of view of some of the political correspondents, this was a disaster.

They live in Parliament buildings in a delicate symbiotic relationship with politicians upon whom they depend for the news that earns their daily bread. It takes years of patient work to build a relationship of trust with Cabinet Ministers, and such controversies wreck that relationship overnight. Some of the 1963 wounds have not yet been healed and continue to play a part in restricting the flow of confidential information between Ministers and Press Gallery.²⁶

24 See Ruth Butterworth, N.Z. Statesman, May 1968, 4; also L. Cleveland, 'How Free is the N.Z. Press?' Comment, 5:3, April-May 1964, 36-42; 'How Impartial is the N.Z. Press?' Comment, 6:1, October-November 1964, 14-18; 'How Secure is the N.Z. Press?' Comment, 7:1, December 1965, 7-10.

25 Bevan Burgess, 'A Necessary Crusade', Landfall, 21:1, March 1967, 97.

26 loc. cit.

Furthermore, the social consequences of the existence of statutory restrictions on the freedom of the press in New Zealand should be considered. They are profound, but difficult to measure because of their indirectness. For example, a convenient way to gag the New Zealand daily press is either to start litigation of some sort (in which case the newspapers will be likely to refrain from further attention to the subject for fear of contempt of court proceedings) or to bring a defamation action which will achieve the same thing and possibly cause the newspaper to drop the subject. N.Z. Truth, for instance, for a time softened criticisms of the administration of mental hospitals after damages had been awarded against it in 1957 in a defamation action brought by a former employee of the mental hospitals service. The same year it was threatened with contempt proceedings by a Supreme Court judge if it published any further references to the hearing in chambers of an application brought under section 86 of the Mental Defectives Act concerning an alleged wrongful detention of an inmate of Porirua Mental Hospital. In July 1960 the paper ceased to publish sketches made in the Wellington courts by members of its staff when the presiding judge, during the hearing of a criminal case, ordered a set of drawings made by an artist in the employment of the newspaper to be seized and destroyed.

In a letter to the then editor of N.Z. Truth on July 28 1960, the registrar of the Wellington Supreme Court quoted the views of the Chief Justice (Sir Harold Barrowclough) on this incident as follows:

...it is proper to observe that the making of sketches in court, however discreet and accomplished the artist may be, could be embarrassing and disturbing to litigants and their witnesses and to counsel, juries and judges as well as to prisoners in the dock, and to that extent could prejudice the due administration of justice. That this undesirable result could follow, and has in fact occurred, is shown by the enactment in England in section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1925, of an express prohibition of the taking of photographs or the making of portraits or sketches in any court. It applies to all courts, civil or criminal. It is the right and duty of the presiding judge to regulate and control the conduct of his court so that the attention of those engaged in it shall not be diverted or distracted from their tasks. In the discharge of that duty a judge could properly give a direction which would leave the same result as the statutory prohibition referred to.

In 1969 the editor and publisher of N.Z.Truth were each fined \$200 and ordered to pay \$100 costs by Mr Justice Macarthur in Wellington Supreme Court for contempt of court. The proceedings arose out of articles criticising magistrates' decisions by saying that 'two magistrates last week thumbed their noses at the New Zealand public' and alleging that one of them did not treat people in an equal and impartial way. The court held that these statements over-stepped the bounds of what it considered to be 'fair and temperate criticism' and were therefore contemptuous.²⁷

On another occasion the phrase 'cocktail-party-loving judges' was omitted under editorial direction from an article criticising inefficiency and delays in the conduct of Supreme Court and Court of Appeal business.²⁸ This was done on the grounds that such comment might be considered contemptuous and that in any case it would have been unwise to antagonise any member of the Bench personally as the paper could conceivably find itself on some future occasion involved in litigation over which the target for its criticism was presiding. The relationship between the press and the courts is even more sensitive than that between journalists and politicians, and it is defined more by such intimations and divinations than it is by open conflict and direct instruction. Any attempt to gauge the freedom of the press in New Zealand must face up to the difficult task of assessing such tenuous and concealed mechanisms.²⁹ Generally speaking, a suggestion or a request from the Bench or from the police, made either formally or informally, is sufficient to persuade most newspapers to adopt what the courts consider a desirable course of action. The interaction between courts and newspapers is for the establishment and maintenance of a working consensus rather than for the victory of one institution over another, but in this relationship the press characteristically finds itself

27 N.Z. Truth, September 16 1969, 2-3.

28 ibid. May 8 1955, 24.

29 'The press in New Zealand has substantial freedom to speak out effectively on all the important issues of our times' and 'so far as I have been able to ascertain, the press does not feel that the government seriously attempts to "manage the news" in New Zealand'. (Alison Quentin-Baxter, 'Freedom of the Press' in Essays on Human Rights (K.J. Keith (ed.)), Wellington 1968). These assertions are based partly on hearsay and partly on an examination of the laws affecting the press and the degree of freedom hypothetically available to the newspapers. They fail to take into consideration the existence of sensitive zones of calculation about the effects of possible sanctions and a variety of social controls and informal restraints that affect content.

playing a subordinate role.

Thus, Wellington newspapers were warned by the Indecent Publications Tribunal that if 'sensational, slanted reporting continued'... and if the press did not 'play the game and present properly balanced reports', more of the tribunal's business would be taken in committee where the press could not report it. In September 1955, when a band of women were occupying part of a disused railway line near Nelson with the aim of preventing the running of demolition trains as a protest against government policy to shut down an uneconomic branch line, The Nelson Evening Mail, at the request of the police, withdrew a three-column display advertisement in which the group of women called for volunteers to 'help save the railway line' even though there were no legal measures in force which could have compelled the newspaper to do so. Such circumstances raise the question of whether or not the conflict model of mass media responsibility is applicable to the New Zealand news media system, and to the daily press in particular.

The difference between the conflict model and the consensus-seeking model is apparent in the way different writers view the activities of the press. David Riesman, for instance, thinks the press should 'shape a productive tension' within our times,³⁰ but J. Edward Gerald sees it as generally confirming the status quo and giving priority to information over leadership of opinion, partly because of the fact that it has to sell advertising to a hard-headed business community and news to an entertainment-fond readership, and partly because of the situation of newspaper management in the middle class echelons of the community.³¹ Consequently 'passive non-involvement in critical problems' is said to be the outstanding quality of journalism and ... 'the press fails to raise substantial and critical questions because it cannot be relied upon to work for changes, even minor ones, in the social structure'. Other writers even

30 Individualism Reconsidered, Chicago 1953, 20. Riesman argues that the notion that there must be agreement on fundamentals in order that democratic politics may go on is an illusion.

31 The Social Responsibility of the Press, Minnesota 1963, 138.

consider that it is impossible to define functions for the press without ineradicable confusion, because arguments about responsibility are likely to be based on what some particular set of interests would like newspapers to be rather than what their readers apparently accept.³² Consequently to treat the press predominantly as a medium of political information and instruction and a forum for the discussion of public affairs is said to be misleading. This view favours the mirror theory to the effect that the press satisfies readers' wants, and what most of them require is amusement rather than tedious instruction. This may, or may not be the situation in New Zealand, but even if it were, it still might not be inevitable in conditions in which there is not an open market for the distribution and sale of mass media output and where the mass media industry itself is capable of a considerable amount of self-regulation. Whether the policy of disclosure, and the view of government as an authority to be watched with some suspicion, is the most desirable one for the news media to adopt, or whether they should see government as a constructive force, an agency which is engaged not only in the dissemination of useful information but also in the calculated but justifiable influencing of opinions, is very much a matter of viewpoint which depends to some extent on the roles that newspaper managements and journalists themselves think they should be playing rather than on the sometimes unrealistic complaints of critics.

Certainly the system outlined in this study is massively efficient at the business of reproducing information, but it seems only marginally and indirectly interested in playing the part of watchdog and critic. Journalists who may be discontented with this state of affairs and with the limitations imposed upon them either by their employers or by the institutions from which they gather news, can, of course, always start their own more venturesome and liberal publications; but with their extremely limited resources, and the smallness of the market for quality journalism in New Zealand, they are not likely to be able to gain a mass circulation and hence cannot have much more than an indirect influence on public affairs by informing and possibly activating a

32 Henry Mayer, The Press in Australia, Melbourne 1964, 54.

number of opinion leaders and other people with specialised interests. Furthermore, an antagonised employer could very easily discipline a rebellious employee who expressed his frustrations in this way. Considering the volume of material they are handling and the widespread coverage they are giving to both national and international affairs as well as to local events, the existing daily newspapers in New Zealand are doing a substantial job with competence and on occasion, excellence. But in some areas of news gathering, the role of neutral conveyer and consensus-seeker is far from adequate. The daily press as a whole suffers from a lack of curiosity about what is behind the news. It needs to allow its journalists much more freedom to speculate and probe. It needs to bring more intelligence and talent to bear in the scrutiny of public affairs. For example, it is often impossible for an ordinary reader of the daily press in New Zealand to comprehend the issues and the development of the argument in some quite important court cases because of the inadequacies of reports. Sometimes significant cases are simply not covered at all by some papers; at other times the stenographic and episodic style in which they are written renders them incomprehensible. Furthermore, reporters generally lack the basic legal training needed to manage the necessary interpolations and interpretation which complex matters often require. The Wellington dailies, for instance, have been inaccurate in some of their reports of court cases and have failed to give even nominal coverage to important civil proceedings. ³³

Other areas of ineptitude exist in the New Zealand daily press. The condition of literary, dramatic, musical and graphic arts criticism illustrates the difficulties faced by the press when it ventures on anything more than a transcription of events. A few of the best papers possess staff with capabilities in one or two of these fields, or else they manage to obtain the services of capable contributors; but most have no special competence. In fact, only a few papers regularly devote space to the arts; the majority either ignore them or give a minimal, cursory attention to them. In the sample some notable exceptions to this

³³ J.A. Wicks S.M., reported in The New Zealand Journalist, November 1967, 2.

dismal policy were a column of art news written by a leading New Zealand critic and published in The Auckland Star, a review of Meanjin's centennial issue and a page of notes concerning music, art and theatre in The Christchurch Star, and a reproduction of a contemporary New Zealand painting with a discussion of its significance in The New Zealand Herald. The New Zealand Herald, The Auckland Star, The Otago Daily Times and many other papers publish book reviews, but these seldom reach the quality attained in The Press which for many years has featured a weekly literary page. A subject-content item frequency count of 0.52 per cent. for literature, 1.15 per cent. for serious music and the dramatic arts, 0.31 per cent. for films and 0.94 per cent. for the discussion of radio and television would be considered most inadequate in a press with any pretensions to quality.

5. THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS

The development of a critical sensibility not only in the arts but also in the fields of economics, politics, public administration, law and the physical sciences is best attempted at a university, but it is one of the weaknesses of journalism in New Zealand that it does not place a sufficient premium on university skills. Indeed, the only prerequisite for employment on the editorial staff of most New Zealand dailies has traditionally been no more than ability to read and write with average facility. It has long been considered that the best training for journalism consists of working in the industry and learning its various skills by a process of imitation and adaptation rather than by theoretical instruction. Consequently, journalism schools have not flourished in New Zealand. An undergraduate diploma course was offered for some years at the University of Canterbury but was generally considered to provide very little that could not be obtained from an ordinary arts degree course. On many dailies the cadet journalist customarily served a period in the reading room as a copy holder before graduating to the reporting staff. He might be encouraged to learn shorthand and typing as useful trade skills, but any aspirations he might possess to higher learning were not necessarily supported by his employer. Some newspapers are still operating their own internal training schemes in which cadets receive regular instruction from experienced hands

and contributing experts. The New Zealand Herald holds annual full-time training courses lasting three weeks to which other newspapers may send cadets if they wish. In 1964, however, the Wellington Polytechnic began a cadet training scheme designed to meet the general needs of the industry, and many employers in the North Island now regard this as useful pre-entry training.

(a) University Training

The same year, E.W. Barrett, then Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, reported on the possibilities for higher education in the field of New Zealand journalism.³⁴ He noted a lack of thoroughness and penetration as well as the initiative to look beneath surface announcements in the daily press. With this went a 'respectful' attitude which could also be described as a passion for reporting the formal, safe, spoken word instead of the known happening. One reason for this, he thought, was 'the paucity of thoroughly educated and disciplined minds within journalism'. This was because too many journalists perhaps lacked both the understanding of complex issues and the self-confidence to ask the penetrating question or to report the sub-surface development. A few former cadets had achieved remarkable self-education, but in general the current system appeared to militate against educated men and women. Barrett also noted the same problem afflicting the fast-growing N.Z.B.C. news service which was drawing its staff at that time almost entirely from the cadet-trained ranks of newspapers.

To overcome these deficiencies, he recommended that a post-graduate journalism programme should be introduced at the University of Canterbury. He admitted that, at the time, there was not likely to be much demand for such a course, but he suggested a number of ways in which standards could be raised in the industry and a more professional approach to journalism training stimulated. These included the offering of some sort of undergraduate unit for journalists as part of the Bachelor of Arts degree, the establishment of fellowships for study abroad by promising graduates, the establishment of a set of annual citations to journalists and newspapers for superior performance in

³⁴ Cyclostyled report to the N.Z.J.A., Wellington 1964.

various fields (including investigative reporting) and the university encouragement of critiques by qualified academic staff members appraising the performance of journalism in specific fields.

Following Barrett's report, the New Zealand Newspaper Proprietors' Association, a number of daily newspapers, the N.Z.B.C., the Tasman Pulp and Paper Company and several other organisations made grants towards the cost of starting a one-year, post-graduate course in journalism at the University of Canterbury. This course began in 1969 with the aim of encouraging higher standards in the New Zealand press and in current affairs broadcasting by training university graduates for work in the news media. The emphasis is on the reporting of political and foreign affairs, on interpretative reporting, feature writing and leader writing. It is too early to comment on the success or otherwise of this venture. It will depend largely on the extent to which more university graduates, or people with a university background, are absorbed into the industry as a result of this introduction to it, but a number of drawbacks are evident. Firstly, the existing system of grading and promotion in accordance with the conditions and rates of pay negotiated in the Court of Arbitration does not recognise the significance of any academic qualifications but bases advancement largely on seniority. The same principle applies to the N.Z.B.C. news section.³⁵ Little progress will be made with schemes to improve the qualifications and status of daily newspaper journalists until provision is made in the industrial awards which govern their employment for the recognition of university and other qualifications as an adjunct to promotion.³⁶ Secondly, there is no

35 N.Z.B.C. employees are regulated in their employment by conditions negotiated on their behalf by the Public Service Association and are virtually on the same terms with their employer, the corporation, as ordinary public servants are with the government. Consequently there are objections to working under a system of promotion by length of service. See Ian Johnstone, a former N.Z.B.C. producer in The Right Channel, Dunedin 1968, 32.

36 Opposition to such proposals can be expected from journalists themselves. Thus, the Manawatu branch of the N.Z.J.A. opposed 'any move to make a university degree in journalism compulsory'. Reported in The New Zealand Journalist, 29:6, August 18 1964, 4.

guarantee that the people taking the post-graduate course will in fact be employed in the mass media industry. Thirdly, the course has been established in the South Island when it could possibly have been more useful either in Auckland or in Wellington where large numbers of people already employed in government as well as in business are engaged in a very wide variety of communications activities and could put instruction in the larger possibilities of journalism to practical use. Some of these objections have been overcome by the establishment of undergraduate courses in mass communications at Victoria University of Wellington. These are options in the Stage II and Stage III Political Science courses and are intended to meet some of the needs of students of politics and of public administration for an introduction to public opinion and mass communications theory as well as for an acquaintance with the criteria of performance of news media systems.

Nor should the more everyday needs of the industry be overlooked. The most important of these is for more academic training of some sort on the part of its employees. Efforts should therefore be made to encourage management to grant time off for university part-time study and to offer scholarships and fees bursaries for those who might wish to undertake ordinary degree courses. They should also be urged to recruit in the universities by offering bursaries to suitable applicants, including women, for whom there are not nearly enough opportunities to enter professions in New Zealand. The best kind of education for journalists cannot be discussed here, but it certainly could usefully include subjects like economics, legal system, constitutional law, political sociology, public administration, government, public opinion theory, mass communications studies and any of the physical sciences. All these subjects are being taught in conventional degree courses in New Zealand universities, therefore part-time undergraduate study bursaries would probably be more immediately useful than bursaries for post-graduate study, but something of this kind should also be provided for those graduates already employed in the industry who might be prepared to undertake masters' degrees. The New Zealand universities need not attempt to teach the rudiments of journalistic practice as is done in the United States schools; the New Zealand press itself can do this far more efficiently. It is one of the advantages of the training on a New Zealand daily that its products have little

difficulty in subsequently performing most of the basic, routine tasks with credit. But university study has the great advantage of introducing journalists to an acquaintance with the specialised literature which is so necessary to them if they are to be even aware of the potentialities of a subject, or if they are to write at more than a pedestrian level about politics, economics, science, medicine, law, public administration and any other of the fields so important to government. It also has the advantage of conferring improved status on its recipients and this is an essential step in any progress towards greater professionalisation.

(b) Professional Status

There is no survey information of any kind available about the status of journalists in New Zealand, or about their own role expectations or fulfillments. Research in this area is urgently required and should, if necessary, be undertaken by the industry itself in its own interests. It is significant, however, that journalists should be organised as an industrial association of workers rather than as an institute or some other kind of professional body, and it is difficult to resist the implication that, for the most part, they may be expected to behave more like process workers than public personalities and leaders of public opinion. The Bick controversy demonstrated the fate of the crusading expositor in the ranks of the N.Z.B.C; a newspaper journalist involved in such a conflict with management would be likely to have obtained even less media attention and would have been disciplined the more conveniently. This is not to say that a great many New Zealand journalists do not occupy positions of modest credit in their local communities and among those with whom they are in daily business contact;³⁷ but if the news media system is to exert its control functions with greater vigour it requires that journalists should have much more public professional recognition and responsibility. Gerald argues that the 'self-righting process' —that is, the provision for equal and open encounters between

37 When the educational roundsman of The Press died, the University of Canterbury Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and the Chancellor of the University praised him on the grounds that 'he betrayed no confidences and broke no agreements...he was a model of journalistic integrity in all his dealings with us'. Reported in The Press, October 30 1968, 12.

opposing points of view' ³⁸ is dependent on the journalist's ability to assure a fair hearing for each of the important constituent groups in national and international society. It is impossible for a public agency to supervise this work; it depends on journalists checking and correcting one another. This means they must construct and use a system of self-government based on professional ethics and in that sense they are in the same situation as lawyers, doctors, academics and other professional groups in the community. Any attempt, however, to advance the professional status of journalists will require machinery of exclusion and qualifications for entry, as well as ethical codes and a means for their enforcement. So far the industry has shown little inclination to move in this direction though a code of ethics was drawn up by the council of the N.Z.J.A. in 1961 and a proposal to institute a press council is now under investigation.

6. CONCLUSION

The criticism that has emerged in this study has mainly drawn attention to shortcomings in the sub-editorial treatment of some N.Z.P.A. messages by the daily newspapers and to inadequacies in their handling of some areas of subject content like Science, Culture and Politics, as well as to the prevailing uniformity with which the content of most of the daily newspapers in the sample was 'mixed'. It has been argued that the press in general should show a more probing attitude towards public affairs and should be more concerned to canvass the background to the news and to provide a forum for the expression of the viewpoints of individuals and minorities. Yet, against this, it can be contended that the press cannot publish any more political news and commentary and any more serious cultural or scientific content without risking the displeasure of readers. There is little reliable survey information of any consequence available about people's reading, listening and viewing habits with the mass media in New Zealand, but to some extent the New Zealand news media may be in a unique position to give people what they think is good for them. They may be able to disregard audience tastes

³⁸ Gerald, op. cit. 167.

so long as the entire media system is kept under its present artificial restraints by various forms of government intervention, and as long as the corporative pattern of organisation is substantially retained in broadcasting and the co-operative practices of daily newspapers are continued. To a considerable extent, New Zealand daily newspaper managements (especially the larger ones) are in the luxurious situation of being able to impose their own values on the selection and presentation of news for readers who are not able to choose any radically different alternative product. Consequently the press can pursue concepts of responsibility at its pleasure: if an annual conference of newspaper proprietors were to decide tomorrow to reduce still further the amount of news coverage of, say, Culture and Science, or to print comics instead of international news, their readers would have to accept the situation. The press is free to produce newspapers which supply a large number of useful recording services with a conscientious, inoffensive mediocrity; but it is also free, if it wishes, to pursue the crusading role of expositor and prescriber with as much zeal and talent as it can command, though subject always to the restraints imposed by the New Zealand legal and political systems.

As a result of the News Media Ownership Act and the careful supervision of broadcasting and television activities provided for under the Broadcasting Corporation Act and the Broadcasting Authority Act, the New Zealand news media system may be 'system dominant', ³⁹ meaning that its conditions of operation are so stable that the impact of individual behaviour on the part of any one of its components is likely to be negligible. Yet, any one New Zealand paper is equally free to break the pattern of content followed by its ring of rivals in conformity. Approximately 49 per cent. of the editorial items in a typical New Zealand daily paper consists of N.Z.P.A. news which in most cases pays heavy attention to Economic activity and to Sport. The total editorial content of the average daily paper has approximately 3.2 per cent. of its items devoted to news about War and the Armed Services, 9.6 per cent to

³⁹ See Morton A. Kaplan, 'System Theory' in Contemporary Political Analysis (James C. Charlesworth ed.), New York 1967, 160.

Politics, 18.1 per cent. to Human Interest and Social affairs, 13.1 per cent. to Crime, Disaster and Public Safety, 22.8 per cent. to Economic Activity, 21 per cent. to Sport, 4.9 per cent. to Science, 5.4 per cent. to Culture and Entertainment, and 1.9 per cent. to Miscellaneous items. The daily papers of the sample showed a high degree of similarity in their patterns of subject content selection, though some of the provincials made minor departures in order to publish more local news.

Only 12 per cent. of the content (measured by item frequency) of the average newspaper of the sample was interpretatively written; only 3 per cent. was devoted to features; 1 per cent. to editorials, 3 per cent. to correspondence and 0.8 per cent. to reviews of books, plays, musical performances and other cultural events. A newspaper attempting to improve its quality could perhaps increase all these values at the expense of the 60 per cent. of its items of content devoted to straight news reportage of one sort or another. Furthermore, only 4.8 per cent. of the average newspaper's content was presented in the form of illustrations material. It would be possible (particularly for a publication using the offset process) to make a dramatic departure from the conventional editorial mix by greatly increasing this content and correspondingly decreasing the volume of items written in the ordinary way.

The unanimity of agreement in the proportions of subject matter published by the newspapers gives support to the criticism that they are lacking in variety. Their similarities may be the price they are paying for the co-operative strength of their organisation. This lends itself well to the performance of the service function, not so well to the achievement of more demanding activities. The only defence for the maintenance of the existing structure of the daily newspapers inside a common news-sharing organisation is to be found in the argument that it is better for a democratic society to have a large number of papers because the chance of them publishing different viewpoints and different selections of news is likely to be so much greater. But if, in fact, they are not doing this particularly well, the maintenance of such a structure becomes unnecessary, because the service they are providing could be obtained just as well from one large newspaper chain or from other types of organisation. For that matter, there is no reason why

newspapers could not be corporatised and run along lines similar to some of the big public corporations, or why they could not be operated as public utilities.⁴⁰ A large number of papers is not necessarily more democratic or efficient than a smaller because the only substantial power the press has got is its power to influence the course of events by exposure, and the performance of such a service has no relationship to the number of newspapers. One good paper could be more desirable than a lot of mediocre ones. Nor is there anything except inertia to stop any large metropolitan newspaper in New Zealand from turning out two very different kinds of newspaper, using the same staff and machinery. It would be a simple enough enterprise for one firm to publish a conventional morning newspaper of record which paid serious attention to such matters as Culture and Politics, as well as a crusading, sensational, evening tabloid full of Crime, Human Interest and Sport, and written with, say, Daily Mirror fluency. Such enterprises could perhaps be more profitable in the long run than dabbling with expensively-produced Sunday publications or with radio broadcasting.

Certainly a more aggressive approach to news gathering and presentation would be likely to have consequences within the political system and throughout the entire field of public affairs. This might have its inconveniences, but because government is one of the largest news generating sources for the entire New Zealand press, it can be argued that the press therefore has a special responsibility to scrutinise government actions and policies. Some newspaper managements, however, are cautious in their approach to such suggestions. According to the chairman of directors of the Wellington Publishing Company, the press is more recorder and entertainer than expositor and prescriber. 'A newspaper's basic task is, of course, to inform the public as objectively and interestingly as possible', an annual meeting of shareholders was told.⁴¹ In this the New Zealand daily press (and the news media system

40 Or by a commission as has been suggested in Australia. See Henry Mayor, op. cit. 251.

41 Reported in The Dominion, December 19 1968, 3.

in general) may resemble some units of the United States community press which has a tendency to avoid conflict in the interests of the community and to protect community institutions rather than report the disruptive aspects of public life.⁴² The policy of the passive recorder of public events may be a response to the style of political activity in New Zealand as well as a characteristic of a media system which is only nominally competitive and is pre-occupied with its service functions. The defect of this situation is that if the press wishes to aspire to any pretensions of quality, its fundamental need is to organise itself for the more informed discussion of public affairs and the more trenchant interpretation and criticism of political activity. It has the potentiality to do this both in breadth and in detail.

Quality papers should provide what has been called a 'continuing education' for their readers. The hallmark of the quality newspaper is its independence, its strong opinions and its interpretative capacities. It should place extra emphasis on the fields of politics, international relations, economics, social welfare, cultural endeavour, education and science. It should also show a concern for getting, developing and keeping a well-educated readership at home and abroad, and it should have the desire to influence opinion leaders everywhere.⁴³ Quality periodicals and specialised journals are not plentiful in New Zealand because they are costly to produce, they have limited circulations, and there is not always enough talent in the country to fill them with first-rate contributions. Broadcasting and television, for all their immediacy and dramatic resources, are primarily media of entertainment, and in New Zealand they tend to be inhibited in their execution of the role of watchdog and critic by the restraints of the Broadcasting Corporation Act and the subjection of their management to varying degrees of government influence. For these reasons, the need for standards of quality in the daily press becomes the more apparent. Furthermore, in view of

42 Clarice N. Olien, George A. Donohue and Philip J. Tichenor, 'The Community Editor's Power and the Reporting of Conflict', Journalism Q., 45:2, Summer 1968, 243-252.

43 John C. Merrill, 'Quality Daily Journalism: An Analytical Discussion', Gazette, 15, 1969, 51-58.

the increasing power of Cabinet and the state services, and the accompanying decline of the controlling influence of the House of Representatives, the press may find itself by default in the situation of what Colin Seymour-Ure has described as an 'unofficial opposition' ⁴⁴ with the power to probe and expose the affairs of government at least as thoroughly as the political opposition. He suggests that it should go even further than that by closely analysing the activities of government departments and their accompanying structure of committees and administrative tribunals, many of which for the most part operate in an atmosphere of semi-secrecy, free from all but the briefest surveillance of Parliament.

Such an undertaking would require radical changes in the composition and qualifications of news reporting staffs as well as the employment of more specialised and better qualified correspondents. For the daily press to be fully effective as an agency of political influence of this kind it would also have to learn to use its power with greater scope and determination. Management as well as staff need to become imbued with a greater sense of professional responsibility if they are to measure their performance against international standards of quality. The easy-going assumption that most events will manage themselves conveniently enough from day-to-day without the benefit of long term philosophy, or even energetic public discussion, will be insufficient for the demands of an increasingly technological society geared to produce new products for world markets. Important social changes are under way in New Zealand as resources are shifted away from traditional lines of agricultural production and directed towards manufacturing and the development of industries like forestry and tourism. The press should be more than a passive agency facilitating the accomplishment of these changes, it should be their critic as well as their prompter. It should be continuously active in debating fundamental questions concerning the allocation of resources and priorities for economic development on a national scale. It should be concerned about such broad cultural problems as the need for a balance between the scramble for industrial development and the desire for conservation of the natural environment. It should also scrutinise

⁴⁴ The Press, Politics and the Public, London 1968, 307.

the effectiveness of the State in New Zealand as the chief patron of the arts, the custodian of many aspects of its popular sports and recreations, and the principal guardian of its standards of social welfare. In such fields of inquiry, what is needed on the part of the press is not so much a relaxation of its traditional middle-class values, as an expansion of its provincial horizons and a greater sensitivity to the changing nature of New Zealand society. Receptivity to new ideas, readiness to experiment with content, and enthusiasm for new fields of discussion are capabilities which the New Zealand press should cultivate if it is to aspire to quality and if it is to play an influential part in the processes of change which are now evident. As New Zealand grows more technologically advanced it also becomes more urbanised. Whether the qualities of the urban culture that takes shape will be any more liberal and stimulating to the individual citizen, or whether they emerge as impediments to the discovery and development of the citizen's individuality may depend to a very considerable extent on the response of the mass media, and particularly the press, to accelerated social changes. Increased sensitivity towards social forces, and aspiration towards international standards of quality journalism need not result in a loss of the special antipodean identity of the New Zealand press; but failure to enlarge its horizons and to interact more fruitfully with the centres of political and economic power could result in a triumph of the worst defects of provinciality.

CHAPTER IX

APPENDIX

1. CONCORDANCE TEST

A coefficient of concordance was used for testing the degree of agreement among the rankings of the eight subject categories of editorial content in terms of the five variables of editorial treatment.

Using the formula:

$$W = \frac{s}{\frac{1}{12} k^2 (N^3 - N)}$$

where s = the sum of the squares of observed deviations from the means of R_j , that is

$$s = \sum (R_j - \frac{R_j}{N})^2$$

k = the number of sets of rankings

N = the number of entities ranked

R_j = the sums of the rankings assigned to each column of editorial variables

$\frac{1}{12} k^2 (N^3 - N)$ = the maximum possible sum of the squared deviations, i.e., the sums which would occur with perfect agreement among k rankings,

the Kendall coefficient of concordance¹ was calculated for the values shown in Table 6, Ch. VI, The Performance of the Newspaper System. A high value of $W = .80$ was obtained, indicating that there was a considerable extent of agreement between the values of the various editorial variables. The null hypothesis is that there was no significant relationship between the variables of item frequency, story inchage, illustrations inchage, prominence and wordage.

Using the formula:

$$\text{and } \chi^2 = \frac{s}{\frac{1}{12} kN (N+1)}$$

$df = N-1$

¹ Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics, New York 1956, 233.

a value of 28.32 was obtained. Referring to a table of chi square values, $\chi^2 \geq 24.2$ with $df = 7$ and has a probability of occurrence under H_0 of $p < .01$. Consequently, the null hypothesis can be rejected and it can be concluded with assurance that the agreement among variables is higher than it could be by chance.

2. THE NORDMEYER-MARSHALL EXCHANGE

Nordmeyer's Statements	% Words Cut	Message Usage Rate	Prominence Scores
Approval of Holyoake's Statement	20.9	13	27.3
In Favour of Vietnam Mission	0.0	1	11.0
Criticism of Marshall	18.8	3	3.3
Support for battery-deferring decision	36.9	3	25.3
Further comments	0.0	1	40.0
<hr/>			
Average values for this group of messages	15.1	4.2	21.4
Average values for items in this subject division	29.7	4.0	15.5
<hr/>			
Marshall's Statement			
Reply to Nordmeyer	43.3	3.0	27.7
<hr/>			

From this it can be seen that when the newspapers reproduced the Nordmeyer statements they imposed word cuts below the average for the subject division and they gave substantially more than average prominence to the Nordmeyer statements which were reproduced in slightly more than the average number of newspapers. Compared with the treatment given Marshall's statement, however, Nordmeyer received better treatment by word cut percentage and newspaper usage, but scored rather less in message prominence (only 21.4 compared with Marshall's score of 27.7).

This sort of analysis would have to be made a great many times and would have to be applied to a representative sample of messages emanating from Labour leaders over a lengthy period of time to demonstrate anything conclusively, but here, at least, was a situation in which favourable treatment was given a series of statements (presumably on their merits as news items) by the newspaper system. If there is systematic bias on the part of daily newspapers in dealing with New Zealand Labour Party affairs, it was not demonstrated during the week under analysis, in fact, the reverse seems to have been the case in the treatment of the Nordmeyer-Marshall exchange in 16 daily papers.

3. THE VIETNAM PROTEST MOVEMENT

Items Generated by the Protest Movement	Newspaper Usages	Prom.
Canterbury section of Public Service Association oppose Vietnam involment	6	10.5
Views of Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation	2	33.5
Wellington Committee on Vietnam welcomes statement on Vietcong negotiations	3	5.3
University academics protest at Vietnam policy (evening shift message)	2	7.5
University academics protest at Vietnam policy (morning shift message)	2	3.0
Effigy of Uncle Sam buried by Manila protestors	-	-
Nuclear Disarmament secretary comments on Holyoake's statement	2	15.0
Nuclear Disarmament Committee statement on American peace mission--bombing condemned	4	7.0
Average values for this group of items	2.6	10.22
Average values for items in this subject division	4.0	15.5

Other Criticisms of the Vietnam War

Views of U.N. Association	6	10.5
Australian Labour Party resolves against sending troops	-	-
Peking newspapers' appeal for help for Vietcong	2	4.0
Indian Prime Minister does not agree with use of troops in Vietnam	-	-
University professor's speech on Vietnam	2	23.0
Oxford Union debate on Vietnam	8	26.1
Senator Fulbright would recognise Vietcong	3	19.7
National Council of Women's views on Vietnam	2	25.5
Australian Liberal Party's views on Vietnam war	-	-
Nkrumah asks Australia and N.Z. to withdraw troops	1	45.0
China says peace talks a swindle	2	16.0
North Vietnam high command congratulates U.S. air force for shooting down its own fighters	-	-
Average value for this group of items	2.1	14.1

4. N.Z.B.C. NEWS SERVICE MEMORANDA

The following are a selection of memoranda transcribed from the files of the N.Z.B.C. news service during the period 1966-67.

(a) Homosexuality in Prisons

Undated (Auckland to head office news supervisor): Understand from reliable informant that at a meeting of prison chaplains at Mt. Crawford Prison, Wellington, a resolution was passed that homosexuality in prisons be condoned. Chaplains want legislation on this. Suggest you contact Robson or Hanan on this one. Sounds like a good story.

Head office to Auckland : Results negative. We would not use the story in any event.

(b) Radio Hauraki

April 19, 1966 (head office news to Auckland): Reference Gapes pirate radio, please send me all stories as available but use nothing locally without my clearance. He is putting too many non-stories out purely for publicity.

April 19, 1966 (head office news editor to Auckland) : Today's Gapes story not strong enough. Will consider when (a) he actually gets his boat (b) fits it out (c) gets official frequency or is refused (d) starts broadcasting (e) gets shipwrecked.

October 31, 1966 (head office news to Auckland): Urgent. Do not, repeat not, use item about Radio Hauraki protest meeting. Mr --- has ruled that such meetings be given no prior publicity but may be covered on news value. No news items on pirate radio should be used until referred to editor head office news. We have a message sent earlier today concerning public sympathy for the crew, public subscriptions for fines and possible newspaper backing. I don't know whether you have used this at all but it must be scrubbed I'm afraid. We have just been talking to the corporation's solicitor and he says it could be construed as an attempt to influence the court before the conclusion of the hearing and hence might be held as contempt. We cannot indulge in these sorts of things till the case is concluded.

(c) Maori M.P.

October 10, 1966 (Auckland to head office news editor): We have a request to cover return of Watene, M.P. for Eastern Maori, from inter-parliamentary committee conference in Teheran for national news. He arrives Auckland at 4 pm today. Could you advise whether a TV interview would be in order?

(a) Vietnam

October 8, 1966(Auckland to head office news supervisor) : We have a statement here from the Auckland chairman of the Peace for Vietnam Committee. I believe we have to get it cleared by the head office editor if we propose using any part of it. It's not very exciting, but it does include this titbit...President Johnson's visit can only mean that he and his government expect New Zealand to increase its military commitment to Vietnam. How about using that?

Wellington to Auckland: Re that story on Vietnam, you may use it if you like. It has been cleared.

(o) The Governor General

October 28, 1966(Auckland to head office) : We understand the Governor General would not appreciate being filmed during the service at St. Faith's church, Ohinemutu, on Sunday. Maybe you had better tell --- to drop that assignment.

(f) Japanese Fishing Vessels

February 28, 1967 (Auckland to head office news supervisor): Several Japanese fishing vessels were sighted less than five-and-a-half miles off the southern end of Ninety Mile Beach at ten o'clock this morning. There were at least four dories and a mother ship nearby. Following reports from shore the Civil Aviation Department received an accurate fix on their position from an aircraft which flew over. Please clear for use.

5. N.Z.P.A. MESSAGES(a) The Vietnam War

Sydney (June 17): 'We shoot first and ask questions later', an Australian soldier returning from Vietnam said today. Warrant Officer R.S. Simpson, 39, of Perth, spent a year at Tako special forces camp, 40 miles west of Da Nang air base as a member of the Australian Army training scheme. Vietcong guerillas ambushed his mountain patrol last September and shot him above the knee, shattering a bone. He spent the next eight months in a U.S. military hospital in Tokyo. He returned to Sydney from Tokyo today. 'There is no way of telling whether the Vietcong are North Vietnamese or South Vietnamese', he told reporters at Sydney Airport. 'In many cases they are friendly South Vietnamese by day and Vietcong by night'. Warrant Officer Simpson was asked whether he had seen any atrocities by either side during the war. 'In this type of war you view so-called atrocities in a different kind of light', he replied. 'People blow up hotels and kill civilians. In a normal war this would be considered an atrocity. I am not saying we are all doing the same things as the Vietcong--but we could, quite easily. I'm all for it myself'. Warrant Officer Simpson agreed that South Vietnamese troops sometimes killed civilians by 'shooting first and asking questions later'. 'This unfortunately happens in every war', he said. 'Once we didn't. Once a patrol met a young, unarmed Vietnamese in the jungle and didn't challenge him. He ducked out of sight and reappeared with a rifle. He killed the last man in the patrol'.

(b) Indonesian Ambush

Singapore (June 17): Two wounded Australians who took part in the ambush of Indonesians in Borneo on Tuesday, today described the action as 'just like shooting ducks'. 'They went over like ninepins. We couldn't miss them', was their enthusiastic description of the action. The Australians are both members of the Third Battalion Royal Australian Regiment -- Lance Corporal Jack Ezzy, 24, single of Forest Hills, Queensland, and Private Alby Kyle, 28, married, of Townsville. Both were in the British military hospital here puffing away at cigarettes when interviewed. Corporal Ezzy was hit in the knee by a bullet and had his leg in plaster. Private Kyle was hit in the back of the thigh with a piece of shrapnel from an Indonesian mortar.

(c) Guns Concealed in Bra

Rome (June 15) : Actress Ursula Andrews shoots from the breast, not from the hip, in her latest film. With her 'killer brassiere', an up-to-date version of the old six gun, Ursula blasts away from the bosom at an assailant who traps her in a New York museum. She wears a pair of 'sex guns' attached to her brassiere in the film 'The Seventh Victim' now being filmed in Rome and co-starring Marcello Mastroianni.

(d) Naked Actress

London (June 16) : A beautiful actress posed naked in front of a Unitarian church parson today and said 'It's a bit of a giggle isn't it', The London Evening News reported. The actress, 21 year old Josephine Pritchard added : 'This is the first time I have posed naked, and then it's before a clergyman'. The parson, the Reverend David Doel said: 'My wife is right behind me'. He meant that Mrs Doel had agreed with her husband that he could take better pictures than the nude studies which appeared in a recent issue of a British magazine. Mr Doel had described the photographs as 'too coy'. The magazine challenged him to do better. They hired actress Josephine Pritchard for the model's job. Both insisted that the camera session should be in private. 'I'm not taking my pants off with all these people here', Miss Pritchard said as Mr Doel ushered the visiting pressmen out of the room. 'It's a bit embarrassing isn't it', the clergyman agreed. The pictures won't be seen until a later issue of the magazine (eds. King) for men. But before the studio door closed on the visitors, Mr Doel explained how he came to be behind the camera. He said he was making a protest against social prudery. 'I wrote to the magazine saying that I thought their pictures were coy and inhibited, especially those of actress Laya Raki. She said in an article that she believed children should be brought up on the breast. If this is so, then nothing is more natural than to show the breasts, but in every blessed picture she was covering them with her hands'. He added: 'this is my protest against the artificial and hypocritical attitude which is so prevalent in our society, particularly in the church, towards sex'. Mr Doel said that the people of the village of Hindley near Wigan in Lancashire where he preached mostly approved of his stand, although there had been some criticism. The president of the Church Council had warned him to 'be rather careful'. At the school which his eleven-year-old son attended, the pupils had greeted the boy with cheers. 'I imagine they thought it was a blow for liberty', said Mr Doel.

(e) Pregnant Policewoman

New York (June 14) : A woman who claimed she was forced to take maternity leave after becoming pregnant on police department orders sued the New York City today for 3,000 dollars, the Associated Press reported. The woman, Mrs Johanna (repeat Johanna) Levin, 35, told the Brooklyn Civil Court she lost the 3,000 dollars in salary. Mrs Levin said she became pregnant under official Police Department orders and was taken from the uniformed rolls during six months of her pregnancy. She said she was injured in an accident in 1958 while assigned to a women's prison. After the accident she suffered continuous pains in her neck, head and left arm. She said that treatments by various doctors failed to ease the pain and she sought the advice of police department surgeons. She said three police surgeons told her pregnancy might have a therapeutic effect and ease her pains. Shortly afterwards she became pregnant and bore her husband a son. While pregnant, however, she was forced to leave the department payroll under police regulations. During the layoff, she said, she lost \$3,018.02 in salary.

6. MULTIPLE LAYOUT CARD FORM

NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS

SHEET NO

CODE # 3		CODE # 0	
1 PA #	1 Item #	1 Item #	1 Item #
2 # Papers using the message	2 Total story Inch	2 Total story Inch	2 Total story Inch
3 Total words cut	3 Head Inch	3 Head Inch	3 Head Inch
4 Average cut (1 dec. place)	4 Illus Inch	4 Illus Inch	4 Illus Inch
5 % cut 1 dec. place	5 # words Printed	5 # words Printed	5 # words Printed
6 Same Day	6 Page #	6 Page #	6 Page #
7 One Day	7 Main Heading Factor	7 Main Heading Factor	7 Main Heading Factor
8 Two Days	8 Prominence	8 Prominence	8 Prominence
9 Three Days	9 Illus Head	9 Illus Head	9 Illus Head
10 story Inch	10 Caption	10 Caption	10 Caption
11 Average	11 Display Total	11 Display Total	11 Display Total
12 Headlay Inch	12 Paper Code	12 Paper Code	12 Paper Code
13 Average	13 Data	13 Data	13 Data
14 Headlay Inch	14 Author	14 Author	14 Author
15 Average	15 Medium	15 Medium	15 Medium
16 Illus Inch	16 Orient	16 Orient	16 Orient
17 Average	17 Mode	17 Mode	17 Mode
18 Prominence per message	18 Level	18 Level	18 Level
19 Average	19 Country	19 Country	19 Country
20 Illus head	20 News Gen	20 News Gen	20 News Gen
21 Prominence	21 Subject	21 Subject	21 Subject
22 Average			
23 Total			
24 Prominence			
25 Average			
26 Combined			
27 Prominence			
28 Average			
29 Author, words printed			
30 per message			
31 Average			
32 Country			
33 Subject			
34 News Gen			
35 Author			
36 P.A. Substantive			
37 Words			
38 Card Code #			
39 1+y			
40 1+x			

DATA as in Summary I (above).

N2 PA SUMMARIES

PA MASTER

PA DETAIL

NON-PA DETAIL

7. SECURITY H.Q. FIRE

Blaze Damages Broadcasting Record Library

Firemen had to clamber through second-storey windows and use bolt cutters to get to the seat of a fire in the New Zealand Broadcasting Service's building in Majoribanks Street yesterday afternoon.

A young man in a house at the back of the building called the brigade at 5.34pm and the first of five machines to arrive found the premises firmly locked and barred.

Firemen—with respirators to aid them in thick smoke—broke through the second-storey windows and fought their way to the seat of the fire. Other firemen cut their way through steel doors.

The fire meanwhile raged through the record library, destroying records, tapes, and files and could not be brought under control till 6.15pm.

The fire was out at 6.40pm and salvage operations began. A Police guard was placed on the entrance to the Security Police headquarters.

Two firemen were injured in the fire. They were inspecting Officer D. A. Varley, who had to have stitches inserted in the right arm, and Fireman S. Hooper, who received cuts to his head after being struck by flying glass.

CHAPTER X

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a biographical list of periodical articles, books and pamphlets containing material useful for the study of the New Zealand mass media system. Most of the references are of American origin. This is because almost all the serious academic research in the press and the mass media generally has been carried out in the United States, either in industry or in the journalism schools and research organisations at the major universities. Consequently the most important sources for reports of relevant research projects and discussions about research methodology and the problems of media organisation, responsibility and control are in such publications as The Public Opinion Quarterly and The Journalism Quarterly. Most of the items listed here are derived from these two journals, but a number of other less important sources (including some European, British, New Zealand and Australian ones) have been drawn upon. A variety of other reference works have also been listed in the section dealing with bibliographic studies.

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