

home in Auckland. We had heard that the Seventh Contingent discharges had not then been issued, and the men were writing to the papers and inquiring as to why they had not got their discharges from the Seventh Contingent, when the men in the later contingents—the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth—had had theirs. Major Johnston, who came back in command of the Seventh, had gone home to Patea preparatory to returning to Africa, and he did not want to be bothered, and could not wait to do the work. Major Johnston was adjutant of the regiment. I was assistant-adjutant, and had acted for three or four months as adjutant of the regiment; so I knew as much about it as he did. Colonel Abbott suggested to Major Smith that I should prepare the discharge-certificates of the Seventh. I did so. That was commenced on the 12th September, and was finished on the 6th October—a period of twenty-six days. For that duty, instead of the big staff engaged on the work for the Ninth Contingent, there was myself and one N.C.O. Of course, the Seventh Contingent was seven hundred strong, whereas the Ninth was twelve hundred.

6. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Was not the work of the Seventh partly done?—Not as regards the discharge-certificates. That had not been touched. It was done in one day more than the Ninth's, when the big staff was working, but for the Seventh's discharges, as I stated, there was but one N.C.O. besides myself employed. The N.C.O. lived up Waipukurau way. As soon as the work was done I told him that I should not require him any longer, and he submitted his voucher and was paid without any question.

7. *Mr. Hardy.*] What was the amount of his voucher?—It would be at the rate of, I think, 6s. a day for a corporal, and I think his detention was about 8s. a day. I think his voucher was for about 15s. a day net. Of course, he was only a corporal. You may ask, Why did I not submit my voucher for that work as well as the corporal. He had finished his work, and he submitted his voucher and was paid. If I had submitted mine it also would have been paid on that supposition. Just before that work was completed Major Smith had an idea that the King's Medal roll would be required, and he practically sounded me as to whether I would take that work on. I said Yes. So that when the work for the Seventh was done and I reported the fact to Major Smith, he at once told me to go on with the King's Medal roll. As I will tell you later on, it was not known at that time how long that work would take. We did not know how long it would take at all; in fact, there were some clasps, as you heard General Babington say—about a thousand—to distribute, and it was just a puzzle as to how long it would take. No one could possibly say how long; so that it was, I suppose, pure negligence in not sending in the voucher. But there was no intention in not doing so—there was absolutely nothing behind it. Of course, if I had thought that there would have been such trouble as there has been I would have sent it in more quickly. By the time we had finished the Seventh Contingent work Major Smith told me to go on with the clasps, and by the time they were very nearly finished—I had been about a month on them—the actual conditions of the King's Medal became known in the colony, and then I was ordered to prepare the King's Medal roll, leaving the clasps alone. I proceeded with the King's Medal roll—this was about the 4th October that I started on this—and it occupied, including the distribution of the clasps, till the 28th February—practically five months. During the whole time I was in the office up to the 28th February I was not entirely engaged in making out the King's Medal roll. As I have said, there were a thousand clasps to be distributed, and right up to the time of my leaving the office—the last day—there were clasp affairs that had to be fixed up: there were men writing about the clasps from all over the colony, and I had to attend to this. Sometimes I might have been occupied an hour a day and sometimes two hours a day on that; and while so engaged, of course, the King's Medal roll had to be put on one side, and I did it when I could. The preparation of the King's Medal roll was especially intricate in the case of the later contingents—the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth—because a number of men who had served with irregular corps in South Africa had come back to New Zealand and gone back with a New Zealand contingent later on. We had no record of their services in the irregular corps, and we had to write to them individually. Each man had to be written to to get his discharge-certificate from the irregular corps, so that we could see if the service with the irregular corps would, if added to the service which we knew of in the contingent, entitle him to the King's South Africa Medal. That had to be done by writing to each man and getting his discharge-certificates. In addition to the distribution of the clasps and the preparation of the King's Medal roll, the conditions under which the King's Medals were issued also opened up the question of the clasps belonging to the Queen's South Africa Medal as regarded the Seventh Contingent. The date for the clasps closed in the original War Office order on the 15th July, 1901, on which day the Seventh crossed the Vaal River into the Orange River Colony, and only those men who were actually present with the regiment on column were entitled to the clasp. The other men had not actually crossed into the Orange River Colony. That, of course, was an intricate point. Fortunately, at the time we crossed the river a roll of the men on column that day was taken, and I had retained a copy of that right through, thinking it would be required. It was most important, because it determined those men who were actually entitled to the clasp. Now, when the conditions of the King's Medal became known it reopened the conditions of the clasps regarding the Queen's Medal, and it made the Orange River Colony clasp applicable to the whole contingent; so that the Queen's Medal roll had to be revised, and those men who had not got the Orange River clasp all became entitled to it under the later order. Of course, all these things took time. You may say that five months was a good while. I think I heard a remark the other day by the Hon. the Minister that I had made a good thing of it, and that I wanted to spin it out as long as I could. I do not think that Mr. Seddon knows me, or has personal knowledge of me, or he would not have made that remark. I do not think I have been accused of a thing like that before. It may be news to Mr. Seddon to be told it, but if the work had been done by one of his clerks that work would still be going peacefully on. The roll perhaps would be done in a year's time.

8. *Mr. Hardy.*] In the event of that work having to be done by one of the clerks, would they