

22. What was your mission ?—My mission was to see if they could relieve us of some of the stocks on account of our having inadequate room. The reply was that they had more stocks than they could deal with, and their accommodation was inadequate. They told me not to send anything out—that they had plenty to go on with. This was immediately prior to this order for blankets coming in. It was specially on account of blankets I went out there.

23. You appear to have assumed that they had got enough, and that this requisition for 3,000 pairs of blankets was a mere formal requisition ?—Yes. I explained to the office the blankets I had sent out without written requisitions, and that the goods sent out would more than balance this order just received.

24. The unfortunate thing apparently was that you came to this conclusion and may have acquainted the office, but the office did not inform the camp ?—Apparently not.

25. You did not communicate with the camp ?—No, sir.

26. Whose business was it to have informed the camp ?—I should say it rested with three men in the office who might have done that. I communicated with the Assistant Storekeeper, Mr. Williams, and also with Mr. Hopkinson. Either of those men usually deal with requisitions and orders from the camp. The matter at the time was never referred to Major O'Sullivan.

27. If it was not referred to Major O'Sullivan it would be the other men who should have informed the camp of the position ?—It was their place, not mine. It rested with the office. Furthermore, the blankets arrived at midday on the Sunday, and the squad of men who went into the camp on the Sunday had plenty of blankets before the night. They were never short of blankets for a night.

28. As to the blankets, there should be some sort of check instituted, should there not, between what you suggest they ought to have at the camp and what they actually have ?—Of course, it is nothing to do with me. Immediately the goods go out from me my responsibility ceases.

29. Is this question of the blankets being the subject of an inquiry ?—I believe not, sir.

30. It seems rather to be the work for an accountant to check the vouchers you hold, and then for some one to count the blankets at the other end ?—Of course, that could be done. We have got a record of all goods issued by us to Trentham Camp. The way they are disposed of does not interest me—I know nothing about that: it is entirely out of our hands.

31. Have you treated any other requisition in the same way as a formal requisition except this one ?—I might state that it is our common practice for verbal orders to be given and for goods to be sent out. An order will be executed, and the next day or two after a written order from the office will be handed over. In the meantime the goods have been sent. Those goods had been previously sent, and I treated that order the way I have just described, and, of course, if we did not treat it like that we would be double-banking and sending twice. You must use your own discretion a bit under those conditions.

32. *Mr. Ferguson.* When did you first commence to send blankets out without orders ?—Many goods have gone out without orders.

33. Under your control, I mean: had you sent out much underclothing without orders ?—Here is an instance. There was a body of 4,000 men in camp—I have not got the date—and certain issues had been made to complete the equipment for those men of which I had a record. I was instructed by the Accountant to complete the issue for those 4,000 men. We have a schedule of what each man is entitled to for equipment, and that is an instance of a verbal order.

34. Is it the custom to send out other goods besides blankets under your control in anticipation that there may be a written requisition for them ?—Of course, blankets have been the chief point, owing to their taking up so much room. I have had numerous other orders for underclothing and various other things, such as deck-shoes, &c., and never received any signed order from the office. I have been just told to send so-and-so, and I have not always had a covering order afterwards.

35. Have you on your own responsibility sent out deck-shoes to Trentham ?—No, not on my own responsibility.

36. Have you ever sent out singlets ?—Yes, acting under verbal orders only.

37. Drawers ?—Possibly.

38. Jerseys ?—Possibly any line.

39. Have you sent out any other line except deck-shoes in anticipation of receiving a written order ?—When certain bodies of men were coming into camp we have anticipated their wants, and have forwarded certain supplies that they would need without a requisition.

40. Do you not receive at the stores from headquarters a statement that on such a date so-many hundred men are going into camp and you will be called on to provide for them ?—I could not say—I have not cases of that kind. We have sent out goods as a result of a notification that certain bodies of men were going into camp, but I never see any communication or anything from headquarters at all.

41. *The Chairman.* You go on sending out with a view of relieving your pressure on your own stocks ?—That is only on very rare occasions, but it has happened chiefly with blankets owing to their bulkiness.

42. *Mr. Ferguson.* When a requisition comes in from Trentham you look upon it merely as an informal matter ?—I never see a requisition from Trentham.

43. Who is the man who does attend to requisitions from Trentham and communicates with Trentham ?—Both Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Williams.

44. What experience had you had before you went into the Defence Stores ?—I have had experience as a commercial traveller and warehouseman extending from my youth. I have been commercial traveller for twelve years, representing a leading house in Australia and New Zealand. My experience has simply been in Australasia.