

230. Is this the contract [put in]?—Yes.

231. What is the date of acceptance?—The 31st January, 1895.

232. That is the contract under which these goods have been supplied in relation to which evidence has been taken during the progress of this inquiry?—Yes.

233. Can you state shortly, Mr. Blow, the system of storekeeping in the Public Works Department?—Yes; I will begin by saying that it differs somewhat from that of the Railway Department, because the circumstances of the two departments in some respects are not the same; all supplies for the railway are required on the line, and can quite conveniently pass through the Railway Stores.

234. Is there a difference in the nature of the goods supplied?—There is no great difference in the nature of the goods supplied; but the goods for the Public Works Department are mostly required on the works, and the contract compels the contractor to deliver them anywhere in Wellington. If, for instance, we wanted goods for the Mount Cook Gaol or the Lunatic Asylum they would have to be delivered there.

235. They would not come into the store?—Not if they were required for immediate use. If they were goods not for immediate use, or goods bought in quantity and to be issued in instalments, they would come into the store.

236. Are there general instructions for direction of the officers of the department in respect to goods supplied to the department?—Yes; I have here the departmental instructions to engineers and storekeepers, showing the methods to be adopted in keeping the store accounts.

237. Were these instructions in force at the time this contract was entered into by Messrs. Briscoe and MacNeil, at the time the goods were delivered, and subsequently to the contract?—Yes; they bear the date 17th June, 1892, and they are still in force.

238. Would you give us in detail the proceedings adopted in ordering stores, and giving the receipt therefor when they are delivered to the department?—When stores are to be ordered the storekeeper puts them in the requisition-book; but he is not allowed to order these goods himself without the approval of the engineer. He therefore submits his list to the engineer, who either amends or approves of it. When the engineer amends or approves, the storekeeper puts a copy of the order into requisition form and sends this on to the contractor.

239. When the goods are delivered, does any delivery-note accompany the goods?—Yes.

240. Then the contractor, when he supplies the goods, sends a delivery-note with them?—Yes, he sends a delivery-note which he gets back by his own carter, receipted by the storekeeper or the workman in charge who receives the goods.

241. Have you any specimen copies here of the delivery-note sent in?—Yes, here are a number of them sent in under this contract.

242. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] These would be returned?—They are sent back receipted when the goods arrive.

243. How are the accounts sent in?—The contractor must send in his accounts not later than once a week; as a matter of fact Briscoe and MacNeil sent in theirs almost daily. When the account comes in it has to be accompanied by the requisition form, so that it may be seen that the goods were duly ordered, and also that the quantity supplied was not in excess of the order; and also by the delivery-note, so that the Engineer may know that the goods were really received.

244. How are the accounts checked when received?—They are checked in the Engineer's Office; he would send them to the Head Office. Every voucher that comes to me is certified by the Resident Engineer. I am content with his certificate.

245. Do you know whether any of these accounts have been returned for correction?—I do not know whether they were returned for correction; I only know that many of them have been corrected, for the corrections appear on the face of them.

246. Do you produce the vouchers referred to by Mr. Jenkins in his evidence?—Yes, I have them here all but one; that one is a voucher against the Lunatic Asylum. I have given the Lunacy Department notice that it was wanted for the purposes of this inquiry. I have received a notice from the Lunacy Department that they have not been able to find it.

247. The sash-cord that is mentioned was supplied to the Lunatic Asylum?—Yes, I have the voucher here—Treasury voucher 4105; it shows that the sash-cord was charged at the weight stated by Mr. Jenkins. The overcharge was not detected, and the account was paid. But this is not a charge against the Public Works Department, but against the Lunacy Department: the overcharge is £1 13s.

248. Now we come to the lead pipe?—Yes; voucher 1244; it is charged as 20lb. at £1 per hundredweight. I have no idea what it weighed. If it weighed 16lb. only, as stated by Mr. Jenkins, the overpayment would be 9d. at £1 the hundredweight.

249. Next, as to the glass from Tingey's?—Yes; the voucher for that is in already: voucher 1443; it shows that the glass was originally charged as 380ft., but it was altered in the department to 156ft., which was the actual measurement.

250. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Can you tell us when that alteration was made; the voucher was put in in April?—It is dated in April.

251. When paid?—Not until the 18th July.

252. When was detection made by the department?—I could not say; there is nothing to show.

253. *The Chairman.*] When was it received in the office?—24th April; it did not leave the office until the 28th of June.

254. Can you tell us when Mr. Jenkins saw the department?—It was while I was on the West Coast; I left on the 21st April and returned on the 6th June.

255. It was within those dates that Mr. Jenkins informed the department?—Yes.