

45. And how long have you been in the Defence Department?—Since the war broke out. On account of the war I had to give up my commercial pursuits when representing Mandel and Carr. I then joined the Defence Stores.

46. *The Chairman.*] You get receipts, I suppose, for everything you send out, whether on requisition or not?—The duplicate vouchers are forwarded from the office for all goods sent out.

47. And do you get that returned signed?—That is the business of the clerk in the office who handles the vouchers—I never see them.

48. *Mr. Ferguson.*] What instructions do you receive from the office?—I receive a page out of a duplicate book with instructions to issue to Captain McCristell goods for Trentham Camp, and signed by Mr. Hopkinson or Mr. Williams.

49. And you got one in this case, but you did not fulfil the order because you thought they had had the goods already?—Because sufficient goods had been forwarded.

50. And then we have it that of your own volition you have sent out goods without an order?—Yes, without a written order, but acting under verbal instructions.

51. One custom is to send goods out on a proper written order, and the other is to send out goods on a verbal intimation to the office that you have done so?—And on a verbal intimation in most cases from the office to send them.

52. *The Chairman.*] Is Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Williams still in the Department?—Yes.

WEDNESDAY, 21ST JULY, 1915.

ROBERT HENRY WILLIAMS sworn and examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Accountant in the Defence Stores.
2. What is precisely your duty with regard to stores that go out to the camp?—The writing of orders on the foreman, or the storeman, for stores that come in on requisition.
3. You receive the requisitions from the camp?—Yes.
4. Upon receiving them you write out directions to the storeman?—Yes, in the domestic-order book to the storeman or the foreman.
5. He does not get the requisition?—No.
6. What do you do after that?—Then it is his duty to carry out the written order and issue the stores.
7. What happens then?—The goods are sent out to the camp, and we obtain a receipt from the Quartermaster for them.
8. Do you get it yourself: is it handed to you?—Not always.
9. How do you know that the order that you have given to the storeman is carried out?—I am acting as Assistant Director of Equipment and Stores—that is my duty. I visit the different departments frequently, and see how the work is getting on.
10. How can you tell by a visit to the department whether all the things have gone out?—Only by asking the man in charge of that department.
11. You say that the receipt comes from the camp: who gets that receipt and keeps it?—The clerk in charge of the issue day-book.
12. Do you not see it?—Only occasionally—not every receipt.
13. What is his duty then?—He has to mark off his entry after this receipt has been returned; then it is filed with others in consecutive order.
14. Apparently your active duties consist chiefly in passing on orders to the storeman upon requisitions that you receive?—Yes.
15. And in going round from time to time and inquiring if those orders are receiving attention?—Yes.
16. Have you any other functions in connection with the stores?—The writing of requisitions for the purchase of stores.
17. In regard to the supply of blankets on the 29th May, they did not go out in time: they were sent out on the Sunday. Can you tell me how that happened?—Through an error on the part of the storeman in charge of blankets.
18. Who is the storeman?—Mr. Sewell.
19. Did you investigate the error?—No.
20. How was the error made?—Mr. Sewell explained that he considered they had sufficient blankets there, as the result of a visit he had made to the camp the previous week, also judging from the schedule which he keeps, adding daily to it as the stores are issued.
21. I understand that it is the practice, as you get an accumulation, to send them out in advance without receiving any orders?—When we are blocked for room we sometimes ring up the Quartermaster and ask if he requires them. If he says "Yes," we send them out and get the requisition afterwards.
22. Do you always get a requisition?—Always.
23. Whose business was it to see that the requisition was got?—It was my duty then.
24. Who would communicate with the camp on that subject?—By telephone, either myself or Mr. Hopkinson.
25. What we inferred from the storeman yesterday was that he is not yet clear that they have not had more blankets than they admit. He said that he considered from the return that there were enough blankets out there to answer the requisition?—I do not know how he could be in a position to know the actual number of blankets required at the camp.
26. Have any steps been taken to see if his supposition is correct?—Not as yet.