Now Baron Huddleston, in our view, made one clear misstatement of the law. He said in effect that the Act did not protect a paper which published slanderous matter, although uttered at a public meeting. He was undoubtedly wrong here. If no slanderous matter was reported, there would be no need for protection, and the main object of the Act was to protect a newspaper which, *for the public benefit*, published matter to which exception might be taken as being slanderous. This is the sole reason for the existence of the Act. No protection is needed when there is no liability.

Again, Baron Huddleston seems to have thought that the Act only protected reports of speeches made at public meetings by the, so to say, official speakers, and not reports of remarks made by members of the audience. He said: "If a newspaper chooses to publish defamatory matter about anybody, though actually uttered at a public meeting, but which has nothing to do with the objects of the meeting, then it cannot shield itself behind the Act." We submit that this is a wrong direction as to the law. The Act protects fair and accurate reports of the "*proceedings*" at a public meeting, and surely the proceedings at a meeting comprise everything that takes place and everything that is said there, no matter by whom? In our opinion he ought to have directed the jury that if the remarks reported were not of public concern, and if the publication of the remarks was not for the public benefit, then the newspaper would not be protected by the Act. In our opinion Baron Huddleston has altogether failed to comprehend the Libel Act, 1888, and if the "Star" does not take proceedings to obtain a new trial, we shall be very much surprised.

Both counsel and judge seem to have treated the expressions "of public concern" and "for the public benefit" as if they were both equivalent to "of public interest." Now the Act does not use the word interest. It provides that the matter reported must be of public concern, and that the publication of it must be for the public benefit. There is surely a distinction between the words concern, benefit, and interest: the public may be interested in a matter which cannot concern it, and the knowledge of which cannot benefit it; the public is very interested in scandalous matter which affects only the parties immediately connected with it, and the knowledge of which is calculated to do more harm than good. And we do not think that it absolutely follows that because a matter concerns the public, it is necessary for the public benefit that it should be made known. There is such a thing as secret service. The first question that should be asked when considering whether a report is protected under the Act of 1888 is: Is it for the public benefit that a report of the matter should be published at all? If this is answered in the negative, the case is at an end. If it is answered in the affirmative, then follows the question: Was the matter published of public concern? If nay, there is no protection. If yea, then inquiry must be made into the fairness and accuracy of the report, and as to whether the meeting was a public meeting within the Act.

Though but small damages were awarded against the "Star," the case is one of great importance. The style of the "new journalism" is spreading to the older papers, and everywhere there is a disposition to throw the light of publicity