

43. The tents would be folded by you?—I superintend the folding and packing.
 44. Would there be any covering round them?—No; just as they are.
 45. Do you remember any orders given for private persons?—I do not know of any except for the Government.
 46. Then, you understood afterward that those were for the Government?—Yes.
 47. From whom?—Mr. Bridson.

Examination of ARTHUR BIDDELL continued.

48. *Mr. Reid.*] You were asked about the glass supplied from Briscoe, MacNeil and Co., charged at 380ft.?—It was originally delivered at the correct size; it was afterwards found to be half an inch short; it was then exchanged for thirty-two pieces half an inch larger. [Receipt produced.]

49. *Mr. Montgomery.*] There is no delivery-note for the second lot?—Not for the second lot; it would not be necessary; no doubt he would be with it himself.

50. This is signed "W. Stevens"?—Yes. The first.

51. Would it be his duty to measure the glass?—I do not know that it would; I do not know that there was any necessity for it. They were for the windows of the Lunatic Asylum, so that the size would be known by the order, and fitting them into the window.

52. Then, the only check would be yours?—From the vouchers.

53. The storekeeper would not attempt to check the quantity of feet?—Not the quantity of feet.

54. *Mr. Reid.*] Then, the 30lb. of nails, would he take the weight of them?—I do not know that he would weigh them; it is not necessary to weigh them; there is no facility for weighing them when they come in. Besides, these would not come to the Public Works District Office: they would be sent straight away to the Lunatic Asylum.

55. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Who is W. Stevens?—He is the assistant to Mr. France at the Lunatic Asylum.

56. Does he sign these sizes and weights without seeing them weighed or weighing them himself?—I do not suppose he did weigh them; they were materials going to a public building.

57. Then, there is no check of weights?—Not on the building.

58. Will you tell me what proportion of materials, goods, &c., go to the buildings?—Nearly everything we use in the District Office goes on to the buildings.

59. All goods that go to the public buildings are practically not weighed?—Most of the goods required for public buildings go direct to the spot, and do not come through the District Engineer's office.

60. *The Chairman.*] You say there is no facility for weighing?—Unless you employ a man specially for that purpose. It would not pay to keep a man for that purpose.

61. *Mr. Montgomery.*] You are an expert ironmonger: do you think your check a sufficient check?—I think it is a sufficient check; I will give you proof of it in the fact that in all that have been supplied only £3 9s. 6d. has been overcharged in weight.

62. Then, we are to understand you that nearly all the goods that are supplied are not weighed?—Not weighed; but when the quantity received is so large it is a proof of the efficiency of the check that the only amount charged which we could not check is only £3 9s. 6d.

63. *Mr. Reid.*] Will you explain to us how they are checked?—The only check is when I check the vouchers.

64. *The Chairman.*] How can you check them if you do not weigh the goods?—We check them by a table rate. If we see that the charge is not in accordance with the rate, or if the charge should appear exorbitant, we check the goods according to the schedule. If there was only a matter of a pound weight or two difference we would let it pass.

65. *Mr. Reid.*] Take the item, "30lb. of square-headed nails." Is there any check on that?—No; there is no check. I would take it for granted that it was 30lb.

66. You would take it for granted, as you had no option except to take it for granted?—Such weights as these.

67. *The Chairman.*] All the goods sold by weight, do you take the weight given to you?—Except those which go to the Workshops.

68. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Galvanised iron will differ as much as 20lb. or 30lb. to the case. Would you take for granted the weight in such a case as that?—If it varied from the table rate I would not—I would also look at the voucher. You get so many sheets in a case; it is easy to calculate whether the proper quantity is supplied. I do not see anything but the voucher and the table rate.

69. Suppose a case of this sort, that in the course of years some slight overcharge would be made, such as 30lb. for 28lb., and so on, would that be discovered?—I could not discover it.

70. And yet you say your own is a sufficient check?—I do not see any other check except you kept a man purposely to check the weights.

71. Then, you say the cheapest way is to trust the contractor?—I would give him credit for some amount of honesty. If the goods supplied came near the amount I would let them pass.

72. Then, all you do is to work out the extensions?—Yes.

73. As far as the weights go there is no check at all?—Not actual weights.

74. *Mr. McGowan.*] With reference to weights, would it not be a check if the order was suitable to the particular work? You would know by the work done whether the proper weights had been supplied?—An architect would probably know whether a certain number of nails would be required for the particular job in hand, and if the quantity did not complete the job there would be so much short-weight. These nails are usually ordered by the Inspector. I should not think that a clerk would have the time to see how many nails were in 14lb.

75. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] If they were required for Woodville, they would not come through your office?—No.