

431. Did your horses suffer at all by being in the camp?—No, I do not think they did.

432. Had they rugs or horse-cloths?—All of them. We had shifted our lines to the top of the hill.

433. Had your men waterproof sheets?—Yes, sheets they had brought with them. With regard to the shifting of our lines, we were told we might shift them and go where we liked; but when there are other companies wanting to do the same thing there was a fear that some one else would “jump your claim.”

434. You were told you could do it at your own risk?—Yes.

435. What did you understand by that?—That if any of the horses got hung up in the trees the authorities would not be responsible for it.

436. Is there any other matter about the camp you would like to tell us?—No, I do not think there is. The latrines were not very good.

437. What have you to say about them?—The officers' latrines were in a very dirty state. The seats were not cleaned the whole time, I should say. I think the pans were emptied regularly.

438. Were the latrines situated in a proper place—both the officers' and men's?—Yes, except that I think any drainage from them was likely to pass down into camp. There is a little bit of gully which runs down close to the trough where the men were supposed to wash. I did not, however, think that anything from the latrines could have got to the cooking-water or to the cooking-place, because they were on the other side of the latrine gully.

439. But you consider there was a possibility of the drainage flowing down to the camp?—Yes, down to the camping-ground.

440. I suppose you do not know that it actually did so?—No. I should say almost certainly it did not, because the pans were emptied regularly, I think.

441. *Colonel Davies.*] You said that you considered Colonel Penton was referring to the four men?—Yes.

442. Why did you say “four” men?—Because I believed those were the words he used.

443. Where did the idea arise from that there were four?—I do not know.

444. Was there any sickness in the camp?—Not that I heard of.

Colonel SOMMERVILLE recalled. (No. 25.)

445. *The Chairman.*] You referred us to two letters you wrote to Colonel Newall, as to your wish to have the cooking done by companies?—Yes.

446. With reference to these letters, there is a telegram here: “Colonel Newall, Wellington. —Majority of corps, not having cooking-utensils, prefer the contract system.—SOMMERVILLE”?—In my second letter I say, “Of course, as you have not sufficient cooking-utensils, that settles the matter.” I sent a circular to each of my corps, and put the question to them, asking what they would do, and the reply was that, as they had not cooking-utensils, they would have to take the contract system.

447. Seeing that the cooking was so unsatisfactory, for the reasons you have stated, why did you not either apply to Colonel Newall to have shelter-sheds erected for the cooks, or get some timber and iron and put them up yourself, with a fatigue party?—The weather was such that we could not work outside at times.

448. Suppose the men had had to work in a shower of rain, would it not have been better than it was?—The whole thing was put to Colonel Newall, and we agreed that there was no possibility of getting out of the trouble. As far as the cooking was concerned, it was getting better. It very much improved after the first two or three days, and every day we were expecting it to get better. As to putting a roof over the cooking-places, it would have taken a whole crowd of men a whole day.

449. The principal point was that there was no camp staff appointed beyond Lieutenants Fitzherbert and Thurston?—As a matter of fact, I could not appoint others. My battalions were gazetted without even a commander being gazetted.

450. Where could we get a nominal roll of the officers in camp?—From Colonel Newall.

451. Had you in camp a nominal roll of officers who were available for duty?—I would not be certain. In every corps I had there were young officers with no experience. I thought it was far better for me to fight the matter with Lieutenant Fitzherbert.

452. The four battalion officers were not young officers?—No; but they could not do battalion duties and camp duties as well.

453. *Colonel Davies.*] I understand you have said that an officer has stated to you that he did not get an opportunity of stating something to this Committee of inquiry that he wished to state, and which he thought should have been stated?—He said that he answered all the questions that were asked of him, but there was more that he could have told if he had been asked. It was with regard to the telephone.

454. Therefore he concludes that he was not given a sufficient opportunity?—I do not think he looks upon it in that light, but he thinks he might have been asked something about the telephone.

455. Did he imply that he did not say it because he was not given the opportunity, or that it was through his own fault?—No; he looked upon it that when the questions were answered he had done. He thought it would have been wise if it was made as well known as possible that complaints had been made to the contractor.

456. Will you give us his name?—No; it was a matter we were talking about together, and I would not like to give his name.

Captain JULIUS SANDTMANN examined. (No. 26.)

457. *The Chairman.*] You are captain commanding what corps?—The Ahuriri Mounted Rifles, Napier.