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to the relieving staff and sit down and do nothing, there might be an incentive not to stay in that department very long, but to go back on the relieving staff where he could sit around. There might be a drawback to that.

Q. Don't you have the same thing in the department if you keep the department staff sufficiently manned to take care of the peak load? There must surely be many hours of each week-end where some of these girls would have to sit around and do nothing?—A. We do not do that. We have got our nose to the grindstone.

Q. We will have to wait for one or two of the other departments to deal with that?—A. Yes.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. All the precautions are taken to avoid idling in the Department?—A. That must necessarily depend on the chiefs of the various branches, and they are fairly active.

Q. But without going into that the work comes into your office, and practically all the work goes to the Deputy, does it not?—A. Oh, no. The Department is so large that there is a large amount of correspondence and work which may never get to him.

Q. The general work isn't distributed through any one channel?—A. Yes, all the correspondence. The correspondence comes in in the morning—

Q. I mean the work for the Department—not the correspondence?—A. The correspondence means the work. Reports from outside offices lead to most of the work in our department. The correspondence from outside parties or the correspondence report from branches come into the office, two clerks attend an hour before the Department opens and open all the correspondence, and distribute it roughly into groups. It is then distributed, put on the file to which it refers, and handed over to the various branches for action. If the action is of a routine nature, it is taken care of by that branch.

Q. Suppose to-day there is a great deal of correspondence requiring work at a certain branch, and very little at another branch what is likely to be the result in that branch to which very little work has been assigned?—A. Well, the work may not come in to-day, it may have come in yesterday, and there is a large amount of work going through the branch continually.

Q. So that you find as a rule each branch has sufficient work to keep them occupied?—A. Yes, they have always work ahead of them.

Q. I notice in looking over your list, a good deal of leave of absence which is not specified as being due to sickness.—A. It is practically all sick-leave. There is very little special leave given in the Department. Any leave of that kind is frowned on, and there is very little of it.

Q. I think we require some medical assistance in some of these Departments then. It seems rather remarkable. For instance, here on this page I find that only one out of fourteen was on duty without leave of absence.—A. Which branch?

Q. The Records Branch.—A. We had a very bad epidemic of influenza last fall, and an Order in Council was passed giving leave of absence to all employees who were afflicted with influenza. If an employee got a medical certificate that he or she was suffering from influenza, leave of absence was granted. Up to last fall leave of absence was in the hands of the Deputy, and little was given. Since that time, it has been under the rules of the Civil Service Commission, and that leads to a few more requests for special leave, because under those rules, a certain amount of special leave may be given. There is very little of it given. There must be a good reason, and it must be for a very few days.

Q. Under the present regulations I understand that an employee can be absent six days without a doctor's certificate. Do you think that that is taken advantage of?—A. No, if there is any doubt, we ask for a certificate. You can always tell. If an employee is working overtime, as a great many of them do in our Department regularly, and is absent for a day, it is not unreasonable to grant it.

[Mr. George J. Desbarats.]