

82. *Mr. Reid.*] Corrugated iron for the Lunatic Asylum?—As regards this item there must be some mistake; no voucher for the supply of 26 sheets of iron to the asylum during February can be discovered in either the Public Works Department or the Lunacy Department, but a voucher for the supply of twenty-four sheets of iron to the Porirua Asylum on the 18th of February is produced: the weight almost exactly accords with the weight that Jenkins says this iron really weighed.

83. Is that 4cwt. 1qr. 26lb.?—No; that is the weight that appears to be incorrect in Briscoe's journal. The voucher for the Porirua Asylum agrees almost exactly, within 6lb., with the weight which Jenkins says is the true weight.

84. Are there any requisitions?—I do not think they have any system of requisitions in the asylum at all.

85. Sheet lead for the Featherston Courthouse: Public Works voucher 19: the entry is one piece milled lead, 12ft. by 4ft. 6in., charged as weighing 3cwt. 3qr. and paid for at that weight.

85A. Blacklead for the Ministerial residence?—Blacklead is certainly made up in different sizes, and we cannot tell whether this is an overcharge, as we do not know for certain what size packets were supplied; but if the contention was proved the overcharge was only 6d., and I did not hunt up that matter.

86. Sanitary piping for Workshops: Public Works voucher 66?—The entry appears as 20ft. solid drawn sanitary piping, 2in., 90ft. ditto 1½in., weight 2cwt. 3qr. 18lb.

87. That is, the two items?—Yes, at £1 8s., £4 1s. 6d., and paid for at that rate. We have made inquiry and found it was sanitary pipe, as distinct from ordinary pipe.

88. *Mr. Skerrett.*] How about the rate?—There is no rate in the contract schedule for this class of pipe; it is a matter for arrangement between the engineer and the contractor.

89. *Mr. Reid.*] Mount Cook store?—That was ordered by the Defence Department direct, one coil flax rope, ¾in., 29lb. at £2 12s. 11d., paid for at that rate, and I produce a note from the Defence Storekeeper showing he has had several coils of ¾in. rope weighed, and they ran 25lb. and 27lb. each. The weight is therefore approximately correct.

90. *Mr. Jenkins's* evidence was that it should be 19lbs.—He said he believed it should be that.

91. Next item is sanitary pipe for the Workshops.—Public works voucher 1445, 30ft. sanitary pipe, 2½in., charged 1cwt. 2qr. 22lb., but it is altered by the Engineer to 1cwt. 1qr. 6lb. Next entry 35ft. same, 1½in., charged 1cwt. 1qr., reduced by the Engineer to 2qr. 27lb., and the reduced weight paid for. There is another entry on the same voucher, one brace skylight adjuster (Preston's), charged originally 12s. 6d., reduced to 2s. 6d. Next, block tin for the Workshops: Public Works voucher 2080. Entry 43lb. block tin at £3 10s., £1 6s. 11d.; this was correct. *Mr. Jenkins* does not impugn the quantity in this case. There is another entry in this voucher against the contractors: thirty sheets of plain galvanised iron, 26 gauge, charged as weighing 2cwt. 2qr. 23lb., but ascertained to weigh 4cwt. and 2lb., and the charge amended from £4 6s. 7d. to £6 8s. 5d. I mention this as showing that the department does not always reduce vouchers if they find an error made by the contractors against themselves; they give them the benefit of it. Next item, Public Works voucher 514: Twenty sheets No. 10 zinc, charged 2cwt. 3qr. 20lb., and paid for at that weight. This weight is probably correct, or, if anything, rather under the mark. Plain galvanised iron, twenty sheets, 26 gauge, charged 2cwt. 3qr. 7lb., at £1 12s., and paid for so.

92. That completes the vouchers referred to by *Mr. Jenkins*?—Yes; but there have been a great many inaccuracies in rendering accounts besides those referred to.

93. Are there other vouchers?—Yes, a number.

94. You have heard *Mr. Jenkins's* evidence as to calling on you, and you corroborate his statements on that point generally?—His first interview was with the Chief Clerk, while I was away; when I came back I saw him myself. I sent for him to know whether, if we took action in this matter, he would be willing to give evidence, because I understood his first communication was strictly confidential.

95. Did he give any particulars?—Yes; he described the process gone through in Briscoe's warehouse. He told me he got a correct note of the weights of goods, and had to pass this note on to *Mr. Bridson*, who erased the correct weight and inserted another weight which was always higher, and instructed him to book the higher one.

96. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Who would do that?—*Mr. Bridson*. He put the true weights on a slip of paper and *Mr. Bridson* instructed him as I have said.

97. *Mr. Reid.*] Can you tell me the date?—12th July. I wrote to *Jenkins* on the 9th July, that I would be glad if he would kindly call on me. I received a reply on the 11th, and he called on the 12th.

98. In consequence of his statement, did you take any action in reference to this contract?—Yes; in consequence of *Jenkins's* statement to the Chief Clerk, inquiries were made to ascertain whether the incorrect charges had been made, and it was found that they had been made; but scarcely any accounts were paid then, and the bulk of the overcharges would have been detected in the ordinary way.

99. I want to know what action you took in the matter?—Other than that?

100. Yes. I want to know what action you took in consequence of that?—The action was taken before I returned to Wellington, by the Chief Clerk, on my behalf.

101. I want to know what was your action; did you give any instructions?—The inquiry had been made.

102. I asked you, in consequence of your interview with *Jenkins*, did you take any action?—I did. I conferred with the Crown Law Officers as to the action which should be taken.

103. Was your action stayed by anything that occurred; and, if so, what?—Yes; by my being informed that the matter was referred to this Committee.

104. Did you see *Mr. R. G. Knight* with reference to the supply of tents?—Yes; he called on me about the matter.