

1946

Charge Landell Sold Furnishings Of Billet, Jewels

By WILLIAM BOSS

Amsterdam, Feb. 21 (CP). — A prosecution witness testified today that Capt. Stanley Bruce Landell and D. W. Thomson disposed of the entire inventory of their lavishly furnished requisitioned Amsterdam billet for 3,000 Dutch guilders (about \$1,200) and two diamond rings valued at 2,000 guilders each.

The witness, Cornelis Dager, 30, engineering graduate of Amsterdam University, who until last December was secretary-driver-interpreter for the two officers, testified in the court-martial of Capt. Landell, charged with theft and improper disposal of automobiles and other articles while serving in Holland. Capt. Landell pleaded innocent of all charges as his trial opened today before a Canadian military court.

Arrested with Capt. Landell were Capt. Thomson and Lieut.-Col. Philip Tedman. Exact nature of the charges against the last two officers have not yet been made public. All three are from Toronto.

The apartment to which Dager referred was that of a wealthy Dutchman, since punished as a collaborator during the German occupation. Included in the furnishings, which Dager said were disposed of to the proprietor of a garage used by the Amenities Control Committee, were six or seven paintings which were produced in court. Dager testified that the seventh was given to him.

Much of today's evidence related to Capt. Thomson and Col. Tedman, as well as Capt. Landell, and will be reintroduced during the trials next week of the two officers.

Acted as Broker

Dager said delivery of furnishings and paintings were made by Canadian Army transport and that, during negotiations, he acted as broker between Capts. Landell and Thomson and the garage owner.

He testified he visited the captives in the Krasnapolsky Hotel in Amsterdam, the evening before they left on repatriation last Dec. 6 and found them packing luggage including "a couple (sic) of wrist watches."

"How many watches?" asked the prosecutor, Lt.-Col. Clarence Campbell of Edmonton.

"I did not count them," said the witness. "I guess between 80 and 100."

Dager testified he was visited later by Capts. Landell and Thomson when he was told that, because of "stories circulating about them in Amsterdam," it might be necessary for him to make a statement concerning his association with them

He said he was told not to talk about shipments of automobiles to the United States, of a blue Ford car he bought from them for 2,000 guilders, a box welded to the back of a Mercury car and another transaction—not disclosed in court—between the officers and a Dutchman called "Berkelau."

He said he balked at being told to tell the Provost he never actually paid for the car and that he would have to return it eventually to Col. Tedman. He added:

"They repeated their previous orders about my not talking, say-

ing, 'You've got to help us in return.' Then Landell stood before me, putting his hand in his pocket as though there was a weapon there, and said: 'If you don't tell them we loaned you the car, you've had it. You may as well say good-bye to your children.'

Three prosecution witnesses declared in court during the afternoon that certificates of ownership signed by Col. Tedman, filed as exhibits this morning, were not the ones on which they had acted as harbor and customs officials to facilitate export of three cars. None of the three could identify Landell in court as one of the three officers who, they said, arranged the shipment. One identified a defense lawyer as one of the three officers involved.

S.-Sgt. Alvin P. Fenton of Claresholm, Alta., was the first prosecution witness today. Fenton was in charge of the Eclipse workshop of the Canadian Army in Amsterdam after VE-Day. He said he remembered dealing with two automobiles mentioned in the charges.

He testified that a 1939 Mercury cabriolet was repaired and painted black and then was issued to Capt. Thomson.

Later it was brought to the garage by Capt. Landell, who ordered further repairs.

Fenton said that about Dec. 1, 1945, he and Tpr. Edward Busby of Toronto followed to Rotterdam a convoy of three cars—a Buick driven by Col. Tedman; a Cadillac by Thomson and a Mercury by Landell. Just outside of Rotterdam the license plates were removed, Fenton said, and after a halt in the city the automobiles were driven to a harbor warehouse where they were left.

Sgt. Fenton identified a document, signed by Col. Tedman, certifying that Capt. Landell owned a Mercury. Similar certificates, also signed by Col. Tedman, stating that the Buick was his personal property and the Cadillac, Capt. Thomson's, were entered as exhibits.

An attempt was made by defense counsel, Capt. J. P. Connelly of Halifax, to have separate trials for each of Capt. Landell's seven charges because "the cumulative effect of the charges might be prejudicial to the accused." He withdrew the request after consultation with his client.

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