

the lavatory arrangements, and basins there fitted, your Commissioners conclude that the basins were similar and satisfactory. There was a difference in testimony as to the actual number of basins fitted, the lowest estimate being about twenty, and the highest about forty-eight, so that there is reason for believing there was a proper supply. Reveille sounded at 6 a.m., and water for washing was available from that hour until 8 a.m., or later. There were some occasions on which the connection supplying the lavatories was out of order, or on which, during the rolling or the pitching of the transport, the continuous flow of the water was impeded; but any inability to secure a wash was generally consequent on the trooper "lying in." A salt-water bath was rigged for the use of the men, but, being used only for the first few days of the voyage it was removed. Every morning when the decks were being washed the hose was at the service of any one who desired it, but apparently was not used by many, if any, of the men, as they considered the weather too cold.

The King's Regulations, paragraph 1610, provide for "A daily allowance of water at the rate of a gallon a head; and a reasonable quantity in addition for washing and other purposes." This allowance, of course, includes the water used for cooking. There is no ground for supposing that the proper quantity was not supplied. Water for drinking was always available; it was abundant, and of good quality. Some men seemed to resent that a sentry was in charge to prevent waste.

LATRINES.

Complaints were made as to the number and condition of the latrines. By Transport Regulations there are "Two seats to be provided for each 100 men fitted for." The most reliable evidence goes to show that there were four latrines, two on either side of the deck fore and aft, containing at least thirty-six seats. The seats need not have exceeded twenty-two, and those actually provided were, as far as ascertainable, in excess of that number. There was no greater discomfort than is inevitable in barracks and in public buildings on shore, and this complaint needs no further comment.

The assertion that they were not kept clean was not sustained. The evidence proved they were under the care of an efficient non-commissioned officer, and were scrupulously clean every day at inspection by the officer commanding, were inspected daily by the officers on duty, and were continually under the eye of the non-commissioned officer in charge. That on some occasions in the evening the exit of one or other of the latrines choked was established. This was almost inevitable when used by hundreds of men, of whom many were indifferent to that scrupulous cleanliness essential to the complete emptying of any closet, but whenever the attention of the non-commissioned officer in charge was called to the state of the latrines, the defect was remedied.

LICE.

Consequent on the assertion that the blankets were infested with lice when issued to the men, your Commissioners obtained telegraphic information from the Transport Officer, South Africa, who cabled, "August 26.—'Britannic' was supplied with 1,900 blankets and 1,000 hammocks at Durban, all clean and dry." Quartermaster-sergeant McDonnell superintended the issue of blankets, and he said they looked clean, and that he did not believe they were lousy. Quartermaster-sergeant Davies gave evidence of a similar nature. Captain and Adjutant Todd, D.S.O. had no complaints made to him on the subject until nearing Albany.

On the other hand it was stated that a considerable proportion of men on the veldt, through no fault of their own, were infested with lice, and that many took on board the "Britannic" the clothes and blankets they had used on the veldt. The hammocks and bedding appear to have been used indiscriminately by the troopers, and therefore the men infested with lice contaminated the hitherto clean bedding. The evidence generally seemed clear that no lice were reported until several days after the sailing of the "Britannic," and that those who complained made no effort to clean themselves. The balance of probability is therefore that the bedding was clean when issued. No water was issued to troopers for the purpose of washing their clothes until within two or three days of their arrival in Wellington, and as it is evident some of the men had embarked with but little more underclothing than what they were wearing at the time, little opportunity was afforded for that personal cleanliness which is essential to health.

FOOD.

Most contradictory testimony was given about the condition of the fresh meat issued to the troopers, varying from the assertion that it was always good to the opinion that it was invariably bad. Some there were who said the mutton was excellent, the beef indifferent; others said the beef was of first quality and the mutton the reverse; but it was generally admitted that when official complaint was substantiated an issue of bully beef was substituted. The quality of this meat was not once called in question.

Amidst the widely conflicting statements sworn before your Commissioners it was difficult to arrive at the truth, but the most expert and reliable evidence was given by Veterinary Captain Young, M.R.C.V.S., for five and a half years in the Public Health Department, Edinburgh, who, shortly after leaving Durban, consequent on complaints that the meat was tainted, and acting at the request of Colonel Davies, was present at every issue of meat before it passed into the hands of the cooks. Captain Young examined each particular joint, and declares it was excellent in quality and free from taint. Surgeon-Captain Bauchop gave almost precisely similar evidence. It was further endorsed by Sergeant-Major Calvert, who, prior to enrolment, had for ten years been engaged in the butchering trade, and who, on account of his expert knowledge, was specially employed to inspect the meat. He was present at almost every issue of meat after his appointment. Several other witnesses gave evidence of a similar nature. Mr. William Nelson, manager of Nelson Bros.' Freezing Company in New Zealand, was also examined. He has for a