

247. Are you not responsible, then, to the Commanding Officer for everything that goes out of the branch? Are you really not acting as his lieutenant?—Yes.

248. Then, you are responsible to him?—Yes.

249. If anything went wrong in his office he would be responsible?—Yes.

250. It should be your duty, as second in command, to see that nothing goes wrong?—Wait a moment. Colonel Chaytor is an officer, and so is Major Moore. They are responsible to the Commandant for their own particular work.

251. Do you not in a measure carry his instructions to them?—Oh, yes; but they see him every morning and go over their papers with him.

252. But in the Commandant's absence you would act?—Yes.

253. And if any mistakes occur you are largely responsible for them?—Yes. The General would hold me responsible for mistakes in my own department and mistakes in conveying his instructions. Of course, in the event of mistakes being made in the department of any particular officer—A, B, or C—that officer would be blamed.

254. In the event of one of them having made mistakes and your not having discovered them, would not you be to blame?—If I knew of them and did not report them I should be to blame.

255. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Who would send the reply to Captain Clark—would Colonel Chaytor send it direct, or would it go through you?—He would send it direct. I should not see it.

256. *The Chairman.*] Still, copies are taken of all letters, I presume?—Yes.

257. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] For all you know to the contrary there may have been a reply sent to Captain Clark?—There may have been. "B" letters are copied in a separate book.

258. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Are copies taken of these minutes of mine?—If we were sending one of them out to a stranger and should not get it back we would take a copy of it, or we would send out a copy. Frequently vouchers, &c., pass between our office and the Under-Secretary; sometimes we send whole files along. A copy is not taken then.

259. Supposing that that document went astray with my minute on it, would you have any record of it?—It is not one of our files.

260. Well, one of the others?—We have a record of letters coming in—a book which we call the "inward book"—in which record of the subject-matter of a letter coming from the Minister would be taken.

261. Have you any record of this, for instance? [Memorandum with minute "Declined" thereon handed to witness.] What office would that be in?—That is a "B" file also.

262. Would you take a copy or any record of that, or would you simply file the document?—We should have a carbon copy of that, and would copy your minute on it.

263. If this was lost you could produce a copy?—Yes.

264. Does the same thing apply to this one [Document handed to witness]?—I should think so. If we were sending this away we would make a carbon copy of it. I do not call sending a document down to the Minister or to the Defence Office sending it away.

265. If Captain Clark has not, as he says, received any reply saying that I declined to pay his claim—as mentioned here—who is to blame?—The officer to whom the files would go—in this case the "B" files.

266. *Mr. Hardy.*] If he had received a reply you would have a copy?—Yes. If the reply was written in manuscript we should have a copy in the press-copy book; if type-written we should have a carbon copy.

267. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] What is this stamp on the document [Handed to witness]?—That is the day we received it back in our office—that is our receipt stamp—"C.O.F., 31 Mar., 1903."

268. I minuted "Declined" on 31st March, and you received the paper on the following day?—Yes.

269. Will you produce at the next meeting all correspondence between Captain Clark and your Department—whether in A, B, or C division?—Very well.

270. Here is a document which throws a light upon the matter. It is written by Colonel Chaytor, is addressed to Captain Clark, and dated the 21st March, 1903: "Your claim for £277 17s. 6d. for pay and detention allowance under orders of C.S.O. has been referred by this office to the Hon. the Minister of Defence for his approval, and you will be informed of his decision when the papers are returned. Claims for £50 2s. difference in pay, £5 2s. extra-duty pay, and £9 5s. 5d. sundries were referred to the Minister by the Under-Secretary for Defence. The two claims for adjutant's gratuity—£50 each—are with our file; but the Under-Secretary for Defence reports that the question of payment of the allowance has been referred to the Chief Paymaster at Cape Town." That is a reply. Do you mean to say that you never got that, Captain Clark?

*Captain Clark:* I do not remember getting two letters in the month. If that is the original letter how does it come to be there? It is the original. How does it come to be on a Government file. If I had got that letter I should have it in my possession.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon:* It is the original, right enough.

*Major Smith:* Yes.

271. *The Chairman.*] Then, instead of sending it to Captain Clark you may have put it on the file?—The only possible explanation I can give is that people get letters and fix them on to their files and sometimes send the whole lot back to us. I am not saying that that was done in this instance, but Captain Clark may have pinned this letter to other documents.

272. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] When sending the letter would you put that mark on it—"C.O.F./03 B."?—That rubber-stamp mark would not be put on it till the letter came back to us. [NOTE.—I have since found that with "B" letters the rubber stamp is put on before going out.—N. L. D. S.]

273. *The Chairman.*] Do you think that Captain Clark would be likely to return the letter to the office?—It is possible.

274. A bit improbable?—I do not think so.