

11.50 a.m., and 3.50 p.m. the mess-call will be sounded, preceded by one 'G,' when the mess orderlies of No. 1 Regiment will parade at the galley in the usual manner, and draw the rations for their messes. At about 7.10 a.m., 12.10 p.m., and 4.10 p.m. the mess-call will again be sounded, preceded by two 'Gs,' when the mess orderlies of No. 2 Regiment will draw their rations in a similar manner. The sounding of the mess-call for No. 2 Regiment to draw will be at the discretion and by order of the ship's orderly officer, who will satisfy himself that No. 1 Regiment's mess orderlies have finished drawing before those of No. 2 Regiment begin. The ship's quartermaster, with the quartermaster-sergeant, will attend at the troops' galley at meal-times and check the amount issued to each mess with the daily-ration indent. The attention of the ship's captain and subaltern of the day is directed to the detail of their daily duties posted up in the brigade office."

98. It used to be customary in the service for rations to be issued at a certain hour in the morning—say, 6 o'clock. : was there any such issue on board?—Yes, there was, in the presence of the captain of the day, subaltern of the day, the quartermaster, the ship's quartermaster, and the quartermaster of each regiment.

99. And that occurred daily?—Yes; also a doctor and, later still, one of the New Zealand veterinary surgeons brought out to inspect frozen meat.

100. Was there any complaint as to the quantity or quality of rations issued?—No, not at the first issue.

101. I mean the early issue, when the raw meat and the bread were issued?—There have been altogether, I think, about six complaints during the voyage.

102. That is as to the quality and quantity of the meat issued?—That is altogether, some as to the quality and one or two as to the quantity.

103. By whom were they inquired into?—They were inquired into immediately by my staff officer. Here are my orders: "When complaints are made to the captain or subaltern of the day, these officers, after satisfying themselves that such complaints are reasonable, will (besides embodying them in their daily written reports) immediately report them verbally to the brigade-major direct, in order that they may be investigated and remedied at once."

104. You say that on six occasions there were complaints: did those complaints come before you?—Yes.

105. Did you find them reasonable complaints?—Three of them were, I believe.

106. What was the matter, then?—One was in connection with fish which they did not like. It was very salt, and they had got an idea that this fish had been thrown in the scuppers.

107. That was before it was issued?—Yes; the fish was thought to have been lying on the grating, and the grating had got broken and the fish had got into the scuppers.

108. Was it a whole fish?—Yes; it was a very big fish, about 5 ft. or 6 ft. long.

109. You believe that complaint to have been true?—Yes.

110. Who was responsible for that damage to the fish—in whose charge was it?—The ship's people.

111. Had it not been issued to the cooks in the morning?—No, it had not been issued to the cooks.

112. Well, as to the quality of the food?—In the case of the fish it was this affair that I mentioned in my report to the G.O.C., when two Australians came up on to the upper deck with some fish in a dish. It was reported to me by my staff officer that a number of men were outside. I went out to see them. There were about forty or fifty men there. There were two Australians with a tin of fish. I said, "What do you men want here?" They said, "We have come up about this fish, sir. It is not fit to eat." I said, "You are Australians, are you not?" and they replied, "Yes, sir." I sent for the officer commanding the Australians. I said, "Have you had any complaint about this: what have you done?" He said that it was the first he had heard of it. I sent for Captain Matthews, my staff officer, and I asked him what had been done about this. He said that it had been inquired into, and they were now issuing preserved meat. I asked the men if they had any further complaints to make, and they said, No. Then I told them they were absolutely wrong in coming up like that, and told them that if they had any just complaints to make they would be put right if made in the proper way. They then went below, seemingly rather pleased, and made a small attempt to cheer.

113. What was the quality of the fish?—I believe the fish was very good, but very salt. I did not like the taste, so I said to the purser, "See that preserved meat is issued in its stead," and he replied, "Certainly." He said that the fish was perfectly good, and that it was the same as we had in the saloon that morning. He promised, however, not to issue any more fish during the voyage.

114. Would you say that the fish was so salt as to be uneatable?—Well, no; it was salt, certainly. I should not like it. But it was quite wholesome, although I did not know the truth of this story about the fish having been dragged along the deck. With regard to the grating I have mentioned, I went with the purser and inspected it, and found one end of it broken down. It was about a foot off the deck. I told him that it would be a great deal better if he were to raise it about 18 in. or 2 ft. He replied that it would be of no use raising it, as the men always broke it down. I said, "You put it up there, and I will put a guard on it."

115. Well, speaking generally in connection with the flour, peas, &c., and whatever rations were issued, were you satisfied with the quantity?—Yes.

116. You had no complaint from the quartermaster?—Only the half-dozen I spoke of. Speaking generally, the food was good. The whole of the half-dozen complaints were put right by the ship's people at once.

117. Who was responsible for the cooking?—The ship.

118. You did not detail anybody to cook at all?—No.

119. It was simply a question for the ship?—Yes.