

68. What is your opinion as to this mode of rationing troops—having cooked rations in preference to letting the men cook for themselves?—I have tried both, and I think the system we had here is the best, more especially for mounted men. We had no expectation of being more than three or four days in camp.

69. How many mounted men did you expect?—About a thousand. Eight hundred came down. There would have been more had it not been for some of the companies going up north, where the Natives were.

70. Had you any complaints about the quality or quantity of the rations besides what you have mentioned?—None.

71. Did you see anything of this alleged breach of discipline?—No; it was communicated to me by the Commandant through the telephone on the evening of the reception in the Parliamentary Buildings.

72. Did you make any inquiries about it?—I rang up Colonel Sommerville, and he said he knew no more than I did; but the Commandant was going up in the morning in reference to it.

73. Did you visit the camp after it was broken up?—It was broken up on the morning after the trouble—on the Thursday.

74. Did you see it after it was broken up?—Not until after I came back from Christchurch. I went to Christchurch on the Friday, and came back on the following Tuesday. I went up to the park on that or the following day.

75. Have you any report about it?—Yes. It is in reference to putting the park in repairs.

76. What was the condition of it then?—It was in a very bad condition.

77. What kind of weather was it during the month of June in Wellington?—From the Sunday before the Duke arrived until I left for Christchurch it was about as bad as I have ever seen it.

78. Is that the normal state of the weather in that month of the year?—June, July, and August are about the worst months in the year.

79. Do you generally look for bad weather in the month of June?—I should look for wet weather. It is winter.

80. *Colonel Davies.*] The camp was broken up after the procession referred to?—Yes; but I did not know that until Colonel Penton informed me of it.

81. Do you know what became of the men and horses afterwards?—Yes. Some went home. Some of the horses were taken out to the Hutt, Miramar, and other places, and paddocked, and the men came to town and made the best of it by getting food wherever they could. That was on the Thursday.

82. Do you not think that at the contract price the men ought to have been remarkably well fed?—It is a very liberal ration; but I think the price tendered is remarkably reasonable considering the time. Everybody connected with the hotels and restaurants was busily engaged preparing for the thousands of visitors expected.

83. *The Chairman.*] What do you pay generally for the rations at the Easter camps?—I think 1s. 7d., 1s. 9d., and 2s. in the city. I say, after considerable experience, that the ration is an exceedingly liberal one, and the price is remarkably reasonable.

84. You do not know whether they got that ration or not?—I have no reason to doubt it.

85. You never had a direct complaint that the men were not getting that ration?—No. At the several schools there were no complaints, and they said they were getting on first-rate when I inquired.

86. *Major Hawkins.*] What was the amount of deposit asked for from the tenderer?—£10.

87. What was the amount of the bond?—£10 for every 100 men, but it was never executed.

Lieut.-Colonel SOMMERVILLE examined. (No. 2.)

88. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, rank, and official position?—Joe Reginald Sommerville, Lieut.-Colonel commanding the Wellington District Mounted Rifles.

89. You were in command of the mounted rifles in camp at Newtown Park during the Royal visit?—Yes.

90. Who pitched the camp?—It was pitched by the Permanent Force.

91. Under your supervision?—Not under my supervision exactly, but under a plan I sent down to them.

92. Where is that plan?—It would be in charge of Sergeant Gentles, of the Permanent Force.

93. Had you anything to do with choosing the site of the camp?—Yes; I had an alternative put before me as to whether I would take Newtown Park for the camp or a place down near the Manawatu Railway line, and I had no hesitation in accepting the lesser of the two evils. I took the camp at Newtown Park.

94. What was the objection to the site near the Manawatu Railway line?—It was too contracted, and there was no possibility of getting away to a better place if the weather was bad.

95. Do you think the chance of getting away was better at Newtown?—I thought I could, if necessary, put the horses among the trees; and there were also the hills at the back.

96. When did you enter upon your duties in camp?—On Friday, the 14th June.

97. When was the camp completely pitched?—When I went into the camp it was ready.

98. What arrangements were made for cooking in camp?—When I went there was a little shed, perhaps 14 ft. or 15 ft. long—it might have been more—and a small trench dug along for a considerable distance, with iron rails laid down.

99. What was the shed for?—It was for what they looked upon as artistic cooking.

100. It was a cooking-place?—Yes.

101. Were you satisfied with the arrangements made for the cooking?—When I first went there I was satisfied with it, so far as I could see, but I pointed out to the contractor or his son that in the event of bad weather it would not be suitable.