

Air Force Stores

Over the past two years the Air Force had made considerable progress in its endeavours to keep better stores accounts, but the progress is now halted through staff being directed to duties connected with gratuities and through personnel freely exercising their right to discharge. A system of duplicate tally-cards introduced to ensure greater accuracy in ledger work has had to be abandoned.

The accounts of a number of closed stations have been examined and found to be properly balanced off. In one or two cases final vouchers or applications to provisionally write off deficiencies were open to question, but have been accepted because of the impracticability of obtaining explanations from officers now returned to civilian life.

Under a Treasury regulation all Departments are required to notify the Audit Office and Treasury whenever any stores are stolen, lost, or damaged otherwise than by fair wear-and-tear, and the number of notifications received indicates that pilfering on stations has been rife.

At two stores depots Inspectors report signs of deterioration in such items as gloves, fabrics, and metalware, and suggest an immediate survey of stocks to classify the immense quantities held into useful and obsolete classes. A clearance of the latter class would enable more attention to be given to those required for future use.

A fire at the Te Awamutu Depot on 24th February, 1946, destroyed stores, including large quantities of useful wearing apparel, to the value of £398,041. This loss stresses the importance of disposing of surplus stocks as quickly as is possible.

Navy Stores

Bulk Store, Auckland.—A report on the dockyard store just to hand states that ledger postings are an improvement over recent years. A number of cards, however, show over-issues which have been allowed to run on without investigation. A test stocktaking revealed more discrepancies between ledger balances and actual stocks than should be the case, and the accounts still require much improvement before they can be considered satisfactory.

Lower Hutt Store.—Examination of the accounts of this store also revealed a position which left something to be desired.

General Remarks on Army, Air, and Navy Stores

In each report from 1940 onwards the stores accounts of the Armed Services have been the subject of criticism, and now that the Services are reverting to peacetime operations the matter of wartime stores accounting is briefly and finally reviewed.

Stores accounting in all three Services deteriorated rapidly immediately following the war expansion, and during the peak mobilization period of 1942–43 was in a desperate state. The accounts at this stage did not provide a satisfactory safeguard against misappropriation, and could not have been