

## SOURCE 2

Extract from a government report on censorship, October 1915

(PRO ref: CAB 37/136/34)



SOURCE 2A

SOURCE 2B

### HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Look carefully at this source and consider what it tells you about the aims, methods or effectiveness of government propaganda. You should consider:

#### ASK YOURSELF:

- What was the government's main aim with censorship?
- What problems with censorship were revealed in section 1?
- What problems did the government have in controlling newspapers?
- Why was it difficult to punish proprietors of newspapers?

## SOURCE 2A

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### PRESS CENSORSHIP.

THERE has been much adverse criticism of the censorship of late, and while a good deal of it is due to ignorance or malice, some serious complaints are thoroughly well founded. The main shortcomings of the present system appear to me to be the following:—

1. The object aimed at by the Government in its control of war news ought to be to facilitate the supply of information to the press quite as much as to prevent the publication of injurious matter. More is done by way of supplying news than is realised by some critics or admitted by others

but it is urgently necessary to make the positive side of Government control of news more effective and prominent.

2. There is no proper concentration of authority in one hand. The Home Secretary is constitutionally responsible to Parliament for the Press Bureau; but neither he nor the Directors of the Bureau have the appointment of the majority of the staff working there:

At the same time newspaper correspondents at the Front are censored by a wholly different organisation; soldiers' letters are censored by a third hand.

3. There is no *compulsory* submission by newspapers of any class of matter for censorship. A newspaper commits no offence if it never submits anything to the censors at all. The offence consists in publishing something which can be proved in a criminal trial to offend against the Defence of the Realm Acts.

## SOURCE 2B

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4. The system involves very unequal treatment as between one newspaper and another. The "Daily Telegraph" submits practically everything to the Censor, and has an almost stainless record. Some other newspapers go to the other extreme and constantly gain an advantage at the expense of more careful and scrupulous editors by being the first to make an announcement which is near to the prohibited line.

6. Even if a newspaper commits an offence which can be established in court, the penalty is limited to fine or imprisonment of the individual reporter, printer, publisher, or (in cases where his personal responsibility can be proved) editor: these punishments do not affect the proprietor in the least;

The only really effective penalty for a bad case would be temporary suspension of publication.