

602. *The Chairman.*] Did any of your officers tell you to whom they understood Colonel Penton to refer?—The sergeants and corporals thought he meant to refer to the whole lot, but not the commissioned officers.

603. Is there anything you would like to state that you have not been asked about in connection with the camp?—I think that if we have a contract made for the supply of rations we should have things looked after better. They should have better arrangements and more cooks.

604. Is there any other matter you have not been asked about which you would like to refer to?—No.

605. Did you sleep in camp?—Yes.

606. Do you know if many men slept out of camp?—A lot of them did. One man in our company who had to go out because he was suffering from asthma.

607. When you say that they slept out do you mean that they got leave?—Yes.

608. Was there a guard mounted?—Yes.

609. Was it there day and night?—Yes. I was only out one evening. I saw the guard when I came in.

SATURDAY, 10TH AUGUST, 1901.

Captain GEORGE JOHN WINTER examined. (No. 28.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are captain of what corps?—The East Coast Mounted Rifles.
2. And have been in command of it how long?—Very nearly two years.
3. You have been a member of the Defence Force of this colony for how many years?—Very nearly thirty.
4. You and your company took part in the camp at Newtown Park in June last?—Yes.
5. How many were there?—Thirty-three of my own corps.
6. How many tents had they?—Four for the men, and two for the officers.
7. Had the men sufficient straw?—No.
8. Not at any time?—No.
9. What were the rations like: take the meat?—The rations were very poor until the last two days.
10. What was wrong with the meat?—Principally it was not cooked—that was the principal thing. Also it was thrown down in the tent where the commissariat was kept, and round the edges of it was covered with mud. I might say that I was the president of the officers' mess. The meat was put into the pots without being washed, because I saw it myself on one occasion, and spoke to the cook about it.
11. What about the quality of the meat?—That was good.
12. And the quantity of it?—Not sufficient; and there was far too much bone.
13. What was the bread like?—Good.
14. And the butter?—Good.
15. And the vegetables?—They were good, but there was not sufficient of them.
16. Were they properly cooked?—On some occasions they were, and on other occasions they were not done at all.
17. And the tea and coffee: what have you to say about them?—I may safely say that for the first night the bucket in which the tea was served was simply covered with grease, showing that it had not been washed before the tea was made or served out. It also appeared to be very weak and made with dirty water until I made very many complaints about it, and then it got better. The coffee was of a very inferior quality.
18. Had you any milk in it?—Not the men's. I did not see any.
19. As to the officers' mess generally, what have you to say about that?—It was very bad indeed.
20. What was there to complain of?—In the first place, the caterer had certain rations to provide, and they were not supplied. There were simply joints of meat, instead of sausages and other things being provided. Then, the vegetables very often were not cooked, and the meat was badly cooked.
21. When you said the caterer undertook to provide certain things for the officers' mess, did you mean that they were in his contract?—Yes. He showed me the list in his book, and said he would supply them.
22. With regard to the fodder, was there sufficient of that?—Occasionally we ran out of it, oats especially.
23. Did that happen several times?—Every day. It would come in afterwards, too late for the meal.
24. On what day did your men go into camp?—On Thursday night, the 13th June.
25. You were one of the first in?—Yes.
26. Did you see the arrangements for cooking?—When I went up the first night they had a cooking-house roofed with iron, about 18 ft. long and about 6 ft. to 8 ft. deep. On the following day they cut trenches on the other side of it for cooking.
27. What had they besides the trenches?—They had iron rails to put the pots on.
28. Were there sufficient cooks?—Nowhere near. As I was president for the officers' mess, I tried to improve the cooking for the whole regiment, and every day when the caterer came up I always interviewed him, and he made me all kinds of promises.
29. Was he there every day?—Either he or his son was there every day.
30. And you complained to one or the other?—Always, every day.
31. Supposing there had been sufficient cooks, were the appliances sufficient for cooking?—After the first two days they might have done. During the first night and the whole of Friday we