

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
OF
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

BULLETIN

Volume Nine, Number Four

Fourth Quarter, 1985

AN ESTIMATE OF CHARLES ELLIOTT'S REVENUE
FROM THE NELSON EXAMINER, 1842 - 1874

LITTLE EVIDENCE SURVIVES on the inventories of nineteenth-century New Zealand printers. In 1851, Ingram Shrimpton, who achieved a reputation in Oxford as a printer for learned societies, and was a foundation member of the Canterbury Association, 'something like £2,000 capital in machinery [an Atlas press for fancy printing, a Columbia for engravings and a Stanhope press], type, paper and ink sufficient for twelve months' ¹ for his son John Ingram Shrimpton to print the *Lyttelton Times*. Five years later in 1856, 'the copyright and the lease of property and plant for twenty years [was sold] to Crosbie Ward and Charles C. Bowen for £5,000.' ² £220 19s. 2d. was laid out in 'printing press, types, etc.' ³ to establish the *Canterbury Standard* in 1854, but in May 1866 the property was sold to the *Canterbury Times* for £1,155 ⁴, a high valuation which is difficult to explain. In April 1842, the New Zealand Government purchased a Super Royal Stanhope press and three thousand pounds of type for £1,425 ⁵ from the Auckland Newspaper and General Printing Company, owners of the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, but paid £844 ⁶ for the initial plant of two Albion presses, a Double Demy, a Super Royal and 7,500 lbs of type bought from Vincent Figgins of London when the present Government Printing Office was established in 1864.

Charles Elliott's outlay and expenditure

The fixed-assets investment which Charles Elliott (1811-76), the South Island's first printer, laid out in establishing the *Nelson Examiner* was probably just about the same as the amount expended in the establishment of the *Canterbury Standard*, or a little higher to include the office building and furniture. The amount of printing equipment required by the colonial printer was not extensive. Elliott started business with a loan from the New Zealand Company and could not afford to lock up as much capital as Ingram Shrimpton put into the *Lyttelton*

Times: his total investment would be far less than the substantial outlay required to establish a government press.

MacKay notes that early newspaper printers in New Zealand originally used only hand presses, laborious to work but suitable for printing a few hundred copies of the newspaper.⁷ Indeed, by the time printing was introduced into New Zealand in 1830, the cast-iron hand press had superseded the old wooden common press for about a decade and the Stanhope, Columbian and Albion presses were commonly available. All three presses were in use in the country before Elliott set up in Nelson in 1842. But having bought his equipment in London after 1832, when he would have completed his apprenticeship at the age of twenty-one years, Elliott would most probably have purchased a demy Albion press with platen size 24" × 18" for which he would have paid as little as £29 if he bought it secondhand.⁸ The cost of the Albion, its relative simplicity of parts, operation and economy of maintenance, made it suitable for use in a pioneering settlement, especially if Elliott bought his equipment with a desire to emigrate.

After the Stanhopean and Columbian presses, the meed of praise is due to the late R.W. Cope, of London, for his invention of the ALBION, which deserves to be placed in the first rank in the list of presses for power and ease to the workman in every point of view: first, they are much lighter in respect to weight of metal: secondly, the pull is very easy; notwithstanding which, it is equal in power to any of them, not even excepting the Columbian: thirdly, it is better adapted for expedition: fourthly, there are so few parts belonging to it, and consequently the machinery is in itself so simple, that there is not the least chance of their being put out of order, or liable to the least accident from wear: fifthly, the works being so simple, are all contained in the hollow of the piston, on which the power is given.⁹

With a freight of £31 12s. 8d.¹⁰ from Gravesend to Nelson for the press, its appurtenances, books and a prefabricated house, Elliott would seem to have commenced business with a modest outlay. But the value of his assets would have increased substantially when he took delivery of "9 packages, printing machine"¹¹ on 18 June 1859 and installed on 8 May 1863 a two horse power steam engine purchased from Barrett, Exall and Andrewes or Reading, England.¹² Being well established by this time Elliott was most likely to buy what was most probably a stop cylinder press: a first-generation two-feeder Wharfedale. The Wharfedale machines became popular in England after 1858 and the *Nelson Examiner* seems to have been one of the first newspapers printed on a cylinder press in New Zealand.

The first Wharfedale machines appeared in this country in the 'sixties'. With the customary delightful inconsequential manner of engineers in naming their products it was called

the "Ulverstonian". It was of very primitive construction, having no cylinder check, neither did it have any delivery for the printed sheets. The lack of delivery gear necessitated the presence of a fly-boy to take the sheets off the cylinder. On the smaller presses the motive power was provided by the feeder who operated a treadle connected with the fly-wheel, while the large presses had to be turned by hand by a handle attached to the flywheel, a very laborious process, and one not calculated to increase sobriety among the machinists. The invention of the stick-flyer revolutionized the Wharfedale and it stood the test for many years, in fact, it can still be supplied if desired. Steam and gas engines, and in some cases, hydraulic power, further eased the lot of printers.¹³

Elliott invested in other stocks-in-trade but neither his initial investment in ink and newsprint nor his recurrent expenditure on these materials is known.

The above inventories must be compared with the inventories of printers in other colonial communities.

In 1827 the *Gazette's* press and type was valued at £1,000, and the same figure was given for the *Australian* in 1850. In 1838 the *Colonist* office had two Columbian presses, a demy (£55) and a double demy (£80).¹⁴

John Lunan (fl. 1805-35), printer of Spanish Town and member of the House of Assembly, in his inventory dated 27 January 1839 includes printing press, types, &c., &c., valued at £700. His son John Lunan Jr, to whom this equipment was bequeathed, seems to have died soon after his father. He had in his inventory, dated 31 August 1839, three presses valued at £16, £16 and £20; £52 other implements including types, forms, tables, stones, desks, stands and cases £250, in all £302. On the other hand, the inventory of Joshua de Cordova, a Kingston printer, founder, with his brother Jacob, of the *Gleaner* in 1834, in 1844 quoted £415 10s. 6d. as the amount of his stock-in-trade, consisting of letter, foolscap and other paper, sundry types, printing presses, etc.¹⁵

It is not known precisely with how many employees Elliott started the *Nelson Examiner*, although the presence of his brother James Elliott, also a printer, and his later business connection with the paper would suggest an early collaboration. Scholefield mentions George Rycroft Richardson as the paper's first editor.¹⁶ The picture of Elliott's employees in 1843 is slightly clearer. Francis Jollie became editor when Richardson died on 17 June 1843 in the Wairau Affray, and Alfred Domett succeeded Jollie by July 1844. John Peter Poynter would seem, by the evidence provided by Meiklejohn and quoted below, to have succeeded Domett before December 1845. The 1849 Nelson Census Return lists only two persons as printers, Elliott at Selwyn Place and Duncan

MacKintosh at Bridge Street.¹⁷ Almost certainly MacKintosh was employed by Elliott. Elliott probably had other employees, but the Census Report does not state the occupation of everybody whom it lists.

A large part of Elliott's recurrent expenditure would have gone into the wages of compositors, pressmen and editors. Alfred Domett was employed on an annual salary of £54 12s.¹⁸, although he was said to have received only £5 at the time he gave up the job in April 1845. When he returned to the editorial chair in 1857 he earned £250 per annum; a salary that compared favourably with what Joseph Wilson earned in Wellington when he was appointed on £300 per annum as New Zealand Government Printer on 16 May 1864.¹⁹ Members of the black trade were traditionally well paid. Up until the first part of October 1842, compositors and pressmen in Nelson received twelve shillings per day. By March 1844 daily rates had fluctuated between a maximum of seven shillings (low) and ten shillings (high), and a minimum of five shillings (low) and six shillings (high).²⁰ Compositors and pressmen in Wellington earned less. For the most part of 1843, they received between £2 and £3 per week, dropping slightly to between £1 10s. and £2 per week from 9 June 1843.²¹

Elliott's other incidental expenses included telegraphic charges after 1865 and postage tax after January 1867. There is no evidence to suggest how much Elliott expended annually on telegraphic bills, but telegraphic expenses must have been huge enough to warrant the suspension of telegraphic news for a period in 1867.²² He was therefore delighted when telegraphic charges were reduced by Sir Julius Vogel, then Telegraphic Commissioner in Wellington and awarded 'the Commissioner full credit for his wise liberality'.²³

The Stamp Act of 1866 and the Postage Act of 1866 (both effective 1 January 1867) led to the imposition of a postage tax of one penny on all newspapers sent through the Post Office.²⁴ This compelled Elliott to add a surcharge of 3s. 3d. a quarter to all subscriptions delivered by post (making it 13s. 3d. a quarter), and to discontinue, except in a few cases, the practice of exchanging by post copies of the *Nelson Examiner* 'with the numerous papers, both in the colony and beyond it.'²⁵ Subscription for the *Nelson Examiner* monthly summary for Europe went up from ordinary delivery of 6s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per annum, if posted; and all newspapers posted to England via Panama attracted a postage of 3d. per copy. The financial burden suffered by newspaper proprietors in the colony by the combined effects of these acts was a decrease of 26.3% in newspaper circulation.²⁶

Revenue

At the time he arrived in Nelson at the age of thirty-one, Elliott was indebted to the New Zealand Company, a liability he hoped to reimburse with revenue from his newspaper printing business. Though he engaged in a variety of business activities, there is little information to suggest their scope. Nothing is known

about the number of business enterprises he registered in his own name or under different names or in partnership with others. Even when he attempted self-liquidation in February 1865 and valued his assets at £43,717 15s. 9d., he provided no details.²⁷ His liabilities stood at £48,236 19s 6d. As these figures were clearly the sum total of the assets and liabilities of his entire business connections, it was felt necessary to estimate the revenue Elliott derived from his newspaper printing enterprise (no doubt his main source of livelihood) to ascertain whether newspaper publishing was an economically viable undertaking in the pioneering settlement.

Several other factors hinder an accurate assessment of Elliott's income: exchange of goods and services between Elliott and other tradesmen would affect the cash flow. So would free exchange of the *Nelson Examiner* with newspapers published by contemporary printers in New Zealand and overseas. Gratuitous display of files of the paper in the reading rooms of an agency, commission paid to agents and other distributors and distribution of complimentary issues to captains of ships in the Nelson port and government officials will all affect the sales receipts. The following estimate of revenue from advertisements is no less fraught with uncertainties. Self-advertisements for book sales, auctions, etc. might have attracted no revenue, but what conditions of any business agreement existed in this connection when the *Nelson Examiner* was printed under the partnership and management of Elliott and his brother James from 13 May 1854 to 31 December 1861, and as a joint-stock company from 15 May 1872 to 15 January 1874, is not known. Neither is it known if advertisements were inserted at reduced rates or even free of charge for friends, relations and shareholders. Were all advertisements strictly charged at the advertised rates? Regardless of the traditional nineteenth-century practice of placing advertisements on the front page of newspapers, it is possible that an advertisement inserted at the top front page might cost a little more than one inserted at the bottom front page or elsewhere in the inner pages or on the back page. Similarly, prominence given to an advertisement by inserting it in large type might attract slightly higher charges than the advertised rate; but there is no evidence to suggest what special rates and concessions operated from time to time.

When the monopoly which the *Nelson Examiner* had enjoyed for nearly a decade and a half was broken by the establishment in Nelson of the *Colonist*, its printer, William Nation, and Elliott set up a cartel to prevent the Nelson settlers from getting the lowered rates of advertisement which would have come with open competition between the two printers. Neither of the two printers kept strictly to this arrangement, and Elliott was known to cut the price (not stated) at which he printed the list of letters for the Nelson Post Office.

Although not wishing to imitate this unenviable spirit, we are bound to state that the publishing a list of letters for the post office was done by us [the *Colonist*] for nearly two years under the belief that it was gratuitous; but ascertaining that the *Examiner* was paid for it, we thought it only just that we

should likewise be paid. We then charged the post office upon the usual terms, but were told that Mr Elliott had charged considerably less! At the same time we were informed that it ought never to have been paid, as it was a piece of valuable local intelligence. We were content until accused by Mr Elliott, who at the same time could not deny having reduced the price, and contended that he had a perfect right to make what arrangements he chose! Why he should therefore deny our right to do the same (although we have in no case intentionally exercised it to his prejudice) is only part of that singular, intermittent self-interest of which we complain.²⁸

The two main sources of a newspaper's revenue are subscriptions and advertisements. The only published evidence of the total circulation of early newspapers in New Zealand is the uncertain record provided by Meiklejohn.²⁹ This is a facsimile reprint of a document believed to have been compiled between August 1843 and December 1845. If, as stated in the document, the circulation of the *Nelson Examiner* was 200, it was, in terms of circulation, the third largest newspaper in the country (along with the *Bay of Islands Advertiser*, and the *Southern Cross*) after the *New Zealand Colonist*, the *Auckland Chronicle*, and the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*; all of which were listed as having a circulation of 250. The *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, with a circulation of 300, was thus the largest paper by 1845.³⁰ With an annual subscription of forty shillings, payable in advance, or twelve pence per issue, the *Nelson Examiner* would yield £400 per annum in subscription revenue in 1843. If the commission Elliott paid agents was similar to that in London at the time,³¹ this would mean he had to give about a shilling in the pound commission for those copies that were distributed by agents. Subscription revenue seems to have fluctuated over the years. In anticipation of increased circulation, Elliott transformed his paper into a bi-weekly on 5 July 1854, reduced the annual subscription to thirty shillings and the cost of a single copy of the paper to seven pence.³²

Annual subscription was, however, raised on 2 July 1853 to the old forty-shilling rate while a single copy of the paper sold for tenpence.³³ Shortly afterwards, on 8 July 1854, the price of a single copy was reduced to sixpence.³⁴ This reduction would seem to have increased the paper's subscription revenue, for by 31 March 1855 Elliott doubled the size of the *Nelson Examiner* and transformed it into a thrice-weekly from 7 July 1863, and then into a daily on 4 January 1871. On 22 April 1871, Elliott reverted to weekly issues in the old demy format with an apology that

The experiment of issuing the *Examiner* as a daily morning papers has not succeeded, and the present will be the last number printed in that form.³⁵

The lack of success referred to in this quotation is clearly low financial returns, as the *Nelson Examiner* was issued daily and regularly during the period between 4 January and 18 April 1871.³⁶ The reissue of the *Nelson Examiner* in a double demy format from 15 May 1872 as a one penny daily by the Nelson Examiner Company Limited was no more financially successful, in spite of the aggressive attempts made to boost subscriptions by free circulation of the paper between 2 July 1873 and 15 July 1873. In his valedictory editorial, the editor lamented poor returns from subscriptions in an experiment which could otherwise have had far reaching and beneficial consequences for the newspaper industry in Nelson.

TO SUBSCRIBERS AND ADVERTISERS

WITH this morning's issue of the *Examiner* its publication will cease -- at all events for the present. Whether or not it will be resuscitated must depend upon circumstances.

In converting a bi-weekly [sic] into a daily morning paper, without increasing the price of subscription, the proprietors possibly committed a mistake, but although the experiment was not up to the present time a financial success, they are convinced that a longer trial would have proved that the course taken was a wise and proper one. The adage speaks of the steed starving while the grass is growing, and it is no new thing for an enterprise to fail for want of immediate resources.³⁷

The *Nelson Examiner's* demise would seem to have been due to non-payment of subscriptions and advertising bills. These bills appear to have mounted into huge sums, and none of the several efforts Elliott made to shame subscribers into prompt payment seems to have succeeded; subscribers allowed 'their accounts to run quarter after quarter without payment'.³⁸

Circulation

Elliott established various local and overseas agencies. In fact there was no way he could have reached subscribers in the scattered Nelson settlement without some form of delivery service. The pioneering years of the settlement of this country were periods of very limited and restricted access within and between settlements, a period when the human foot was the most reliable form of transportation. 'Mails and papers were distributed as, and when somebody happened to walk or ride in the requisite direction.'³⁹ Indeed, throughout the *Nelson Examiner's* existence, delivery of the paper to subscribers within the Nelson settlement was mainly on foot, but also by post, which was similarly delivered within the settlement and its environs. Postage of the paper to Southland and the North Island was delivered mainly by coastal vessels. The

monthly summary for Europe was usually issued on mail days to be sent overseas to Melbourne, Sydney, London and other destinations. Cash sales at the *Nelson Examiner* office appeared to be few and it was not until about 1865 that the paper was regularly sold along the street opposite the Nelson Post Office.⁴⁰ The rudimentary postal service created many delivery problems against which many a subscriber had complained.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our New Plymouth correspondent and subscribers are informed that the *Nelson Examiner* is regularly posted for subscribers in that province, before noon on the day of publication. We can therefore do no more than express our regret that the numbers should reach them so irregularly.⁴¹

It was partly to remove this bottleneck in the circulation of the paper, especially within the Nelson settlement, that Elliott established several agencies over the years.

With the transformation of the *Nelson Examiner* into a daily morning newspaper, the Nelson Examiner Company Limited developed an express delivery service; a chain of relay runners who delivered the paper to subscribers within fifteen miles radius of Nelson at breakfast.⁴² By August 1873 the delivery time was slightly altered from half-past seven in the morning to eight o'clock in the morning.⁴³ It seems, however, that delivery of the paper was restricted to the main road from Nelson to Spring Grove, while school children joined the ranks of unpaid agents by carrying subscriptions delivered to their schools to their parents in the hinterland.⁴⁴

Aside from subscriptions and advertisements, other sources of revenue included miscellaneous jobbing printing: 'show bills, placards, bill-heads, catalogues, hand-bills, pamphlets and every description of letterpress printing'.⁴⁵ Contractual printing for the Nelson Provincial Government also provided necessary revenue although Nation appeared to have supplanted Elliott in this vital area in 1872.⁴⁶

Advertisements

In the absence of audited accounts, one can do no more than guess the revenue Elliott derived from advertisements, which according to James Perry are 'the only beneficial commerce of a Newspaper'.⁴⁷ Oswald Curtis wrote to his brother Stephen Curtis on 25 July 1873 that Elliott made his fortune from his advertisements:

One thing is certain that the *Nelson Examiner* is making his fortune by the columns of advertisements he gets every week

-- he has already doubled the size of the paper and raised the price to 10d a number and this week he has issued an extra number as well.⁴⁸

The methodology adopted in assessing Elliott's income involved sampling advertisements during the nearly thirty-two year period of the paper's existence at ten-year intervals: 1843, 1853 and 1863, 1843 being the first full year of Elliott's business when he was deemed to have been successfully established and all being years of Elliott's sole proprietorship. The year 1873 was not considered because it is not known how the Nelson Examiner Company Limited shared its dividend. All advertisements in the first Saturday issue of each month (giving a total of twelve samples for each year) were analysed, classified by content, and counted. The content of the advertisements was typical of newspapers of the time. There were the big standard advertisements for patent medicine: Holloway's Pills and Ointment, Thomas Keating's Worm Tablet and Cough Lozenges; Lea and Perrins' celebrated Worcester Sauce, pronounced by connoisseurs to be the 'only good sauce', and applicable to every variety of dish; and other advertisements for banks and insurance companies which filled the pages of metropolitan as well as colonial newspapers. There were also advertisements for agricultural land to let or sell, provision and clothing imports from Sydney and London, and political advertisements: official requisitions inserted by listed signatories requesting candidates to stand for political offices and the candidates' acceptances and addresses.

I have divided the advertisements by the classification scheme developed by Scott Bennett for his analysis of advertisements in *The Times*, London, and the *Windsor and Eton Express*.⁴⁹ Bennett's categories are not entirely perfect for my purposes because they were developed for examination of advertising in Britain in the early nineteenth century and the preoccupations of the Nelson settlers in the 1840s were naturally rather different. Nevertheless it seems more useful to classify the *Nelson Examiner's* advertisements under the same headings to enable comparison to be made, rather than devise my own schedule which, though perhaps better devised, simply by being different would hinder such comparison. Bennett's scheme comprises six broad classes and twenty-six specific classes.

REAL PROPERTY, CAPITAL GOODS AND MAJOR ENTERPRISES

Auctions

Residential property to let or sell

Agricultural property to let or sell

Commercial property to let or sell

Room and board

Trade and general business announcements, construction trades, capital goods, good will, public contracts

Shipping

Horses, transportation, carriage

Insurance

RETAIL TRADE

Books, stationery
 Medicine and cosmetics
 Lotteries
 Spirits, wine, public accommodation
 Clothing
 General retail trade and household goods
 Private (i.e. non-commercial) trading
 Theatre

EMPLOYMENT

Service positions offered
 Service positions sought
 Trade positions offered or sought
 Professional positions and services (mostly teaching) offered or sought

PUBLIC EVENTS, EXHIBITIONS, FAIRS, CORPORATE MEETINGS

LEGAL NOTICES

OTHER

Political advertisements
 Charity subscriptions
 Reward notices
 Personal advertisements
 Inclosure notices
 Unclassified advertisements

Not all these classes are represented in the *Nelson Examiner's* advertisements. There are, for instance, no advertisements for lotteries; and inclosure notices, being a special aspect of English history, have no relevance for the Nelson settlement. Though seemingly self-explanatory, most of the divisions are not mutually exclusive. Auctions embrace everything so advertised for public bidding: landed property, merchandise of all sorts, sundry household effects, books and stationery, etc. But agricultural property also covers land and farm produce. If advertised to let or sell as a single item, a steam mill or a warehouse is classified under commercial property, but if lumped together with 'two dwelling houses and three acres of land', all go under 'trade and general business announcements'. As they are usually required by law to be advertised, all government notices, be they related to invitation to tender for road construction or to the sale of land, are classified alongside all notices inserted by

practising solicitors on behalf of their clients as legal notices. Awkward advertisements are classified where they belong under the broad class of 'other'. But Bennett's categories are not entirely helpful and more classes are needed to deal with the recreational aspects of life, such as invitations to join a billiards club or a musical society. Table I shows the six broad classes and fifteen specific classes for which advertisements are represented in the samples.

Real property, as a group, constitutes 50 per cent of the samples. Unlike London and Windsor, where retail activity in Bennett's samples is 15 per cent and 22 per cent respectively, retail trade comprises a significant 30 per cent of the business activity advertised in the Nelson settlement during the period under review. It is noteworthy that while retail trade slumped from 43 per cent in 1843 to 23 per cent in 1853, and only appears to be slightly recovering in 1863, real property rose steadily from 47 per cent to 52 per cent. But comparison with auctions, which account insignificantly for less than five per cent of the samples, still makes retail trade an important source of Elliott's advertising revenue. The fact that auctions were not advertised extensively shows that they were not a significant part of the local scene, or were much less important in the mercantile life of the people, than they were in London and Windsor. The comparative difference between the percentage of book and stationery advertisements in *The Times* (6.9 per cent) and the *Windsor and Eton Express* (7.2 per cent) on one hand and similar advertisements in the *Nelson Examiner* (5.7 per cent) on the other perhaps suggests the different preoccupations of a pioneering society. It is not surprising that shipping advertisements were insignificant in Windsor. Bennett, however, found less than five per cent of advertisements for shipping in London.⁵⁰ The greater relative importance of shipping activity in the Nelson settlement which one assumes still resulted in only six per cent of the samples. It should be noted that many of these advertisements were for Elliott, who was often probably only trying to fill his pages: interpreting the evidence provided by his own advertising is therefore difficult. Advertisements for his overseas agencies and other British firms are likely to distort the pattern in the samples.

TABLE I: ADVERTISING CATEGORIES IN THE *NELSON EXAMINER*, STATED AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ADVERTISING WITH BENNETT'S AVERAGE FOR *THE TIMES*, *WINDSOR AND ETON EXPRESS* (1812-1872)

	<i>NELSON EXAMINER</i>				<i>THE TIMES</i>	<i>WINDSOR AND ETON EXPRESS</i>
	1843	1853	1863	Average	Average (1812-1827)	Average
REAL PROPERTY, ETC.	47.3	49.2	52.3	49.6	56.7	54.7
RETAIL TRADE	42.6	23.1	25.2	30.3	15.0	22.1
EMPLOYMENT	4.0	6.4	11.5	7.3	17.5	5.9
PUBLIC EVENTS, ETC.	2.4	9.3	3.7	5.1	3.7	6.2
LEGAL NOTICES	2.4	3.5	5.0	3.6	2.5	5.9
OTHER	1.2	8.4	2.0	3.9	4.7	5.3
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100
Auctions	4.3	3.5	4.6	4.1	21.8	33.7
Trade and general business, etc.	19.2	18.8	22.9	20.3	7.3	4.9
Residential property	3.7	5.6	4.1	4.5	12.6	6.8
Commercial property	2.9	1.5	3.1	2.6	4.6	1.0
Books, stationery	11.2	3.5	2.3	5.7	6.9	7.2
Medicine and cosmetics	1.0	2.2	1.6	1.6	1.5	6.2
Agricultural property	12.7	9.3	7.4	9.8		
Shipping	4.1	6.9	5.4	5.5		
Horses	0.4	3.2	2.7	2.1		
Insurance	—	0.4	2.0	1.2		
Room and board	—	—	0.1	0.03		
Retail trade	25.7	15.2	18.2	19.7		
Spirits, wine, etc.	3.7	1.5	2.7	2.6		
Theatre	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4		
Private trading	0.8	0.2	—	0.3		
Subtotal	89.9	72.3	77.5	79.9		

In ascertaining whether newspaper printing in the Nelson settlement was an economically viable enterprise, I have tried first to establish a relationship between the amount of printed space devoted in column millimetres to advertisements and news, and second to estimate the revenue derived from advertising. Table II shows the spatial relationship between advertisements and news, and Figure I shows the proportion of space devoted to advertisements and news.

TABLE II: AVERAGE NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF SPACE FILLED BY ADVERTISEMENTS AND NEWS IN EACH ISSUE

Year	Advertisements	% space for advertisements	% space for news
1843	43	24.7	75.3
1853	48	28.1	71.8
1863	151	56.7	43.3
Average	81	36.5	63.5

While the percentage of printed space devoted to advertisements steadily increased from 25 per cent to 57 per cent, reflecting, as Bennett also notes in the case of a similar increase in the *Express*, the growing success of a newspaper in its market, the percentage of printed space allocated to news decreased correspondingly from 75 per cent in 1843 to 72 per cent in 1853, and significantly to 43 per cent in 1863. Not only was this a drop in relation to the proportion of the paper devoted to news, but it also represented a drop in real terms of space devoted to news between 1853 and 1863. In 1853 there were nearly 78,000 column millimetres of news: in fact from July to the end of the year there was a very noticeable increase in the amount of space given to news reports in response to the events leading to the Crimean war. The dramatic preponderance of advertisements over news is all the more remarkable in the face of the competition Elliott received from *Nation* from October 1853 onwards.

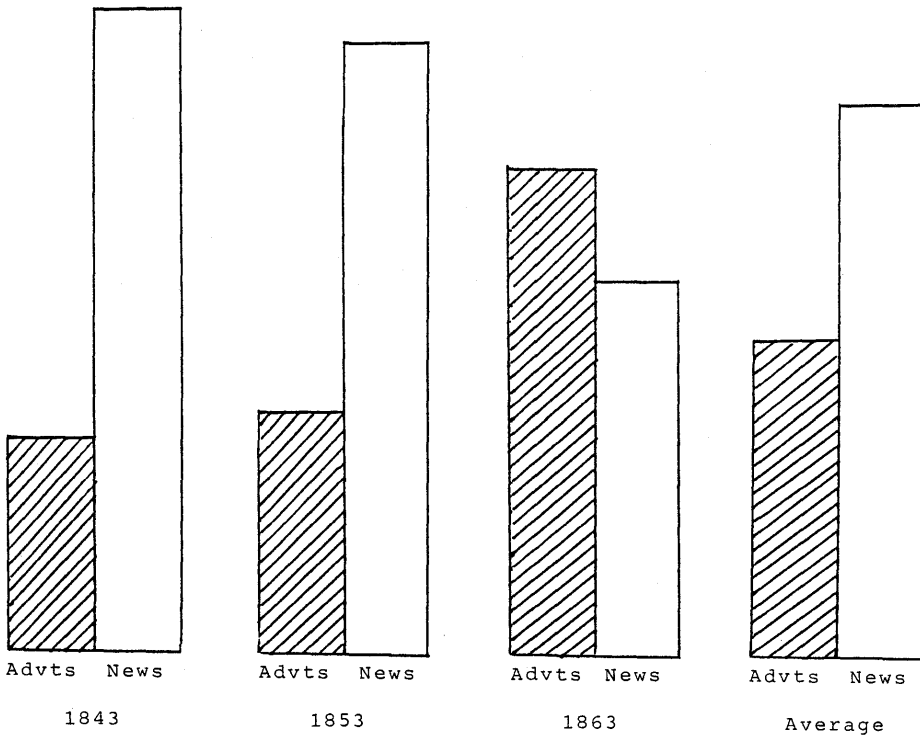


FIGURE I: PROPORTION OF SPACE DEVOTED TO ADVERTISEMENTS AND NEWS

To ascertain the average revenue produced by advertising, the advertisements were counted line by line and mathematically computed using advertising rates operating during the sample years. The results are tabulated below.

TABLE III: AVERAGE REVENUE PRODUCED BY ADVERTISING IN EACH ISSUE

[Note: As it was impossible to compute the potential revenue in a way which would take account of the varying rates charged for second and subsequent insertions, the calculations were done as if each advertisement were charged at the full rate. The sums given below therefore represent a notional income higher than the sums Elliott would actually receive for any individual issue.]

1843	£197 7s.6d.
1853	£297 11s.3d.
1863	£514 14s.0d.

These analyses reveal that advertisements were the mainstay of Elliott's income. Elliott's revenue from advertisements had increased by 50 per cent by 1853 and by 1863 was over two and a half times his revenue in 1843. But Elliott was bankrupt in 1865 and was worth only £300 at his death.⁵¹ Probably he had become over-extended with subscribers paying more slowly or not at all for their subscriptions and advertising bills than is suggested by the figures I have produced. Taking evidence from other colonial communities is fraught with danger, but the reasons for Elliott's failure appear to be a dreary pattern throughout the colonial printing world. On 28 August 1855, Charles Henry Mills inserted the following apology, which also probably marked the death of his *Trinidad Examiner*:

Circumstances over which we had no control, has [sic] caused the issue of the present number to be delayed. In plain words we say the pecuniary embarrassed circumstances of the Proprietor has been the cause, and if friends of the *Examiner* would but come forward with the "tin" that is due (especially the Country Subscribers) no such drawbacks would occur in future...⁵²

Similarily in December 1877, barely three years after the *Nelson Examiner's* demise, Samuel Carter threatened to suspend his paper if subscribers failed to honour their bills:

Until arrangements are made to put the paper on a better footing, the publication of the *San Fernando Gazette* will be suspended from 1st January 1878. We have no desire of discontinuing the publication of the paper, but we find it impossible to carry on under existing circumstances. For the last two years we have not been able to collect as much money, in the shape of subscriptions, as would pay for the paper and ink used for printing the *Gazette*, and we have no wish of getting further in debt... we shall be glad if subscribers in arrears will come forward and pay up, and thus enable us to recommence the publication of the paper at an early date. Job printing will still be carried on in the office.⁵³

In a way, the *Nelson Examiner* demonstrates the strains and stresses of the Victorian newspaper proprietor. The lack of audited accounts and other forms of documentation has made it difficult to pin down Elliott's capital investment, running costs on printing accessories, wages, etc., or to make a precise calculation of the income he derived from subscriptions and advertisements. Nevertheless, Elliott appeared to have started business very well. His eventual failure suggests that even a quite competent printer who produced a respectable paper, which he modified by prevailing technology to the taste and demand of his clientele, stood a very serious risk of failure in early New Zealand. Many New Zealand printers before Elliott had failed for similar reasons. In 1849, W.B. Graham was forced to suspend his newspaper, the *Otago News*, when both the New Zealand Company and the Otago Church Trustees withdrew their subscriptions of twenty copies each in retaliation for Graham's uncompromising political views.⁵⁴ Adverse economic factors were equally debilitating. Population grew slowly and was scattered. There were many lean years interlaced with only a few boom years. With only £7000 of bank notes circulating among 2,942 people in 1843⁵⁵, barter was an essential medium of exchange: a form of payment which did not make newspaper printing a competitive enterprise.

Though the advertising rates used by Elliott were not sacrosanct, the application of Bennett's methodology for the assessment of the revenue Elliott derived from advertising has been instructive. The exercise has been useful in showing the sort of comparison that can be drawn between the preoccupation of people in the mother country and those in the colonies. Bennett's scheme has made it possible for me not only to determine the predominant economic activities pursued by the colonists, but also to determine the mainly consumer - orientated market in which the *Nelson Examiner* functioned: evidence which tends to illustrate how far the larger early New Zealand economy was heavily

dependent on foreign imports and substitution, with little productive capacity of its own. Comparison of Elliott's revenue with that of Charles Knight, proprietor of the *Windsor and Eton Express*, would have been interesting in terms of further parallels that could be drawn between the provincial and colonial newspaper. In spite of the lack of evidence on Elliott's total income and the inadequacy of my sample data, one is tempted to conclude that steadily increasing advertising and steadily increasing income therefrom were signs of good business. Although the marked differences between the colonial society and the mother country make Bennett's classification scheme unsuitable, the methodology is very sound for application by future investigators of advertising in early New Zealand newspapers. This sort of study holds tremendous possibilities of enriching our knowledge and understanding of printing and the book trade history, and of various other aspects of early New Zealand society.

Lishi Kwasitsu,
Monash University.

NOTES

¹ Guy H. Scholefield, *Newspapers in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1957), p. 211-12; Fiona Macmillan, *The Spread of Printing: Eastern Hemisphere, New Zealand* (Amsterdam, 1969), p. 39.

² Scholefield, p. 212-13.

³ A.A. Smith, *Printing in Canterbury: a History of Newspapers and Printing Houses of the Province from the Earliest Times* (Christchurch, 1953), p. 23-5.

⁴ Scholefield, p. 218.

⁵ Scholefield, p. 73; W.A. Glue, *History of the Government Printing Office* (Wellington, 1966), p.22; Macmillan, p. 30-1.

⁶ Glue, p. 32.

⁷ Richard Alexander MacKay, *A History of Printing in New Zealand, 1830- 1940* (Wellington, 1940), p. 103.

⁸ James Moran, *Printing Presses: History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times* (London, 1973), p. 99.

⁹ Charles H. Timperley, *The Printers' Manual: Containing Instructions to Learners ...* (London, 1838), p. 92.

¹⁰ National Archives NZC 32/62 'Accountant's Office Papers. Invoices of Cargoes 1839-1841' (Freight Book of Ships to Nelson, New Zealand per Lloyds Fifeshire Mary Anne Ltd., Auckland, September, 1841).

¹¹ *NE*, 18, no. 49 (18 June 1859), p. 2, col. 3.

¹² *NE*, 22, no. 41 (9 May 1863), p. 2, col. 5.

¹³ MacKay, p. 104.

¹⁴ *Colonist* (28 July 1838), *Australasian Chronicle* (24 April 1840), advt., *Australian* (2 February 1833), quoted in R.B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920* (Sydney, 1976), p. 47.

¹⁵ Roderick Cave, 'A Digest of Wills and Inventories of Members of the Jamaican Book Trade: Preliminary Draft Text' (issued in the series of duplicated Working Papers in West Indian Printing by the Department of Library Studies, University of the West Indies, 1975, no. 18), p. 36-8.

¹⁶ Scholefield, p. 156-7

¹⁷ National Archives SSD 3/2 'Superintendent of the Southern Division 1849 Census Return', p. 60.

¹⁸ Scholefield, p. 157.

¹⁹ Glue, p. 33.

²⁰ 'Wholesale Prices Current', *NE*, 1, no. 15 (18 June 1842), p. 60, col. 4. Cf. subsequent issues up to 2 March 1844.

²¹ 'Wholesale Prices Current', *New Zealand Colonist and Port Nicholson Advertiser*, 1, no. 1 (2 August 1842). Cf. subsequent issues up to 2 August 1843.

- ²² *NE*, 26, no. 111 (19 September 1867), p. 2, cols 4-5.
- ²³ *NE*, 29, no. 25 (26 March 1870), p. 2, col. 6.
- ²⁴ *NE*, 25, no. 162 (29 December 1866), p. 2, cols 4-5.
- ²⁵ *NE*, 25, no. 159 (22 December 1866), p. 2, col. 5.
- ²⁶ *NE*, 26, no. 96 (10 August 1867), p. 2, col. 5.
- ²⁷ National Archives JC-N 2/1 'Justice Department Courts Nelson Series 2: Court Registers 1. Register of Insolvent Estates, Nov. 1863-Nov. 1868', p. 19.
- ²⁸ *Colonist*, 3, no. 253, (23 March 1860).
- ²⁹ 'Early Record of New Zealand Newspapers', reproduced in G.M. Meiklejohn, *Early Conflicts of Press and Government: a Story of the First New Zealand Herald and of the Foundation of Auckland* (Auckland, 1953), p. 49 and facsimile reprint facing this page.
- ³⁰ The 'Early Record of New Zealand Newspapers' lists nine out of the thirteen papers published up to 1845. One would expect the circulation of the individual newspapers to fluctuate with the fortunes of the various settlements as well as the success or otherwise of the newspaper proprietors.
- ³¹ The document reproduced by Meiklejohn does not indicate any payment of commission. Agent's fee is based on the figure provided by Charles Knight, *London* (London, 1841), 5, no. 346 quoted in Scott Bennett, 'Victorian Newspaper Advertising: Counting what Counts', *Publishing History*, 8 (1980) 5-18.
- ³² *NE*, 2, no. 104 (2 March 1844), p. 412, col. 1.
- ³³ *NE*, 12, no. 591 (2 July 1853), p. 5, col. 2.
- ³⁴ *NE*, 13, no. 645 (8 July 1854), p. 2, col. 2.
- ³⁵ *NE*, 30, no. 92 (18 April 1871), p. 2, col. 4.
- ³⁶ There were eighty-eight daily issues of the *Nelson Examiner* between 4 January 1871 and 18 April 1871. The paper was, however, not published on Thursday 13 April 1871, which was a holiday. I was unable to trace any issue for Friday 7 April 1871, although issue numbering suggests that the paper was published on that day.
- ³⁷ *NE*, 33, no. 12 (15 January 1874), p. 3, cols 2-3.
- ³⁸ *NE*, 27, no. 40 (2 April 1868), p. 3, col. 3.
- ³⁹ J. Newman, 'Land Transport in the early Days', *Journal of the Nelson Historical Society Incorporated*, 1, no. 2 (May 1957) 4-6 (p. 5).
- ⁴⁰ *NE*, 24, no. 82 (8 July 1865), p. 2, col. 4.
- ⁴¹ *NE*, 14, no. 96 (27 February 1856), p. 2, col. 1.
- ⁴² *NE*, 32, no. 53 (2 July 1873), p. 3, col. 1.
- ⁴³ *NE*, 32, no. 81 (4 August 1873), p. 2, col. 6.
- ⁴⁴ *NE*, 32, no. 61 (12 July 1873), p. 2, col. 5.
- ⁴⁵ *NE*, 31, no. 36 (5 June 1872), p. 2, col. 3.
- ⁴⁶ *NE*, 31, no. 62 (4 September 1872), p. 2, cols 5-6.
- ⁴⁷ Perry to William Adam, 8 June 1792, Blair-Adam MSS, Blair-Adam, Kinross-shire; quoted in Ivon Asquith, 'Advertising and the Press in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries: James Perry and the *Morning Chronicle*, 1790-1821', *The Historical Journal*, 18 (1975) 703-24 (p.704).
- ⁴⁸ Oswald Curtis, letter to Stephen Curtis, 25 July 1853; Curtis Family Letters, 1852-66. Misc. MS, A.T.L.
- ⁴⁹ Bennett, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁰ Bennett considers as an insignificant market factor any class accounting for less than five per cent of his total samples.
- ⁵¹ Nelson High Court Department of Justice, 'Affidavits to Move the Letters of Administration' sworn by Mrs Jane Elliott on 19 July 1877. Charles Elliott died interstate.
- ⁵² Roderick Cave, 'The History of Printing in Trinidad: some Preliminary Notes' (issued in the series of duplicated Working Papers in West Indian Printing by the Department of Library Studies, University of the West Indies, 1975, no. 13), p. 14.
- ⁵³ Roderick Cave, 'Early Printing in Southern Trinidad' (issued in the series of duplicated Working Papers in West Indian Printing by the Department of Library Studies, University of the West Indies, 1975, no. 20), p. 3.
- ⁵⁴ *NE*, 8, no. 409 (5 January 1850), p. 178, cols .1-4.
- ⁵⁵ Supplement to the *NE* (8 March 1845), p. 3, col. 3.

Copyright of Full Text rests with the original copyright owner and, except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, copying this copyright material is prohibited without the permission of the owner or its exclusive licensee or agent or by way of a license from Copyright Agency Limited. For information about such licences contact Copyright Agency Limited on (02) 93947600 (ph) or (02) 93947601 (fax)