

R. v. Belanger*Theft of Canteen Funds—Identification through R.C.M.P. Gazette Item—
Recovery of Money*

On Feb. 3, 1941, the Adjutant of a regiment stationed at Camp Sussex, N.B., reported to the local R.C.M.P. detachment that \$1000 in canteen funds had been stolen from the strong-box in his room. The only person with a key to the strong-box was the canteen manager, Pte Paul Emile Belanger. This soldier was absent without leave, having last been seen at 6.30 p.m. of the previous day. Also missing was a small typewriter case from the office.

Military, town and railway police were furnished with descriptions of Belanger and of the stolen bills. Enquiries revealed that Belanger's home address was St Hyacinthe, Quebec. A search through past issues of *R.C.M.P. Gazettes* showed that a Paul Emile Belanger, alias Paul Dubois, had been released from St Vincent de Paul Penitentiary on July 18, 1940 (Vol. 2, No. 32, Para. 2714; *Gazette* Photo No. 1490).

Accordingly this information was telegraphed to the Officer Commanding, "C" Division, Montreal, an information having been laid and warrant issued for Belanger's arrest. On the morning of Feb. 5, word was received from "C" Division that Belanger had been arrested at St Hyacinthe the day before.

At the time of his arrest, Belanger was wearing civilian clothes and had \$22.53 in his possession. He said that he had taken about \$700 from the canteen and stayed overnight at Moncton where he spent \$60 on civilian clothes. He changed into these clothes on the train and threw his uniform out the window. Then he fell asleep and when he awoke the typewriter case containing the money had disappeared. In view of this, he decided to stay in Montreal instead of going on to Ottawa as he had intended.

From the baggage master at St Hyacinthe station it was learned that two pieces of luggage had been checked in from Montreal. One of these was a small typewriter case. This baggage had been called for at 7.00 p.m. on Feb. 4, by a taxi-driver. Confronted with this information, Belanger confessed his guilt and said he would take the investigators to where he had hidden the money. At his home he opened a trunk and handed over \$103, stating that this was all the money he had left.

A further search uncovered a small money-box in another trunk and it contained \$675, a bank-book in the name of Paul E. Belanger and one in the name of the Adjutant of the regiment from which the funds had been stolen. The typewriter box and keys were also located.

Both bank-books were issued by the Sussex branch of the Royal Bank of Canada. The one in Belanger's name showed a balance of \$118 made up of varying sums deposited on Jan. 28, 29, and Feb. 1, 1941. Finally Belanger admitted that all the funds recovered belonged to the regimental canteen.

On Feb. 11 the preliminary hearing was held at Sussex and defendant committed for trial. Having elected for Speedy Trial, he appeared before His Honour Judge Tilley on Feb. 20 and entered a plea of Guilty. One week later accused was sentenced to serve two years in Dorchester Penitentiary. The money was ordered returned to the regiment from which it had been taken.