

54. Did you understand that it was part of the 6,000 ? Yes.

55. What did you do ?—I immediately rang up for a motor-lorry, and went and informed Major O'Sullivan of the position immediately. Then we assisted to load the lorry, and they were sent out at once. I arrived at the camp about 2.30 the same afternoon, and the lorry was unloaded when I got there.

56. There was no delay on your part ?—No.

57. When did you hear from Mr. Sewell or anybody else that the total 6,000 were not sent out ?—As far as I know it was the next day. I went up to find out why the whole order was not completed. Mr. Sewell went through the books with me, and we took out a schedule showing what he considered was the position.

58. Showing how many blankets had been sent out from the time the camp was inaugurated ?—Yes, until that day. He then informed me what he had done in regard to this requisition, practically on the same lines as it has been stated here.

59. This was after the event ?—After the event.

60. After the error had been discovered at the camp and duly remedied by you ?—Yes ; I may say that Mr. Sewell had previously informed me on the previous Monday or Tuesday that there was a great quantity of blankets in store at Trentham.

61. *The Chairman.*] He informed you that there would be a considerable number out there. What was the occasion for doing so : was that to indicate that it would not be necessary to send out the full 6,000—because he says that he informed you that they had a considerable number out there, and that you agreed with him—that is the effect of his evidence ; and in consequence he only sent out enough to make up the total, judging from what he assumed they had in hand ?—That was on his own authority.

62. But why did he come to you to say that they had so many blankets out there ?—It was in his own store where he made the remarks to me on the subject. He did not come down to make the statement to me. It was in discussing the issues that day. We were discussing what we would send out that day, as we had a lorry to go.

63. *Mr. Ferguson.*] Then it was not in your mind that Captain McCristell's requisition was too large ?—No.

64. You did not query that ?—No.

65. You would not say that he had more blankets than he needed ?—No.

66. *The Chairman.*] There has been no attempt since to clear up that question ?—Not yet.

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JOHN ROTH HOPKINSON sworn and examined. (No. 15.)

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What are you ?—Clerk in the Defence Stores.

2. In regard to requisitions for stores from Trentham Camp, who receives them in the first instance ?—I do.

3. They come by post ?—Yes.

4. On receipt of a requisition what do you do with it ?—Put the date-stamp on it first.

5. What next ?—Then write the orders on the various departments.

6. Do you make any inquiry before doing that as to whether the goods ought to be supplied or not ?—Mostly. The schedule is made out, and we know from the number of men going into camp.

7. *The Chairman.*] Do you get a return of the number of men going in ?—Yes.

8. *Mr. Gray.*] And you know also how many men are in camp ?—Yes. From the strength of men we know what will be required and the amount of equipment.

9. You prepare in advance for the requisitions ?—Yes.

10. Then it is for a specific number of articles, and you proceed to supply them ?—Yes.

11. You have to write orders on the various departments whose duty it is to keep the stores in stock ?—Yes.

12. Do you recollect this requisition coming in from Trentham, dated the 22nd May, for 6,000 blankets and other things ?—Yes.

13. When did you receive it ?—On the 24th May, as the date-stamp shows.

14. What did you do with respect to the ordering of the blankets ?—I wrote an order on Mr. Sewell, who was in charge of the department for blankets, to send 6,000.

15. Can you produce a copy of the order ?—Yes [produced].

16. This is a carbon duplicate ?—Yes : " Please issue to Captain McCristell 6,000 blankets."

17. On the top it is marked " 516 " ?—That is the order number.

18. And the requisition number is 571 ?—Yes.

19. You issued the order on the same day as it was received by you ?—Yes, on the 24th May.

20. Had you anything further to do with it ?—No, I had nothing further to do with it after the order left me.

21. You had nothing to do with the despatch of the goods ?—Sometimes, when Mr. Williams is busy, I see that the goods do go out.

22. Was there any suggestion made that 6,000 was too big an order ?—No, sir.

23. You know nothing about the alleged surplus in camp ?—No ; the only thing I knew was on the Monday morning, when Mr. Sewell reckoned this order for 6,000 was a duplication.

24. He meant that he had already supplied this 6,000 in advance ?—Yes ; he said he had seen Captain McCristell on the previous Saturday and he had told him he did not want blankets because he had enough.

25. Are goods ever issued without a requisition ?—Occasionally. Captain McCristell might ring us up from the camp and tell us the requisition was coming in, and ask us to supply the goods before the requisition arrived.