

# REPORT

OF THE

## CONTINGENTS TRANSPORT COMMISSION,

TOGETHER WITH THE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS, EVIDENCE, AND EXHIBITS.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*



NEW ZEALAND.

BY AUTHORITY: JOHN MACKAY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1902.



## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
I. Commission ... ..	v
II. Report ... ..	vi
III. Minutes of Proceedings ... ..	xiv
IV. Index of Witnesses examined ... ..	xvii
V. Evidence ... ..	1-281
VI. Exhibits :—	
Exhibit A.—“Britannic” Voyage Report ... ..	282
“ B.—List of men in Hospital on board “Britannic” on Friday, 1st August (Day of Arrival) ... ..	283
“ C.—Report as to State of Health of Passengers and Crew on “Britannic” during Voyage ... ..	283
“ D.—(1.) List of Sick from “Britannic” treated on Somes Island and Mainland ... ..	284
(2.) Cases of Pneumonia treated on Mainland ... ..	286
(3.) Dr. Ewart’s Report <i>re</i> Sick in Wellington Hospital ... ..	286
“ E.—Return showing Daily Beer-issue on “Britannic” ... ..	287
“ F.—Agreement : Ninth New Zealand Contingent for Service in South Africa	289





1902.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## CONTINGENTS TRANSPORT COMMISSION

(REPORT OF THE), TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS, EVIDENCE, AND EXHIBITS.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

### COMMISSION.

RANFURLY, Governor.

To all to whom these presents shall come, and to Sir William Russell Russell, of Hastings; Robert McNab, Esquire, of Gore; and John Andrew Millar, Esquire, of Dunedin, members of the House of Representatives: Greeting.

WHEREAS it is alleged that the food and the accommodation provided for the members of the New Zealand contingents on board the steamers "Britannic" and "Orient" when returning from South Africa were unsatisfactory and insufficient in many respects: And whereas it is expedient to hold an inquiry respecting the said allegations:

Now, therefore, I, Uchter John Mark, Earl of Ranfurly, Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, in pursuance of all powers and authorities enabling me in that behalf, and acting by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, do hereby appoint you, the said

Sir WILLIAM RUSSELL RUSSELL,  
ROBERT McNAB, and  
JOHN ANDREW MILLAR,

to be Commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting upon the aforesaid allegations, and also inquiring into and reporting upon any matters connected with the transport of the said contingents in the said steamers which may come under your notice in the course of your investigation.

And you are hereby authorised and empowered to have before you and examine all books, papers, writings, and documents whatsoever which you may deem necessary for your information on the subject-matter of this inquiry. And also to have before you and examine on oath or otherwise, as may be allowed by law, all witnesses and other persons you shall judge to be capable of offering you any information touching or concerning the premises: Provided that, except in the case of members of the New Zealand contingents, nothing herein contained shall be construed to empower you to examine any member of His Majesty's regular forces as to acts done by him in the performance of his military and naval duties.

And I further require you within twenty-one days from the date of these presents, or as much sooner as can conveniently be done, using all diligence, to certify to me under your hands and seals your opinion upon the subject-matter of the said inquiry.

And I do hereby declare that this Commission shall continue in full force, and that subject to these presents you, the said Sir William Russell Russell, Robert McNab, and John Andrew Millar, shall and may from time to time proceed in the subject-matter hereof at such time and times within the prescribed limits and at such place or places as you shall deem expedient.

And I do hereby further declare that this Commission is issued subject to the provisions of "The Commissioners' Powers Act, 1867," and "The Commissioners' Powers Act 1867 Amendment Act, 1872."

Given under the hand of His Excellency the Right Honourable Uchter John Mark, Earl of Ranfurly; Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies; and issued under the Seal of the said Colony, at the Government House, at Wellington, this eighth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and two.

J. G. WARD.

Approved in Council.

J. F. ANDREWS,  
Acting-Clerk of the Executive Council.

[Seal.]

Commission to be extended from twenty-one to thirty-five days.

RANFURLY.

Commission to be extended for a further period of twenty days.

R. 10/9/02.

## REPORT.

---

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Ranfurly,  
G.C.M.G., &c., Governor of the Colony of New Zealand.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Commissioners appointed by the commission of the 8th day of August, 1902, under the hand of Your Excellency and the Seal of the Colony, for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting upon the food and the accommodation provided for members of the New Zealand contingents on board the steamers "Britannic" and "Orient" when returning from South Africa, and any matters connected with the transport of the said contingents in the said steamers which might come under their notice in the course of their investigations, have now the honour to report to Your Excellency.

Directly your Commissioners received Your Excellency's commission they advertised in each of the two principal newspapers circulating in the four large centres of population in the colony that they were prepared to hear any evidence any witnesses were willing to give in the matters referred to them by Your Excellency, and requested them to forward their names to the Commissioners, and informed those who did so that their expenses would be paid. The result was that twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and thirty-three troopers gave evidence. A few witnesses residing in Auckland and Christchurch were not summoned, owing to the similarity of the evidence given by others from the same districts, and there being no suggestion of any fresh complaint being adduced. In addition, thirteen officers, four officials connected with the Health Department, and one civilian were examined.

Major-General Babington, Commandant of the New Zealand Forces, was present every day on which your Commissioners took evidence, under instructions from the Imperial authorities, to advise, if required, but not to offer opinions.

Captain Rich, R.N., H.M.S. "Ringarooma," was also present under similar circumstances on behalf of the Admiralty.

### GENERAL.

THE agreement under which the men on board the troopship "Britannic" were enlisted for service in South Africa is set out in detail in a document attached to this report (see Exhibit F), of which paragraph 3 provides that "the volunteer shall be subject in all respects to the terms and provisions of the Act of the Imperial Parliament known as 'The Army Act, 1881,' or any Act continuing or amending the same, and the Articles of War for the time being in force, made under the authority thereof respectively." The attestation form contains the oath of the volunteer, "I will faithfully serve in the Imperial Auxiliary Force until I shall be lawfully discharged." Your Commissioners narrate these conditions of enlistment to emphasize the terms under which the New Zealand contingents served, and to show that they were in all respects those of the regular military forces of the Empire, and that the Transport Regulations are identical for all Imperial troops, though, apparently, by special concession the Yeomanry and colonial contingents were granted an improved dietary scale.

Under Transport Regulations the "men are to be berthed in hammocks hung 18 in. apart for seamen and marines, 16 in. apart for troops, and 20 in. for petty officers and sergeants, each berth to be 9 ft. in length, locking in 18 in. at each end"; and, "Every man must have a seat at a mess-table. Therefore the maximum number of men a deck will accommodate is governed by the number of mess-tables that can be fitted; when, however, seamen are carried, each man must have a hammock-berth. As a rough rule, the number of men a given space will take is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  men to each foot of length when the beam allows 6 ft. tables to be used; 3 men to each foot of length when the beam allows 7 ft. tables to be used;  $3\frac{1}{2}$  men to each foot of length when the beam allows 9 ft. tables to be used." "A 9 ft. table takes 12 men each."

"Latrines and urinals for men (*Two seats to be provided for each 200 men fitted for.*)"

"Wash-place for men (*Five troughs to be provided for each 200 men fitted for.*)"

In regard to hospitals, "A sufficient space will be appropriated in the most suitable part of the vessel for the hospital and screened off with canvas screens. Suitable battens to be fitted for this purpose, with white-line stops properly whipped fitted so as to secure the screen when rolled up. Standing bedplaces, three to every hundred men fitted for, to be built up in one or two tiers as directed, &c."

In the Royal navy the hospital accommodation or sick-bay is usually constructed in definite relation to the number of the crew on any given vessel. The usual proportion in battleships is 3 per cent of the total ship's complement, the floor-area allowed being from 20 to 30 square feet per man.

As soon as the question of overcrowding was raised your Commissioners requested Captain Rich, R.N., to cable to the head of the Transport Department in South Africa for an official statement of the number of men which the "Britannic" was fitted for, and in course of time received from Captain Rich the following cablegram:—

" 'Ringarooma,' Wellington.

" August 25.—Your cipher message: 'Britannic' now fitted carry 1,084 men; originally carried 1,100; greatest number carried, 1,090. New Zealand troops were under Imperial Transport Regulations, and rationed on superior scale, same as Yeomanry. Transports [officer], Durban, where ship embarked the troops, has been instructed answer your other queries.

" Naval Transports, Capetown."

The duties of your Commissioners would have been far simpler had they had the opportunity of inspecting the transport "Britannic" and examining as witnesses the master and officers of the transport. Unfortunately, she had left Australasian waters before their first meeting, and the memories of the various witnesses as to details of fittings have to be relied on; but facts stated by responsible officials and actual observation would have been more satisfactory.

Your Commissioners at the outset were face to face with the difficulty of being without specific charges or statements to inquire into, and the complainants, though vigorous in denunciation, were usually vague in statement, and few apparently knew to what accommodation or food they were entitled. In consequence it became necessary to lead witnesses, though, as they appeared at their own request, it was their duty to assert and substantiate their assertions.

The actual cubic measurement of the space available on the troop decks could not be ascertained, but, notwithstanding the allegations by many witnesses that they were overcrowded, the fact cannot be overlooked that the official information shows that the transport was fitted for 1,084 men, and the actual disembarkation "state" shows only 1,005 non-commissioned officers and troopers on board, or almost exactly 8 per cent. fewer men than might, under Transport Regulations, have been embarked, and less by 10 per cent. than she has carried on a previous occasion. It became perfectly evident that many men preferred lying on the upper deck, or on tables, or on the troop deck to sleeping in hammocks. No doubt the limited space made the sleeping in narrow hammocks irksome to men whose method of life had previously been unconventional and latterly entirely in the open air. The width between the hammock-hooks, apparently, was 18 in., and regular troops are liable to have to accommodate themselves to 16 in. of space.

It was alleged by a few that there was not sufficient room for proper exercise on the upper deck, and some complained that the troopers were not allowed to make use of the deck reserved for their officers. It was, however, proved that parts of the upper decks which were available were not made use of by the men, and that there was little inclination amongst most of them to participate in sports promoted for their exercise and amusement; further, that part of the space allotted to the officers was by them assigned to the non-commissioned officers, thus limiting considerably their own decks. To admit that on board a troopship there should be no space for the officers separate from the men would be to agree that an important factor in maintaining discipline is unnecessary.

Your Commissioners are of opinion that the number of men on board the "Britannic" was not in excess of Transport Regulations, and consequently that, whatever inconvenience may have been experienced by some of the men, she was not overcrowded. Paragraph 1575 of the King's Regulations and Orders for the Army explains that it is the special duty of the troop-deck sergeants to see, *inter alia*, that hammocks are properly hung and cleared off decks at the proper hour in the morning. It is evident that that duty was not sufficiently attended to, nor was the rule enforced that at evening rounds the men on the troop decks were "in or on their hammocks." Had the men been compelled to sling their hammocks properly, and to sleep in them, there would have been greater comfort and fewer complaints of lack of accommodation, and probably less disease, as the sleeping on the troop deck on which men suffering from catarrh had been constantly spitting may have had a tendency to accelerate the spread of pneumonia. The ventilation of troop decks is always a difficulty, and there is reason to fear that the air did not freely circulate, and they were close. On the lower deck never, and on the upper deck only occasionally, could the portholes be opened. Windsails, about four in number, were rigged, and electric-fans were constantly at work causing some movement in the air. but the evidence points to the fact that the mouths of the windsails were not infrequently tied, probably by the men sleeping near them, and the air-shoot blocked, thus preventing such ventilation as was provided from having its full effect, and it appears to your Commissioners that it would have been desirable that the transport should have been provided with better artificial ventilation by propulsion and extraction of the air, as the natural supply of fresh air on troop decks cannot be sufficient during heavy weather, or in particularly calm latitudes, notwithstanding all the use that may be made of windsails or air-scoops.

#### WASHING ACCOMMODATION.

In Transport Regulations and specifications for fitting a ship for the convenience of men, it is laid down under the heading of "Wash-place for Men," as follows: "Five troughs to be provided for each 200, fitted for," and then details of the method of their construction follow. Apparently, therefore, twenty-six troughs are all that were required on board the "Britannic" to fulfil the requirements of Transport Regulations. Basins were fitted instead of troughs, but no complaints were made on that score; and, having personally examined the transport "Montrose," and seen

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

period of twenty years had great practical experience both of meat-freezing and the frozen-meat trade. His evidence shows that it would be practically impossible for the meat generally to be tainted, though an occasional quarter of beef might have been affected by what is known as "bone-stink," which would affect a portion only of the quarter, and when cut into joints would have been instantly discovered. In mutton "bone-stink" is unknown.

Your Commissioners cannot, therefore, believe that the meat was either bad in quality or in any way unfit for issue. It was identical with that supplied to the officers' mess-table. That many of the witnesses believed the meat to be tainted is possible; but their sweeping condemnation of all the food on board diminished materially the value of their testimony. The unanimity with which an issue of salt fish was complained of leads to the belief that there was reason for dissatisfaction; but as the complaint was immediately attended to, and bully beef supplied instead, the men were given a good meal of food they liked, in exchange for that they objected to.

The bread was excellent in quality, and sufficient in quantity, and was supplemented by an unlimited supply of biscuits, which were declared by almost every witness to be excellent.

Butter of good quality, or jams and marmalade, were supplied every day; and no fault was found except to an occasional jar of rhubarb-jam, which was said to have fermented. These small luxuries evidently were good.

Sometimes bacon or sausages were issued for breakfast, and preserved meat frequently for supper. The men had cheese on rare occasions. Fresh potatoes, small in size but as good in quality as could be expected on board a ship leaving South Africa, were supplied daily. The evidence showed that the men were, if anything, supplied with larger potatoes than those supplied to the officers' mess. There was continual dissatisfaction expressed that the tea and coffee had been boiled in the same coppers as the soup had been cooked in, and that they were covered with grease in consequence, one witness endeavouring to mislead us into the belief that the grease was 3 in. deep, but on further questioning diminished the alleged quantity from 3 in. to 2 in., to 1 in., to  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., and ultimately confined himself to saying it was greasy. This wild class of evidence, which was fairly general, tended to discount the value of the complaints. It appears to be not improbable that the tea when greasy may have been so from the "dixies" not having been properly cleaned by the orderly men after having been used for soup. Throughout the whole of the ships of H.M. navy, and in all transports, the tea and coffee are boiled in the same coppers as the meat. It would be quite impossible, with the limited space available on board ship, to have separate utensils for cooking for a thousand men. The tea and coffee, it would seem, were drinkable, though not nice; that could not be so owing to the circumstances under which they had to be made.

In *Punch* of the 23rd July, 1902, page 45, there is a cartoon of a breakfast-table in the saloon of an ordinary passenger-steamer, entitled "A Secret of the Sea." The passenger says, "Look here, steward, if this is coffee, I want tea; but if this is tea, then I wish for coffee." From this extract it would appear that complaints about board-ship tea and coffee have been heard by others than your Commissioners, even under circumstances more favourable than that of cooking in a transport galley.

In the cablegram from the Transport Officer, Durban—which is as follows: "Aug. 27th. Date of last inspection of galley, bakehouse, &c., unknown. Naval Transport."—the dimensions of the men's galley were not stated; but, as the transport had been engaged carrying other and larger numbers of troops, it is only reasonable to presume the space was up to that required by regulation. No doubt on many occasions the cooking was unsavoury, and the orderlies in accepting undercooked meat for their mess caused much of the dissatisfaction. All men can eat meat when overcooked, but undercooked meat is absolutely revolting to many.

#### DIETARY SCALE.

The following is the dietary scale for troops or third-class passengers as set out by the Transport Regulations, and in "Theory and Science of Hygiene," by that eminent authority, Colonel J. Lane Notter, R.A.M.C., M.A., M.D., &c. The colonial troopers were "rationed on superior scale, same as Yeomanry." The Yeomanry ration is said to be an improved third-class scale, but direct evidence as to what constituted the Yeomanry scale was not obtainable.

#### *Scale of Rations per Man per Week.*

Salt beef	...	...	...	...	...	...	24 oz.
Salt pork	...	...	...	...	...	...	24 "
Preserved meat	...	...	...	...	...	...	36 "
Flour	...	...	...	...	...	...	12 "
Suet	...	...	...	...	...	...	2 "
Raisins	...	...	...	...	...	...	4 "
Split peas	...	...	...	...	...	...	$\frac{4}{5}$ pint
Compressed vegetables	...	...	...	...	...	...	2 oz.
Biscuits	...	...	...	...	...	...	36 "
Fresh bread	...	...	...	...	...	...	4 lb.
Rice	...	...	...	...	...	...	4 oz.
Preserved potatoes	...	...	...	...	...	...	8 "
Sugar (unrefined)	...	...	...	...	...	...	18 "
Tea	...	...	...	...	...	...	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Vinegar	...	...	...	...	...	...	$\frac{1}{8}$ pint.
Mustard	...	...	...	...	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz.
Pickles	...	...	...	...	...	...	6 "
Pepper	...	...	...	...	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ "
Salt	...	...	...	...	...	...	2 "

N.B.—With fresh meat an additional 4 oz. of bread or 3 oz. of biscuit is to be issued to each man.

NOTE.—The ration of fresh meat is to be of the same weight as that of salt or preserved meat, and 8 oz. of fresh vegetables are to be the ration for men, women, or children; but, when fresh vegetables are not procurable, preserved potatoes (uncooked), 2 oz., or compressed mixed vegetables, 1 oz., are to be issued in lieu.

Your Commissioners have no doubt that the scale of food, even of that supplied to Yeomanry, was never denied to the men

#### SALE OF FOOD.

Men asserted they had constantly bought food from the cooks, stewards, and crew—some said every day from Durban to Wellington. In this, as in most other assertions, there was probably exaggeration, and they may have confused the legitimate purchasers from the canteen with the illegitimate purchasers of the ship's stores. It seems probable, however, that there was considerable illicit dealing. How it could have been carried on without discovery by the purser or chief steward is difficult to understand, as it was stated that a hundred men at a time would be purchasing. Your Commissioners mention this, though scarcely coming within the scope of their commission, as a matter worth reporting.

Your Commissioners considered the possibility of the cooks defrauding the men of a part of their rations with a view to selling it to them better cooked later on; but have no doubt there was no deficiency in the quantity supplied to the troops, and the sales made were principally of cakes and suchlike commodities rather than of solid food.

Verbal orders were given to the troopers to try and put down this iniquitous traffic, but the men's sense of the impropriety does not seem to have been awakened.

#### HOSPITALS.

The most serious part of your Commissioners' inquiry dealt with the health of the men and the attention to and condition of the hospital. There were thirty-two bed-places in the hospital. The number of beds specified for a battleship is 3 per cent. of the crew, and the same provision is made in the Transport Regulations, and as there were 1,005 non-commissioned officers and men on board the "Britannic" there can be no doubt the Transport Regulations were complied with as regards hospital accommodation. The height between decks on board the "Britannic" was not so great as is desirable, but deck-space of 20 to 30 square feet is all that is insisted on, and so any overcrowding of the hospital was consequent on the extraordinary outbreak of illness on board during the last days of the voyage, was only temporary, and was remedied by the Principal Medical Officer. Until arrival at Melbourne the hospital was not full. There were about eighteen patients, and this number is no greater than might have been expected. From Melbourne to Wellington the development of measles was abnormal, rising from about sixteen cases on leaving Melbourne to twenty-eight the day after, and then increasing by seven and eight a day until on arrival at Wellington there were, according to Surgeon-Major Pearless, P.M.O., fifty-one patients in hospital. Of this total of fifty-one patients, nine were on sick-list with pneumonia. On the Port Health Officer's inspection, many other cases were discovered. In this, as in all other branches of the inquiry, the difficulty of obtaining accurate evidence has been great, owing to the departure of the transport and the entire absence of official records. However, it appears that the first case of measles was discovered about ten days after the transport started from Durban, and the period of incubation being from ten to fourteen days, the germs of the disease had unquestionably been absorbed prior to embarkation, and most probably that may be true of the immediately subsequent cases. It is extremely probable that the measles were introduced into the transport by details of the Tenth Contingent, who had come from a camp where measles had been prevalent. The sufferers, not knowing the nature of their ailment, did not report themselves sick until after they had entered the infectious period of the disease, and consequently had contaminated numbers of their comrades. All the medical testimony without exception was to the effect that the isolation of the disease under the conditions of the troopship was impossible; and the almost universal catarrh which seems unavoidable on the sudden transition from the high dry air on the veldt to the cold damp air of the sea probably prevented that early discovery of the disease which might have assisted in mitigating the outbreak. Pneumonia is a common sequel of measles under ordinary circumstances. Under those of the close crowding of a large body of men when ventilation is imperfect, coupled with the insanitary condition of insufficient change of clothing, an outbreak became inevitable. Had the troops remained on board another week the epidemic would have been still more disastrous. It was declared by the medical witnesses impossible to avert the spread of pneumonia. One medical gentleman stated his opinion that the saloon should have been occupied, and the captain of the ship even turned out of his cabin, to provide accommodation for the patients; but we think that was not possible, nor, according to the evidence, was it necessary.

The Port Health Officer, in his report to the Chief Health Officer, describes the hospital as being overcrowded and dirty, but appears not to have made allowance for the fact that illness had been developing with terrible rapidity, and that he and the Assistant Chief Health Officer on their inspection themselves sent to the hospital about twenty cases—men who had not reported themselves sick, hoping thereby to avoid detention on board. Except one or two rather vague complaints of lack of attention to patients, not made by themselves but by others, the general impression conveyed was that the Principal Medical Officer and his assistants were attentive to their duties during the voyage, and that notwithstanding the sudden and alarming spread of illness the drugs and appliances were ample, and that provision was made to extend the hospital-space immediately after leaving Melbourne.

As an example of the rapid spread of pneumonia we place on record an extract from a book called "A Doctor in Khaki," by Francis G. Freemantle, M.A., M.B., B.Ch. (Oxon.), M.R.C.P., late Civil Surgeon to Forces in South Africa. "The East Yorks, who form two-thirds of the troops on

board, evidently brought on board with them from Aldershot an epidemic of supposed influenza with severe pneumonic signs. They had lost two cases at Aldershot; and here we have had twenty cases, all but three, who only fell sick a few days ago, being East Yorkshire men. Four or five have been delirious, and three have died. As the only medical staff, besides four doctors, consisted of a Volunteer medical sergeant, one R.A.M.C. orderly, and a civilian 'compounder' (*i.e.*, dispenser), the hospital-stores, accommodation, and *personnel*, intended only for the usual work of a transport, have been taxed to the uttermost, and treatment has been difficult, as the ship's hospital, though amply fitted for the usual work on a transport, was not fully enough staffed nor stocked for so great a strain.

"There was difficulty in putting on ice poultices and fomentations regularly, although the pleurisy was frequently severe; there was a dearth of thermometers when the non-official had been broken, and there was a drug-famine, the giving-out of the digitalis being especially serious. It is fortunate that the sergeant of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, the civilian compounder, and the only orderly did not break down, the atmosphere in hospital through the tropics being most oppressive."

This happened on the troopship "Nile" leaving England, and running daily into warmer weather, with disciplined troops on board, and medical men with enthusiasm and the most modern skill and and experience to guide them. This example certainly should make the relatives of the "Britannic" sufferers less astonished at their own sad experience.

Unfortunately, a misunderstanding seems to have arisen as to the period at which the Health Department took over charge of the invalids, and when the responsibility of the medical officers in charge of the sick ceased. Without doubt the Health Department on boarding the transport issued instructions for the landing of the sick, some of whom they ordered to be sent to the Hospital, and others to Somes Island; the handing-over of the blankets, &c., for fumigation; and also ordered men whom they found showing signs of disease to the ship's hospital. It is evident that it was understood the invalids would be disembarked on the day the "Britannic" arrived. Delays, however, took place, and the sick had to be left on board for the night. Dr. Eccles remained on board, and devoted himself to the welfare of the sufferers during the whole night, and had the assistance of four orderlies, who volunteered, and did good service, and there is no reason for supposing that the patients suffered from want of attention. The charge of drunkenness the night before arrival, brought by one witness against the orderlies, broke down under examination.

That the regular hospital orderlies should have been allowed to leave the sick before they were absolutely and unreservedly handed over to the Health Department seems to your Commissioners to have been distinctly wrong; but they qualify that statement by saying there was every reason for the Principal Medical Officer to believe that his responsibility for the sick was terminating, if not terminated, when arrangements were virtually taken out of his hands by the Health Department.

The allegations that the sick were not removed to Somes Island with due care are quite unfounded; every arrangement that could be made for their comfort was made. Three trained nurses and Doctor Purdy accompanied them, the deck of the "Duco" was screened to break the wind, and Permanent Artillerymen, sailors, and volunteer orderlies were in attendance to carry those unable to walk. All the medical men agreed that in transporting from the ship's hospital to the "Duco" it was inadvisable to use stretchers owing to the sharp turnings, narrow passages, and steep ascents and descents, and their opinions must be received as the best obtainable. No other suitable accommodation could have been procured on the mainland in addition to that obtained at Wellington Hospital, nor was the removal of the sick to Somes Island injudicious.

The quarantine buildings on Somes Island are old-fashioned and somewhat inconvenient, but there was ample accommodation for all the patients. The question whether it is the most suitable place for a quarantine-station is one for the Health Department, and not for your Commissioners to decide; but they are of opinion that no harm resulted from the removal of the patients to the island, and it would have been most dangerous to all on board the "Britannic" to have placed the vessel in quarantine without landing the patients.

The total number of deaths is twenty, made up as follows:—

2	At sea.	
6	Somes Island :	} Taken from ship's hospital.
2	Wellington Hospital :	
5	Somes Island :	} Taken from ship, their condition being discovered only on eve of disembarkation.
	of disembarkation.	
2	Somes Island :	} Illness developed ashore.
1	Private boardinghouse, Wellington :	
2	Auckland :	

—  
20

The evidence shows that the men near the end of the voyage exhibited a disinclination to report themselves sick to the surgeons, lest they might be prevented from getting ashore. Eleven men who were not in the hospital the night before disembarkation were detected, and sent from the steamer to Somes Island. Of these eleven men five died. There is little doubt that concealment of their condition was largely responsible for such a heavy death-rate. Nothing was elicited regarding the circumstances under which the five who died ashore became ill.

The troops commenced the voyage under unfavourable circumstances. Details of the Tenth Contingent sent to join the "Britannic" at the last moment introduced the germs of measles; the closely-packed decks, the weak ventilation, and the habits of the men, who had not the training of regular troops to stand the confinement, all conduced to the development of the disease. The same conditions predisposed them to pneumonia, which, following on the measles,



produced the heavy death-roll. None of the officers on board the "Britannic" are responsible for the details of the Tenth Contingent being sent from a camp where measles had been prevalent. The Transport Department in South Africa ordinarily supplies a complete change of clothing to men upon embarkation. This was applied for, but declined owing to the former issue being so recent.

Your Commissioners are of opinion that systematic instruction in the hanging of the hammocks would, by economizing the room, have avoided the necessity of men sleeping on the decks, that periodical physical inspection would have insured greater personal cleanliness, and that the carrying-out of both of these requirements would have kept the men in a condition better able to resist the after effects of measles.

Statistics supplied by Dr. Purdy show that the percentage of deaths from pneumonia in various countries under diverse circumstances point to the conclusion that there was not an unusual mortality of the cases treated. According to the United States Government report for 1901, the mortality ranges from 20 to 40 per cent. under hospital treatment. In the Middlesex Hospital there was an average mortality of 17 per cent. during a period of ten years, and in a remarkable epidemic at Middlesborough, in Yorkshire, the death-rate rose to 40 per cent. Pneumonia, it was stated, was one of the few diseases of which the death-rate had not diminished, notwithstanding the advance of medical science.

It is impossible to state the percentage of deaths which resulted from pneumonia contracted on board the "Britannic" or immediately after the disembarkation, as the men speedily scattered all over New Zealand, and their subsequent medical history is unobtainable. The fatal cases only are known. All medical records were left on board the transport.

Mr. W. T. Brown, formerly of Happy Valley, Wellington, appeared before your Commissioners and asked to be permitted to make a statement as to the complaints of his son, Trooper Brown, who died at Somes Island; but, as the statement was a narration of general conversations between father and son before the latter believed himself to be dying, the statement could not be accepted as evidence. But your Commissioners made inquiry into the circumstances of the young man's illness, and have nothing to report, unless that the medical officer in charge on Somes Island appears to have been most attentive.

#### DISCIPLINE.

Most of the evidence your Commissioners could obtain as to the maintenance of discipline on board had to be derived from officers and men whose own conduct was concerned; but the sworn testimony of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, whether dissatisfied or not with the food, accommodation, water-supply, latrines, or hospital, was that the discipline was good and the attention of the officers to their duties and the complaints of the men were not perfunctory, but zealous. The testimony of Lieutenant Wynyard Joss, of the Fifth Queensland Bushmen, was that he had not previously seen discipline as good; the Assistant Chief Health Officer, Dr. Valintine, pronounced it "excellent"; and the Port Health Officer, Dr. Pollen, declared, "I have inspected all the troopships that have come back. There was no barracking, the men were well behaved, they filed up, and they obeyed their officers promptly; it was striking to my mind between the discipline on board the ship and that on board the others." Notwithstanding all of which your Commissioners feel that that strict attention to details which no doubt is irritating to troops only partially trained, but which constitutes and insures real discipline, was not so perseveringly attended to as His Majesty's regulations enjoin. The troopers were not paraded for exercise on deck so much as they should have been, nor for personal inspection, as provided in His Majesty's regulations, and the first delivery of hammocks, their hanging, their daily stowing, and periodical inspection were not so efficiently attended to as they might have been.

In justice to the officers commanding regiments, your Commissioners desire to report to Your Excellency that the above and all other duties were as well, if not better, carried out on board the "Britannic" than on any other transport or troopship which has returned with New Zealand contingents. The congregation of large bodies of men, however, in very narrow limits demands most exact attention to regulations if the maximum of comfort obtainable is to be secured. That is doubly so when the troops are only partially trained, and discipline is relaxed by the cessation of the tension caused by service in an enemy's country, the virtual termination of their service, and the absence of that *esprit de corps* which comes from long association coupled with traditions of an inherited glory.

Taking all the circumstances into consideration, your Commissioners are of opinion the discipline was fully equal to the standard approved of by civilian public opinion in the colony; but it is essential to the well-being of New Zealand troops and their proper efficiency that a higher standard of discipline should be insisted on.

It is not, but it should be, ridiculous for an official to commend the discipline because the men "obeyed their officers promptly," and "there was no barracking." Attention to discipline and its daily and unceasing enforcement may seem difficult to the officers and irksome to the men, but the cleanliness, regularity, and obedience of all must be insisted on to insure the comfort and convenience of the whole.

#### "ORIENT."

Having reported to Your Excellency at some considerable length on the supply of food and accommodation, and the various questions arising in connection with the comfort and discipline on board the "Britannic," your Commissioners feel that, as there were complaints from only four of the non-commissioned officers and troopers of the "Orient" with regard to food and accommodation, it is unnecessary to report to Your Excellency more than that the food, accommodation, and conveniences evidently were of much the same character as those on board the "Britannic"; and as so few men responded to the advertisement inviting any who were dissatisfied to forward their names to the Commissioners, there cannot have been any serious cause for complaint.



In regard to the sleeping-accommodation, the cables from the Naval Transport Department, Sydney, disclose the fact that the Regulations limit the number of men by the sitting-accommodation at the tables. Thus, while the "Orient" was fitted for 1,254 men, there was only hammock-accommodation for 1,000. In view of medical evidence of the effect of sleeping on the deck, your Commissioners are of opinion that transports should provide hammock-space for all men on board.

But the subject which caused your Commissioners most thought was the discipline. They beg respectfully to report to Your Excellency there was lax, if not an almost entire absence of, discipline on board the transport. It was evident from the evidence of the officer commanding (Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott) that few of the King's Regulations relating to the discipline and conduct of the troops on board a transport were attended to.

Apparently there was no inspection of the men's quarters until a day or two after sailing. It was unknown whether the men were medically examined prior to embarkation; or whether the squadron officers saw to the issue of bedding. Nobody was ordered to inspect the meat prior to issue, or to see it weighed. The 'tween decks were defiled on occasions, and nobody was punished for the offence; a portion of the 'tween deck was used as, and stank like, a urinal. There were no written reports by the officers of the day, and the officers for duty required by the King's Regulations were not appointed. No parades for exercise or personal inspection were ordered.

The misunderstanding between the Health Officers and the officers commanding on board the "Orient" in Wellington Harbour resulted in a lamentable display of incompetency, or unwillingness to maintain discipline, on the part of the regimental officers. The precise moment at which a fatigue party ordered to prepare camp on Somes Island for the remainder of the troopers should have been landed, is difficult to decide; but that passive, if not active, insubordination in connection with the landing existed on board is unquestionable, and was no doubt fomented and aggravated by a letter written by Major O'Brien, commanding the North Island Battalion, to Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott protesting against the disembarkation on Somes Island on the ground of the men's health. Your Commissioners visited Somes Island, examined its suitability for a camp, and came to the conclusion that it was suitable.

The charge that troopers used disgusting and insulting language with intent that it should reach the ears of their officers, your Commissioners fear was too true, and not merely of an occasional character; and as such conduct was allowed to go unnoticed and unpunished, the moral influence of the majority of the non-commissioned officers must have been of the weakest character. Major O'Brien, in the course of his evidence, states that "many men would not get up till 7 or 7.30 a.m.," and plenty did not get up in time to wash; that men going out were on their best behaviour, but coming back they got lax in their discipline; that it was not possible to enforce more discipline, and if an attempt had been made the men would have taken no notice; and that it was impossible to enforce proper discipline among colonial troops. Major O'Brien was in command of the regiment from which a fatigue party was detailed to land and prepare the camp on Somes Island. He states that the men were paraded at 9.30 a.m., and remained ready to disembark until 1 p.m. The fact remains that the tug came alongside the transport, that people got on board her and the fatigue party did not—the reason alleged being that the sea was too rough. As Major O'Brien had written protesting against the Auckland men being landed on Somes Island, which letter Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott forwarded to the Commandant, your Commissioners do not believe that these officers made proper efforts to disembark the fatigue party. The evidence of Doctors Mason and Purdy compels the opinion that the disembarkation of the troops on Somes Island was passively obstructed by the two senior officers on board the "Orient." The evidence of the cleanness or dirtiness of the ship is not convincing either way, although Dr. Purdy stated that she was clean when he saw her. It is interesting to notice that the transport "Orient," on which discipline was slack, lost no men by death on the voyage, and disease was less virulent in character, a result highly commendatory to the medical staff.

Reviewing the circumstances which may have conduced to the absence of proper discipline on board the "Orient," your Commissioners are immediately confronted with the fact that the conditions under which the Ninth Contingent was embodied, employed, and embarked at Durban for New Zealand made proper discipline a practical impossibility. Embodied about 1st February, 1902, it was employed only three days on trek and three days returning to standing camp, and its whole period of service practically concluded on embarkation at Durban on 9th July. Many of the officers were new to their duties, strange to one another, unaccustomed to command and the habit of discipline, and unable to instruct their non-commissioned officers, because they did not and could not know even their own duties, and most of the non-commissioned officers were inexperienced, and unqualified by previous training for their responsible positions. These circumstances, and the disappointment of the men at having to return to New Zealand with fewer laurels than their more fortunate comrades, all combine to produce the result which your Commissioners regret to have to report for Your Excellency's information. It takes twenty years to prepare an Imperial soldier for the position of officer commanding a regiment; New Zealand must not be disappointed if some of her officers were not disciplinarians at the end of twenty weeks.

All which is, with great respect, submitted to Your Excellency.

As witness our hands and seals, at Wellington, this twenty-third day of September, 1902.

W. R. RUSSELL.  
R. McNAB.  
J. A. MILLAR.

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

---

THE first meeting of the Commissioners took place at the Parliamentary House on Wednesday, the 13th August, 1902, at 2.30 p.m.

Commissioners: Sir W. R. Russell, Messrs. J. A. Millar and R. McNab, M.H.R.s.

The secretary and shorthand-writer (Mr. J. W. Collins) was also in attendance.

Proposed by Mr. McNab, and seconded by Mr. J. A. Millar, That Sir W. R. Russell be elected Chairman.

The Commission deliberated on the forms of procedure, and decided to insert advertisements in the principal papers in the four centres of the colony requesting persons prepared to give evidence to forward their names and addresses to the Chairman.

Telegraphic notices were sent to Colonel Davies, C.B., New Plymouth; Surgeon-Major Pearless, Wakefield; and Captain Lewin, Addington; and a letter to Major-General Babington, Wellington.

It was decided that, as the evidence would be reported verbatim, it was not necessary that Press reporters should be present.

The Commission adjourned at 4.30 p.m. until next day.

---

### THURSDAY, 14TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 4.15 p.m. All the members were present.

Draft notice summoning witnesses to attend and give evidence was approved.

Several telegrams from troopers offering to give evidence were read.

The allowances to be paid to witnesses was then discussed.

The Commission adjourned at 4.40 p.m. until next day.

---

### FRIDAY, 15TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3.25 p.m. All the members were present.

Correspondence was read and discussed.

The Commission adjourned at 3.45 p.m. until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 19th August.

---

### TUESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10 a.m. All the members were present.

After discussing the order in which witnesses were to be taken, the Commission formally opened at 11 a.m.

Major-General Babington was present to watch the case on behalf of the Imperial authorities.

The representatives of the Press present were notified of the decision of the Commissioners not to admit them to the proceedings of the inquiry.

The following witnesses were examined: Colonel Davies, C.B., Surgeon-Major Pearless, Captain Lewin, Quartermaster-Sergeant Davies, Lance-Corporal Donaghuey.

The Commission adjourned at 5.25 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

---

### WEDNESDAY, 20TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

Captain Rich, R.N., was present to watch the case on behalf of the Admiralty.

The following witnesses were examined: Quartermaster-Sergeant Clouston, Trooper Debenham, Acting Squadron-Sergeant-Major Herbert Collins, Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell, Troopers McGoverin, Dodd, Mellor, and Nicholson.

The Commission adjourned at 5.40 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. on Thursday.

---

### THURSDAY, 21ST AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Troopers Silbey, Waldie, Muir, Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell (recalled), Trooper Moore, Sergeant Cook, Trooper B. T. Cope, and Squadron-Sergeant-Major Pender.

The Commission adjourned at 5.20 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

---

### FRIDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Captain Heckler, Veterinary Surgeon Captain Young, Trooper Andrews, Sergeant Massey, Troopers McLoughlin, Davies, Craig, and Bradley.

Mr. W. T. Browne was allowed to make a statement, as father of a deceased trooper.

The Commission adjourned at 5.25 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## SATURDAY, 23RD AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Trooper Gardiner, Sergeant Barnes, Trooper Farrow, Hospital-Sergeant Griffiths, Pay-Sergeant Oliver, Trooper H. E. East, Sergeant-Major W. Denby.

The Commission adjourned at 1.40 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. on Monday, the 25th August.

## MONDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commission met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Trooper Maurice Murray, Sergeant-Major Jessep ("Britannic"), and Corporal Mackenzie and Surgeon-Captain Falconer ("Orient").

The Commission adjourned at 4.10 p.m. until 3 p.m. next day.

## TUESDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Sergeants Larsen, Challis, and Cameron, Troopers Wallace and Free.

A letter was sent to Sir Joseph Ward in regard to the Commission sitting with closed doors and the exclusion of the Press. (See exhibit.)

The Commission adjourned at 5.30 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. next day.

## WEDNESDAY, 27TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 2.30 p.m. All the members were present.

A memorandum was sent to Sir Joseph Ward, covering a letter to His Excellency the Governor applying for an extension of time for the Commission to make its report.

The following witnesses were examined: Trooper Mulhern, Sergeant Henderson, Quartermaster-Sergeant Horne, and Corporal Moore.

The Commission adjourned at 5.30 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## THURSDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

Extension of time for presenting the report was approved of by His Excellency.

The witnesses examined were as follows: Trooper Avenell, Corporal Castles, Troopers Steed, Crook, Drower, Powell, Lucas, Rowlatt, Ivimey, and James.

The Commission adjourned at 5.30 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## FRIDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Sergeant-Major Cowell, Lieut.-Colonel Chaytor, Lieutenant Joss, and Major Polson, D.S.O.

The Commission adjourned at 6.15 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## SATURDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Trooper George Stewart, Drs. Pollen and Valintine.

The Commission adjourned at 1 p.m.

The Commissioners left at 2.30 p.m., and proceeded to Somes Island, and inspected the Quarantine Station and camping-ground.

## MONDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Dr. Valintine (re-examined) and Dr. Purdy.

The Commissioners left at 1 p.m., and inspected the troopship "Montrose."

## TUESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Dr. Mason, Captain Todd, D.S.O., Sergeant-Majors Charters and Jackson, Acting-Sergeant Beasley ("Orient").

The Commission adjourned at 5.25 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## WEDNESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Surgeon-Major Fearless (re-examined), Sergeant McAlpine, and Trooper Callam.

The Commission adjourned at 12.30 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

Dr. Bauchop was examined.

The Commission adjourned at 1 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## FRIDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Sergeant-Major Calvert, Colonel Davies (recalled), Drs. Mason and Purdy (recalled), Troopers Percy and Coates ("Orient").

The Commission adjourned at 6 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. next day.

## SATURDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commission met at 10.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The following witnesses were examined: Lieut.-Colonel Abbott and Major O'Brien ("Orient").

The Commission adjourned at 1 p.m. until 11 a.m. on Monday, 8th September, 1902.

## MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 11 a.m. Present: Sir W. R. Russell and Mr. J. A. Millar, M.H.R.s.

Mr. Nelson, of the Tomoana Freezing-works, gave evidence.

The Commission adjourned at 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. next day.

## TUESDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

It was decided not to call any further evidence.

An outline of the proposed report of the Commission was read.

The Commission adjourned at 4.45 p.m. until next day.

## WEDNESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners were engaged in drafting the report.

A further extension of time to report was applied for to His Excellency the Governor.

## THURSDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

A rough draft of the report was submitted and discussed.

A further extension of time to report was granted by His Excellency.

The Commission adjourned at 5 p.m. until Wednesday next, the 17th instant.

## WEDNESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

The report was submitted and discussed.

The Commission adjourned at 5.30 p.m. until 8 p.m. On resuming at 8 p.m. the report was further considered.

The Commission adjourned at 11.45 p.m. until 3 p.m. next day.

## THURSDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

The report of the Commission was further considered.

The Commission adjourned at 5.30 p.m., and resumed sitting again at 8 p.m., and adjourned at 12.40 a.m. until 3 p.m. next day.

## FRIDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 3 p.m. All the members were present.

The report was again under consideration.

The Commission adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

## MONDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 11 a.m. Sir W. R. Russell and J. A. Millar, Esq., Ms.H.R., were present.

The report was finally approved of, and arrangements were made to sign it and send it on to His Excellency with a copy of the evidence to-morrow (Tuesday).

The Commission adjourned at 12 noon.

## TUESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1902.

The Commissioners met at 11.30 a.m. All the members were present.

The report was signed, and sent on to His Excellency the Governor through the Acting-Premier.

The Commissioners place on record their appreciation of the services of the Secretary (Mr. J. W. Collins), who by his energy enabled the Commission to report more speedily than they anticipated.

The Commission adjourned at 11.50 a.m.

## INDEX TO WITNESSES.

"BRITANNIC."		Page
<b>OFFICERS,—</b>		
Colonel R. H. Davies, C.B.	.. .. .	1, 253
Lieut. Colonel Chaytor	.. .. .	176
Major Polson, D.S.O.	.. .. .	190
Captain and Adjutant Todd, D.S.O.	.. .. .	215
Captain and Quartermaster Lewin	.. .. .	13
Captain Heckler, Commanding Tenth details	.. .. .	70
Lieutenant Joss	.. .. .	188
<b>MEDICAL OFFICERS,—</b>		
Surgeon-Major Fearless, P.M.O.	.. .. .	10, 223
Surgeon-Captain Bauchop	.. .. .	228
Veterinary-Surgeon Captain Young	.. .. .	77
<b>CIVILIAN WITNESSES,—</b>		
Dr. Mason, Chief Health Officer	.. .. .	213, 234
Mr. W. Nelson	.. .. .	236
Dr. Pollen, Port Health Officer	.. .. .	196
Dr. Purdy	.. .. .	207
Dr. Valentine, Assistant Chief Health Officer	.. .. .	202, 246
<b>NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS,—</b>		
Sergeant-Major Calvert, Squadron B	.. .. .	231
" Charters, Squadron A	.. .. .	218
" Cowell, Tenth details	.. .. .	169
" Denby, Squadron D	.. .. .	106
" Jackson, Squadron A	.. .. .	221
" Jessep, Squadron G	.. .. .	112
" Pender, Squadron A	.. .. .	69
Quartermaster-Sergeant Clouston, Squadron E	.. .. .	24
" Collins, Squadron E	.. .. .	33
" Davies, Squadron F	.. .. .	17
" Horne, Squadron B	.. .. .	134
" McDonnell	.. .. .	36, 61
Hospital-Sergeant Griffiths, Squadron B	.. .. .	101
Pay-Sergeant Oliver	.. .. .	104
Sergeant Barnes, Squadron H	.. .. .	95
" Cameron, Squadron D (Tenth details)	.. .. .	122
" Challis, Tenth details	.. .. .	117
" Cook, Squadron F	.. .. .	66
" Henderson, Squadron E	.. .. .	131
" Larsen, Squadron A	.. .. .	115
" Massey, Squadron H	.. .. .	82
" McAlpine, Squadron A	.. .. .	225
Corporal Castles, Squadron C	.. .. .	149
" Moore, Squadron D	.. .. .	138
Lance-Corporal Donaughey, Squadron E	.. .. .	19
" Rowlatt, Squadron C	.. .. .	164
<b>TROOPERS,—</b>		
Andrews, Squadron E	.. .. .	79
Avenell, Squadron C (Tenth details)	.. .. .	144
Bradley, Squadron H	.. .. .	91
Callam, Squadron A	.. .. .	227
Cope, Squadron F (Tenth details)	.. .. .	69
Craig, Squadron A	.. .. .	89
Crook, Squadron H (Tenth details)	.. .. .	157
Davis, Squadron E	.. .. .	87
Debenham, Squadron H	.. .. .	28
Dodd, Squadron H	.. .. .	43
Drower, Tenth details	.. .. .	137
East, Squadron H	.. .. .	105
Farrow, Squadron E	.. .. .	98
Free, Squadron E	.. .. .	126
Gardiner, Squadron E	.. .. .	92
Ivimey, Squadron H	.. .. .	166
James, Squadron G	.. .. .	168
Lucas, Tenth details	.. .. .	163
McGoverin, Squadron E	.. .. .	40
McLoughlin, Squadron E	.. .. .	84
Mellor, Squadron E	.. .. .	45
Moore, Squadron E (Tenth details)	.. .. .	61
Muir, Squadron E	.. .. .	59
Mulhern, Squadron E	.. .. .	129
Murray, Squadron H	.. .. .	108
Nicholson	.. .. .	47
Powell, Squadron A (Tenth details)	.. .. .	161
Silbey, Squadron D	.. .. .	49
Steed, Squadron C	.. .. .	153
Stewart, Squadron A	.. .. .	195
Waldie, Squadron G	.. .. .	57
Wallace, Squadron E	.. .. .	124



## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1902.

*The Chairman* (to Major-General Babington).] I understand, General Babington, that you are here to represent the Imperial authorities, not to take any part in the proceedings?—Yes, sir.

*The Chairman*, addressing those present, said: The course the Commissioners propose to take in the inquiry is to examine first of all Colonel Davies, Surgeon-Major Pearlless, and Captain Lewin; and, as it is possible in the course of the inquiry that there might be implication of laxity of duty and want of attention on the part of these officers, they will be allowed to remain in the room throughout the proceedings and cross-examine any witnesses touching their own departments. The Commissioners know that by taking a shorthand report of all the evidence given an entirely accurate report will be arrived at and published. They believe that the daily publication of evidence of impressions as well as facts is not so likely to lead to absolutely separate and independent statements as evidence given without knowledge of what previous witnesses have stated, and where charges are made during the course of the investigations the Commissioners believe that such charges should not be made public before being dealt with by them. The Press will not therefore be admitted.

Colonel DAVIES, C.B., sworn and examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman*.] Will you tell me your name and rank?—Richard Hutton Davies, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Brevet-Colonel New Zealand Militia, and Companion of the Bath.

2. You served in South Africa?—Yes.

3. In which contingents?—First, Third, Fourth, and Eighth.

4. Were you on board the troopship "Britannic" on her last trip to New Zealand?—Yes; I was in command of the troops.

5. Were you employed and paid by the Imperial Government or by the New Zealand Government?—We were paid by the Imperial Government.

6. In whose employ were you and the contingents?—In the employ of the Imperial Government, so I understood.

7. What port in South Africa did you sail from?—Durban.

8. Did you touch anywhere *en route*?—At Albany, and we went into Melbourne Harbour.

9. Where did the men on board the troopship march from to embark?—They came down by train from Newcastle.

10. What contingents did they belong to?—The whole of the Eighth came back, with the exception of the men who had permission to stay; and eighty-two of the Tenth came back, and a few Australian details.

11. Did they have notice before leaving Newcastle that they were to embark?—They were only notified the morning before they were actually entrained.

12. Did they know that they were likely to re-embark?—Oh, yes; they knew they might get orders at any time.

13. Did they have time to prepare for embarkation?—Oh, certainly.

14. They were not hurried straight from Newcastle without preparing?—No; they were preparing for days before.

15. How long were they in Durban?—They were run straight on to the boat out of the train.

16. How long was the steamer in Durban after embarkation before starting?—They embarked on Saturday morning, and she sailed about daylight on Sunday morning. She was waiting for something that was coming up from Cape Town.

17. What was the health of the men on embarkation?—Very good. There were no invalids embarked.

18. Were they medically examined?—If they were it was before I went on board the ship. I had some details to attend to. As far as I know, there was no necessity to examine them, as there were no sick men on board.

19. In what condition would their clothes be in on leaving Newcastle—clean or lousy?—Clean, I should say. But it depended entirely on the men themselves. There was no reason why the men should not be clean.

20. Were there any lice in South Africa?—In certain men. Of course, certain men start this, and other men have practically to live with these men; but I have no reason to suppose they were not clean. They had ample time to wash all their clothes.

21. Will you give us the number of men?—One thousand and five.

22. Do you know all about the cubic space on board the troopship?—No.

23. You are not able to give us any evidence on that?—No; I did not measure it.

24. Do you know what space is required by transport regulations?—No, I do not.

25. Did any question arise on embarkation about being overcrowded?—No. There were one or two complaints about its being stuffy, for the first day or two out from Durban, when I inspected, which I think was perfectly natural. The ship was full, and it was natural that complaints should come from men who had just come from the fresh air on the veldt. The growling was not confined

to the men; the officers growled about the stuffiness of their cabins. After the first three days the weather got a bit cooler, and at every inspection, or nearly every inspection, I asked the men, "How do you find it now? Is it stuffy?" And they said, "It is all right now, sir." I had no complaints after the first few days.

26. On how many decks were the men quartered?—Four quarters, I think.

27. But they were only on two decks?—Yes.

28. Were windsails plentiful?—Yes, and electric fans.

29. Was any demand made for more ventilation?—No, except the first two or three days I mentioned. Everything was done that could be done to give ventilation.

30. It was not formally complained to you that the ventilation could be improved?—No, certainly not.

31. Was the "Britannic" inspected before embarkation by yourself?—No.

32. You were marched straight on board?—No; that is left to the embarkation officers.

33. But, whether you wished to inspect or whether you did not, you were marched on board whether you liked it or not?—Yes.

34. How soon did you make your first inspection of the ship after you had embarked?—The morning after we sailed.

35. Did she seem clean?—Very fairly clean for the first day out.

36. Was there the remains of ancient dirt in her?—No, sir. I considered her always a very clean ship, and very easy to keep clean.

37. Speaking generally, on embarkation she was clean rather than dirty?—Yes. There is an order of mine issued the first morning after we sailed. The order is as follows: "After his first inspection to-day the O.C. troops desires to express his satisfaction at the very fair state of order in which he found the troop-decks and quarters generally on this the second day at sea, and he impresses upon all ranks the necessity for united and redoubled effort to keep and maintain quarters in a thoroughly clean and orderly condition for the health and greater comfort of all concerned."

38. Then, that fairly represents the condition of the ship when she came into occupation of the troops?—Yes, sir.

39. Was there any inspection by the surgeon?—I went down with him every morning.

40. And he never expressed himself to you as other than satisfied with the condition of the ship?—No.

41. Who was the transport officer at Durban?—The naval transport officer was a Captain Hallking or Kinghall—I forget which.

42. Was he on board the troopship?—Yes; the military transport officer was, and a representative of the naval transport.

43. Did they make any remarks to you about the ship?—None whatever.

44. Then, so far as you know, the naval and military transport officers were satisfied with the condition of the ship?—Yes.

45. Do you chance to know how she had been employed before she was employed to take home the Eighth Contingent?—She has been running as a transport, I believe, ever since the beginning of the year. She was for about five months bringing the Imperial representative corps round the colony, and since that she took back some Australians.

46. Was this immediately preceding the trip before your contingent came?—I think she came from England, and I think she took away some Boer prisoners at one time.

47. Who had been on board her the very last trip before yours?—I am not quite sure, but I have an impression that she had been to England; but I do not know for certain.

48. I want to ascertain whether the preceding occupants were dirty, or the reverse?—I cannot give you any information.

49. Was any complaint made by yourself, or by any person that you are aware of, to the transport officers at Durban before you sailed as to the condition of the ship?—No.

50. Was any objection made to you by any of your officers or by any of the men before leaving Durban?—None whatever.

51. Was any complaint made at that time—before leaving Durban—as to the well-being and condition of the ship?—Nothing more than I told you just now.

52. Were there any complaints as to the housing generally: did they say they had no hammocks, bunks, or means of sleeping?—They made no report as to this.

53. What sleeping-accommodation was provided?—Hammocks.

54. Did every man have a hammock?—Yes, so far as I know; they never reported to me otherwise.

55. Then, you believe they all had hammocks?—Yes.

56. Were they supplied on board with blankets, or did they take their blankets with them?—They were supplied on board.

57. Who served these blankets out?—The ship's purser.

58. Not by any transport officer?—No; they belonged to the ship.

59. Who supervised that distribution?—Captain Lewin, quartermaster.

60. It is not part of the surgeon's business?—No.

61. He did not supervise it?—No; simply the quartermaster. It was not his (the surgeon's) duty.

62. Are you aware of the condition of the blankets when they were issued?—No; I heard no complaint about them.

63. Supposing the blankets were foul, do you think it would have been reported to you?—I think so—at once.

64. And the quartermaster was responsible for the issuing of the blankets, and it would have been his duty to make complaint if he thought the bedding was foul?—Yes.



65. And he made no complaints?—No.

66. Do you believe that the blankets were clean when they were issued?—As far as I know, they were. I have no reason to believe otherwise.

67. Did you ever hear of the ship being completely lousy—the bedding and the bunks?—No.

68. You did not hear it in South Africa as one of the things that happen?—Never, when they were embarking.

69. How soon after leaving Durban did you first hear of the blankets being lousy?—I never heard of the blankets being lousy.

70. It was never reported to you that they were lousy?—No.

71. If they had been lousy, could means have been taken to clean them?—Yes, I believe so; but if all the blankets were lousy it would be a very different affair. But I have no experience of that sort of thing.

72. Could they have been cleaned by placing them on a steam chest, or by disinfectants of any kind, or was it practically impossible?—Well, if I had heard they were lousy I would certainly have done my utmost to see that they were cleaned, but I never received any report that they were lousy.

73. Then, you are unable to give us any information as to whether they were very lousy?—I do not know that they were at all.

74. You never heard they were lousy, and there were no steps ordered by you or suggested to you for cleaning them?—I never heard the thing raised at all.

75. Now as to the matter of keeping 'tween decks clean, what course was adopted?—Fatigues were detailed every morning to attend to this. I had the two New Zealand regiments and an Australian detachment on board, and they were detailed by the officers commanding.

76. Could you give us the names of these officers?—Lieut.-Colonel Chaytor; Captain Polson, D.S.O.; and Major Haytor.

77. Do you know what methods were taken by the fatigue parties to keep the decks clean?—The decks were washed pretty frequently and sanded. They were not washed every day. We found it not advisable to wash daily the 'tween decks, as coming back in winter weather they did not dry quickly.

78. But in your opinion they were sufficiently scrubbed and attended to?—Yes, and kept very clean.

79. Were they holystoned, or scrubbed with sand?—They were never holystoned once. They were scrubbed and rubbed over with mops, and then gone over with a squeegee. But we did not do this more than was necessary because of the cold weather, but they were perfectly clean.

80. You are satisfied that every effort was taken on board ship to keep her in a thoroughly clean condition?—Quite satisfied.

81. You believe that it resulted in the ship being kept clean?—I am quite satisfied that the ship was clean.

82. In the matter of accommodation for the men, did they have proper messing-tables?—Yes, sir.

83. Sufficient to seat everybody?—Yes.

84. Were they supplied with spoons, forks, &c., by the ship?—Yes.

85. And they were in sufficient quantity?—Yes.

86. You had no complaints about this?—No.

87. What was the dietary scale for the soldiers on board the transport?—I am sorry that I have not got it. The captain of the ship has the transport regulations with him. He gave me a bill of fare of the rations that the troops were getting, and the rations that were given were very greatly in excess of the transport regulations.

88. Could you procure the dietary scale, do you think?—Only from the ship. I do not know of any in New Zealand.

89. Could you get this?—No, unless we can get hold of an old one, and I do not know that it would apply to the present time.

90. Was there any difference in theory, at any rate, between the rations supplied to colonial and Imperial soldiers?—I could not say.

91. But, in any case, I understand that you and your men were Imperial soldiers, and not colonial soldiers?—Yes; we were paid by the Imperial Government.

92. Did the men get the regulation ration?—I know the men got a great deal more than the regulation ration supplied to the Imperial soldier. For instance, I could mention one thing that I remember of the difference between the bill of fare and in the transport regulations. In the transport regulations men get fresh bread twice a week, on the troopship they got fresh bread every day and an unlimited supply of biscuits.

93. Have you any list of what rations were supplied daily?—No; I am sorry I have not the bill of fare.

94. Was there a variety of rations?—Oh, yes.

95. Can you give us at all from memory what the men received in the way of dietary?—They had boiled mutton and roast beef. They had sufficient meat all the time. They had a certain amount of tinned meat, but they had frozen meat, I think, every day.

96. What had they for breakfast?—I am afraid I cannot remember that; but you will be able to get that from the quartermaster exactly.

97. Was there an officer present each day at the issue of rations?—Yes, several. The details of duties was posted in my brigade office on board, but there were several orders that applied. In connection with the issue of rations, I found that the regiments were interfering with one another to get to the galley, so I issued the following to avoid confusion: "To avoid confusion in future the bugle-calls for the troops' breakfast, dinner, and tea will be sounded as follows: At 6.50 a.m.,

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 brigademajor 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.

120. Was the cooking fairly good?—It was very good, considering that the galley was so small. They were rather at a disadvantage owing to its smallness. I consider it was too small for the total number on board. Also, it had only one entrance, and the wind all the way to Albany was always on that side.

121. Do you consider that the cooking was what it ought to have been?—I do not think there was anything much the matter with it; but I think they were rather handicapped for room. It might have been a little better, perhaps.

122. I suppose if they had had more room they could have turned out better food?—There would have been no difference in the food itself. It would have been just the same.

123. Who suffered, the men or the cooks?—The cooks mostly, I should say.

124. You think that the effect of the galley being small did not tend to make the food as nice as it would have been had the galley been larger?—I think, occasionally the food was not so good as it might have been with a bigger galley.

125. Was there complaint to you of the cooking as well as of the rations?—Yes; I remember on one occasion an officer saying to me, when I asked if there were any complaints, that the men had complained that the mutton was rather underdone yesterday. This is the only complaint I can think of.

126. I suppose the men who liked it underdone would find no fault with it?—No. The officer was rather unfortunate about this case, as I reminded him that the men had had fish, and he said, "Oh, yes, I meant the day before that."

127. You do think, then, that upon one or two occasions the men were justified in making complaints about the cooking?—Yes; I think it is quite possible.

128. When you had inquired into this question of the cooking, was a remonstrance made, and did the cooking improve?—I never had more complaints. I went over the galley again with the purser. Two or three times a week I went to the galley when I went to the rest of the ship, and had a look at the food there. I went in with the purser and inspected the cooking arrangements again, and asked him if he could devise any means by which he could improve it in any way. They had only a limited number of boilers, and the tea had to be cooked in the same boilers as the meat. He said it was always done on a transport. I said, "Never mind, can you devise any means of doing otherwise? Can you cook the water for the tea where you cook for the saloon?" He said it was actually impossible—he could do nothing.

129. Was the tea greasy?—I was informed once or twice that it was. I sent for some of the tea myself, and I never found anything the matter with it.

130. Was there a notice that meals could be purchased by the men for 1s.—did you see such a notice?—No, I never saw such a notice. I think you are referring to the "Orient."

131. Was there such a notice on the "Britannic"?—No, I never heard of it. I heard that meals were being sold by the ship's people.

132. We have a telegram from Walter Crook, of Pukekohe, stating that he is prepared to give evidence that he had to pay £5 for food on the "Britannic." Are you aware there was food being sold on the "Britannic"?—At the beginning, the first two or three days out, it was reported to me that some of the ship's people were selling food. I sent for the purser at once and told him of it, and asked him to have it stopped immediately. He said that he did not see what he could do to stop it, as if he put those men in irons he had no one else to put in their place, and said if I could stop it he would be pleased. I said, "Very well, I will give instructions that if any of your men are seen selling food, then my men are at liberty to take the food away from them without paying for it, and give them a ducking for it." I never had any further complaint about it.

133. Where did they get the provisions?—They stole it from the ship; they had absolutely no right to do so.

134. What was the food they sold?—I do not know what it was; I do not think I have heard. It is not an uncommon thing on board ship; they have often tried to do it.

135. Do you imagine it was done to any extent?—Not after the first two or three days.

136. Do you think there was any necessity for men in ordinary health to buy food?—Perfectly certain there was not.

137. Then, any statement such as this (which we will inquire into)—that a man had to spend £5 on food—would be untrue?—Certainly.

138. What quality was the preserved meat?—Very good; there were never any complaints about it.

139. By "preserved meat," do you mean tinned meat?—Yes.

140. The same as is used by men on out-stations, &c.?—Just the same.

141. It is not like the old preserved meats on board ships?—No; it is constantly eaten in houses here. It is sold to hotels as pressed beef.

142. Was the meat supplied to the officers—I mean apart from any poultry—any different in quality to that supplied to the men?—It was exactly the same.

143. You had it daily, and you were satisfied with its quality?—Yes, perfectly satisfied.

144. Do you know what meat it was?—No.

145. Whether it was American or English?—I fancy it was American, but I am not sure.

146. You are quite satisfied that it was good sound meat?—Oh, yes.

147. Not lean, poor stuff?—No; it was good meat.

148. You had no fault to find with it?—No.

149. And that supplied to the officers was exactly the same as supplied to the men?—Exactly the same.

150. Cooked in the same galley?—No.

151. Do you imagine that the officers' cooks were better than those who cooked for the men?—They were the same cooks who cooked for the passengers on the "Atlantic."

152. Were the cooks for the men qualified cooks?—Yes; they had been cooking in transports before.

153. They were not “rough-and-tumble” men?—Every one of them was a cook. I had an argument with them in the galley. Two of the cooks assured me that on all the transports they had been in they boiled the tea in the same boilers as the meat. That is how I happen to know they had been on ships before.

154. What water was supplied to the men?—Practically, as much as they liked.

155. You are sure they had an ample supply?—Yes.

156. Were there any complaints?—Never.

157. Was it condensed?—Some condensed and some fresh. They could get as much as they wanted. There was never any complaint about it.

158. It was good in quality?—Yes.

159. About the washing: were there any utensils for the men to wash in?—There were four lavatories.

160. How many basins in each lavatory?—From memory, I should say about a dozen in each.

161. Could men have washed on deck in buckets?—Yes; they also had a sail bath on deck. I should say it was about 10 ft. to 15 ft. long by 2 ft. or 3 ft. deep. They could have had a bath as often as they had liked.

162. They had, I presume, plenty of salt water for that?—Yes.

163. There was no excuse for men being dirty personally?—Absolutely none.

164. There was no reason why they should not wash on the decks at certain hours in buckets had they chosen to?—No.

165. Did the men take baths?—I could not say how many did. I never had any complaint whatever about the want of water.

166. How many water-closets were there for the men?—I think there were four—two fore and two aft—and there were some ten to a dozen closets in each.

167. There were about forty seats altogether, I suppose?—I should think quite that, from memory. I went through them every morning.

168. Do you think the number was sufficient for the men?—It was ample.

169. There was no question brought under your notice of there being insufficient closet accommodation?—No. I consider the lavatory accommodation was the best I have seen on a troopship.

170. There were no complaints on the subject?—None whatever.

171. Was any effort made to increase the number of water-closets?—There was no necessity for that.

172. It has been alleged that the men used to ease themselves in the scuppers about the decks?—I never heard of such a thing on the whole voyage. I do not believe it for a minute.

173. You never heard of it?—Never heard of anything of the sort.

174. Were there any urinal tubs for the men below deck at night?—I do not know that there were any. I did not see any below. I do not think it would be healthy.

175. Did you personally inspect the men's quarters?—Yes, sir.

176. How often?—Every day, excepting when I was rather ill with a cold.

177. How many inspections did you miss?—I suppose I missed about about half a dozen on the whole voyage.

178. You yourself personally visited the decks every day?—Yes, almost every day. I may have missed a couple of days before arriving at Albany, and perhaps between Albany and Melbourne, and between Melbourne and New Zealand, but no more.

179. Unless something specially prevented you, you visited the decks, the lavatories, latrines, &c., and you say that everything was clean?—Yes; and when I did not inspect personally the officers commanding the regiments, Lieut.-Colonel Chaytor and Captain Polson, inspected their own quarters and immediately reported to me. Surgeon-Major Pearlless inspected the hospital and reported to me.

180. How many officers were on duty each day?—There was the captain of the day, subaltern of the day, and the quartermaster for the whole force. In addition, there was the quartermaster of each regiment, captain and subaltern of the day for each regiment, and a doctor to inspect the meat, and, latterly, the veterinary surgeon also to inspect the meat.

181. Why did the veterinary surgeon inspect the meat?—Because I had a complaint after the doctor was put on, and I thought that, as Captain Young had been brought to New Zealand as an expert on frozen meat, he would be a most excellent man to see if there were anything the matter with the quality of the meat. He never reported anything wrong. If there had been anything wrong with the meat he would have ordered it to be thrown overboard. On the 18th July the following order was issued by the officer commanding the troops (Colonel Davies): “In future officers commanding units and detachments will detail one officer per squadron or detachment daily to attend every issue of stores, rations, &c. These officers will be expected to satisfy themselves that complaints are well founded before forwarding them. The principal medical officer will detail a medical officer to inspect the meat issued for the troops' consumption at 8 a.m., 11 a.m., and 6 p.m. daily.”

182. And in consequence of that order a surgeon did attend, and any report of bad meat was made to you?—Yes; they were there to deal with it.

183. Did officers make written reports to you each day?—Yes.

184. Were there any complaints in them?—Yes.

185. Have these reports been kept?—I do not suppose they have. They were no use when we came here. My staff officer—Captain Matthews—might have them.

186. Did the regimental officers on duty attend at each meal to see that they were properly served?—Yes.

187. And to see if there were any complaints?—Yes.

188. If there had been complaints, would they have been embodied in the officer's report?—They would have been brought immediately under my notice.

189. With the exception of the half-dozen cases you have alluded to, there were no complaints?—No. Three of those complaints, or two at any rate, were in connection with the stew. There was a difference of opinion as to whether they were well founded or not. The truth of the matter was, I believe, that they had made the stew with pickles in it, and the men said it was sour. The officer who tasted it said it was perfectly good. However, I got them to issue some other meat in place of it.

190. Was there a daily parade of the men?—No.

191. How often did they parade?—They paraded before they went to Albany, and they paraded for medical inspection at Melbourne. There were no regular parades, except for fire and boat stations.

192. Was there any Sports Committee?—Yes.

193. Did the men take part in sports?—Yes. I got up an Amusement Committee almost as soon as we started, and we had sports and concerts on two or three occasions.

194. Had the men any duties to perform during the day?—Only a certain number each day.

195. How many men were on guard during the day?—About eighty were on duty.

196. Is it customary to have parades?—Not coming back.

197. Do you know what is the custom of the Imperial service, returning from active service?—No, I do not. We had no arms.

198. Were the men ordered on deck at all?—They were ordered on deck every morning, so that the lower decks could be cleaned.

199. Was that order obeyed?—Yes, it was obeyed, with the exception of one or two occasions when I gave orders that they could remain below because it was wet.

200. They were systematically ordered every day?—Yes; they were got on deck for about two hours and a half.

201. Did the men usually like to stay on deck, or did they prefer staying below?—Yes; they liked to stay on deck in fine weather.

202. Were the decks crowded?—No. Most of the men were always on deck.

203. Then, generally, there were no parades. The men were ordered on deck, and there were Sports Committees, and there were general attempts to keep the men interested and employed?—Yes; they had a band in the afternoons playing on deck.

204. Did the non-commissioned officers carry out their duties carefully?—Yes.

205. You were satisfied with the way they performed their duties?—Yes.

206. Did they have any influence over their men?—Yes; some have, some have not much.

207. Your men were mostly of the Eighth Contingent?—Yes.

208. How long had they been in South Africa?—They were away from New Zealand six months.

209. Had they been actually engaged in the field?—Yes.

210. For how long?—Well, from practically three days after they landed—from the middle of March. They went to hold the passes in the Drakensbergs. We were then ordered to Klerksdorp, and were trekking from the middle of April.

211. They had been under good discipline?—Yes; for three months and a half.

212. Who commanded them in South Africa?—I did.

213. Was the standard up to the discipline of the earlier contingents?—Yes, both when in the field and on the ship.

214. Did you find it difficult to enforce discipline on board the ship coming home?—Not at all.

215. You were satisfied yourself with the discipline?—Yes, I was pleased rather than otherwise.

216. Was there any active insubordination on board?—Not one case, excepting the one I have mentioned, when two Australians brought up some fish.

217. Did you inflict any punishments on board?—Yes.

218. Were the men on board under proper discipline, or was there a tendency to insubordination?—They were under discipline.

219. And you were satisfied with the condition of the discipline?—Yes, perfectly.

220. For what military crimes had you to inflict punishment?—For overstaying leave at Albany, for instance; for looting from one another—thieving. There was a good deal of that coming back.

221. On two occasions?—Yes, on two occasions.

222. Was there no feeling among the men themselves to put down these military crimes?—There did not seem to be. Of course, I do not say it was general, but it exists among a few.

223. You think it was no more in this case than in previous cases?—No.

224. Did not the men resent this stealing from a comrade?—Yes.

225. And when they were able to ascertain the crime they brought it under your notice?—Yes.

226. What punishment did you inflict on board?—As a rule, I left it to the officer commanding the regiment.

227. In the case of thieving from a comrade, were they dealt with by a court-martial?—They were dealt with summarily by the commanding officers.

228. How soon after starting from Durban did the men begin to get ill—I do not mean sea-sick?—There were a few men in hospital a few days after we started.

229. From what complaint?—Colds.

230. Was there drunkenness on board?—There were a few men drunk after coming on board from Albany. We always got that.

231. There was no drunkenness on board the ship?—Not to my knowledge.

232. There was no drunkenness?—No.

233. You say the men began to get ill three or four days after you left Durban: what were they suffering from?—Colds.

234. Not measles?—No.

235. Nor pneumonia?—No. Some developed it later, but there were no cases at first. There was very little sickness from Durban to Melbourne, I consider.

236. Were there many ill at Albany?—Very few there. There was no occasion to land any of the men there, or to take special notice of illness. There was only one man seriously ill. I had a consultation with the medical officers, and they said the landing would do him a great deal more harm than keeping him on the ship. He has since recovered.

237. Can you give us any information as to the cause of pneumonia?—No, I am not a medical officer; but I know this: that when a man comes from a country possessing a marvellously dry clear air and gets into the cold damp latitudes he gets a cold. I could nearly guarantee that 950 out of 1,000 get colds.

238. Why did it develop into pneumonia?—My opinion is that where you get a great many colds you get some pneumonia—it finds out the weak one.

239. Can it be prevented?—No.

240. Do you think there was anything left undone to stop the pneumonia spreading?—I do not.

241. Had you many ill when you got to Melbourne?—No.

242. There was no necessity to take rigid steps at Melbourne?—None whatever. The whole ship was inspected by a doctor at Melbourne before he let the Australians land.

243. Did he report to you?—He said there was nothing much the matter, and he took the Australians off.

244. Was the hospital accommodation sufficient?—Ample until within a couple of days from New Zealand, when there were measles.

245. Do you know what brought the measles about?—No.

246. Were there any measles before you left Melbourne?—Not to my knowledge.

247. How long before you arrived in New Zealand was it before you found the hospital accommodation insufficient?—Two or three days before arrival.

248. Was there any attempt to improvise more space?—Yes; a piece was screened off joining the hospital.

249. Did that give sufficient accommodation?—Yes.

250. Were you satisfied with the way the surgeons carried out their duties?—Yes, perfectly.

251. They left nothing undone they might have done?—I am quite sure they did not.

252. Had you any hospital nurses or orderlies on board?—We had two nurses, but they were indulgence passengers, and were not on duty.

253. Did you extemporise hospital orderlies?—We had our own hospital orderlies—we had them on trek.

254. Had you a sufficient number?—Quite sufficient.

255. Even when you were close to Wellington, and had an epidemic on board?—Yes. If more had been wanted the surgeons could have got them.

256. Did the nurses assist you?—They offered to assist Major Pearless, but their assistance was not necessary. There were only fifteen men in hospital, and I call that very light.

257. The ship was not understaffed in connection with hospital orderlies and nurses?—No; there were five New Zealand doctors—four of the Eighth, and Dr. Bakewell, of Auckland—on board. There were also four Australian doctors.

258. So far as you know, were the drugs in ample supply?—I never heard anything to the contrary.

259. And all hospital requisites were there?—Yes, as far as I know.

260. Do you know whether any inquiry was made into the hospital requisites?—I think that Major Pearless ascertained this. He reported to me that everything was right.

261. Have you personally visited the hospital?—Yes; every day I inspected the ship.

262. Did the patients make any complaints?—No, none whatever. They said they were very comfortable. They were in the best part of the ship; it was light and airy, with electric fans and well ventilated.

263. Was the commander of the steamer a helpful man?—Very.

264. And was anxious to help you on all occasions?—Yes.

265. You have no fault to find with him.—No.

266. To whom did you report yourself on arrival in New Zealand?—To the disembarkation officers, Colonel Newall, and to Major-General Babington by telephone.

267. Did you report any complaints in connection with the ship?—No.

268. Did any person on board the ship appear anxious to lodge any complaint with the New Zealand authorities when they arrived in New Zealand?—None whatever, so far as I know.

269. Was there any more ordinary departure from discipline on board during the voyage from Durban to New Zealand?—No; on the contrary, I consider that the discipline was better than I expected.

270. You did not feel yourself incapable of maintaining discipline?—Not in the least.

271. Were your officers attentive to their duties?—Very.

272. Were they on all occasions sober?—On all occasions, as far as I know, except once. I put one officer under arrest.

273. But, systematically, there was no drunkenness on board?—None came under my notice.

274. Then, with the exception of one case, you say that the officers were sober?—Yes, except on this one occasion. I went down from my cabin to the saloon, and met an officer at the door of the saloon who was the worse for liquor. I took him for a private at first, and asked what he was doing there. I turned round and looked at him, and saw that he had no badge. I said, "Are you an officer?" He said, "Yes, sir." I then told him that he had better go to his cabin at once, and ordered the purser to close the bar.

275. With the exception of this case, was there any drunkenness among the officers?—None that came to my knowledge.

276. Were you satisfied that the officers carefully attended to the comfort of their men?—Perfectly satisfied.

277. And you have no fault to find with any of the officers?—No.

278. *Mr. McNab.*] I just wanted to ask you a few questions in regard to the illness—that is the only point. You stated, Colonel Davies, you did not think the illness could be prevented?—No.

279. You know that something like twelve cases have resulted in death?—Yes; some, perhaps, from illness contracted since they left the ship.

280. How many cases of death are you aware of that had their illness contracted while on board ship?—Only two who died on the ship, so far as I know.

281. Were all the deaths that resulted since the men left the ship through illness contracted after leaving the ship?—I cannot say, sir. It is beyond me. You could arrive at it by finding out whether the men who have died since were patients on the ship. I have no knowledge of it.

282. Do you think, from your knowledge of Volunteers and of transports, that a transport-vessel that can take 1,084 Imperial troops—do you think, from your knowledge of Volunteers, that it is advisable to have that number when they are all Volunteers who have not seen six months' active service? Do you think it is advisable to put that number on board, as a Volunteer officer?—Yes, I think it is.

283. Then, you think that Volunteers can stand the "packing" equally with Imperial troops—I do not see why not. I do not understand why you say "packing" because the Imperial representative corps was sent round on the "Britannic." I presume that is what you refer to.

284. I want to know, if the steamer had registered accommodation for 1,084 men, whether you think it is advisable, as a Volunteer officer, that 1,084 Volunteers should be put on board of her. I understand you to say Yes?—Yes; I do not see any necessity for treating them differently from a regular soldier.

285. Then, if these 1,084 Volunteers who had come down from the veldt, where they had been used to the open, and on active service for about three months—do you think they should be put into the troopship to the extent that was done?—I do not think it would have made any difference to the number of men that have died of pneumonia. If these men had come back in lots of 500 I do not think it would have made much difference. I do not think it has anything to do with the number of men on board.

286. You stated that one of the reasons why men took ill was that they had been on the veldt, and the change from the veldt to the steamer caused it?—I do not think the steamer was overcrowded. She was full, but not overcrowded.

287. And from your knowledge of transport, knowing that that might be anticipated, do you consider that that number of men should have been put on board the steamer, although the men had come from the open veldt?—I do not think it affected them. For instance, I can give you an example. I came back on the "Tagus" and on this boat. On both occasions I had a very fine cabin on deck, and yet on both occasions I was laid up. Officers are just as liable to get a cold as the men. I think it is the change of climate, not the ship.

288. If it is the change, and not the ship, and the change of conditions, how is it that so large a proportion of men who went on board the steamer when she left South Africa have since died than those who returned to the colony in small numbers?—I think you will find that a larger proportion died since the "Tagus" came back, although the "Tagus" had fewer troops on board.

289. You say you do not know whether these men who have since died were ill when they landed?—No.

290. Were any of your men sent to Somes Island?—I do not know how many. That has been done by the Health Department since they landed.

291. So that the deaths on board the troopship that took place at Somes Island would be of men who, when the steamer landed here, were in hospital?—Not necessarily. I think men have been sent from Wellington streets to Somes Island; I am not sure. Men who came by the "Britannic" have been taken ill since they landed and been sent to Somes Island.

292. Of the other steamers that have brought troops from South Africa, do you know if the number who died after the steamer landed here—whether they were sick in the hospital here? Are they greater in the "Britannic" than in the other troopships since the war began?—I do not think they are greater, or as great, as the number from the "Tagus."

293. Outside of the "Tagus"?—I do not know in the least.

294. You cannot express an opinion whether the proportion of the "Britannic" troops who died after they landed is greater than the proportion of the troops outside the "Tagus"—of returned troops since the war commenced?—No.

295. One complaint was made in regard to funerals. It is not usual on a troopship to parade the whole of the troops?—No, certainly not. It is not considered advisable on account of the gloom that it casts over the ship.

296. It is only for a small portion?—Only the man's squadron, and that was done in each case. I should like to say, in connection with funerals, that when the first man was buried the

funeral service was read by the Australian chaplain, who landed at Melbourne, and the captain of the ship; and his officers were present, and I was there myself with my officers, and the officer commanding the man's regiment, and the adjutant, and the squadron officers were paraded, and as many more who liked to come could come. In regard to the second case, the chaplain had left the ship, and I had to read the service, although I dislike the duty very much. I do it out of consideration for the feelings of the friends of the deceased, instead of ordering any one else to do so. Both the burials were carried out in a proper manner.

297. *Mr. Millar.*] Do you remember what the tonnage of the "Tagus" was?—Yes, 5,545.

298. And the tonnage of the "Britannic"?—That I could not tell you, but it is slightly smaller.

299. How many troops did you bring back on the "Tagus"?—About 750; but she was fitted up for 1,500.

300. I think you stated you had 1,005 troops in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

301. That does not include the officers?—No. The number of officers would not have affected it, because she could hold 200.

302. You said that the troops were all carried on two decks?—Yes.

303. Were there electric fans on the lower deck?—Yes, right through.

304. Was the ventilation good on the fore part of the ship?—Not so good as on the after part. The ventilation would have been much better but for the westerly winds we had all the way to Melbourne.

305. You do not think the ventilation could have been improved?—No, I do not think so. There were ample windsails, and everything was done that could be done.

306. How many hatches had she—three or four?—I do not remember.

307. Were the hatches closed, or were they used for ventilation?—Some were closed, some open.

308. What was the total of the hospital accommodation?—I think it was thirty-two cots.

309. They were only occupied to the full within two or three days of arriving in New Zealand—I do not think there were ever more than fifteen men in it at a time.

310. Was the hospital in the 'tween decks?—The hospital was on the deck immediately below the upper deck.

311. There was only one galley for cooking?—Yes.

312. You never had a complaint made that hammocks had not been provided for the troops?—No.

313. As far as you are aware, the men never need have slept on the deck?—As far as I am aware, no. There was never any necessity. There is always a difficulty in getting men to go below—to go from the fresh air.

314. It has been stated by troopers that they desired hammocks, but the ship had not got them, and they had to sleep on the deck right through?—I never heard of it. It never came to my notice.

315. It is customary to issue a sea-kit to troopers coming on a transport?—Not coming from Africa. They give them a gratuity of £1 5s. to buy plain clothes. There were no sea-kits issued.

316. There were none issued on the "Britannic"?—No.

317. Were they given their £1 5s.?—Yes; they were supposed to buy plain clothes with it. I am not prepared to say they all had the £1 5s. given to them before they started. It was included in their last pay.

318. Although they were not given a kit, they were given £1 5s., which is equivalent to the kit?—Yes.

319. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything you would like to add to the questions already asked?—I think not, sir. There is my voyage report. [See Exhibit A.]

Surgeon-Major PEARLESS sworn and examined. (No. 2.)

320. *The Chairman.*] Your name, please?—Walter Ralph Pearless.

321. Your rank?—Surgeon-Major, New Zealand Militia.

322. You have been in practice where?—At Wakefield, Nelson.

323. Were you senior medical officer on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

324. Were you on board the "Britannic" before the men embarked?—No, not before.

325. Did you make an examination of the ship either when they embarked or shortly afterwards?—Yes; I went to the principal medical officer to see what steps they had taken.

326. Who was he?—I do not know.

327. Did he inspect the ship?—I suppose the transport officer did that.

328. You do not know whether the principal medical officer did?—No.

329. What did you go to him about?—To see what arrangements he had made about drugs and instruments.

330. Were you satisfied that the proper drugs and instruments were put on board?—Yes, quite satisfied.

331. You were quite satisfied with all the medical supplies that were put on board?—Yes.

332. Was it part of your duty to inspect the bedding and men's quarters?—No, I did not. I inspected the hospital arrangements.

333. But was it not part of your duty to inspect the men's quarters to see as to their sufficiency of accommodation as to cubic measurement?—No, I had nothing to do with that.

334. You were placed on board the ship in medical charge of the men, and you had no power to remonstrate whether the cubic space was sufficient or not?—No.

335. Was it part of your duty to see that they had sufficient bedding?—No, I had nothing to do with that.



336. Did you inspect the hospital when you went on board?—Yes.
337. Did you by any chance take any notice of the blankets?—Yes, the blankets were absolutely new.
338. And free from vermin of any kind?—Yes.
339. Do you chance to know anything about vermin on the blankets on board: were there any complaints?—The last night before we landed there were some complaints.
340. In the course of ordinary conversation, did you hear it stated that the ship was very foul?—No, I never heard a word.
341. Have you ever been in a transport before?—No, but I have been in the merchant service.
342. Do you imagine that the ship was in a clean condition or the reverse?—She was as clean as she could be.
343. Had you to do with the issuing of the rations to the men at all?—No, except telling one of the staff to examine it.
344. Did you, in consequence of orders from Colonel Davies, inspect the food?—A medical officer did every day.
345. Did you individually inspect it, or did you delegate that duty to others?—I gave it over to others.
346. Did he report to you?—He reported to me verbally.
347. What were the nature of his reports?—Twice, I think, he told me the meat was tainted outside.
348. You mean that the meat was bad when it came from the freezing-chamber?—Yes; and it was twice thrown overboard.
349. Were any reports made to you officially through your officers, or by them direct, of the bad quality of the meat?—No.
350. Did you ever inspect the meat yourself?—No.
351. Never on any occasion?—I saw it twice. Once I saw a man going along the deck growling about it. It was perfectly good.
352. Then, this fish that is supposed to have been bad: you say you examined that yourself?—Yes.
353. What did you think of the quality of the fish?—I think it was salt and soft, but I do not think it was bad. It was not nice to eat.
354. It was soft and saltish?—Yes, it was not firm at all; it was not in good order. But I do not think it was absolutely bad.
355. Used you to inspect the ship?—Yes; I went round every day with the colonel.
356. What were your observations?—Always found her very clean.
357. No signs of dirt of any kind about her other than that incidental to a large number of men together?—No.
358. Then, comparing her with your experience on board ship in the mercantile marine, do you consider she was as clean or cleaner than the ordinary quarters provided for sailors?—She was quite as clean.
359. Not cleaner?—No.
360. You heard no complaint about lice until you arrived in Wellington?—No.
361. Supposing lice had been common in the blankets, could any means have been devised to get rid of them?—We might have steamed the blankets; but what about the men themselves—the blankets would get wet.
362. Could not the men have been cleaned?—Yes, by putting the hose on them; that would be the only way.
363. Let us suppose that a man becomes lousy who wishes to become clean, would it be possible for him to have cleaned himself and kept himself clean?—Yes, certainly, a man could have kept himself clean.
364. They could have got rid of the lice?—Yes.
365. Would they have been infected by the dirty ones?—If they were all cleaned there should be no reason why it should start again.
366. I mean, would it have been possible for the clean man to have kept himself clean?—I think so.
367. The whole ship might have been clean even supposing the whole ship was lousy?—Yes, sir.
368. Did any person apply to you or to any of your subordinates about cleaning himself from vermin?—Not on board; they did on the veldt.
369. Do you suppose that the men brought down the lice with them from the veldt?—Yes.
370. Was it very difficult to avoid lice on the veldt?—Yes, unless you were very careful.
371. It was possible there to keep yourself clean?—Yes.
372. Was it part of your duty to inspect the water-closets?—Yes.
373. Do you know how many there were?—I think there were four—two fore and two aft—besides two in the hospital for the patients.
374. Do you know how many seats there were in each latrine?—There were eight or ten, but I cannot remember exactly; I think there were ten.
375. Did the question of insufficiency of latrine accommodation come under your notice at all?—No.
376. Do you believe the question was raised on board the ship?—Not to my knowledge.
377. Was it ever reported to you that the men were dirty 'tween decks, and that they used the scuppers to ease themselves?—No, I never heard of it; nor did I see it.
378. You cannot speak as to the sufficiency of the food that was issued?—No, except for the hospital; I know about that.

379. The supplies to the hospital were all that you desired?—I got everything I wanted.
380. The ship's officers were willing to assist you in every way?—Yes.
381. How soon after leaving Durban did the men begin to sicken?—I do not think there were any in the hospital until three or four days after.
382. What were the first two or three complaints?—Mostly colds.
383. Nothing serious?—There was one case of enteric.
384. Did that case of enteric lead to any others?—No. He is in the hospital now. He was convalescent on board the ship.
385. When did pneumonia appear on board the ship?—I think we had about five or six cases by the time we came to Albany.
386. How many men were in the hospital then?—About eighteen.
387. How many had you room for in the hospital?—Thirty-two.
388. Did you think there was any necessity to land any of the cases at Albany?—There was only one man seriously ill, and I thought there was more risk taking him ashore than to leave him on board ship.
389. What was he suffering from?—Pneumonia. He recovered. I forgot to say that one case of measles occurred before we got to Albany.
390. How long are measles in incubation?—Ten to fourteen days.
391. How many days were you from Durban to Albany?—Fourteen days.
392. Then, the case had been contracted before leaving?—Yes.
393. You do not think there was contagion on the ship before the troops embarked?—No.
394. What steps did you take to isolate each case?—I put him in the hospital. As far as isolation is concerned, it is impossible.
395. How soon after did fresh cases of measles appear?—When we arrived at Melbourne I think we landed three Australians with measles.
396. How did they contract the disease?—From this other man before he was taken to hospital. I know three were landed with measles at Melbourne.
397. When is infection most virulent?—When the rash is coming out—that is, just before.
398. That would be before the man was taken to the hospital?—Yes.
399. How soon was this first man taken to the hospital?—Immediately he was reported.
400. There was no mistaking the disease: was the rash out?—Yes.
401. He might have contaminated other men before he went into the hospital?—Yes.
402. When did the great number of cases of pneumonia develop?—I had pneumonia, of course, all the way, but mostly after leaving Melbourne.
403. Is pneumonia an infectious disease?—I do not think so, as regards ordinary pneumonia; but the septic pneumonia prevalent on the "Britannic" was decidedly infectious.
404. Could anything have been done to prevent the spread of pneumonia?—No.
405. You think that it was absolutely inevitable from some cause or another?—I do.
406. What was the primary cause which led to so many cases?—Owing, I think, to living in the high dry latitudes and out-of-doors and then coming suddenly into the cold weather. Two days out from Durban we got into a very cold damp climate, and I think that is the chief cause.
407. There was nothing that could have been done to prevent the spread of pneumonia?—No; not more than was done.
408. How many cases proved fatal before your arrival in Wellington?—Two.
409. Where did they die?—One man died on the 17th, before we got to Albany, and another on the 29th, between Melbourne and here.
410. Can you tell the Commission how many patients you landed with pneumonia in Wellington?—I have nine down.
411. When you landed?—Yes.
412. Do you know how many cases have occurred since?—No; a good many.
413. But you have no official information on the subject?—No; the cases followed measles.
414. Did the water on board ship ever come under your notice?—Yes.
415. Was it good in quality?—Very good.
416. Do you know whether it was condensed?—I think there was both condensed and fresh water.
417. Do you know whether the condensing-engines were in good order?—I do not know. I do not think we were ever short of water.
418. There was nothing in the assertion that men could not get sufficient water to keep themselves clean?—No, nothing whatever.
419. What utensils did the men wash in?—They had iron hand-basins. They had the sail bath.
420. Did they make use of the sail bath?—For the first day or two, when in the warm climate.
421. Was the water in the sail bath constantly renewed?—Yes, the hose was played into it.
422. Did you ever visit the men when they were at their dinners?—No.
423. You do not know, then, as to the quality of the food put before them—cooked food, I mean?—I did not inspect that.
424. Did you find the men at all times amenable to medical treatment: when they came to the hospital were they obedient?—Yes, I had no trouble whatever. Of course, there was always a certain amount of malingering.
425. Can you give us a list of those men who were in the hospital on or before the day of arrival in Wellington?—Yes.
426. How many were there?—Fifty-one.

427. Can you give us also the date they were returned ill?—No, I could not without getting the hospital returns, and they have gone on the boat.

428. You can give us the complaints they were suffering from?—Yes.

429. But you cannot give us the date they were taken ill?—No, only the complaints.

430. Will you please furnish us with a list of names and complaints?—Yes, sir. [See Exhibit B.]

431. *Mr. Millar.*] I think you said you had some previous experience at sea?—Yes.

432. Was that in a passenger-vessel?—Yes.

433. Troops or ordinary passengers?—Ordinary passengers.

434. Ordinary passengers of the second class?—Yes.

435. How does the amount of space allowed them compare with that allowed to troopers?—They all had cabins.

436. Then, there is no comparison to be drawn between the two?—I do not know that there is any more space allowed in the cabins.

437. Can you give us any idea as to the number of cubic feet allowed to troopers?—I could not say exactly, but I think it is 50 ft.

438. Do you know the amount that is allowed to seamen?—No.

439. It is 72 ft. and deck-space in addition: is not that so?—I do not know.

440. Do you consider that the ventilation in the lower decks was ample?—Yes, I think there was plenty of ventilation.

441. Did you take means to take the temperature at night-time?—No.

442. Never taken?—No.

443. So that it was only from casual observation you think the ventilation was sufficient?—Yes.

444. The temperature was not taken by anybody?—I do not know.

445. Then, you have nothing but your own opinion for saying that the ventilation was sufficient?—Yes.

446. *Colonel Davies.*] I want to ask Dr. Pearlless how the hospital accommodation on the "Britannic" compared with that on board the "Surrey"?—There was no comparison. That on the "Surrey" was disgraceful. If there had been as much sickness on board the "Surrey" there would have been a lot of deaths.

447. *Mr. Millar.*] What hospital accommodation did you have on the "Surrey"?—I had twelve bunks.

448. That is all?—That is all.

449. What was the condition of it?—It was dirty and ill-ventilated.

450. That was on the troopship we sent away?—Yes.

451. By whom was she inspected before she went away?—I do not know.

452. You do not know the Department of the Government which inspected the ship?—No. I saw the condition myself.

453. Was your attention drawn to the hospital accommodation before you left?—It was, and I think it was not sufficient.

Captain KINDERSLEY CAMILLO MONTAGUE LEWIN, Captain in the New Zealand Militia, examined. (No. 3.)

454. *The Chairman.*] What position did you occupy on board the "Britannic"?—Ship's quartermaster.

455. To what corps were you attached in South Africa?—The Eighth New Zealand Contingent.

456. Did you accompany the men from Newcastle to embark at Durban?—Yes.

457. When did you go on board?—In the afternoon after the men had embarked.

458. The ships lie out in the roads at Durban?—Yes.

459. Was it part of your duty to inspect the accommodation for the men on board?—Well, I suppose it was; but I was detained on shore, which prevented my going on board before the men embarked.

460. When did you get on board?—About 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

461. The men having embarked when?—They came down earlier; I think, about 11 o'clock.

462. Were you in communication with the transport officer?—No; with the Ordnance officer.

463. Why with the Ordnance officer?—I had to collect the blankets and other Government property of that nature.

464. These were the blankets the men had with them?—Yes.

465. Did you chance to notice these blankets when handed over to you?—I did not inspect them carefully, but some of them were lousy.

466. Were you able to form any impression of the percentage of blankets that were lousy?—No.

467. Do you think it was very numerous?—I do not think it was very bad. There were a few isolated cases where the men did not take care of themselves.

468. Was it possible on the veldt to avoid being lousy?—With the officers, yes; but with a number of men herded together it was very difficult.

469. Do you know the number of men who were lousy on the veldt.—No.

470. But it was a common complaint?—Yes.

471. What steps did the men take on the veldt to clean their blankets?—The only way they could clean them was to hang them out in the sun or lay them on anthills.

472. Did the sun clean them?—If the blankets were hung out properly the lice would drop off.

473. Would it be possible on board ship to so hang out the blankets as to get rid of vermin?—No.
474. Do you know anything of the space afforded to each man on board the "Britannic"?—Only by my personal observation.
475. You do not know the accommodation that should be provided for each man?—No, I do not know; but the ship had deck-space also.
476. Had the men the cubic space provided in the transport regulations?—I can only suppose they had because they had the same number on board before.
477. You do not know the cubic space they had, or, rather, what each man was entitled to?—No.
478. Had you to do with the issue of blankets to the men on the ship?—Yes; I did it through my quartermaster-sergeant, who was a thoroughly reliable man.
479. Do you know the condition of the blankets when they were served out to the men?—They were said to be all new.
480. Do you mean those served out to the hospital as well?—Yes.
481. Reported to you by your quartermaster-sergeant?—Yes.
482. Then, you believe the blankets were perfectly clean when served out to the men?—Yes.
483. All the men had hammocks?—Yes.
484. Certain of that?—Yes.
485. It was not necessary for any man to sleep either on the lower or upper deck if he chose to go into a hammock?—No.
486. Were any complaints lodged with you about the condition of the bedding or hammocks by anybody?—Not till about three days before arriving.
487. No complaints prior to leaving Melbourne?—No.
488. What was the complaint then?—The second steward said he saw a man throw his blankets overboard, and I went and found that it was so; but there was no official complaint.
489. That was a complaint by a ship's officer of the waste of the ship's property, not a complaint by the man himself?—That is so.
490. With regard to the accommodation, did the men seem very crowded? Was there room to hang their hammocks?—There were lots of men who preferred to sleep on the deck. Many of them had plenty of accommodation, but they preferred to sleep outside.
491. Do you know whether there were actually a sufficient number of hooks on board to sling the hammocks to?—I think so.
492. In the matter of latrines, do you know the number?—There were five altogether.
493. One for the hospital?—Two for the hospital, one for the after part of the ship, and two forward.
494. How many available for the use of the men?—Three.
495. How many seats in each?—I did not count them, but I think there were about thirty all told.
496. Was it part of your duty to inspect these places?—Yes.
497. Were they kept in order?—Yes; I had a very trustworthy sergeant—Henderson—and he kept the things in first-rate order.
498. There was no justification for complaint about the accommodation or the condition of the latrines?—There might have been more latrines with great advantage.
499. Would it be possible to extemporise any latrines?—I do not think so.
500. Do you happen to know whether the latrines had been altered since the ship had been previously used?—I do not know.
501. You do not know if she had the same number as when the ship came round the colonies with the Imperial troops?—No; I did not go on board then.
502. With regard to the ventilation of the ship, was there any question ever raised about getting windsails for the lower decks?—Yes; and also getting air-exhausts.
503. Do you know how many windsails went down to that deck?—Two, I think.
504. How many men were in that compartment?—About half the number—quite half the number.
505. The men, I understand, were divided into four compartments. I ask about the lower deck: how many were there?—Two squadrons.
506. How many men to a squadron?—About eighty, I should say.
507. That would be about 160 men there?—Yes.
508. The ports there were never opened?—No.
509. Then, the men were dependent on the hatchways and windsails for ventilation?—Yes.
510. Were you ever on the lower deck after the men had all gone to bed?—Yes.
511. What was the atmosphere like then?—Well, it was rather thick, but nothing extraordinary.
512. Were you ever spoken to as quartermaster as to the condition of the atmosphere?—No.
513. Did you hear in the course of ordinary conversation that the men suffered from the condition of the atmosphere?—I may have heard so, but nothing more.
514. Have you been with troops before?—Yes, on six ships—two going from here, and two coming back, and two prisoner-of-war ships.
515. How did the space on board the "Britannic" compare with your previous experience?—It was very similar, with this exception, that I think the "Cornwall" and "Tongariro" were loftier between decks.
516. What height was the "Britannic" between decks?—About 6 ft. 4 in.
517. Could you stand up there?—Yes, except under the beam.
518. What height are you?—About 6 ft. 2 in.

519. That was on the lower deck?—Yes.

520. In the matter of food, what rations were issued per man? Was there a dietary scale?—Yes. It was the Imperial Yeomanry scale. There are two scales in the Imperial service—one for the ordinary soldier, and the Yeomanry scale. This latter scale was that on which we were supposed to be rationed.

521. Is that a better scale than the scale for the ordinary soldier?—Yes.

522. Have you any document to show what the actual scale was?—No; I could not get one.

523. What did the men get?—They had a ration of baker's bread every day, and they had as much biscuit as they could possibly eat. There was a barrel standing on each troop-deck, and they could help themselves when they chose.

524. Good?—Very good. At breakfast they had coffee and stews.

525. What sort of stew?—Meat stew.

526. Not cooked a second time?—No; it was always fresh.

527. Was there curried hash?—Yes, sometimes.

528. Was it a fair meal?—Yes.

529. Not such a meal as a man of ordinary taste would say was not fit to eat?—No, especially if a man had come from the back country.

530. Did they have butter?—Yes, alternately with jam, every day.

531. Was the butter good in quality?—Yes, very fair.

532. And the jam?—Very good.

533. How much jam did they get?—About  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. per man.

534. Every alternate day?—I think they had butter twice a week, and jam on the other days.

535. What did their dinner meal consist of?—They had baked and boiled joints, with sauce.

536. What meat?—The meat was frozen. The purser informed me it was Queensland and New Zealand meat.

537. No corned pork?—Not as a rule. I saw corned pork on one or two occasions.

538. Did you see the meat issued?—At first I did; but afterwards it was inspected by Veterinary Captain Young and Doctor Bauchop, who was responsible.

539. You have seen it yourself?—Yes.

540. What was the quality?—Good.

541. Was it fairly good food?—Yes.

542. Was it like meat rejected anywhere else?—No. I never saw anything wrong except on one occasion, and then it was taken back to the cook's galley and changed.

543. What meat was that?—It was a joint of mutton.

544. Did the men ever get soup?—Yes.

545. How often?—Several times a week.

546. Did they ever get puddings?—Yes.

547. What were the puddings?—Generally duff.

548. Anything but duff?—They got rice occasionally.

549. How often did they get duff?—Several times a week.

550. Ever get any cheese?—I do not think so.

551. For supper what did they get?—They generally had a small ration of meat, and they had their bread which was issued in the morning, and their jam.

552. What do you mean by a small ration of meat?—I mean a stew.

553. Did they get meat three times a day?—Generally, but not always.

554. Was the preserved meat good?—Yes. It was Armour brand.

555. Was it of a stringy nature of our experience of twenty or thirty years ago, or was it like the good meat you could go into a shop like Gear's and purchase now?—It was very good.

556. And the men liked it?—Yes.

557. Do you think the men got enough to eat?—It was their own fault if they did not. They had a liberal bread ration, and if there was any complaint the matter was immediately remedied.

558. The cooking of the meat was fairly good?—Yes; but the cooks worked under a disadvantage—the galleys were too small.

559. Did the food suffer from that?—Occasionally. The ship rolled a great deal, and that made it worse; but if ever there was a complaint of anything it was taken back and something else given in exchange.

560. Was there any complaint made to you about the quality or quantity of the food?—Very seldom. About half a dozen times some of the men went to the chief staff officer, but the complaints were very trivial.

561. Were there more complaints on this voyage than on the other voyages you went on?—I do not think there were so many.

562. Were the men, on the whole, fairly satisfied?—They seemed to be so.

563. Then, with regard to the bread, and the flour, and the jam, and the coffee, was there any complaint?—They found fault with the coffee because the cooks had to use the same boilers as the meat was cooked in, and there was a little grease on the top; but the tea was as good as you generally get on board ship.

564. Did you as quartermaster have any authority over the ship's cook?—No; he was under the ship's officers. If I complained, I complained to the chief steward or the purser.

565. It has been said that there was an advertisement on board that there were meals for sale: was that so?—Yes. I told the men that if they saw any man coming along with a meal which he had bought they could upset him and take it from him, and I told the cooks that if I found anything of that sort going on I would have a stop put to it.

566. Do you think that the cooks neglected their duty to the men generally for the sake of these meals?—I do not think so, except at first; but it was very soon rectified.

567. You think that the selling of meals ceased?—I think that from the officers' galley some of the men may have procured something, but I did not know anything of it.

568. Do you think there was any necessity for any man who was apt to be dainty to go and buy rations anywhere, or could he live on the food supplied to him?—He certainly could live on it.

569. Were the meat, and bread, and other things supplied to the officers different?—No; it was the same.

570. The bread good?—Yes.

571. The biscuit good?—Yes.

572. And you are sure it was the same as supplied to the men?—Yes.

573. Was the water of good quality?—Yes; they had condensed water and also fresh water.

574. Do you know whether the men were obliged to forego a wash because there was no water?—I had a corporal in charge of the water-supply. It was his duty every morning to pump up the water condensed the day before and give the men out from three to four hundred gallons to wash in every day. They could also have a salt-water bath. At first there was some difficulty, but I saw the chief officer of the ship and he said that they could have as much water as they chose.

575. Was the three or four hundred gallons in addition to what they had to drink?—Yes.

576. Was there ever any complaint about a short supply of water?—No; the only complaint was that it should be kept on longer.

577. Could the condensing-machinery have supplied more water, or was it used to its fullest extent?—The chief officer told me it was used to its fullest extent.

578. Do you know anything about the hospital arrangements?—No; it was not in my department.

579. Was the ship called upon through you to give extra luxuries to the hospital?—No.

580. The communication was from the surgeon to the officers of the ship?—Yes.

581. Who inspected the rations when they were issued in the morning?—I did.

582. You were present at the issue of the raw meat?—It was inspected by the doctor and by Captain Young.

583. Then, was there a certain amount weighed out for each man?—The bread was issued to each squadron, and that was supervised by me and by my quartermaster-sergeant. The quartermaster-sergeant of each squadron came up and it was handed to him, and he issued it to his men.

584. At the serving-out of the rations was there ever any complaint as to the quality of the meat?—Only on that one occasion, as far as I was concerned.

585. Were you satisfied with the way in which your subordinate officers did their duty?—Yes, perfectly.

586. Were they keenly alive to the necessity of doing their duty?—Yes.

587. *Mr. McNab.*] You had nothing to do with the hospital?—No.

588. Nothing to do with the hygienic arrangements?—No.

589. *Mr. Millar.*] You said you went through the decks at night-time after the men were below?—I have had to go down once or twice.

590. Much room to walk about when the hammocks were swung?—No.

591. Was she carrying up to the full accommodation?—I think, if the hammocks had been systematically slung, she would have carried more; but that was a matter for the squadron officers to look after. I could only advise, and could not give any orders.

592. You had no control over that?—No.

593. You believe she could have carried more if the hammocks were properly slung?—I think so.

594. You think it would have been an improvement if there was another latrine?—Yes.

595. Had not the ship wood on board?—It was space that was the question.

596. Was the deck so lumbered up that there was no space?—There was no space.

597. She was, then, very bad in that respect?—Yes. In bad weather the men were very cramped and could not get on deck.

598. Another latrine would have cramped the space?—Yes.

599. It would not take up more than 12 ft. by 3 ft.?—Yes; but then you have to make a screen.

600. I am assuming that they had sufficient timber to make the whole thing without a screen?—In the first place, there were no complaints.

601. But you have expressed your opinion that it would have been better if there had been another?—Yes.

602. Whose duty was it to recommend that another should be put up?—Well, possibly mine.

603. I am not trying to put you in a hole, but I want to get at facts. You think possibly it might have been an improvement if there had been another latrine?—It was not thought of until these complaints came forward now.

604. How much bread was served out to each man?—1 lb. a day, in addition to biscuit.

605. You said, also, the tea was as good as you could expect at sea: why not expect good tea at sea?—Because I never tasted a good cup of tea at sea yet.

606. But there is nothing to prevent as good tea being put on board as you can get on shore?—But it is in the making of it. It is not made in small quantities.

607. You concluded the tea was quite good?—Yes.

608. Did they have condensed milk with the tea?—I do not know whether it was condensed milk or frozen milk.

609. What quantity of drinking-water was allowed per day?—As much as they liked.
610. And three pints a day for washing?—They had between three and four hundred gallons a day amongst them.
611. Well, that comes to about three pints apiece. Was the hospital cooking done in the saloon galley or in the men's galley?—I do not know.
612. *Colonel Davies.*] Why do you think the latrines were not sufficient, and that it would have been better if there had been two latrines aft: did you ever hear any complaints?—No. That was my view.
613. When did you form that opinion?—I knew there were not many seats in the latrines.
614. Did you ever mention it to anybody?—No.
615. You did not think it was a serious matter?—I waited to see if there were any complaints.
616. Were there not two latrines aft?—No; one. But there were two hospital latrines.
617. As to the deck-space: you think it was too limited for the men to walk about on it?—Yes, in bad weather.
618. But in fine weather the men could be there?—Yes.
619. Then, there was ample room on deck?—Yes; but not for drill purposes, only for the men to move about.
620. Plenty of room for sports?—No.
621. Did they not have the promenade deck for sports?—They had.
622. *Mr. Millar.*] Was the promenade deck open to the troops at all times?—No.
623. Then, as far as the deck accommodation is concerned, it cannot be taken into account?—No; it was kept for the officers.
624. The troops as a whole had no access to that deck except in cases such as that referred to by Colonel Davies?—No.
625. *The Chairman.*] Was there any ration of spirits or liquor of any kind issued to the men?—No; not that I know of.
626. Were they allowed to purchase liquor on board?—Yes.
627. From the ship?—I do not know about the canteen arrangements, but they were allowed to purchase beer every day.
628. Is that according to the transport regulations, or was it provided under the ship's regulations?—It was under the transport regulation which says, "Beer may be obtained daily on payment by the sanction of the officer commanding the troops on requisition by the officer commanding the regiment to the quartermaster."
629. Was there ever any drunkenness on board?—I never saw a case the whole time I was on board.
630. Did you ever hear of the men committing a nuisance between decks?—No.
631. Do you think such could be the case, except upon rare occasion?—I do not think it ever occurred.

Quartermaster-Sergeant JOHN WILLIAM DAVIES examined on oath. (No. 4.)

632. *The Chairman.*] Were you attached to either of the two contingents on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, to the Eighth Contingent.
633. What was your position on board?—Quartermaster-sergeant of F Squadron of the South Island Battalion.
634. Had you been with any of the other contingents before?—Yes, with the Fourth Contingent.
635. When were you promoted to the rank of quartermaster-sergeant?—When I was with the Eighth Contingent in Addington Camp, Christchurch.
636. You acted in that capacity when in South Africa?—Yes.
637. And on board the ship when going out?—Yes.
638. Is it part of your duties to deal with the rations?—Yes.
639. Do you know the rations issued per man?—I can pretty well tell them. As far as I remember, 1 lb. of baker's bread per man was issued each morning. Besides that, biscuits were issued. They were put in barrels on deck, and the men were allowed to help themselves when they liked.
640. Were they of good quality?—They were good biscuits.
641. In the way of meat?—The mess orderlies went to the galley at each sounding of "Cook-house door" and got the meat—sometimes stews, and at other times cold meats.
642. What was the ration of meat per man?—1 lb. per day.
643. What sort of quality of meat was it?—It was very good meat. Once or twice I tasted it and it was a little tainted, but that was all.
644. Had the meat a good appearance ordinarily?—It looked very good.
645. It did not look like rejected meat?—I never saw it look bad.
646. It was fairly fat meat?—Yes; it was frozen mutton generally.
647. How would it compare with the meat hanging in a butcher's shop?—You could not tell the difference.
648. What other rations did they get?—Flour. The bread was baked.
649. I mean for puddings or that sort of thing?—They always obtained the pudding from the cook-house when on issue, at dinner-times.
650. Plums, currants, sugar?—The tea was always sweetened. They got apple-pie occasionally and other puddings.
651. Such as?—Plum-puddings and tarts sometimes. I think these were extras.
652. Did the men pay for them?—No; they were extras from the cook-house.

653. Did you attend the issue of meals?—Yes, every morning.
654. Were you satisfied with the condition of the meat?—Yes, on the whole.
655. Were there complaints as to the condition of the meat, the quality and quantity?—Some of the men did say the meat was bad and not enough of it, and on one occasion it was brought to me, and I saw it. I went to the regimental quartermaster-sergeant, and he complained to the higher authorities and I got bully beef for the men.
656. Was that good?—Yes.
657. Did the men like it?—They said they would sooner have it than the other.
658. What was the fault with the fish?—They said it had been lying on the deck and the dogs had walked over it and dirtied it, and that it was dragged to the cook-house and was not washed.
659. Do you know anything of the quality of the fish, whether it was eatable or not?—Some men would eat it and some would not.
660. Why not?—Some said the dogs had been over it and dirtied it, and it was not fit to eat.
661. I mean the quality of the fish generally?—It was fair. I ate a little. It was too salt to eat much.
662. Was it very salt?—Yes.
663. Did many of the men eat it?—Yes, four or five men at each table out of a dozen would eat it.
664. When was it served out?—At dinner-time.
665. Did they get a ration of meat as well?—They had meat in the evening.
666. How was the cooking?—The cooking was a little rough, that was all. The accommodation for cooking was not good and ample for such a large number of men.
667. Was there a fair variety?—Yes, a very good variety.
668. Were there many complaints about the quality of the food?—I only remember complaints being made on three or four occasions.
669. How did this food compare with the food of the Fourth Contingent?—I think it was as good as we had coming back on the "Tagus."
670. Not as good as when you were going there?—No; it was always better on the voyage out than coming back.
671. Had you anything to do with the issue of the blankets at Durban when the contingent started?—Yes; they were issued to me.
672. What was their condition?—They were all fastened up in bundles of tens.
673. Were they clean or dirty?—They looked clean.
674. Had they been much in use?—I do not think so.
675. Do you think they were lousy?—I do not think so; but it is a common thing on the veldt, and many men were lousy when they came on the boat; I know for a fact.
676. Did those who got lousy on board take reasonable care to get rid of the lice?—Some may have done so; others did not.
677. Was it possible to get rid of the lice on board?—There were tarpaulins put up to give the men a chance of bathing and cleaning themselves, and they could get rid of the lice if they bathed and changed their clothing occasionally.
678. Were the hammocks clean?—Yes.
679. How did the ship compare with other transports that you had been on board of in regard to appearance and cleanliness?—Of course, the "Britannic" looked dirty from coaling when we went on board, but the 'tween decks were far cleaner than some of the other ships I was on, such as the "Gymeric."
680. About the water-supply, had the men all the water they wanted to drink?—I could always get a drink of water, and I am sure they could. I would go and ask the man in charge of the water-supply, and he would get you a drink when you wanted one.
681. Good water?—Very good.
682. Any flavour from being condensed?—No, none.
683. And the supply for washing?—One could always get a wash before 8 o'clock; but if you did not go until half-past 8 or 9 o'clock the place was being cleaned up, and the men in charge would not let you in. I have been there myself after 8 o'clock and so have some others, and had a wash. You could always get water after 6 o'clock.
684. No man need go dirty if he chose to go at the proper hour?—No.
685. Did many men avail themselves of the salt-water bath?—A good many did in the evening and in the morning, but not many in the daytime.
686. Was there a constant supply of clean salt water?—Yes, the hose was always obtainable.
687. Was there room to hang a hammock for each man on board?—No, there was not quite room enough.
688. Not enough hooks to hang the hammocks?—There was not room enough, and there were not hooks enough. The floor was always occupied, and so were the tables.
689. Were there hooks in the beams not occupied, or were they placed where the men could not hang their hammocks?—I have seen places where there were hooks not occupied, but you could not get room to hang another hammock between those on each side of you.
690. Was there much buying of meals on board?—Yes, a good deal.
691. Who supplied them?—The men would tip the stewards.
692. What food did they buy?—Roast beef, roast potatoes, cabbage, and sometimes pastry; also fruit.
693. Why did the men spend their money on that food if they had an ample supply at the ordinary mess?—They wanted a change. They did not get cabbage or roast potatoes.
694. Did you not get vegetables?—Yes, potatoes and beans.
695. Was there a necessity for a man to buy this food to keep himself in condition?—No, he could have kept himself all right without it.



696. Were you able to get liquor?—We got liquor every morning; beer at a penny a pint.

697. Did the men buy the beer much?—Yes.

698. Good quality?—Oh, yes; it was good.

699. How came you to be promoted to be quartermaster-sergeant: have you had any experience of this kind of work in civil life?—I was acting-sergeant in the camp, and for some reason or another, better known to those over me, they made me quartermaster-sergeant.

700. Was it not from your previous experience?—I suppose so.

701. About the closets, was there much discomfort to the men owing to the insufficient accommodation?—I do not think so. I did not hear the men complain about discomfort; from that cause.

702. Were the closets kept fairly clean?—Yes; they were cleaned out every morning.

703. Was there any nuisance below: did the men “pump-ship” or use the scuppers as urinals?—No, sir; I never saw anything like that done.

704. You do not know anything about the hospital arrangements?—No, sir.

705. Were the men fairly satisfied on the voyage across?—There were complaints of the food being dirty and of their being overcrowded.

706. That was the general complaint: they did not urge complaints?—No; they only talked about it.

707. How do you think their comfort compared with your previous experience?—I do not think the “Britannic” was quite as comfortable as the other boats I was on.

708. In what did they lack that comfort?—In the sleeping-accommodation; it was not very good. I slept in the guard-room myself.

609. Was it very stuffy in the sleeping-accommodation?—Occasionally; but you could not get room to hang up your hammock, and you had to lie on the floor, and then somebody would walk over you in the night-time.

710. You think the windsails were sufficient to keep the place sweet below?—Yes; but there were too many men below for the sweetness to exist long.

711. Was the place kept pretty clean below?—Yes; it was cleaned every day for inspection at 10 o'clock.

712. *Mr. Millar.*] Where was the guard-room?—At the forward end of the ship.

713. On the upper deck or in the 'tween decks?—On the 'tween deck, just the same as the others, only there was more room.

714. Did you have any extra food there?—No; I only slept there and had my food below with the others, at the mess-tables.

715. Were you on the 'tween deck or the lower deck?—On the 'tween deck.

716. You think the sleeping-accommodation was not sufficient?—I think it was too crowded.

717. About the deck-space: on a fine day was there room for the men to move about?—No, there was not much room to walk about unless some of the other men sat down, which they generally did.

718. When you came back in the “Tagus” had you more room than in the “Britannic”?—There might have been a little more, but not much. The only thing you could say was that she was rather crowded for accommodation.

719. *Mr. McNab.*] You are not making complaints?—No; I thought that as I knew a little about it I would give evidence.

720. At what time did the inspection take place?—About 10 or half-past 10 o'clock daily.

721. Then the men were ordered on deck?—After breakfast the mess orderlies—two for each table—had to clean up, and if the men remained below there would not be room to do it.

722. How long would they be on deck?—From 9 till half-past 10.

723. During the afternoon were the men ordered up on deck?—No, they pleased themselves for the rest of the day.

724. The men got into the habit of loafing about where they were in the habit of sleeping, and would not go in for physical exercise?—They played cards all the afternoon at most of the tables.

725. Were there any who systematically went in for physical exercise?—No.

726. That would be during the afternoon. What about the evening: would the men sit about and continue what they had been doing?—They would continue what they had been doing in the afternoon, and after tea would go on again.

727. Did any of the squadron officers say to the men it would be better to go on deck?—I do not know.

728. Was it ever suggested to the men that it would be better for them physically to get about and go on deck, and not hang about the lower deck?—No.

729. It never was impressed on them?—No.

730. *Colonel Davies.*] Were not a majority of the men on deck in fine weather?—Yes; but in damp, misty weather they would go below.

731. *Mr. McNab.*] Were there some men who seemed indifferent to going on deck, and would hang about the sleeping-quarters?—I do not say that. In damp weather they would be down below, but in fine weather you would find them all on deck, or nearly all.

Lance-Corporal DONAUGHEY examined on oath. (No. 5.)

732. *The Chairman.*] You have volunteered to come here and give evidence?—Yes, sir.

733. Will you let the Commission have the statement you want to make?—I will start on the food first. It was simply disgraceful, and not only that, but it was not properly cooked; in fact, it was not cooked at all. I have seen the meat and fish taken out of the hold and left on the deck, and

there were four or five dogs on the deck, who simply walked over it and made water on it. As for the potatoes, they were mostly in cases. They took them out and put them in the boiler and never washed them or peeled them. I might also say I saw rice and apples served out to the North Island mess, and they were swarming with maggots. The meat we got was mostly boiled mutton. It was put into the water, but was not boiled properly, and most of it was thrown away into the sea. That was apparently because the men refused to eat it. As for the tea, it was boiled in the same boiler as the meat. The meat was just taken out and the boiler filled up again and the tea boiled in it. As for complaints, I do not think there was a day there was not a complaint about the meals until the last, when the men got fairly disgusted and gave up complaining. I think that is all I have to say.

734. Have you any complaint to make about the water?—I have to complain that the water was dealt out in the morning for about two hours—from 6 to 8 o'clock, I think. I know that on several days men could not wash, and we could never get any water until two or three days before we landed.

735. Was it only served out between 6 and 8 o'clock?—I will not say exactly the time. It might be between half-past 5 and half-past 8. There were several mornings when it was turned off before the men could wash. There were five hundred men to wash in three wash-houses, and about eight or twelve bowls in each place; but as for washing clothes we never got any water until two or three days before we landed.

736. Anything about the accommodation?—As for the accommodation, I may say that in the place where we of the South Island Battalion were there were a hundred and fifty men too many. It was very rough weather coming over, and the men had to stop below, and they could not open the portholes. They were the chief part of the day there, and had their meals there. There was no deck to go up on. The consequence was we were very nearly suffocated. I do not think there were many men who went to sleep before an early hour in the morning. A lot of men slept on the floor. There was no room to hang the hammocks. The consequence was the men who were in hammocks were spitting on the men below. I believe there would not have been so much sickness if there was room to take exercise. If you went on deck you had to stand generally in one place. It was very cold weather, and the men had no room to go about. Non-commissioned officers had a part of the officers' promenade deck. I do not know exactly how long it was, but it was only a little corner of it. I think the officers might have made it a lot more convenient for the men if they had given one side to the men. It was from 30 to 40 yards along the ship, and they might have given the men one side. On one particular night there was a trooper sleeping down below, and he did not feel well, and he went to the non-commissioned officers' deck, and the consequence was he was taken into the guard-room.

737. About the latrines?—As a rule, the latrines were kept pretty clean, but during one afternoon they were disgraceful. Besides that, there were men on board suffering from diseases which should have caused them to have latrines of their own, but they used ours.

738. Do you mean venereal diseases?—Yes. There was a sergeant in charge of the latrines, and I must say he did his work very well. As for the blankets, they were in a very filthy state when we got them.

739. When you say the cooking was disgraceful, what was the quality of the meat before it was cooked?—I saw meat come out of the hold black. It was mostly stew we got, and they cut it up and put it into a tin-lined basket on deck, and I picked a piece out, and others picked pieces out, and showed them to the men, and it was rotten. I happened to be passing and saw this on the deck.

740. That is one particular occasion, but generally was the meat fair or bad?—You could not call it fair. The meat was not fit for consumption.

741. Was it frozen meat?—Yes.

742. In what way was it unfit for consumption?—Well, it might have been improperly frozen; it was rotten.

743. All?—There were some of the sheep which were right enough, but as a rule the meat was black. They were in muslin bags, and if you cut the bag you could see the inside was black and mouldy.

744. And the beef?—I think it was fairly good; it looked fairly good.

745. Was this reported to the quartermaster?—When the meat came down there was a complaint nearly every day. I do not think that the meat was reported on when it came out of the hold.

746. Who took the meat from the ship's officer?—It was the ship's quartermaster who took it out of the hold; then it was taken to the butcher's shop, and from that sent to the cook's galley after it had been cut up.

747. No orderlies or others to supervise the work?—Any time I saw it it was taken out of the hold and there was a fatigue party which took it to the cook.

748. Was not the meat passed by an officer?—Not as far as I saw. Of course, it might have been passed in the butcher's shop.

749. Was not the quartermaster or the quartermaster-sergeant present at the issue of the meat?—I think the quartermaster was present when they got the meat out of the hold, and when the men went along with it he went to the galley-door.

750. Was the officer of the day there?—Yes.

751. Was not the surgeon there?—I never saw him.

752. The veterinary surgeon?—No. When the meat came up from the hold it went to the butcher's shop. The butcher's shop was about 30 yards off, and it was taken along there. It was not passed before I saw it.

753. Do I understand you to say that you believe the meat was not passed by any person representing the contingents?—I had better say I did not see it passed. I was never in the butcher's shop.

754. You say the food was disgraceful. I want to find out whether a responsible officer took steps to see whether it was good meat or not?—As far as I know, I never saw them examine it, but all the same I believe Captain Young, the veterinary officer, did examine it. I believe he did although I did not see him.

755. Was it possible for him to have seen it although you did not?—Oh, yes; anybody in the butcher's shop would see it.

756. You say the mutton was practically not boiled at all?—Yes.

757. How often?—Several times.

758. How often a week did you get boiled mutton?—Quite twice a week.

759. You say the fish and the meat was left on the decks so that the dogs could make water on it?—Yes.

760. Was that often?—I only saw it on one occasion.

761. Were there many dogs on board?—A good few; six or seven.

762. What did you get in the way of puddings?—There were plum-puddings and rice and prunes and stewed apples.

763. Was the rice often filled with maggots?—No; only on one occasion.

764. Were the plum-puddings fair?—Well, a fair weight.

765. Were they bad to eat?—Yes.

766. What ship did you go out in?—In the "Cornwall."

767. Did you live well there?—Yes; like kings.

768. You say there was not a day that a complaint was not made until the end?—No.

769. To whom were the complaints made?—To the officer of the day; and on one or two occasions the men paraded on the deck and made their complaint.

770. Did you ever make a complaint?—No. I paid for my meals as I came over, because I could not eat the rations. I could not get my meals until after the officers had theirs.

771. Why did you not make a complaint?—I simply had nothing to do with it. I was not made a non-commissioned officer until I was coming over; but whenever the men made a complaint I went with them.

772. When was a complaint made and no notice taken of it?—I cannot remember the day or date.

773. Give us some glaring case of no notice being taken of a complaint?—On one occasion the troopers paraded to Captain Fookes, and the captain said he would see what he could do, and the consequence was the trooper threw the mutton over the side.

774. Did the trooper go to a non-commissioned officer and make his complaint in a proper way?—I think he went to Sergeant Greig.

775. What was the name of the trooper?—Mulhern.

776. Was no notice taken of the complaint?—Captain Fookes said he would see what he could do.

777. And nothing came of it?—Nothing whatever.

778. You say the tea was made in the same boiler that the meat was boiled in?—Yes.

779. Was there ever an attempt to clean the boiler?—Not after the meat was taken out and the water for the tea put in. One night I went to the cook and asked him for some hot water. I was not very well, and I asked him for some. He said, "What do you want it for?" And I said, "To make a drink of tea." He gave me the water, and there was an inch and a half of grease on top of it.

780. Do you mean to say there was an inch and a half, or even an inch, of grease on top of the water?—Well, I dipped my pannikin in and there was three parts of the pannikin of grease.

781. You say the men could not wash except between 6 and 8 o'clock in the morning?—I am not quite sure of the exact hours.

782. Before 9 o'clock, at any rate?—Yes.

783. Was that a hardship?—Half the men could not get time to wash, there was such a crowd; and the breakfast was before that.

784. Did you manage to get a wash?—Yes, generally.

785. Most men could have got a wash if they tried?—I could generally get a wash when the men were at breakfast, because I got my meals from the officers' galley.

786. Enough water to drink?—Yes, always sufficient.

787. In any quantity?—As much as they liked to drink at the tub.

788. You say there were a hundred and fifty men too many on board: how do you arrive at that calculation?—You hung your hammocks over the tables. There were ten or twelve men at each table, and you would be sleeping very close.

789. Do you know how many the ship would carry, and if she had more than the transport regulations would allow?—The transport regulation as to the "Britannic" is 1,084, I think.

790. You gathered that from the newspapers?—Yes.

791. How many were there on board?—I do not know, but, judging myself, and seeing the men on the ship, I think there were too many.

792. But that would not lead one to suppose there were a hundred and fifty too many?—That is quite right.

793. Then, what do you mean?—I mean that if there were a hundred and fifty less the men could sleep more comfortably, but then not too comfortably.

794. Were all the hooks filled up?—If all the hooks were filled up the men could not sleep at all.

795. Why?—Because the men would be too close.

796. How far apart?—If all the hooks were filled up and the men in the hammocks they would be pretty close together.

797. Were they left 1 ft. 6 in. or 2 ft., or how far apart were they?—I do not think they were 2 ft. apart. I could not tell you exactly.

798. Do you remember any instance in which there were three hammocks hanging together on three hooks?—Yes; I slept in the middle hammock myself.

799. Did you touch the hammock on each side?—Yes, and got a dig in the ribs from the other fellows.

800. You say the blankets were filthy when handed out?—Yes.

801. Your own, for instance?—Yes.

802. You are quite sure of that?—I am quite certain of that.

803. How long did the lice remain?—Till we arrived.

804. What steps did you take to get rid of them?—As was said on board, "Get a drive on." Most of us did, but did not succeed.

805. Did you complain to anybody about the condition of your own blankets?—No; I do not think there were any complaints made.

806. Was there any effort made to clean them?—No. When we got up the hammocks were rolled up and put away in another room.

807. If we had evidence that the blankets were clean when issued would that be false evidence?—Yes, that is false evidence. They were all dirty.

808. Out of a hundred blankets how many would be lousy?—If they all came from the same issue they would be all lousy.

809. You believe they were all lousy?—Yes, I believe they were.

810. How long were you at Durban before having to embark and after embarking?—I forget; I would not be sure.

811. When you found your blankets were lousy there did you send for insect-powder or anything to cure them?—No; I do not think there were any complaints made.

812. *Mr. McNab.*] You made mention of a case of maggots in the rice?—Yes.

813. Did the men take that rice to their officer?—I would not be sure.

814. What did you hear?—I was standing on the deck, and the orderly said, "Just look at that rice."

815. Do you know whether they took it to the officer?—I do not know. They were at one end of the ship, and we were at the other.

816. Then, they may have taken it to the officer and got other rice?—Yes.

817. Was there anything special issued to the men that night?—I could not say.

818. You do not know what steps the men took, you do not know what the officers did to remedy it, you do not know what the ship did, and it may have ended up by a special issue to the men, and that you do not know?—That is right.

819. You only know of one case, and do not know what was done in that?—That is right.

820. Did you complain to the medical officer or to the medical department that there were men who should be told off to separate latrines?—I think Sergeant Major did.

821. You did not?—No.

822. Then, as far as you are concerned, it was not reported to the medical department?—Yes; one man was put in the guard-room.

823. Then, the officer did take steps to remedy the matter?—That is right.

824. Did you report on the occasion you saw the food being thrown on the deck?—Not to the officer.

825. To the non-commissioned officer?—I reported it to the men.

826. Were you a non-commissioned officer at the time?—No.

827. Not report to another non-commissioned officer?—No; I went below and told the men what I saw.

828. You did not formally report it to Colonel Davies?—No.

829. You say when you saw the frozen meat coming out of the hold it was not fit for food?—That is right.

830. Did you ever see the frozen meat being issued from the butcher's shop to the cook?—Yes.

831. Did you ever see frozen mutton that you thought not fit for human food issued from the butcher's shop to the cook?—I have seen meat issued from the butcher's shop to the cook worse than what I saw coming from the hold.

832. And yet you know that one of the best veterinary officers there inspected the food?—I never saw him inspect the food.

833. You know he was on board the vessel?—Yes, he was on board the vessel.

834. Do you know of any case where the man lost his life through the food?—No.

835. Do you know of any man losing his life through what you complain of to-day?—No.

836. Then, it only caused an inconvenience to the men at the time; it is not a matter that caused any death on board?—This is what I saw myself. I did not bring any complaints myself on the boat, and I did not think it my place to interfere with anything.

837. Did you hear the orders to prevent the practice of buying meals from the cooks?—Yes.

838. Then, you knew you were acting against orders?—The order was if anybody was found with food on deck that they bought from the cook it was to be taken from them.

839. You know it was forbidden by the officer in charge?—Yes.

840. You admit you were breaking the regulations that had been issued by the officer commanding for the proper discipline of the men on board the vessel?—I do not think that order ever came out in orders.

841. You knew it had been issued?—I never heard it from an officer. I only heard it from a trooper, and he tried to upset my tea.

842. You did it because you did not have it put in orders, and simply because you heard of it?—I bought all my food because I could not eat the other.

843. And you would not complain to a non-commissioned officer about the food?—I never made a complaint on the boat.

844. *Mr. Millar.*] Therefore your evidence is as to other men, and not as to complaint of your own?—I never made any complaint.

845. Do you know the names of any of the men who made complaints to an officer?—There was Trooper Brett, but I believe he is an Australian; Trooper Wallace, of Southbridge; Trooper Jones, of Lyttelton. I do not know of any more. There were so many complaints to the orderly officer that one could not remember them.

846. *Mr. McNab.*] Could you tell us who was the orderly officer to whom these troopers made complaints?—I could not.

847. *Mr. Millar.*] I think your whole complaint is more as to the cooking than as to the quality of the meat, except the mutton?—Yes, that is right. It was the mutton and the fish; the beef was all right.

848. The cooking was bad?—Yes.

849. Was that through inefficiency of the cooks, or want of accommodation for cooking?—I think the accommodation was small, but I think if they had better men cooking they could cook the food better, even with that accommodation. If they had beef to boil, as long as they could put it in the boiler they could have boiled it properly.

850. *The Chairman.*] Who sold you the food?—I think it was the head cook in the officers' galley.

851. *Colonel Davies.*] You said that Captain Fookes said he would do what he could?—Yes.

852. Then you said the trooper threw the meat overboard?—Yes. Captain Fookes was standing at the door, and said he would do what he could, and then he turned round and walked inside.

853. You remember when that fish was lying on the deck when the grating broke down and it fell on the deck and then into the scupper?—The fish I speak of was put on the deck; it was not lying in the scupper.

854. You will remember when they brought up this fish?—Yes.

855. They got the issue for three weeks?—Yes. This fish I saw the dogs make water on was not lying in the scupper.

856. *Dr. Pearlless.*] Did a man with venereal disease use the ordinary latrines?—Yes.

857. You know there was an order that they were not to use them?—They were using them for a week before that order came out.

858. There was an order?—Yes.

859. *Captain Lewin.*] Did you always get your food at the galley?—Never.

860. How, then, do you know the quality of the food?—Because on six days out of seven I was down below at meal-time.

861. Are you aware that there was an order that the cooks were not to issue any food to men on payment?—The only order I am aware of I got from the troopers. It was simply a trooper standing at the door when I went for it, and he said there was an order that if any one was found with food which they had paid for they could take it from them.

862. You know the cooks were threatened with punishment if they sold food?—They took their risk. I paid the cooks £2 for the trip when I came on board.

863. *Mr. McNab.*] Therefore you made arrangements for feeding before you knew of the food served out being inferior?—Yes.

864. Then, when you made an arrangement to get your food in this way for the voyage it is no reflection upon the quality of the food served out to others?—It was done before I knew what the food served out was like; but you can generally form an opinion of what that food is.

865. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean it was all bad?—No.

866. What do you mean?—Men do not expect to get first-class tucker on a troopship, and I was not feeling very well.

867. You think that the "Britannic" was worse than other transports?—As between the "Cornwall" and "Britannic," I would sooner be on the "Cornwall" for three weeks than on the "Britannic" for a week.

WEDNESDAY, 20TH AUGUST, 1902.

Quartermaster WILLIAM CLOUSTON sworn and examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name, please?—William Clouston.
2. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.
3. Were you on board the “Britannic”?—Yes, sir.
4. Had you served in any other contingent before the Eighth?—The Second, sir.
5. What rank did you hold?—Trooper in the Second.
6. But when you came in the “Britannic”?—Acting quartermaster-sergeant.
7. You volunteered to give evidence: would you like to make a statement?—No, sir; if you will ask questions I will answer them.
8. Are you prepared to speak generally as to the condition of the food, the blankets, and accommodation, &c.?—I would sooner answer questions.
9. Where did you march from to go on board the steamer?—We were taken right down on the wharf from the train.
10. From what place in South Africa did you start?—From Elandsfontein.
11. You were not from Newcastle?—We came from Newcastle later.
12. And marched straight on board?—Yes, sir.
13. Did you know anything about the general condition of the men as regards lousiness when they started from Newcastle?—As far as I know, there was none.
14. How long notice did the men get that they were about to embark?—About 2 o'clock in the morning. We left next morning about 8.
15. Did you suppose you were likely to march?—Yes, it was rumoured we had to go.
16. Had the men made preparation for the march?—We had no idea when we were going.
17. You think that the men when they embarked were clean, and that their things were in good clean condition?—Yes, sir.
18. How long had they been away trekking when away from Newcastle?—We were trekking about three mouths from Newcastle.
19. Do you know anything about the condition of the bedding which was served out to the men?—It was issued to me at dark. I did not know in respect to mine till later. I think the blankets were lousy.
20. When did you notice the lice on your blankets?—A week or two after we started—before we got to Albany.
21. Did you not notice before you got near Albany?—About a week out from Durban.
22. Do you imagine that there could have been lice on your own blankets for a week without your discovering it?—Yes, I do.
23. You would not have perceived them if they were on the blankets when they were issued?—I would not notice them.
24. They were visible to the naked eye, were they not?—Oh, no, sir. You never found them on the blankets.
25. Had you anything to do with the issue of the blankets?—Yes, sir.
26. As quartermaster-sergeant, you had to issue them to your own squadron?—Yes, sir.
27. Did you remark whether there were lice on them when they were issued to the men?—I asked when they were being issued if there was any lice on them, and was told there was no lice, as they had been washed.
28. Why did you ask that question?—Because there were lice on the “Tongariro” when we came back first, so this time I asked the question.
29. Did you search for lice on the blankets?—No, sir; it is impossible to search for lice amongst these blankets.
30. Did they look clean?—Yes, they looked clean.
31. Do you think there had been any neglect on the part of the transport officials in Durban over the blankets?—No, I do not think so.
32. You think that if they were lousy it was unavoidable?—Yes.
33. Is there any means of cleaning a blanket?—I suppose so, but we had no means on board ship.
34. Was there any effort made to clean them on the boat?—No; because there was no possible way of doing it.
35. Would it be possible to put them in a steam-chest and kill the vermin by super-heated steam?—I do not think so, sir, on the boat.
36. Not with fresh water?—No, not on board the boat. There were no possible means.
37. If the blankets were lousy, who were to blame for it? Do you imagine that it was the transport officers before the blankets were served out?—I could not tell you who ought to be blamed for it. The rumour was that the blankets had been used for prisoners of war. When these lice get into the blankets it is very difficult to get them out.
38. Did you know where the “Britannic” came from?—I have no idea, sir.
39. In her last trip had she been carrying Boer prisoners?—So we heard; but I could not vouch for it.
40. You heard she was bringing Boer prisoners back to South Africa?—Yes.
41. As quartermaster-sergeant, then, did you make any comment to anybody upon your belief that the blankets were not clean?—No, I did not, sir.
42. Did you make any report to any one?—No; I thought they were clean when they were first given to us. I thought at the time they were issued they were clean.
43. But you found a week or ten days afterwards that there were lice on them?—Yes.
44. Is it possible, or is it probable, that those lice spread from men who unfortunately came on board the steamer?—No; they were not spread in that way.

45. Then, in the matter of accommodation: do you know anything about the accommodation on board for the hammocks?—Very poor, sir.

46. What do you mean by "very poor"?—There were plenty of hammocks, but not enough room to sling them.

47. You do not mean that they were too crowded?—Yes; those that had slung hammocks on the hooks were very crowded, and others had to sleep on tables, &c.

48. Were there hooks to hang hammocks on?—Yes; but there were not sufficient to hang the whole lot.

49. Do you know anything of the space allowed in a transport for a hammock?—I could not tell you the exact measurement, sir.

50. I want to get, if possible, at the transport regulations, and to find out whether according to them you were crowded?—I could not answer that question.

51. Supposing it had been desirable to hook all the hammocks up, were there enough hooks?—There was not room to hang all up.

52. Were there hooks enough?—No, there were not.

53. About the condition of the air in the 'tween decks: was it very bad?—Very bad indeed, sir.

54. Was any record of the temperature taken?—None was taken that I am aware of.

55. In what way was the air bad?—There was a very, very bad smell down there in the morning. If you came down from the upper deck you could hardly stand there.

56. What was done in the way of ventilation?—Nothing was done, sir.

57. No windsails?—No.

58. What hold were you in?—Fore.

59. Did you apply for windsails?—I never did.

60. Was it your duty to see to these things at all?—No, sir.

61. As a non-commissioned officer did you not feel responsible at all for these things?—The sergeant in charge of the mess-room was responsible for that.

62. Well, did you complain to any of them about it?—There were always complaints about the smell down there, but I do not think they could remedy it.

63. I wish you to separate the discontent from an actual complaint. Was there an official complaint made?—Not that I know of.

64. You are sure there were no windsails down your hold at all?—Not forward, sir.

65. Any electric fans?—No.

66. What was the general condition of cleanliness down below?—Pretty clean, sir.

67. Was reasonable care taken to keep the ship clean?—Yes; as well as could be expected. They were well washed out.

68. Was anything left undone that ought to have been done?—Not down below, sir.

69. Which deck were you on?—On the upper deck.

70. Then, how did the air get into the part of the ship where you were quartered?—There was a big opening where the hatchway was. It was always open, except when raining.

71. Did any other air come in?—Yes; from the portholes when they were opened.

72. Were they generally closed or opened?—They were always open in fine weather.

73. Would they be open two days out of three, or one day out of three?—Two days out of three.

74. Who kept them open?—Ourselves.

75. Then, if the ports were closed it was because the men preferred to have them closed?—Yes, sir.

76. About the food: were you satisfied with it?—It was very bad indeed, sir.

77. Was it part of your duty as quartermaster-sergeant to see to the food?—I saw it drawn.

78. How often were you on duty for that?—I used to go myself. The regimental quartermaster attended to that. I was squadron quartermaster.

79. Who represented your squadron: what was his rank?—Regimental quartermaster-sergeant.

80. He went every day?—Yes.

81. Had you any duties in the matter at all?—No, none at all.

82. What quality meat was it?—It was often green—very bad indeed.

83. Was it the beef or mutton?—Both of it, sir.

84. Were any representations made about the condition of the meat?—There were always complaints about it, sir.

85. But I mean official complaints?—I could not tell you. It was reported to the orderly officer every day.

86. Who watched the issue of the meat before it was cooked?—I do not know that.

87. You do not know whether there were any complaints made when the meat was still uncooked?—Yes; there were great complaints made on board to the orderly officer.

88. And was that followed up do you know—to whom was the report taken?—I do not remember. I could not say now, sir.

89. Was it brought before the officer commanding, or before a Medical Board, or a Board of any kind?—I think that the matter was reported to Colonel Davies.

90. On many occasions?—Not always from the whole of us, sir.

91. Have you any idea of how many cases were reported?—There were not many.

92. Were there half-a-dozen?—About that I think. There were not more than that.

93. Was there any effort made to remedy complaints?—Yes.

94. Well, not only was effort made, but was there success in the effort?—Yes; we had bully beef given us.

95. When bad meat was served out were the men compelled to eat it or go without?—They had either to eat it or go without at first. We did not get bully beef until we got to Albany.
96. How about the quality of the bully beef?—It was very good indeed.
97. And the biscuits?—Very good, sir.
98. Had you enough?—Plenty, sir.
99. Did you ever get puddings?—Yes, they were very fair.
100. How often did you get puddings?—Twice a week; Thursdays and Saturdays, I think. In the sergeants' mess we got puddings every day.
101. And the cooking—how was that?—Not the best in the world, sir.
102. Was the food properly cooked?—No, sir, it was not.
103. In what way did it fall short?—We had to send it back almost every day, as being raw.
104. Were complaints made about that?—To the orderly officer, yes.
105. Was any notice taken of it?—They used to cook it over again, but not always.
106. How often did this meat come cooked raw?—It was nearly a daily occurrence.
107. Was it underbaked, or underboiled?—Underbaked.
108. And did all the men find it too undercooked?—Yes, sir. There might have been a few who did not, as the meat on one side might be well done, but the majority complained.
109. Have you any other complaint to make about the food generally?—Well, it was far from being what we should have got. We could have got better had they liked to give it to us. Every morning we had simply potatoes and water—they called it stew.
110. Was there no meat in it?—Very little.
111. And every morning you got the same thing?—Yes.
112. Complaints were made about the cooking, and I did not quite follow you whether notice was taken of the complaint or not?—It was reported very often, and there seemed to be no change.
113. Do you think there was an attempt made on the part of the authorities to remedy the defects or not?—It did not look like it, sir.
114. You think not?—I think not, sir.
115. About the drinking-water, was that good?—Very good.
116. Did you have plenty?—Plenty of it, sir.
117. Did you have sufficient water for washing?—We could not get enough of that—it was turned off too quickly. Later on they gave us another half-hour.
118. How many basins were there?—About twenty, I think.
119. Did the men ever try to get buckets or anything of that sort to wash in?—There were no more on board, sir, excepting those used for washing-up, &c., and they could not take those.
120. Was there enough water for washing?—Plenty of water aboard the boat, but we did not get it.
121. Why did you not get it?—Because it was turned off too early.
122. You mean that men could not wash before half-past eight?—Well, they could, but those that came first got a wash; but the water was turned off before they were all finished washing.
123. Were you ever in hospital?—No.
124. You do not know anything about the hospital?—No.
125. Had you to buy food coming across?—I bought some, sir.
126. Was not an order issued against it?—There was not an order. I did not see it, but I believe it was stated that there was a verbal order.
127. You are a non-commissioned officer?—Yes.
128. Did you carry out the verbal order?—I did not hear of it.
129. You did not think it your duty to help in carrying that order out?—No.
130. Where did you get the food from?—The cook.
131. How much did you pay?—1s.
132. What did you get for this?—Saloon food, sir.
133. You paid for each meal as you received it?—Yes. I did not buy three meals a day all the way over.
134. What conditions were the latrines in?—Very good and clean indeed, sir.
135. Were they sufficient?—Yes, sufficient.
136. Did the officers go round at every meal-time?—The orderly officer did.
137. One of the officers for each regiment, or one for the whole ship?—One for each regiment.
138. Did they appear to take any interest in the food of the men?—Yes, sir, I think so.
139. Then, do you think that they tried to improve the meals of the men or not?—I think they did what they had power to do.
140. Which other contingent were you in?—The Second.
141. What troopship did you come back in?—The "Tongariro."
142. Were you more comfortable there?—Yes, a lot, sir.
143. How many men were on board?—About eleven hundred, I think; Australians and New-Zealanders.
144. Was the food much better?—Yes, much better indeed, sir.
145. Better in quality or better cooked?—Better each way, sir.
146. *Mr. McNab.*] As quartermaster-sergeant, was it your duty to report whether the men were dissatisfied with their food?—The senior man at the table had to report it to the orderly officer.
147. Had you any duties in the way of reporting the bad condition of the food?—If the men had reported to me I should have carried it further on.
148. If you saw it yourself, and the men did not report, would you send a report to your superior officer?—Most decidedly, sir.



149. And did you do so on all occasions?—I never reported it personally myself.
150. You never reported it yourself?—No, it was reported by the men.
151. Why was it, when you saw it yourself, you never reported it?—Because it had been reported before by the men.
152. Did you not see the food before the men saw it?—No, sir.
153. You never saw it before the men saw it?—No, sir.
154. When did you first make arrangements with the cook about a supply of food?—It would be three or four days out from Durban.
155. What was the nature of the arrangement you made?—I just went up and bought it like any one else would buy it, and paid 1s. for it.
156. You did not make any arrangements for the trip?—No, sir.
157. When you bought your first meal, what was your objection to the food supplied then?—I did not like the food we were getting, and as I had plenty of money I bought it.
158. Was it because you were flush of cash that you wanted to get the same food as the officers, and not because at that time the food supply to the men was indifferent?—If it had been pretty good food I would not have bought any.
159. Coming back now to the question of the blankets: you did your best to find out whether the blankets were clean or not?—I did, sir.
160. You reported to your officer what investigations you had made?—Yes, sir.
161. Did you not report to him that the blankets were not in good condition?—I did not report to him.
162. What duties had you, then, in regard to the blankets?—Simply drawing them from the storekeeper, and issuing them to the men.
163. If you had noticed that the blankets were in bad condition would you have reported it?—Yes, sir, I would.
164. No report coming from you that the blankets were in a bad condition, your officer was quite justified in taking it for granted that you were satisfied with the blankets?—Yes, sir.
165. And no complaint could be made against him?—No, sir.
166. You do not suggest any point against the officers because lice were afterwards found in the blankets?—No.
167. Did the officers commanding squadrons do anything with their squadrons over and above the general orders that were issued under Colonel Davies during the passage over?—No, I do not think they did, sir.
168. Did troop-leaders ever do anything with their troops?—No, I do not think so.
169. How did men pass away the afternoon as a rule?—Most of them were up on deck, but a tremendous lot of them were below, playing cards, talking, and reading.
170. Were there some of the men who would get into the habit of spending a lot of their time down below, and not take every advantage of going on deck and moving about?—They took every advantage of moving about as much as they could.
171. By the men?—Yes.
172. From what you know of the men, supposing the squadron-leader had arranged during the afternoon—the off-time of the men—to have some physical drill, or give some of the men hard work during the afternoon, would the men have stood it?—I do not think so, sir.
173. You think they would have rebelled at having to go through physical exercise?—Yes. I do not think they would do it, sir.
174. I suppose you yourself would know that that would be of advantage to the men on board ship?—I suppose it would be, sir.
175. Now, in regard to the condition of the air: you described it as very bad?—Yes.
176. Was that on the lowest deck?—On the upper deck of the two—the 'tween-deck.
177. Then, on the lower deck matters were worse?—Worse still, I think.
178. Were you ever down there?—I passed through; I never stayed there. I had to pass through to get to the store-room.
179. Did you notice whether the men on the lower deck took every advantage of getting on deck?—Yes. We could not all get on the main deck at once. It was always crowded there.
180. You do not think that a number got into the habit of hanging about and not going up on deck enough?—No; they always went up on deck, sir.
181. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you see any drunkenness on board?—Yes; very little though. There were penny beers.
182. Could you get drunk on a penny beer?—Yes, very often. I did not get drunk myself.
183. You saw it yourself?—Yes.
184. Were any steps taken when you saw it: did any of the officers take any action over it?—No, sir.
185. Did it ever come to their notice?—No, I do not think it did.
186. *The Chairman.*] Did you say you saw much drunkenness among the men on board?—Yes, almost every morning there was drunkenness. They were just merry.
187. Drunk as a soldier?—Yes.
188. Did you take any steps to report that?—I took no steps.
189. Was it part of your duty as a non-commissioned officer to take such notice?—No, I do not think so.
190. Was it your duty on shore if a man was drunk to place him in the guard-room?—It is the duty of a non-commissioned officer.
191. Would that differ on board ship?—It should not.
192. Did you or did you not do your duty in the matter of drunkenness?—I did not feel it my duty to report the matter.

193. Did you or did you not do your duty in the matter of drunkenness? I would like a distinct answer to this?—Well, I did my duty. I do not think they were drunk enough to put in the guard-room.

194. You saw the men were drunk?—Well, they were hardly drunk; they were merry. If they were very drunk they ought to have been put in the guard-room. But I do not think I should have taken any notice of that kind of drunkenness—they were not drunk enough.

195. In the matter of ventilation, did you ever apply for any windsails?—We did not apply for them. We had no need for them, as we had a big hatchway open.

196. You did not apply for windsails, and you did not want them?—No.

197. There was no effort on the part of the men to get more ventilation than they had got?—No, sir.

198. *Colonel Davies.*] What squadron were you acting quartermaster-sergeant to?—E.

199. When were you appointed quartermaster-sergeant?—On the way to Klerksdorp.

200. Klerksdorp or Vryberg?—Vryberg, I think, sir.

201. Do you know of any complaint with regard to bad food that was made formally through the proper channel to officers that was not seen into and remedied?—Well, I know that when complaints were made there was no change made.

202. Did you ever see any meat that was not eatable, and represented to an orderly officer, and no steps taken?—No, sir.

203. Did you see them get an issue of preserved meat when the fresh was condemned?—Yes, sir.

204. You state that you do not think that any result came from the authorities to remedy the cooking: do you mean the military officers or the officers of the ship?—I do not mean the military officers; I mean the ship's.

205. You never heard of any complaint being made properly, and no notice taken of it?—No, sir.

206. Is it your opinion that your officers and senior non-commissioned officers always took notice of complaints made to them?—Yes; it is my opinion they did.

207. And did their best to put them right?—Yes.

208. There were about twenty basins, you said?—Yes, about that, sir.

209. You mean for the whole regiment?—Yes, but there may have been more.

210. But there was about that number?—Yes.

211. There were two lavatories?—Four, sir.

212. Yes, but two for your regiment?—Four for our regiment—two on each side of the ship.

213. With regard to the space on deck in the afternoons: is it not a fact that there was plenty of deck-space, only that during most of the voyage it was cold and wet, and you could not be on deck except under shelter?—There was not enough deck-space in my estimation.

214. There was the fore-castle?—It was too cold up there, sir.

215. There was the main deck on both sides from the fore-castle right back to the poop on both sides of the ship?—Yes, sir.

216. There was the after part of the ship, close to the stern, where the boats were?—There were two little strips, I think.

217. As a non-commissioned officer you had part of the after deck—more than is usually allowed to non-commissioned officers?—Yes.

218. If it had been warm weather and the men could have got about all over the decks on both sides for instance, and on these other decks, they would have had very much more room?—I do not think so. I think they were crowded, wet and fine.

219. It was too cold on the fore-castle?—It would hold very few, and it was too cold.

220. *Captain Lewin.*] Was there a sergeants' mess on board?—Yes, there was.

221. Did you belong to it?—Yes.

222. And had extras supplied at meals?—Yes; but very little. The extras were a pudding every day, I think.

223. Were you in charge of the issue of beer to your squadron?—Yes, sir.

224. Did any of the men get more than the pint?—Not that I know of.

225. And in your opinion they got drunk on one pint?—I do not know. They might have got drunk on somebody else's pint.

226. *The Chairman.*] Do you imagine that they were able to purchase spirits on board?—I cannot say.

227. What do you think?—I think it was possible to get it from the ship's steward, sir, by paying through the nose for it.

228. Do you know of one circumstance where they got it from the ship's stores?—I do not, sir.

229. All the same, you think they could get it?—Well, money can do anything.

230. I want you to be a little exact. You say they were drunk—they only got one pint of beer—I want to know whether you can trace the drunkenness to any cause?—I suppose some of them did not draw the beer and others used to take it. The beer was very thick, and some did not like it.

231. You think the beer itself was good?—Yes, it was; it was a good make, but very thick.

Trooper DEBENHAM sworn and examined. (No. 7.)

232. *The Chairman.*] You are Trooper Debenham?—Yes, sir.

233. What is your name?—Frederick Debenham.

234. What is your rank?—Trooper.

235. What contingent?—Eighth.

236. You telegraphed you were prepared to give evidence?—Yes.

237. Would you kindly make any statement you like to mention?—I think the food on some occasions was not fit for human consumption. The stewed apples that the men got to eat in the puddings were full of insects, and the biscuits were alive with insects. The soup issued to us was very poor, and the vegetables were not sufficiently cooked. They were rather hard. And the potatoes, I think, were only fit for pigs. They were very small—on some occasions about the size of marbles. We used to get about four a man, I think. On other occasions the potatoes were much larger, but they were issued to us with long growths on them where they had been growing in the ground. The coffee was very bad. I believe it was made the night before. It was issued to us at breakfast, and it was stewing all night. Some of the jam was very good, but there was one issue of jam which was very unpleasant to eat—that was rhubarb-jam.

238. Why was it unpleasant?—I think it was fermenting. It is jam that does not keep very well, and it was very bad. In addition it had a horrible taste. The raspberry, plum, and gooseberry-jam was good and the butter was good, while of the meat I saw I had no complaint whatever. It was very nice to eat, I thought. And the bread was good, but there was hardly enough of it. We could eat our issue at breakfast alone.

239. How much did you get?—I do not know exactly—it was like a large-sized bun. And the fish we had issued—we got proper for tea one night—had scales on it as big as a shilling. It was unscaled, and we had to pick them out or they would have choked us really.

240. What was the quality of the fish?—It was very fair to taste, sir. It was just the scales that were on that we took exception to.

241. Were there any other complaints?—I think the boat was too overcrowded, and the accommodation. I believe there were only nine or ten hooks for a mess-table, and there were sixteen men at our table; therefore a large majority of them had to sleep on the tables, or on the floors wherever they could get. As regards the bath, sir, I believe we had a bath about a week between Durban and Albany. There was a canvas bath erected on the boat filled with sea-water, but when the cold weather came on it was abandoned.

242. Was it taken away?—Yes, sir. We could not get a bodily wash. As regards blankets, I think they were very unclean when issued to us.

243. Can you think of anything else—were you in hospital?—No, sir, I was never in hospital.

244. Anything about the beer?—The beer was not very good on account, I suppose, of the vibration of the boat. I believe, had it been on shore, it would have been just as good as Burton ale, which is reckoned one of the best beers in England, I think. On account of the vibration, however, it got shaken up, and was rather thick when issued to the men. If we had had bottled beer it would have been much better. The latrines, I think, were good; there was ample accommodation. But I think that the food issued to the men—that there was not sufficient to eat. I really think the men could have eaten double their issue. In the stew on some occasions that was issued for breakfast the potatoes would be too hard and uncooked. We used to get jam issued, I think, once a day for tea—it was to be consumed at tea alone. For breakfast we had no jam or butter or anything. The bacon was good that was issued to us. The salt fish that was issued the men complained about. I think it was a ling or barracouta or something. I was mess orderly from Durban to Albany, and I was well acquainted with the tucker, as I had to issue it to my mess, and the fish was not very good, sir.

245. How often was the fish bad?—I think there was only one case they complained about it—the salt fish. In fact they would not eat it, and it had to be thrown overboard.

246. Was that the quality of the fish or the treatment of the fish?—I think it was the treatment really.

247. Was it eatable?—It was a salt fish, and you could not expect a much better taste, but I believe the treatment was the cause of the complaint.

248. What treatment?—I hear the latrines were run on this fish. It was packed up on the side of the ship, and the latrines overflowed one day and run on this fish that was issued to us, and the men saw this and refused to eat it. There were several dogs on board, and they used to put their legs up against it occasionally. I did not see it with my own eyes, but I just give you the opinion of men on board.

249. Did you have salt fish on more than one occasion?—I remember only one occasion.

250. Can you tell us about the ventilation?—The ventilation was not very good in our troop-deck. We could not open the portholes.

251. What deck were you on?—No. 5 troop-deck—the lowest. We could not open the portholes because the water would have come in. But there were several air-valves from the deck. The weather being very wet, we could not wash the floor every morning. The weather was fairly rough between Durban and Albany, and the men would have a rough time, the water coming over and wetting the decks, and the men sleeping on the wet decks at night caught colds. There were several occasions when the men made complaints and no remedy was made.

252. You mean no notice was taken?—Yes, sir.

253. Can you give us some specific instances of that?—The men complained about the food that was issued, and told the officer of the day about it when he came round for complaints, and there was no notice taken of it at all.

254. When the complaint was made did the officer say or do anything?—He said he would do what he could for us, but he did not think he could do much. I think that is all.

255. How often, now, were the apples full of insects?—Every time that we had them issued I noticed insects.

256. What sort of insects?—Very small maggots—little white ones with brown heads.

257. In every issue the apples were in that condition?—Yes.

258. And you say the biscuits were alive with insects?—Yes.

259. Was that always the case?—I did not notice it at first. I did not look closely into them; but in the last barrel I noticed them, and the men noticed them.

260. When was that—just before you arrived in New Zealand?—About a week before.

261. That was the only barrel you noticed it in?—Yes, the only barrel.

262. Then, generally, on the trip across were the biscuits good or bad?—Well, I did not notice the insects prior to a week before we got to New Zealand. They may have been in before, but I did not notice them myself.

263. You say the soup was fair?—Yes.

264. And the vegetables were hard?—Yes, they were hardly cooked.

265. How often did that happen?—Nearly every day. They did not use fresh vegetables; they used preserved ones, and they need a lot of soaking.

266. You say the potatoes were growing: do you think that could have been helped?—Well, there was a fatigue party told off to wash the potatoes, and I think they might have picked off these growths. They were fully 3 in. long.

267. Who was to blame for this, do you think?—The chief steward, I think.

268. Could he help them growing?—No, not at that time of the year he could not.

269. The coffee, you say, was bad: was it the quality—was it not strong enough, or what?—It was very black, something like ink to look at, and the taste was not very nice at all. It tasted as if it had been stewing all night.

270. Did it look clean?—It was that dark you could not see what was wrong with it.

271. That was the principal fault—the darkness of the coffee?—Yes.

272. You were satisfied with all the jam except the rhubarb?—Yes.

273. How much jam did you get at all?—Well, for sixteen men we got a soup-plate full.

274. How often?—Once a day, I think. It depended whether we got cold meat for tea. If there was only cold meat we got jam.

275. Was the jam enough to go round?—Just enough for a taste round, sir. There was not too much.

276. You said that there were not enough hooks for the hammocks?—Yes.

277. Were all the hooks occupied?—They were on our deck, sir.

278. And the men had to sleep on the floor?—Some men preferred sleeping on the floor.

279. Was there a hook for them if they liked to use it?—I do not think there was.

280. I would like you to be clear on that subject?—I could not say positively as to the number of hooks.

281. Were the hooks unoccupied at any time? Had every hook a hammock on it?—On some occasions every hook was occupied.

282. Then how many would be on the floors?—I could not say exactly; there were so many lying all over the place.

283. Was there hammock accommodation for them all?—I do not think there was for them all.

284. Was there hammock accommodation for three-quarters of the men?—Yes, I suppose there would be for about three-quarters and no more.

285. When the bath was removed, did the men endeavour to get the hose played on them?—Not to my knowledge.

286. Would that have been allowed, do you think?—I think the officers of the ship would have allowed it.

287. The men could have got a hot-water bath had they chosen to get it?—I suppose they did not think of that.

288. When the blankets were served out to you, did you notice anything wrong with them?—No, I did not.

289. Did they look clean?—Fairly clean.

290. How soon after you received them were you conscious they were lousy?—A day or two afterwards. I myself could not sleep because of the lice on the blankets.

291. Were any steps taken to clean them?—No, sir.

292. Was it possible to take any steps to clean them, do you think?—No, sir, they were rolled up every morning and packed away.

293. Supposing there had been complaints made, was there any possibility of cleaning the blankets do you think?—No, sir.

294. Did you see any drunkenness on board the ship?—There were one or two on the deck intoxicated.

295. Often?—Very seldom, sir; twice a week, perhaps.

296. Have you any idea how they got drunk?—Through drinking too much beer.

297. How did they get the quantity?—Some men at the table were teetotalers, and they gave their issue to the men who were fond of it.

298. You say there was not sufficient to eat?—Yes, sir.

299. Do you know how much meat was issued at all?—I do not know exactly, sir. Dinner was the best meal of the day. They had not much to complain about the dinner. We had plenty of meat at dinner.

300. Fairly cooked?—Yes. For breakfast there was hardly enough to eat. When bacon was issued you would get a small slice four inches long for each man. It was hardly enough for grown men.

301. Did the men get meat three times a day?—Yes, sir.

302. But not enough to satisfy hunger?—Not at breakfast. At dinner they were fairly well satisfied.

303. Do you know what weight of bread they got a day?—No, sir.

304. Do you think they would get a pound of bread a day?—Yes, perhaps they would get a pound.
305. And biscuits?—Well, there was a barrel of biscuits put down on the troop-deck, and the men could get them when they wished.
306. They could get biscuits whenever they liked?—Yes.
307. Was the bacon of good quality?—Yes, sir.
308. About the question of the latrines running over the fish: were the men obliged to eat that fish or throw it overboard and starve?—The majority of them refused to eat it.
309. Did they make any complaint about it?—Yes, sir.
310. And was it remedied?—It was substituted by bully beef.
311. And because some filth got on the fish the men were given other food instead?—Yes, sir.
312. Did this happen on more than one occasion?—Yes, sir.
313. Were they on each occasion given bully beef, or what?—Yes, sir, I think so.
314. There was discomfort rather than hardship in that matter?—Yes.
315. The men had not to go empty on account of it?—No, sir.
316. You say that complaints were made, but no notice was taken?—Yes, sir.
317. By complaints do you mean official reports, or merely the discontent which we all have at times at our meals?—Merely discontent.
318. Were the officers neglectful of the interests of their men?—I think on some occasions they were. I do not think they reported the complaints.
319. Just let us have one, so that we may pursue it further?—I never took any particular notice or put a date down. We complained about the food, and the officers said, "We will do what we can; we do not think we can do much," and perhaps we would hear no more about it; they would let it pass by.
320. Was the same fault repeated next day—that is, if you complained of bad meat, was bad meat served the next day?—Different rations were served to us day by day, and perhaps the men liked the next day's ration, and did not complain.
321. Then, you say the officers were neglectful. I would like you to substantiate that in some way or another so that we can see how they were to blame?—On some occasions we complained, and the complaints were attended to. There were a lot of plates broken, and we complained to one of the officers and we were given some in place of them. But in some cases there was no remedy whatever made by the officers. I did not take any particular notice of dates, as I did not think it was so important.
322. *Mr. McNab.*] What age are you?—Twenty-two.
323. What was your occupation previous to enlisting?—Saddler.
324. Did you ever live in a tent?—Yes, sir.
325. For how long?—Well, prior to my enlistment I was in camp a week with the North Canterbury Battalion.
326. Outside of that, did you ever live in a tent?—No, I do not think so.
327. You have never done any camping-out?—Very little, sir.
328. What steamer did you go to South Africa in?—In the "Cornwall."
329. How long were you on the voyage?—Five weeks.
330. How long in South Africa?—About three months and a half.
331. You then came back in the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
332. You were another four weeks on board?—I think about four weeks.
333. What were you doing in South Africa?—We took part in a drive with Sir Ian Hamilton's force.
334. How long were you in fixed camp in South Africa, and not engaged in the drive?—I did not reckon up.
335. How long were you in the drive?—About a month or five weeks from the time we left Klerksdorp.
336. Out of five months that you were on service, over two months was spent at sea?—Yes, sir.
337. And another two months in a stationary camp?—Yes, sir.
338. When you were coming back were you fairly tired of the climate and the steamer life?—No, I was rather fond of the climate on the veldt—in fact, it agreed with me immensely.
339. Better than the steamer?—Yes, I was in better health in every way.
340. The steamer life did not agree with you?—I am a good sailor, I was never sick; but I think it was the accommodation, food, and one thing and another, that affected me.
341. Were you ever in the hospital?—No, sir.
342. Were you passed as medically fit when you left the steamer?—Yes.
343. When did you get that cough?—I caught cold soon after I left Durban: I never went to the doctor with it. Some of the men who had colds went to the doctor, and the medicine they got did not do them much good.
344. Through your not taking advantage of medical treatment on board do you not think you would get into a low condition and be apt to complain of your meals?—No, I do not think so.
345. Do you not think a man suffering from a cold or a chest complaint, and not taking medical advice, would be more apt to complain of the tariff on board the steamer than a man who had got proper medical treatment?—Yes; looking at it in that light.
346. Might not some of your complaints be due to the fact that you were not in proper fettle yourself?—No; I do not think it was due to that.
347. Although you admit you took a cold, and you did not report yourself to the doctor?—Yes, sir.

348. Can you give me the name of the officer who stated he supposed he could not do much, when a complaint was made to him?—No, I did not take particular notice.

349. You could not give the name of that officer?—No, sir.

350. Do you know whether the complaints you referred to increased in number the longer you were at sea?—No; I do not think they did. The complaints were general right through the voyage.

351. In regard to the growth on the potatoes, you do not suggest that there was any disease?—No, sir. Some of the potatoes were watery and unpleasant to eat.

352. The growth on the potatoes was simply the potatoes striking?—Yes, sir.

353. And you know that at a certain stage they always do sprout?—Yes.

354. And it was simply a case of leaving the sprouts on when cleaning the potatoes?—Yes, sir.

355. In regard to the fish, you complained about the proper that there were scales on it?—Yes, sir.

356. Are you aware that if you boil proper you must not scale the fish?—We thought it ought to be cooked without the scales.

357. You are aware that boiled-fish is cooked with the scales on?—I did not know that.

358. About the hammocks: Did you notice whether the same men invariably used the same hammocks, or did some of the men sleep one night in hammocks and another night on the floor, or did the men always sleep in the hammocks and always sleep on the floor?—I think the men who slept in the hammocks kept to the hammocks.

359. And the men who went on the floor kept to the floor?—Yes; some got hammocks and some did not. Every man did not get a hammock.

360. Did any of the men who had hammocks issued to them sleep on the floor?—Yes; some men did, sir. They laid their hammocks on the floor and slept on them.

361. Have you ever been in the Volunteers before?—Yes, sir.

362. How long?—Well, I earned two capitations. I held the position of corporal.

363. Did you ever see any complaints in the Volunteer camps?—Yes, sir.

364. Were they complaints of a similar nature as to those on the troopship?—The complaints were about the quantity of the tucker. Some tents used to get more than the others. I think it was owing to the fault of the quartermaster-sergeant; the food was not issued out fairly.

365. You know that at camps men are drilled all day, and have a lot of field-work to do?—Yes, sir.

366. Do you consider that the meals on board ship were inferior to what they would be in a Volunteer camp?—Yes, I do, sir.

367. Do you think that if the men on board the troopship had had their appetites sweetened by roaming about the hills and doing a day at field-work the meals might have appeared just as nice to them as in a Volunteer camp?—No, I do not think so.

368. *Mr. Millar.*] You state that you had potato-hash every morning for breakfast?—Not potato-hash—it was soup with boiled potatoes in it.

369. And the potatoes were very small, and only fit for pigs?—Not in the soup, sir; those were the ones issued for dinner.

370. You got about four of these potatoes?—Yes, sir.

371. Did you say that you were the mess orderly?—Yes, sir.

372. Did you report that?—I thought it was the Imperial ration, so I did not report it.

373. Was it your duty to report it?—It was my duty to report any complaint, but the men thought it was the Imperial ration, and they lodged no complaint. They just complained amongst themselves, not to the officers.

374. *Colonel Davies.*] You say that the bath was removed after a week or two out from Durban?—Yes, sir. I am not positive about it, but I have an idea it was. I wanted to have a bath one day, and found it was not there.

375. You went there one day to look for it?—Yes.

376. You did not apply for a bath?—No, sir.

377. Did you ever hear a man apply for a bath and not get one?—No, sir.

378. You were mess orderly out from Durban, you say?—Yes, sir.

379. And you saw me go round on inspection in the mornings?—Yes, sir.

380. And you heard me ask the men if they had any complaints?—Yes.

381. Did you hear the men make complaint?—Most of the men said the tucker was all right when you were there, but they used to complain during the meals.

382. I turned round and asked the whole room if there were any complaints?—Yes, sir.

383. No one made any complaint on any occasion?—No, sir.

384. If a man made a complaint it was remedied, as far as you know?—Yes, sir.

Acting Sergeant-Major HERBERT COLLINS sworn and examined. (No. 8.)

385. *The Chairman.*] Your name, please?—Herbert Collins.

386. You belonged to which contingent?—The Eighth, sir.

387. What rank did you hold?—Acting sergeant-major.

388. Are you willing to give evidence before the Commission?—Yes, sir.

389. Will you make a statement of what you wish to tell us about?—Well, as regards the hospital, I know nothing about it, with the exception of the case of two men who had measles, and they were paraded in front of the doctor, marked on the sick report as having measles, and marked for hospital. They did not go into the hospital, and they mixed up with the men in the mess-room, and remained there all that day, and one of them slept there that night.

390. When was this?—I could not tell you the date.

391. Did you complain about it?—I went to my own officer about it, Captain Fookes. He went to the medical authorities, and he got them to take the men to the hospital. I would prefer you to question me, if it makes no difference. Well, as to the sleeping-accommodation of the men, I do not think there was anything like sufficient room down below for the men; also the food was bad, and of a very poor quality; and also, as regards the promenade accommodation, there was not sufficient room.

392. Anything about the blankets?—The blankets, as far as I know, were lousy when they were issued, but I could not swear to it. I think the men had a fair amount of water; it was good. I consider the latrines were too small; the ventilation was bad. There was a fair quantity of food. Every man was allowed a pint of beer, drawn about 11 o'clock. I have no fault to find with it. It was not good beer by any means, but if they did not like it they need not take it.

393. You say the sleeping-accommodation was not sufficient?—No, sir; it was not sufficient.

394. What do you mean by "not sufficient"? Was there less than the transport regulations required, or less than you would have chosen to have?—Less than I would have chosen to have. There was no room for the men to sleep. They were closely packed in the hammocks, and they were sleeping on the floors and in the passages where we had to walk to the staircase.

395. Did each man have a hammock?—Every man was issued a hammock.

396. Why did they not hang them?—There was not room.

397. Were there sufficient hooks to hang the hammocks on?—Yes; there were hooks, but not sufficient to hang all the hammocks on.

398. Had you anything to do with the issue of the blankets?—No, sir.

399. You were regimental sergeant-major?—No; acting squadron sergeant-major.

400. Take your own blankets as an illustration: What did they look like when they were issued to you?—One looked clean, and the other the reverse—it looked soiled.

401. Bad in colour, or what?—Yes, sir.

402. Did any of the men make any complaint to you?—No.

403. When did you first discover lice on your blankets?—I never discovered any.

404. Were your blankets free all the time?—Yes.

405. To what do you attribute that yours were clean and others were not?—Luck, I suppose.

406. Did you take any trouble to get them cleaned, or were they cleaned without trouble?—We simply rolled them up in the hammocks before breakfast each morning, and they were then stacked in racks, and we got them again after tea.

407. I understand you to say that, although one of your blankets did not look clean, as far as you can guess it was free from lice?—Yes, sir.

408. How many suffered from lice on the way across?—About a third of the men.

409. Do you imagine that the other two-thirds of the blankets were free of lice then?—That I could not say, sir.

410. You think that two-thirds of the men were without lice?—I think so.

411. Do you think it reasonable to suppose that their blankets had no lice?—I suppose it is, sir.

412. How soon were complaints made about the blankets being lousy?—I suppose it would be a week after we embarked.

413. You did not hear of it before?—No, sir.

414. Is it probable that the men brought lice down with them from the veldt?—It is possible that some did, sir. I remember that plenty of the men were free when they came on board, and they complained of being lousy about a week after they got on board, and said they got it from the blankets.

415. Were the men commonly lousy on the veldt?—No, sir, not this time.

416. Did you bring the question of the blankets before anybody in your capacity as senior non-commissioned officer?—No, sir.

417. Was there official complaint made about them?—I do not know; I could not say.

418. You say the latrines were small?—Yes; after breakfast you would have to wait perhaps for an hour.

419. Do you know how many latrines there were—how many seats?—I should say there were about a dozen seats—that is, on our end of the ship. I do not know how many they had for the North Island section, but they used to come up and use ours.

420. Was there any complaint made to the officers about the latrines being insufficient?—Not that I know of.

421. Were they kept in fair condition?—Yes, sir.

422. In regard to the ventilation, which deck were you on?—I was on the first deck.

423. What means of ventilation had you?—No means of ventilation except what came down the companion-way. There were portholes, but we could not use them very often, as we had to keep them closed both sides.

424. Were there any windsails?—There were none on our deck.
425. Was there willingness on the part of the ship's officers to oblige in anything?—I think we had a difficulty in getting scrubbing-brushes for cleaning, and we had to scrub with the dust-brooms.
426. There were no applications for fresh means of ventilating?—Not that I know of.
427. The beer was not good?—No, sir.
428. Was it bad in quality?—It was very thick, and had not at all a nice taste.
429. Do you know the name of the maker?—Yes; Ind, Coope, and Co.
430. Are they a good firm of brewers?—I believe they are.
431. How much was issued to the men?—One pint.
432. Was there any drunkenness among the men?—There was the first day it was issued. They did not know how strong it was.
433. Was there any means of obtaining spirits from the ship's stores?—Not that I am aware of.
434. Did you purchase food from the stewards?—I did on several occasions.
435. How often did you buy food?—Twice on the voyage.
436. You knew there was an order against it?—I never heard of an order against it.
437. You only purchased food twice?—Yes.
438. Did you lose weight on the voyage?—I never weighed myself; but I certainly never gained. I did on the troopship before. I put on 14 lb.
439. *Mr. McNab.*] When was it that you say the case of measles was reported and not taken direct to the hospital?—I could not tell you the date.
440. Was it near the end or the beginning of the voyage?—It was the latter part.
441. Between here and Albany?—Yes, it was.
442. That was on your own deck?—Yes, sir.
443. How many on that same deck took measles afterwards?—I really do not remember; I should say there were two or three.
444. Do you remember the names of those men?—Yes; Purvis and Murphy were the men who had measles and were not admitted to the hospital at once.
445. And what were the names of the men who took measles after this incident?—Nicholson was one.
446. How long afterwards was it that he took measles?—Well, as far as I remember, four or five days.
447. You do not suggest that Nicholson got the measles from these two men after they had been detected and before they had been put in the hospital?—I could not say, sir.
448. It was only a matter of four or five days after?—To the best of my recollection.
449. And it was between here and Albany?—Yes, sir.
450. Was it between here and Melbourne?—I could not say.
451. The men were generally free from midday onwards?—Yes, sir.
452. Supposing, now, that I had been your squadron commander, and had wanted to turn out my squadron for an hour and a half for physical work in the afternoon, would the men have liked that, or rebelled at it?—I do not think so, sir. I do not think you would have had room to give it them.
453. Would the men have kicked against it?—I am sure they would not.
454. Did you ever hear any expressed desire for it?—No, sir.
455. What makes you think that the men would have welcomed it?—I speak for my own squadron; they would have done it.
456. Then, you think if they had been given hard drill every afternoon they would, without any trouble, have done the work?—I think so, sir.
457. You understand that I mean hard physical work to keep them in condition?—I think they would have done it.
458. *Mr. Millar.*] What was the quality of the meals that were issued to you: were you satisfied with the quality?—No; and the men were not satisfied with it.
459. What did they object to?—The quality of the meat.
460. Was it inferior?—Very inferior, sir.
461. Of your own personal knowledge, do you know if the cases were reported to the officers?—It was reported repeatedly to the orderly officer when he came round.
462. When complaints were made were attempts made to rectify them?—I do not know whether attempts were made, but there was no improvement in the meat until after we left Albany.
463. What was the fault with the meat?—Well, it was bad.
464. And yet it was continually issued and no attempt was made to rectify it until after leaving Albany?—Yes, that is right, sir; but it was not always bad.
465. In cases where bad meat was issued and the attention of the officer was drawn to it, did you get anything in substitution for it, or did you go without that meal?—After we left Albany we got bully beef.
466. Prior to your arrival at Albany, when the meat was so bad that it could not be eaten, was anything substituted for it?—Nothing was substituted. On rare occasions bully beef was issued.
467. Had men to go without meat on those occasions when it was too bad to be eaten?—I believe so, sir.
468. Was the meat the same as supplied to the officers?—I could not tell you that, sir.
469. Do you think it is likely that meat coming out of the same freezing-chamber day after day could be bad from one end of the ship to the other?—I think it is quite possible that the men who were working the meat would know by its appearance, and could pick out a good piece if they liked.



470. Have you ever been down in a freezing-chamber?—Yes, sir.

471. Do you think the men would stay down there and pick out the meat?—Not below, sir. They would take it up on deck and could pick it over there.

472. I understood you to say that one of the men reported as having measles slept amongst the men all that night after he had been marked?—Yes, sir.

473. Was the other man taken into the hospital at once?—He was taken up at 9 o'clock at night. The sergeant in charge of our troop-deck took him up to the hospital at 9 o'clock.

474. What doctor marked him for the hospital?—I could not tell you that, sir.

475. Whose duty was it to see that they went to the hospital?—The hospital orderly.

476. Did you ever come through the 'tween decks at night-time when the men were up in their hammocks?—On my own deck, yes, sir.

477. Was there much room to walk among the hammocks?—It took you about five minutes to get the length of this room for fear you stepped on somebody.

478. Were they touching one another in their hammocks?—Yes, sir.

479. How were the hammocks hung?—Fore and aft.

480. They would go pretty well across from side to side?—Yes.

481. Was there an alley-way to walk between them?—At the far end, yes.

482. You say that when the hammocks were swung they were touching each other?—Yes.

483. The men were lying on the floors and tables and in the alley-way to get to the companion?—Yes, sir.

484. And did that go on all the voyage?—More so in the latter part of the voyage. In the early part some of the men used to sleep on deck.

485. You said there was not enough deck-space?—No, sir.

486. How much space was there in the promenade deck reserved for officers and non-commissioned officers?—Well, there were two promenade decks reserved for the officers. I should say they were about 25 to 30 yards long and about 4 yards wide.

487. If that promenade deck had been given to the men, do you think it would have given sufficient room for the men as an exercise-ground?—Well, it would have made a very big difference.

488. Supposing one side had been kept for the officers and the lee side for the troopers, do you think that would have given sufficient room for the men to exercise themselves and to walk about?—It would have given a great deal more room, anyhow, because the decks they were on were always wet from morning till night.

489. Would it be too cold to promenade on the upper deck?—Certainly not.

490. During the bulk of the voyage they could have used it?—Yes, sir, they could. On account of the small accommodation they had to promenade in there was no room to sit down, and the men used to get tired of standing and they would go below; and, being down there in the foul air, no wonder some men got sick. I stood on the decks until my legs ached.

491. When all hands were upon deck there was not room for the men to walk round—they simply had to stand about?—Yes; they had to stand along the sides, as there was no room for people to pass. They were always carrying meat and vegetables, and as the passage was very narrow you had to get close up to the deckhouse to let them pass by.

492. Whose duty did you consider it was to attend to the ventilation of the lower holds?—I should say it was the duty of the commanding officer on his inspection to see to it.

493. According to the evidence we have had, the commanding officer generally went round at 11 o'clock in the forenoon?—Yes, sir.

494. Well, at that time the place would have had a fair chance to get ventilated?—It always looked best then—it had just been cleaned up.

495. Did you ever see the temperature taken on any of the lower decks?—No, sir.

496. Do you think they could form any idea of the temperature without taking the temperature?—Not unless they came down at night.

497. Do you consider that, in your opinion, the overcrowding and bad ventilation indirectly developed disease?—Certainly I do, sir.

498. *The Chairman.*] Was inspection constantly made by the regimental officers of the troop-decks?—Yes, sir.

499. There was care taken in the carrying-out of the duties by the officers?—To the cleanliness of the rooms, yes, sir.

500. Did you say you did not know what doctor reported the measles case?—I do not know, sir.

501. What do you know of your own knowledge about it?—Well, I saw the sick trooper myself, and I saw he was marked as having measles, and was to go into hospital. Later in the afternoon I saw them down in the mess-room.

502. Were the sick paraded by a non-commissioned officer?—Yes, sir.

503. Was it not their duty to see that they went to the hospital?—No, sir. He simply had to parade them, and get a report from the doctor.

504. Have you any idea why they did not go to the hospital?—Well, I believe there was not sufficient accommodation. I believe they were enlarging the hospital at the time, as the accommodation was not sufficient.

505. I should like you to be able to charge your memory when this happened?—I do not know, sir, for certain.

506. Was it after you left Melbourne?—I could not say; I fancy it was between Albany and Melbourne.

507. Supposing we had evidence that the hospital was never full up to a certain date—it is important that we should get your evidence as to this point?—I am afraid I have nothing definite to say.

508. *Colonel Davies.*] Can you give me the names of any officers to whom complaints were made—proper reasonable complaints—and no notice was taken of them?—No; I do not remember the names of the officers. I only know that I heard complaints made to the orderly officers repeatedly about the quality of the meat.

509. You do not know whether these complaints were investigated or not?—I could not say, sir.

510. You say you had to stand on the deck, and that your feet were always wet?—Yes, sir.

511. You were a non-commissioned officer?—Yes, sir.

512. Why did you not go on to the non-commissioned officers' deck?—Because it was too exposed.

513. During the greater part of the voyage is it not a fact that it was only comfortable on one side of the ship: on the other side it was wet and windy?—I do not think it was wet and windy on both sides.

514. Did you ever see the non-commissioned officers' part of the promenade deck so crowded that they could not sit on the lee side?—Yes, I think so.

515. You saw the regiments mustered on the two sides of the promenade deck?—Yes, sir.

516. One side would only just about hold one regiment standing up?—Yes; that is right, sir.

517. What would have been the effect if all the men had been allowed to go up on that promenade deck: do not you think it would have been just as bad as the other part of the ship?—No, sir, because a certain number would have remained below, and they would have had room to move.

518. Do you remember the time we had sports and a concert on the deck that only a limited number could get on, and there was no room for the men to sit even?—The majority of the men I saw there were sitting down.

519. Sitting down on the deck—we could not accommodate more than a certain portion of them?—I never saw it overcrowded like that. The men I saw there always had sufficient room to sit, but all the men were not there.

520. Did you ever hear of any application being made for further ventilation?—No, sir.

521. You say that this case of measles happened when the hospital was being enlarged?—Yes, sir.

522. That was between Melbourne and New Zealand?—I do not know, sir.

523. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] About these cases of measles: How do you know they had measles?—He was marked on the sick report.

524. Were they marked on the face?—Murphy was, sir.

525. How did you come to see the report?—It was always shown to the squadron sergeant-major.

526. Did you ever hear of a man being marked for hospital not being admitted at once?—I heard of Purvis's case.

527. You do not know what doctor marked him?—No, I do not.

528. Do you think this happened before we left Melbourne?—I do not know, sir.

529. It was at the time the hospital accommodation was being increased?—Yes, sir.

530. *Captain Lewin.*] You say that, in your estimation, about one-third of the men were lousy on board?—Yes, sir.

531. Well, did you hear of any men being lousy on the veldt?—I did, sir.

532. Are you aware that these men brought fresh clothes on board?—In the case of my own squadron they did. I ordered one man to get fresh clothes and to have a bath.

533. He got a thoroughly clean suit of everything?—He had clean underclothing, and he had a bath.

534. Would that clean the men?—In some cases it would.

535. Did all the men do that?—I did not order them all to do it; it was only one case I knew of.

536. Presumably some of those men came on board lousy?—I believe there were, sir.

537. You understand how the hammocks were stored?—Yes, sir.

538. They were all put away together. Do you think it possible that if one man had made his blankets lousy it would contaminate the others?—Certainly I do, in time.

539. You did not notice the lice for a week or so?—Not for about a week or so.

540. Are you aware whether the men slept in the same hammocks every night?—Some of them did not.

541. They might have taken up other men's hammocks?—Yes, sir.

542. So that if a man was lousy he would contaminate another hammock, in the same way a clean man would be contaminated?—Some of the men lost their hammocks and then took what hammocks they could get.

543. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] In the second case of the measles did it not occur to you to report it to me?—No, it was not my duty. I believe my officer went to you, and this man was then ordered to go straight to the hospital.

544. He was admitted as soon as reported to me?—I believe he was.

545. *Mr. McNab.*] Who was the officer to whom you reported?—Captain Fookes.

Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant MICHAEL McDONNELL examined on oath. (No. 9.)

546. *The Chairman.*] Which contingent do you belong to?—The Eighth Contingent, No. 1 regiment.

547. Did you belong to any contingent before?—I belonged to the Jubilee Contingent. I have been in the Commonwealth.

548. Not been before in South Africa?—No.

549. What rank do you hold?—Regimental quartermaster-sergeant.

550. Can you give us any evidence as to the blankets, the insufficient food, the water, accommodation of the men, and such matters on board the "Britannic"? Are you here to make any complaints?—No, sir. I was asked to come to this inquiry and state what I know about the food and the sanitary condition of the ship.

551. Had you to do with the issue of the blankets?—Yes.

552. Did they pass through your hands when issued at Durban?—Yes; I saw every blanket issued.

553. Were they in good or bad condition?—In good condition.

554. Did you look at them with a critical eye to see their condition?—I looked at every blanket there.

555. Did you believe them to be free from vermin?—Yes; they smelt quite fresh, and some of them were new.

556. Had there been vermin in them would you have discovered that?—Yes. They were white blankets, and as I had been in a troopship before I would look at them carefully.

557. You believe these blankets were free from vermin?—Yes, I do.

558. How did the hammocks seem?—They were clean.

559. Did they pass through your hands?—Yes.

560. And they had all the appearance of being fresh and clean?—Yes.

561. Did you take any particular notice of the ship when you went on board at Durban?—I went round the ship next morning. I only arrived on board late at night as I was returning stores at Durban.

562. Where did you issue the blankets?—Down in the store on the ship.

563. Had you any means of knowing how long the blankets had been used before?—No.

564. When you went round the ship next morning what appearance did she present?—The ship was clean enough, but you cannot expect everything after the first night at sea.

565. Was the ship herself clean, apart from other matters connecting with starting?—Yes.

566. Did you issue the sand and brooms, or was it the ship's work?—I had to draw them.

567. Was there any difficulty in getting sufficient sand and brooms?—There was no difficulty in getting them, but they seemed rather short of sand at the finish.

568. What do you mean by "at the finish"?—After we left Melbourne we could not get sand.

569. Had you to do with the issue of rations?—Yes.

570. Getting the meat out of the freezing-place?—That was done by the ship.

571. When did it first come under your observation?—In the butcher's shop every morning.

572. Was it weighed out?—Yes, before a butcher who was told off for the men.

573. One of your own men?—Yes.

574. What was the ration?—About  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. a day.

575. Used you to examine the meat?—Yes, every day.

576. What was the quality of the meat: was it well-grown meat or was it an inferior sample?—Some of the meat was tainted a little on the outside.

577. How often?—About twice or three times a week. Sometimes it would be a little green, but that would be taken away, and no meat passed without its being examined by the officers, and also by an experienced butcher whom we told off.

578. Was any meat put into consumption that, in your opinion, was unfit for human consumption?—No, sir; on no occasion that I saw.

579. Did the medical officer and the veterinary officer attend every day at the inspection of the meat?—Yes, every day.

580. They were attentive?—They went through every piece of meat. I was there on every occasion.

581. You think both the officer of the day and the sergeant saw that no meat was issued except what was good?—Yes.

582. You do not think they were lax in their duty on some occasions?—No, sir.

583. Do you consider there was an ample supply of meat?—I do.

584. Did you have any complaints made to you officially that the meat was insufficient in quantity or bad in quality?—Yes.

585. Did you report that?—Yes.

586. To whom?—To the officer of the day, and sometimes to the chief steward, and then they got corned beef.

587. Do you mean when the meat was unsatisfactory you could get other meat?—Yes.

588. Do you think there was any case in which men went without meat through it being bad?—If it was so it was their own fault.

589. Do you know any instance in which an appeal to a higher authority failed to get relief?—No.

590. Sure of that?—Yes.

591. How much bread did they get?—A pound a day.

592. Biscuits?—The biscuits were put in barrels on the deck in any quantity, and the men could help themselves.

593. Were they good?—Yes; and if there were any bad casks of biscuits you had only to report it to the storekeeper and get another.

594. What was the cause of their badness?—They were damp once; they seemed to be dry and none of them wet, nor was there any mildew, but they had no flavour.

595. Were they clean?—Yes, very clean.

596. You had no difficulty in replacing them when the defect was pointed out?—No.

597. Did the men get anything besides bread and meat?—They had jam every day.
598. How much?—About 2 oz. or 3 oz. of jam per man.
599. Any butter?—They had butter twice a week.
600. Good butter?—Yes.
601. Was it bad on any occasion?—I never saw it bad.
602. Besides jam and butter, did they have anything else?—They had cheese once a week.
603. Pudding?—Every day.
604. What kind?—Plum-pudding and sago alternate days, and rice on others.
605. Apples?—They had them once, but the men would not eat them.
606. Why?—They had a sort of grub in them, and the men would not take them.
607. How often did they have them?—Only once.
608. Was there rice with them?—No, not that day.
609. What did they have for breakfast?—Irish stew, and twice a week a good ration of bacon.
610. What ration?—About two slices per man.
611. Any vegetables?—Potatoes.
612. Were they good?—They were good.
613. What size?—They were a nice size—about the ordinary potatoes we grow here.
614. Do you know anything about the water-supply?—It was good water. Of course, the men could not have water whenever they wanted it.
615. Not to drink?—No.
616. How often could they get it?—Whenever they wanted it; but there was a man in charge of it, and sometimes they could not get it.
617. Was the water ever bad?—No; or if it was it was remedied.
618. Was there any complaint of an insufficient supply for drinking?—No.
619. What allowance was there per man for washing?—The men went and got a basin full.
620. Was there any reason why a man could not get a wash?—No, unless he shut himself up in his hammock and the water was closed off.
621. Were there sufficient utensils for the men to get a wash before the water was shut off?—Yes.
622. When was it shut off?—About 8 o'clock.
623. When was it put on?—About 6 o'clock.
624. Can you tell us about the space? Were there hooks for every hammock on board?—Yes.
625. Sure of that?—Yes.
626. Then, if a man lay on the floor it was because he did not choose to hang his hammock on to the hooks?—Yes.
627. Quite sure?—Yes.
628. How far apart were they?—About 2 ft. 6 in. apart.
629. I wish you to be particularly careful about that. Of course, you can only speak from memory; but do you think they were 2 ft. apart?—Yes.
630. And that there was room for every man to hang a hammock if he chose?—Yes.
631. Did you visit the 'tween decks and the lower decks on many occasions?—Every day.
632. During the night?—Sometimes I walked round them at night.
633. Was the atmosphere foetid?—It did not seem bad, although the men were always down there at night-time. I did not see any difference from other ships.
634. Do you know much about ships?—Well, I was in close proximity with the other men when we went Home with the Jubilee Contingent.
635. Was the ventilation fair in the lower deck—which, of course, was the worse deck?—It was very fair. There were two windsails there.
636. Had you much wind during the voyage?—Yes.
637. Enough to make the current pretty strong through the windsails?—Yes.
638. Had you any complaint from any man about the insufficiency of windsails and ventilation?—No.
639. The 'tween decks was well ventilated?—Yes, because the air came direct down through the gangway.
640. Were the ports often open?—No; they were not open between Durban and Albany.
641. What was the ventilation?—It was through the hatchway.
642. Were there two openings into it?—Yes; one through the hatch, and the other through the alley-way.
643. Were they far apart?—No; they were side by side.
644. Was the ship constantly cleaned?—Every day.
645. As much so as on your Jubilee trip Home?—Yes, I think the "Britannic" was kept very clean.
646. Do you know anything about the hospital accommodation?—No.
647. *Mr. McNab.*] On your Jubilee trip what would be the routine work that the men had to do during the day?—We used to drill morning and afternoon.
648. There was enough room on that ship to drill on the deck?—Yes; there were a lot of passengers on board, but we were always able to make room to drill.
649. Do you not think that kept the men in better fettle?—Yes, they were all the better for it.
650. It kept you from getting despondent and moping about?—Yes.
651. You mentioned about the biscuits being bad: were they ever condemned on account of their being creeping with maggots?—No, sir; I never heard of it.
652. It was just the appearance?—The biscuits as a rule were brown, but those condemned were white and tasteless.

653. It would be on your report to your superior officer that he would be satisfied that the condition of the blankets was good when they came on board?—Yes.

654. You took every reasonable precaution to see they were in a clean state?—Yes.

655. And you reported that to your officer?—Yes.

656. Do you know that after you left, and when the voyage commenced, lice developed in the blankets?—Yes.

657. What explanation can you give of the matter—that is to say, of the origin of the lice?—The only thing I think was that the men brought them with them. I know perfectly well that in coming down in the train from Newcastle I saw men take their shirts off and shake the lice out of them. I was in the same truck with them and saw it.

658. It was no fault of those controlling the supply of blankets that the lice appeared in the blankets after you left?—No, sir, as far as I could see.

659. And you were in a position to see?—Yes; I issued the blankets.

660. *Mr. Millar.*] In connection with the water, a man who did not get washed before 8 o'clock did not get washed at all?—The water was put on again for an hour or an hour and a half.

661. Was it on for an hour in the morning and for an hour and a half in the midday for washing?—Yes.

662. At what part of the voyage was water given to the men to wash their clothes?—I think it was after we left Albany, but I would not be sure at what part of the voyage.

663. Do you not think the men would have a better chance of keeping themselves clean if they had a certain amount of water to wash their clothes?—If a man washed his clothes before he came on board he did not want to wash them every week.

664. Were the clothes clean when they came from the veldt?—That I could not say.

665. Would it be likely that the men would go on board ship, after coming down the whole way from the veldt, with a clean stock of clothes?—No, I do not think they would.

666. Then, probably their clothes were dirty when they came on board?—Yes, a certain amount of them.

667. I suppose no such thing as salt-water soap was issued to the men?—No, sir.

668. You gave evidence that bacon was sometimes given for breakfast: was there sufficient for the whole lot?—Sometimes it would be short, because it was impossible to cut up bacon for a thousand men accurately.

669. Was it possible for any member of the contingents to say that bacon was not given?—No.

670. If a man gave evidence that neither bacon nor cheese was ever served out, that evidence would be wrong?—Yes; but he might have been away when it was given.

671. During a twenty-eight-days voyage was it possible he did not see the bacon?—It is scarcely possible. I saw it served out.

672. Was there a sergeants' mess on board the "Britannic"?—Yes.

673. Where?—On the troop-deck.

674. Separate from the men?—Yes, as regards the mess. The men were alongside of them.

675. Do you think that tends to promote discipline amongst men?—No, I do not think so.

676. That the sergeants should mess along with the men?—They did not mess along with the men.

677. But they were amongst the men all the time?—Yes.

678. Do you think such a thing is likely to promote good discipline?—Of course, it would be better if they were separate.

679. In your own experience, did the sergeants mess along with the troops?—No; they had separate accommodation.

680. You said they were quite as crowded in the other troopship you went in as in this one?—Yes.

681. But still you admit they had sufficient room in the other ship to have a separate mess for the sergeants?—Yes; but there were a smaller number of men there. It was altogether different from this.

682. When you went Home you drilled forenoon and afternoon?—Yes.

683. So you had plenty of space?—Yes.

684. Could you have drilled these contingents twice a day if you wanted to?—I suppose it would be a hard matter.

685. Was there much room to spare on deck when they were all on deck?—No.

686. Do you think that the officers took that proper interest in the men which it was their duty to do?—I certainly think so.

687. You stated that two windsails went into the lower deck?—Yes.

688. Does that refer to the whole length of the ship?—There were two decks forward and two aft, and there were two windsails forward and two aft.

689. Where did they go?—Right down below.

690. How was the wind coming from Durban?—On the beam generally.

691. Is it not generally pretty well aft in coming from Durban?—Not this time. It was more inclined to be on the beam.

692. You know that if the wind was blowing in the same direction as the ship was going you would not get the same current of air as if you were steaming against it?—I know, sir.

693. How do you imagine there was any ventilation in the lower deck forward?—Through the windsails.

694. How far away from the current of air would be the furthest bunk?—About 40 ft.

695. That was from the companion-way?—Yes; the hatch went straight down by the bulk-head.

696. How much would it be in the troop-deck?—In the forward troop-deck the bulkhead went straight down. The other two decks were right away aft.

697. What length would there be in the aft decks?—They were pretty well down in the centre—not quite in the centre, but nearly so.

698. You were down on several nights and did not find the atmosphere stuffy?—I was not down long enough.

699. Do you know of any attempt to ascertain the atmosphere in these decks?—I do not know.

700. You are of opinion the officers took a proper interest in the men?—As far as the part of the ship I was in they did. When complaints were made to the officers the matter was inquired into and rectified.

701. Did you see much drunkenness on board, either in the saloon or below?—I did not.

702. Any gambling?—I did not see much; the men who gambled kept to themselves.

703. You did not know of it to your own knowledge?—No, sir.

704. *Colonel Davies.*] When you say you issued the blankets at Durban, did you issue them to the whole of the men in the ship?—Yes.

705. One non-commissioned officer said he had to stand up all day long on the main deck. You know that a certain part of the deck was set apart for the non-commissioned officers, and they also had a part of the promenade deck: was it ever so crowded that there was no room for a non-commissioned officer to sit down?—Never.

706. You never saw a day when they could not get on the lee side and sit down?—Never, when I was there.

707. Had the non-commissioned officers room enough to play quoits on their own deck?—Yes.

708. Do you think there was any complaint made to an officer or to a non-commissioned officer that was not rectified at once?—No, sir.

709. Or any complaint of the food?—None.

710. Was there any reason why any men should have gone on board that boat lousy? Had they not ample time at Newcastle to wash and clean themselves?—Yes, plenty of time, because they had a stream running alongside.

711. Plenty of water and ample opportunity?—Yes.

712. No reason why a man should go on board the boat dirty?—No. I know that many men washed themselves and their clothes.

713. Was not the sergeants' mess partitioned off from the men?—Yes; there was a screen put up.

714. *Captain Lewin.*] How many men were there in the Jubilee Contingent?—About fifty.

715. And how many in the Commonwealth?—About a hundred and eighty. I would not be sure.

Trooper McGOVERIN examined on oath.\* (No. 10.)

716. *The Chairman.*] What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

717. What rank?—Trooper.

718. You sent your name and address to the Commission as being anxious to give evidence: will you be good enough to make any statement you wish to make?—I have no statement to make. I will answer your questions.

719. It is impossible for the Commission to know what you want to speak about: you can either tell us whether you have complaints to make or praise to give, and we shall be happy to hear you?—Well, I have no praise to give.

720. Do you think the troops were badly treated on board the "Britannic"?—There were too many on board the boat, and some of the food was not at all too good.

721. Will you kindly be specific? "Not too good" will scarcely convey what we want: was the food too bad?—It was so bad I could not eat it—that was, the food served out to the troops; because there was other food which I bought from the cooks, and which kept me going.

722. What part of the food was bad?—The tea and the coffee were horrible; and, as for the meat, I did not know what to make of it at all.

723. Any other food?—There was fish there lying on the deck for a time, and the dogs went and pump-shipped on it. I did not see the troopers get that to eat, but it was said they did.

724. Have you anything else you can suggest? Were you ever in the hospital?—I was not.

725. Do you know anything about the hospital?—No, nothing at all.

726. Will you inform the Commission a little more particularly upon these points—we want to get specific allegations about them?—Well, sir, I cannot say.

727. You say there were too many on board?—Yes.

728. What do you mean?—They were sleeping down below, and they were too thick. They were sleeping on the tables and underneath the tables, and it was too hot.

729. Was that too many for comfort or too many for transport?—For comfort.

730. Do you know the transport regulations?—No.

731. Do you know whether there were more men on board than there should be under the transport regulations?—I do not know. I only know that there were too many for comfort.

732. Did you consider yourself an Imperial soldier, or a colonial soldier, or what? Who paid you?—I got my pay from the captain.

733. Did the Colonial Government find the money or did the Imperial Government find it?—I could not tell you.

\* This evidence was sent to witness to revise, but was not returned.

734. Do you know under whose authority you were—the Imperial authority or the colonial?—So far as I know, we were under the Imperial.
735. Then, were you under Imperial or colonial regulations?—I could not say.
736. You say it was too hot down below?—Yes.
737. Did anybody take the temperature there: was there any record of how hot it was?—No. I only know we used to rush up on deck to get a breath of fresh air and to get cool.
738. Any ventilation in the 'tween decks?—Only through the gangway and the portholes.
739. No windsails?—None.
740. You say the food was not too good: do you mean that the meat was bad?—As far as I know, the meat was bad. I could not eat it.
741. Why not?—Some of it was raw, and the smell was bad.
742. Was it good or was it bad when it was served out?—It looked bad.
743. How?—It was of a greenish colour.
744. Were the men obliged to eat that meat?—I do not know. I never ate it, and I used to complain every time.
745. Was it green when cooked?—It was green after it was cooked, and when it was cooked.
746. Were complaints made about the quality of the meat?—Yes; there were nearly always complaints.
747. To whom?—To the orderly officer.
748. Did he endeavour to remedy it?—I could not say. We got bully beef a couple of times after the complaint.
749. Was that in substitution for the bad meat?—Yes.
750. Then, the men were not obliged to eat the bad meat?—No.
751. Was there any occasion when the meat was bad and it was reported, and no effort made to put it right?—I think there was.
752. Do you know when?—I could not say.
753. Do you know the officer to whom the complaint was made?—Complaints were made to nearly all the officers.
754. We want to get at some person who neglected his duty. We shall then have something to go on; but if you speak in this general way we cannot get at it?—I could not say to which officer complaints were made. There were complaints nearly every day.
755. How soon did you commence to buy from the cooks?—I began to buy when we were three days out.
756. What did they supply you with?—With potatoes and vegetables, and a bun and a cup of tea now and then.
757. Was the meat the same as that supplied to the officers?—I could not say. I never ate meat on board, except bully beef.
758. What did you have for breakfast?—We seldom had any breakfast at all. I used to get up between 12 and 2 o'clock in the night and have a bun and a cup of tea.
759. No breakfast?—Hardly any breakfast.
760. When was the next meal?—At 7 o'clock in the evening.
761. What was it?—Some sort of stew.
762. Stewed in the cooks' galley?—Yes.
763. You say the tea and coffee were horrible?—I never touched them. They came out of the same boiler that the meat was boiled in.
764. How do you know the coffee was horrible?—I could smell it.
765. What does "horrible" mean? Do you mean that it was dirty?—Well, it looked pretty filthy.
766. Could you not go a little closer than that? Was there anything special to draw your attention to it?—Well, the tea was greasy.
767. Why was that?—I cannot say. Whether it was boiled in the same boiler as the meat, I do not know.
768. As to the fish being left lying on the deck, did that occur frequently?—I only saw it once.
769. Were the men compelled to eat that fish?—I do not know.
770. Was there a complaint made about it?—Yes, there was a complaint.
771. Were the men told they must eat it or go without?—Some of them took the fish on deck and showed it to Colonel Davies, but I do not know whether anything was done.
772. Did you see the dogs pump-ship over it?—Yes.
773. Then what happened to it?—It was still lying on the deck.
774. Was this an every-day occurrence?—No. It only happened once.
775. Do you think it is likely the men would be told they must eat it?—No; I suppose they would please themselves.
776. Would not other food be substituted for it?—The men who made the complaint would get bully beef. I think they were given bully beef instead of the fish.
777. And the bread, how was it?—It was good bread. It was very good.
778. And the biscuits?—Well, I never ate a biscuit on the boat.
779. Do you know that the men got biscuits?—There was a barrel of biscuits on the deck.
780. And were the men allowed to take them?—Yes.
781. Were they decent biscuits?—They looked right enough.
782. About the accommodation for the men: do you know what width the hammock-hooks were apart?—I could not say exactly, but I think they were about 2 ft. apart.
783. Do you think it would be as much as 2 ft.?—That would be the outside. I know when the hammocks were hanging they were all overlapping one another.
784. Were there enough hooks for every hammock to be hung?—I could not tell you. Some of the hooks were broken.

785. But, apart from that, were the men compelled to sleep upon the deck because they could not hang a hammock?—I could not say. I always had a hammock; but whenever you got out of your hammock you were sure to step upon some man who was sleeping on the deck below.

786. Was there not room to hang the hammocks if the men chose?—I could not say.

787. With regard to the lice, did the blankets seem clean to you when they were issued to you at Durban?—They seemed clean. I could not say they were clean, because when I got on board it was dark.

788. How soon did the lice appear after leaving?—They got to me on the first night.

789. Do you think you brought them down with you from the veldt?—No; I never found one on me on the veldt.

790. What steps did you take to clean the blankets?—We had not much time for that.

791. What were you doing?—It was not that, but when we got up we had to put the blankets down below.

792. Did you report to the officer that your blankets were lousy and you wanted to clean them?—No.

793. *Mr. McNab.*] How many men were there at each mess?—There were eleven, or twelve, or thirteen.

794. And you were told off to the tables?—Yes.

795. How many were there at your table?—Twelve.

796. Can you give me the names of the twelve at your table?—Budge, Finlay, P. Kavanagh, Pocock, two Mansons, Rose, Cuthbert. I cannot think of any more.

797. Are any of these outside now?—No. Mellor is there, but he was at the next table to me, not the same table.

798. Do I understand you to say that you got your meals from the cook at 2 a.m. and 7 p.m.?—Between 12 at night and 2 in the morning I got a meal.

799. What meals between 2 a.m. and 7 p.m.?—A cup of tea and a sandwich.

800. What did you pay for that?—1s. each time.

800A. How much in all did you pay to the cook?—I could not say exactly, but it was from £2 8s. to £2 10s. I allowed myself two bob a day.

801. *Mr. Millar.*] I think you said you found the heat very great down below at night-time?—Yes.

802. You said you used then to go up on deck?—We used to go up and get cool.

803. To your knowledge, were there many men who did the same thing?—I do not know.

804. Did you see others go up?—Yes, others went up.

805. Is it not very possible and probable that during the time they were on deck coming out of the heated atmosphere they got cold?—Yes; I got my cold from going on deck.

806. A man coming from the hold and going up on deck would be very liable to get a chill when he got into the cold weather?—I dare say he would.

807. Do you know if there are any of those who caught cold on board ship in this way who are over on *Somes Island* now?—I cannot say from my own knowledge.

808. Do you think that sufficient attention was paid to the ventilation down below?—Well, I should think there ought to have been another windsail put down into our deck. It would have been much cooler if that was done.

809. Do you suppose that any of the officers who were supposed to be in charge down below could have ascertained the state of the atmosphere there?—I think they could have put a wind-sail down.

810. When you got up did you ever see any officer go through the 'tween decks—I mean when you got up at night to get your meal?—I never saw one then. When I was on duty I used to see them.

811. At what hour?—On the night I was on duty I saw Captain Fookes. He went round about 8 o'clock.

812. When did the men turn in?—About half-past 6 o'clock.

813. The majority would be in their bunks at 8 o'clock?—Yes.

814. Did any officer go round at midnight?—No.

815. You yourself were often up at midnight?—Yes, nearly every night.

816. *Colonel Davies.*] Did you go in the "Cornwall"?—Yes.

817. What squadron were you attached to?—E squadron.

818. Who commanded it?—Captain Fookes.

819. You said you heard complaints: do you mean ordinary growls?—No; complaints to officers. I made complaints myself.

820. To whom?—To Captain Fookes.

821. Can you tell me any occasion on which you made a complaint and no remedy was given?—No, I cannot.

822. Was it when he came round that you made the complaint?—Yes.

823. Were you ever there when I went round the decks below?—No, I never saw you down there.

824. Where were you mess orderly? Was it between Durban and Albany?—I was mess orderly when we were going into Albany. I was mess orderly for six days, and I started just before we got in.

825. Did you make any complaint to any officer whom you can name who took no notice of your complaints at the time they were made?—No.

826. Did you make a complaint to any particular officer that was not remedied?—I cannot say, sir. I made a complaint, and he took me up to the cook-house and made them change the meat that I had complained of.



827. You say when you made the complaint to an officer he took you to the cook-house and gave you more food?—He gave us more.

828. And then you say you were not satisfied?—I do not say I was not satisfied.

829. Were you satisfied that he did what he could for you?—We had to be satisfied, I suppose.

830. Why?—I thought it was enough, such as it was.

831. What was the complaint to the officer?—That there was not enough stew.

832. You say that you complained that there was not enough, and the officer took you to the cook-house and got you more?—A little more.

833. You said you considered it enough?—They reckoned it was enough.

834. Did they go away satisfied?—I went up with the officer and he got us some more, and we had to be satisfied with that.

835. When you were mess orderly did you not see that there was sufficient for the mess?—No; I just took what they gave me.

836. That is to say, you bought your own food and did not care much about your mess-mates?—No.

837. *Captain Lewin.*] You say you gave these cooks 1s. for a cup of tea and a bun?—They sent me down potatoes and something else.

838. Did they not give you meat?—I never took meat on the boat.

839. Did other men get meat from the cooks' galley?—Yes.

840. They got good meat, I suppose?—I could not tell whether it was good or not.

841. Was it better than the men got?—I could not say. I never troubled about it.

842. *The Chairman.*] Was the crew fed from the same galley as the troops?—I could not say.

Trooper CHARLES WILLIAM DODD examined on oath. (No. 11.)

843. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of any contingent?—The Eighth New Zealand.

844. What was your rank?—Trooper.

845. Were you in either of the other contingents?—No, sir.

846. You sent up your name and address as being willing to give evidence before this Commission: will you be good enough to inform the Commission what you wish to say?—Well, I do not know anything about the hospital. I was in the troop galley assisting the cook. Sometimes the meat was all right, and at other times it was pretty bad and half-cooked. That happened on several occasions. Of course, I used to tell the cooks, and they used to say it was quite good enough for the "dogs," and they said when they took the Tommies over they had far worse than that. The tea was not fit to drink. They used to make two half-boilers of tea and filled them up with cold water, and it was the same with the soup. Then, with regard to those preserves and the apples: the apples were alive with maggots, many crawling over them. Of course, the troopers would never eat them. Then, the rice was all mouldy. Then, there was fish: the fish were left on the deck. Of course, the dogs used to run about and do what they liked on the fish, and the fish was brought in and shoved into the boiler. Of course, the troops would not eat it, and bully beef was given instead. The same boilers were used for the tea as were used for the meat, and the other boilers were not half cleaned. The steam was turned on, and then the tea was put in and it was boiled. There was no room to hang the hammocks down in our lot—the H squadron. It was completely crowded down there. I think that is about all. I do not know anything about the hospital or anything like that. I was always well myself during the voyage.

847. *The Chairman.*] What complaints have you about the water?—There are several complaints. Sometimes the water was off. It was off pretty often, and you had to wait for water. I think that is about all.

848. What were your duties in the troop galley?—I used to go there and lend a hand in many things.

849. Were you employed in the troop galley: how did you get there?—I only went of my own free-will.

850. Were you ordered there?—No; I went of my own free-will.

851. Did you go every day?—Yes; from half-past 6 in the morning till 8 at night.

852. When you saw all this bad making of tea did you never take any steps to remedy it?—I just told the cook; and he said it was good enough for the men, and the Tommies had the same.

853. Did you bring it under the notice of the officers?—Yes; my own captain was one, and once or twice to Captain Haselden.

854. Did you report this to him?—No, I did not report it. There was plenty of reporting as it was. The troopers never had half enough to eat, and they used to come to the butcher's shop and get bully beef.

855. Did they always get it?—Not always; but they got it sometimes.

856. You think there was not enough meat served out to the men?—No, not by a long way.

857. Have you any idea how much was served out to each man?—I could not tell you exactly, but there were joints cooked for fourteen or twenty men.

858. You think the men did not get enough rations?—No.

859. They did not get anything like 1 lb. a day?—No.

860. Did you help the cooks?—Yes. The meat and potatoes came along and were shoved into the boiler and the steam turned on.

861. Did you have the turning-on of the steam?—Yes.

862. Did the men ever get baked meat?—No; always boiled or stewed.

863. You say sometimes the meat was good and sometimes bad?—Yes.

864. How often bad?—Pretty often. The men used to complain about it.

865. Was it bad once a week?—Yes; sometimes more.
866. In what way was it bad?—It was green when it came into the cook's shop.
867. Was this beef or mutton?—All beef.
868. Was the mutton all right?—The mutton was pretty fair.
869. How often was the beef issued?—It might be issued perhaps four or five times following, and then you would have mutton next day.
870. Did they get more of beef than of mutton?—More beef.
871. When the beef was only half-cooked, did you remonstrate with the cook?—I told him about it.
872. Why did you remain in the galley, where everything was so bad?—Simply because I preferred going there and be working, and I could get my meals from the officers' galley. I got pretty well looked after by the chef of the officers' galley.
873. Then, you looked after yourself rather than after the men?—Well, I was working there.
874. But it was purely voluntary on your part?—Yes.
875. The tea also was bad?—Yes, awfully bad.
876. It was filled up with cold water: was that to make it drinkable?—There would be two boilers for the tea, and they would be half filled with hot water, and then filled up after with cold and boiled.
877. How long would it take to boil the cold water with the steam-jet?—We would have the cold water in about 2 o'clock, and it would be boiled at half-past 3. Then we shoved in the tea, and after an interval of about fifteen minutes the milk was put in and the sugar.
878. Did they have vegetables with their meat?—Yes; they would get some of these desiccated vegetables and put them in with the meat and boil them, and then they would fill it up with cold water.
879. Do you think the officers paid attention to the complaints made to them?—Yes, as far as I saw. They would come into the galley and ask the cook, "What is the meaning of this?" and have it altered.
880. Who was to blame for the condition of the food given to the men?—I suppose it would be the Government to blame. The officer would come along about fifteen minutes before the meat was served out, and the cook would cut off a piece from the edge—the best part—and in the middle it was only half-cooked.
881. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—I was barman at Searl's Hotel.
882. You saw the stewed apples, and you say there were maggots in them?—Yes.
883. How often did the men have them?—About three or four times on the voyage.
884. Were they always maggoty?—I could not say so, but these were fairly bad.
885. They had them on three or four occasions, and they were bad on one?—Yes.
886. Were any complaints made or any steps taken to remedy that?—Yes; a complaint was made, and a man came to the slide and chucked the apples at the cook's head.
887. But that was not a complaint. Was there any complaint made to the officers about the stewed apples?—That is all I know about it.
888. How often did they have rice?—I really forget. No doubt it was pretty often.
889. We were told they had rice very seldom indeed: was that correct?—I could not say for certain.
890. Did they have it more than once?—Oh, yes. It had got damp and mouldy.
891. As to the fish on the deck, how often did it happen that the dogs used it to cock their legs at?—I noticed it only once.
892. And then what happened? Were the men obliged to eat it?—No; they simply chucked it over the side.
893. Were they given something in place of it?—I think they were given bully beef instead.
894. What steps did the cooks take to clean the boilers before making the tea?—Very little.
895. Did they turn in the steam-pipe, or anything of that sort?—It was in the afternoon, and they had been boiling meat; they chucked the water out, and gave the boiler a wipe round with a rag, and in went the water for the tea.
896. They did not put in the steam-jet?—Yes; but there were several occasions on which the water was not boiling.
897. Did you often see the water greasy?—Nearly always. The coffee was made at night, and left till morning.
898. You say there was no room to hang the hammocks?—No.
899. How wide apart were the hocks?—I could not tell you. I went down on two or three occasions, and could not get room, so I went up to the stewards' place.
900. Was there room to hang the hammocks?—No; men were sleeping everywhere.
901. Were there hocks for them?—No, there were not.
902. You have no idea how far the hocks were apart?—I could not tell you; but I know they were all taken up, every one there was. There were two or three men who paid the stewards to allow them to sleep in their bunks. They paid them £1 10s.
903. You had to wait for water?—Yes, on three or four occasions.
904. What do you mean?—It was because the water was off, and we had to wait till it started again before we could fill the boilers.
905. Did it cause a delay?—There was one occasion on which there was a delay of an hour and a half.
906. Why could they not get water?—I do not know.
907. Was it on account of an accident to the machinery?—I could not tell you.
908. You were never in the hospital?—I was never an inmate of the hospital.

909. *Mr. McNab.*] You said that when the meat was cooked the officer came along and inspected it?—Yes.

910. I understood you to say the cook appeared to have hoodwinked the officer by giving him one of the best pieces?—Yes.

911. Who was that officer?—It might be the officer of the day; it might be Captain Haselden or another officer.

912. Previous to being cooked, when it came from the butcher's shop, was the meat passed by an officer?—I could not tell you. It was simply put in the cook's shop, and if it was to be stewed we cut it up. I know there was some pork which the officer condemned and had it chucked overboard.

913. Before the men got it?—Yes. They had some pork before and they all grumbled over it, but in this case the officer came along and condemned it.

914. What officer?—Captain Young.

915. Did he often come along and examine the meat?—I never saw him there before or after.

916. That was at the cook's shop?—Yes.

917. *Mr. Millar.*] You say the beef was green?—Yes, on some occasions.

918. That beef had come from the butcher's shop to the galley?—Yes.

919. You know you are on oath in giving this evidence?—Yes, sir.

920. We were told that it never came green from the butcher's shop?—I know it was green because I passed the remark to the cook. He simply put some sauce over it, so that it should not be seen.

921. Was much returned back to the galley when you saw it?—Yes, several times.

922. Although it was passed in the butcher's shop it was rejected afterwards?—Yes.

923. How much bacon did you cook in the galley?—Sometimes they got it once a week and sometimes twice. It was principally on Sunday morning.

924. Enough for all hands?—No; they were always short.

925. You say you could not sleep down below?—No; I tried to get down on two or three occasions and could not, and so I went to the stewards' place. Of course, the cooks themselves never ate the beef or drank the tea. They got what they wanted from the saloon galley.

926. *The Chairman.*] Was the meat supplied to the officers' mess different to that supplied to the men's mess?—I could not tell you. I know the officers' was better than ours.

927. *Colonel Davies.*] You mean better after it was cooked?—Yes.

928. You did not see it before?—No, sir.

929. You did not sleep down in the men's quarters or have your food with them?—No, sir.

Trooper PERCY MELLOR examined on oath. (No. 12.)

930. *Mr. McNab.*] To what contingent did you belong?—The Eighth.

931. You have indicated a desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation of the troops on board the transport "Britannic." The Commission will hear what you have to say. Make your statement concisely, and afterwards you may be asked some questions. What matters do you wish to refer to?—I complain of the overcrowding. There was not room in our part of the ship to hang the hammocks, and half the men were sleeping on the floor. As for the food we got, some of the meat was fairly rotten. I used to visit the hospital on an average five days a week in the afternoon. I had a cousin and a mate there, and they complained very badly.

932. We do not want to know what other people said; we want to know what you saw yourself?—There was a young fellow down there who is since dead. He was delirious all day, and he used to get out of his bed, and it was sometimes a long time before the orderly came back, and I helped to put him back in his bed. He was soon dead. Another young fellow who was suffering from enteric fever used to go to the tap and drink the water, and I had to put him back in his bed. He died in Wellington Hospital.

933. Regarding the hammocks, how many men as a rule used hammocks, and how many slept on the floor?—A lot of them used to sleep on the floor.

934. What proportion would be accommodated in the hammocks hung up?—Every night all the tables were filled and there were a lot on the floor.

935. Would half the men spend the night sleeping in their hammocks?—Rather more than half.

936. Did these two-thirds monopolize all the space with their hammocks?—Yes.

937. How close would the hammocks be together?—Too close to be comfortable.

938. How close would that be?—If one of the hammocks was a little tighter than another alongside it the man in the tighter hammock would be hanging over the man in the other hammock and half lying on him.

939. Were all the hooks there for the hammocks occupied?—Yes.

940. Then, there were about half more men to be accommodated than there were hooks to hang hammocks on?—Yes.

941. Did you usually sleep in a hammock or on the floor?—In a hammock. I used to keep my hammock in the rack above me by getting up early and putting it there. I kept it in the same place always, and hung it from the same hooks.

942. Did you ever make any complaint to an officer regarding the want of accommodation for sleeping?—I cannot say I did so myself personally.

943. When you were sleeping at night was it hot?—Yes, the air was very foul. What made it worse was when you were on guard at night. You had to go on guard for two hours on deck and then you had four hours off. You had to go up on the cold deck and then go down again into this hot room.

944. Did you make any complaint to your officer regarding that matter?—No, I did not; I did to the sergeant of the guard.

945. Did you ever complain to Colonel Davies when he came round for inspection?—No, sir.

946. Now, with regard to the food, what do you mean by saying that some was rotten?—The meat was very bad indeed.

947. What was done with it?—It was thrown overboard after complaints were made that it was unfit for human consumption.

948. Was the complaint made to the officer of the day?—Yes; every time we had meat for dinner there was a complaint made to the officer of the day.

949. Recall to your mind one specific case of complaint to an officer, and tell me the name of the officer?—A dinner complaint?

950. One case where a complaint was made at meal-time that the food was rotten?—Yes; we complained to Colonel Davies, and every man of the South Island regiment went to Colonel Davies on the deck. That was the day of the bad fish.

951. Was it a complaint that the fish was rotten?—Yes, sir. It was lying on the deck, to my knowledge, for two or three days.

952. What was done as the result of the complaint?—I believe we got some bully beef.

953. Do you not know you got it?—Yes.

954. Then, Colonel Davies attended to that complaint?—To that complaint.

955. Do you remember any complaints of rotten food that were not attended to by an officer?—Yes.

956. What was the name of the officer the complaint was made to?—I do not think I can give you the name.

957. Do you remember the date?—I do not know.

958. Was he a captain or a lieutenant?—He would be a lieutenant.

959. Do you remember the squadron?—I would not like to say for certain, but I think it was Lieutenant Manson, of E squadron.

960. Was it that the fish was rotten?—No; it was only one day we had the fish bad.

961. What sort of meat was it that was bad?—It was green when it came out of the hold before it was cooked.

962. What was the complaint to Lieutenant Manson?—That the meat was bad.

963. What did the lieutenant say?—That he would look into it, but we heard no more about it.

964. Did you get all your food at your mess-table?—Not all of it; I used to buy some.

965. Where did you buy it?—I used to get it out of a porthole in the saloon galley.

966. What did you pay for it?—I gave 1s. for a couple of sandwiches and some tea.

967. *Mr. Millar.*] You said complaints were made every dinner-time about bad meat?—That was after Albany. Before that there was no use making a complaint; there was no satisfaction.

968. A different officer had charge each day?—Yes, sir.

969. Then, your charge is against every officer?—Not against every officer. Some told us to go and get other meat. Lieutenant Duigan told me, and I went up and got a fresh piece of meat.

970. Can you tell me another officer who attended to the complaints?—Lieutenant Harper.

971. Another?—Lieutenant Manson.

972. You can remember these distinct cases where complaints were lodged and the officers took steps to rectify them?—Yes.

973. You say complaints were made every day?—Yes.

974. Then, your charge is against the other officers?—No, sir.

975. It was not rectified?—Sometimes it was, and sometimes it was not.

976. Then, we are left in the dark as to who were the officers who neglected it?—I did not make a note of it.

977. These three officers had the matter rectified?—Yes.

978. *The Chairman.*] Give us the name of one officer who refused to attend to a complaint?—I could not.

979. Then, you wish the Commission to infer that every officer attended to the complaints?—No.

980. You say you know the officer, and you do not care to name him?—I do not remember the officer.

981. You make a charge that officers neglected their duty. You name three officers who did their duty. Name another?—I cannot.

982. Do you mean will not?—I cannot. From Durban to Albany very little notice was taken of complaints. After Albany bully beef was given to us.

983. Can you give us an instance where the men had to eat bad food because the officer would not take steps to remedy it?—No, I cannot remember one.

984. Then, you say there was no occasion to eat bad meat?—Yes, there was.

985. Was a complaint made?—Yes.

986. To whom?—There was no attention paid to the complaint.

987. Cannot you say to whom the complaint was made?—I cannot.

988. I again ask you, Is it that you will not answer, or that you cannot answer?—I cannot answer.

989. Then, you do not know?—I do not know.

990. You say it was very hard to go on duty on deck for two hours and then have four hours off: how would you remedy that?—It was not necessary to have men there when it was raining. I had to keep the men off the deck, and it is not likely men would want to sleep there then.

991. Then, when it rains the guards should be taken off?—Some officers allowed their men to go off, but our officer insisted upon our doing the duty.

992. Then, you think a man on pay ought not to be compelled to do his duty?—What do you mean?

993. On a rainy day a man on Imperial pay should not be compelled to do duty?—No, when there is no necessity to have a man on duty.

994. *Mr. McNab.*] You were in receipt of full pay when on board?—Yes; we got forty days' oversea pay from Durban.

995. Was not a further payment to come?—Yes.

996. After the expiration of the forty days?—Yes; thirty-one days.

997. So you got seventy-one days' pay after leaving Durban?—Yes.

998. *Colonel Davies.*] When you say you complained to an officer and there was no remedy, was it to the officer of the day or to an officer of your regiment?—To the officer of the day.

999. There were two officers of the day for the ship, a captain and a subaltern of the regiment—which do you mean?—I took it to the lieutenant.

1000. You were a member of the South Island regiment?—Yes.

1001. Do you remember the officer?—It was to Lieutenant Pitt I complained.

1002. Supposing I told you that Lieutenant Pitt was paymaster, and was never on duty during the voyage as officer of the day, what would you say?—I do not know him.

1003. You cannot mention an officer to whom a complaint was made and no notice of it taken?—I cannot.

1004. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You say a trooper jumped out of bed in delirium and died in a few minutes?—Half an hour.

1005. Who was he?—Lawrence; I helped to put him into bed.

1006. At what time was it?—I do not know.

1007. Do you remember seeing me that afternoon?—Yes.

1008. Did I order all visitors out of the hospital?—Yes.

1009. And why did you not go?—I did go.

1010. Did you know that he was lying on a spring bed?—Yes.

1011. Was there an orderly attendant there?—Yes, after a time.

1012. Is it extraordinary for a man to jump out of bed in delirium?—No.

1013. Was the other man Tom?—Yes.

1014. Do you know that he was in hospital almost all the time since he left New Zealand?—I do not know. He got out and went to the water-tap and had a drink, and I put him back into bed.

1015. Why did you not stop him getting out?—I did not see him until he was out.

Trooper J. E. NICHOLSON examined on oath. (No. 13.)

1016. *Mr. McNab.*] To what contingent did you belong?—The Tenth.

1017. You communicated with the Commission stating that you would like to give evidence before them regarding the troopship "Britannic." The Commission will be very pleased to hear what you have to say. Do you appear to complain?—Yes.

1018. On what matters?—There was no accommodation for sleeping. There were only hooks to hang about ten men's hammocks over our table, and we had to sleep on the table or on the floor, and the floor was occasionally wet. It was wet on perhaps four or five occasions. Then, the meat was green several times. When I went to get into hospital, three days from home, with measles, I could not get in. I went on deck, and my brother caught the measles off me, and now he is dying at Somes Island.

1019. Any other matters?—We got apples and rice one night, and I suppose you have heard what was the complaint about them. They were maggoty. The vegetables were not cooked in the soup. We had no accommodation on the deck. We had only a very small deck for five hundred men to promenade on for exercise. I think that is all.

1020. First, in regard to the sleeping-accommodation, did you sleep in a hammock or on the floor?—In a hammock for some time upon deck.

1021. Did you sleep in a hammock slung to the hooks?—Part of the time, but afterwards I had to sleep on the floor.

1022. How many of the men could be accommodated in the hung hammocks in your part of the ship?—There were sixteen at our table, and there were only ten hooks for the hammocks for sixteen men. You had to sleep on the table or on the floor, or else up on deck.

1023. How far were the hooks from one another?—I do not know exactly. I suppose it would be nearly 2 ft.

1024. Did you ever make a complaint about want of accommodation for sleeping?—No.

1025. Why did you not complain?—There was no room, and if we had made a complaint it was no use.

1026. Then, you made no complaint because you did not see how the commanding officer could give you accommodation in any other way?—Yes.

1027. You say that on four or five occasions the meat was green?—Yes.

1028. Was it in that condition when served at the mess-table after it was cooked?—Yes. We saw it, and when we cut it at the mess-table and tasted it we found that it was bad.

1029. Did you complain to the officer of the day?—Yes.

1030. Often?—There were two meals a day at which complaints were made during the first week. They were not corrected, so we got tired of making complaints.

1031. Will you give me the name of an officer to whom you made a complaint?—I did not know the names of any of the officers of the 8th regiment. I can tell you the name of one officer. It was Lieutenant Duigan.

1032. You say you made a complaint to him and he paid no attention to it?—Yes.
1033. Any other officer?—No. He was the only one I knew. He was in the Tenth, and was the only one I knew.
1034. Officers were coming in and going about on duty, and you mean to say you never asked your mates who they were?—I used just to tell them about the complaints, and that is all.
1035. You say you had measles, and you complained to the doctor, and you could not get into the hospital?—Yes.
1036. Why?—There was no room in the hospital.
1037. How did your measles get on?—I got medicine from the hospital, and some of the fellows got me a hammock, and I slept in that on the deck till I got here. Then I went to some friends and stopped with them.
1038. Did the Health Officer pass you?—Yes.
1039. Did you parade before him with the measles still on you?—Yes.
1040. Were there any others?—There were three or four with the measles who passed him.
1041. And the doctor on board would not allow you into the hospital because there was no room?—Yes.
1042. You got the medicine you wanted?—Yes.
1043. You stated that the rice was in a filthy condition?—Yes.
1044. Was there a complaint made to the officer then?—Yes.
1045. Do you know the officer?—I do not know him.
1046. Was it the officer of the day?—I do not think he came at that meal; sometimes they did not come.
1047. In regard to this particular case of the apples and rice, I ask you what the officer did when the complaint was made to him?—I do not know.
1048. Were you present?—No. They told him at our table, and that was all we heard of it.
1049. Were you North Island men?—We were quartered with the South Island men, but I belonged to the North Island 10th regiment.
1050. Then, you complained to an officer whose name you do not know: do you know what he said?—He said he would do his best to stop it.
1051. What was done with the apples and rice?—We had to put them overboard. They were not fit for consumption.
1052. Have you any idea of the date? Was it before you arrived at Albany?—I could not say.
1053. *Mr. Millar.*] Could anybody walk through these 'tween decks without seeing the men lying on the deck or on the tables?—No, not very well.
1054. Were you ever told to get off the deck and go into a hung hammock?—No.
1055. You were not interfered with?—No; only our own men grumbled.
1056. Was there any officer or non-commissioned officer who went through at night?—I never saw one go through.
1057. You were never told to get a hammock hung up?—No.
1058. Was it very hot there?—Yes.
1059. Did you ever get up at night and go on deck?—No.
1060. Did you ever see any one go?—They used to be rousing me up and asking me to go on deck.
1061. Did you see them go up?—Yes.
1062. Do you think there would have been sufficient ventilation if the men went up on deck?—No; there was only a small gangway leading down to the deck.
1063. What doctor was it you saw when you failed to get into the hospital?—I forget his name; he was a very small man.
1064. *Colonel Davies.*] Was it Dr. Pearless?—No.
1065. Was it Dr. Rogers?—Yes.
1066. *Mr. Millar.*] What reason did he give?—That he had no accommodation.
1067. Did he see you for measles?—Yes.
1068. Where did he tell you to go?—He said I had better get into a hammock, and he gave me medicine.
1069. Your hammock was hung in the same place?—I never had a hammock until after I was on the promenade deck.
1070. Was your hammock amongst the men when you had the measles?—Yes.
1071. Did the doctor visit you?—No.
1072. How long was that before you arrived at Wellington?—Three days.
1073. Where does Lieutenant Duigan live?—At Wanganui.
1074. On the occasion of the apples and rice were they very full of maggots?—Yes.
1075. Did you see it yourself?—Yes.
1076. Was it thrown overboard?—Yes.
1077. If we had it in evidence that it was thrown at the cook's head it would not be correct?—It was from our table that it was thrown overboard. It was from a different table that it was thrown at the cook.
1078. How often had you rice?—About three times a week.
1079. How often apples and rice?—Only three or four times on the voyage.
1080. Were they ever maggoty before?—No.
1081. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your age?—Nearly twenty.
1082. What was your occupation before you enlisted?—Labourer.
1083. Where were you working?—At New Plymouth.
1084. *Colonel Davies.*] You say men had to sleep on the wet floor: how often was it wet?—Occasionally. There was no ventilation to dry it.

1085. It was not wetted every morning?—No, only occasionally.

1086. You mean it was only wet on the days it was washed?—Yes.

1087. On other days it was dry?—Yes. Sometimes the water came through the portholes.

1088. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You are No. 8993, and you were in the hospital for measles?—No. I was in the hospital in the earlier part of the voyage for a sprained ankle.

THURSDAY, 21ST AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper SILBEY sworn and examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] State your name, please?—Henry George Silbey.

2. What contingent did you belong to?—Eighth.

3. What rank did you hold?—Trooper.

4. You have sent your name down as anxious to give evidence before the Commission: will you make any statement?—Yes, sir. As regards the fish aft of the vegetable-locker: There is a vegetable-locker each side of the ship, one for potatoes and one for vegetables. Right aft of the ship there were fifteen or twenty sacks of fish lying on the deck. There were about eight or nine dogs on the ship, and they were allowed to walk over them and do what they liked on them. The latrine was right close alongside of it. The latrine would get full up at times, and when the ship would be rolling the water would slouch right over it, and the latrine-water would run right over as well. That fish was served out to the troops. The potatoes also were lying outside on the deck along with the fish. There were about twenty or thirty cases thrown overboard by the troops which had been used by the dogs running on them and the latrines running over them. As regards the soup, it was very fair, but the vegetables in it were not half-cooked. And the coffee was very fair—it would have been better if they had cleaned the coppers out before putting in the coffee at night for the morning. It used to be made overnight, and boiled up again in the morning. The tea was similar; it was very much worse than the coffee. They used to make the stew in the same pan at night, and then wipe it out with a dirty cloth instead of washing it. The meat was similar. It was blue when it was brought up to be cooked. When it was cooked it would have to be sent back again half-raw. When complaints were made about it there was no notice taken whatever until later on.

5. No notice taken at first, but later on?—Yes. The only time when the complaints were made and notice taken was when they rushed the upper deck and demanded more tucker. There was not sufficient tucker to keep them alive. You got so-many potatoes to last sixteen at a mess-table, and there would be about two small potatoes a man. Sometimes you would get rice for your dinner. The stewed apples would be cooked for you, and while they would be stewing there would be maggots in them. We were told by the cook, if they did not have sufficient we could go to the devil. On one occasion the soup was brought up and thrown at the cooks inside the galley. The apples were also done the same. The blankets that were given to us on board the boat when we left Durban were full of vermin. I got my blankets about 7 at night. I particularly looked at the blankets before I slept in them. If you wanted to sleep down below you would have to make a rush after tea to get your hook, or else you would get none at all. Men would have to sleep down below or on the deck. There were only seven hooks, and sixteen to a mess-table. If you wanted to sling your hammock there would be a row about it. You would have to swing your hammock first or else lose it, and go on the upper deck and sleep. When we got about a week and a half out from Durban there were thirteen or fourteen sacks of turnips and carrots rotten, and they were thrown overboard. I myself helped to throw them over with the vegetable-cook. This could have been prevented if they had a little more management, and they could have been stewed up for the troops. I know nothing about the hospital. I had always plenty of water. I was working in the saloon galley helping the vegetable-cook. The troops were allowed only a certain amount of water to last so-many men. I do not know anything about the water; I could not say how much they were allowed. I started work when I first went on the boat—the first day out from Durban until we landed in Wellington. I had always plenty of everything myself. I noticed particularly at night about the coffee. They would make it in the troopers' galley, and sell it at night to the troopers. They made tea in the afternoon, and you could buy a cup of tea. You could buy a decent feed at the saloon galley also for 1s. Some of the troopers paid £2 and £3 for the trip from Durban to Wellington. Orders were given one day—I could not say which day or date—by the colonel, I believe, for any troops to rush anything that was sold on the deck; that was as regards the coffee or sandwiches.

6. Anything about the latrines?—The latrines were always full up of a night-time. If you went to the latrine, of course you got wet-footed. I do not think I have anything else to say.

7. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—Waiter; and I have been travelling with theatricals often during the last few years as a contortionist and singer.

8. Whose dogs were they that ran about the ship?—The troopers'.

9. Was there any endeavour to control them?—No, they were allowed to run about the decks; but after complaints were made I believe they were ordered to put them away somewhere.

10. This fish you say that was messed by the dogs: were the men compelled to eat it?—Well, they were not compelled to eat it, but they had to leave it. The troopers saw it with their own eyes. When it was cooked they would not eat it.

11. Did they make official complaint about it?—I believe they did; I am not certain. I believe two Australians took it up to the colonel.

12. Did you not tell us about the decks being rushed?—Yes, the upper deck, but not in connection with the fish; that was for more provisions to be served out to the troops. They wanted bully beef.

13. Why did they want that bully beef?—Because they had not got sufficient to eat.

14. Have you any idea how much food was issued to the men?—I could not exactly say, but I saw it in the dish myself. I should imagine that it would not last sixteen men—it would be a very small allowance. They would only be able to have two small potatoes and a very little piece of meat.

15. Do you think the men got a pound of meat a day?—No, I would not say that.

16. They did not get a pound of meat?—No.

17. Then, if we get evidence that a pound of meat was issued it is false evidence?—I would not like to swear about it. I would not like to say.

18. You have taken your oath, remember, so please be accurate in your statements. You will swear that a pound of meat was not issued to the men?—By looking at it in the dish it was not a pound of meat.

19. Was complaint made about the fish?—Yes, complaint was made about it.

20. Was any notice taken of the complaint?—Yes, there was notice taken of it.

21. It was remedied?—It was all thrown overboard.

22. Did the men have to go empty on that occasion?—They were given bully beef instead.

23. Then, when complaint was made about the fish it was thrown overboard, and the men were given something in its place?—Yes.

24. On that occasion the men had to wait a little, perhaps, but they did not go empty?—They did not go empty.

25. Tell us any information about the fish?—The fish was cooked with the scales on it and its inside in it. Groper, I think, it would be.

26. Did you see the fish with the entrails left in it?—Yes, sir; I saw it in the troopers' galley. I was called in by a trooper.

27. What was his name?—That I could not say.

28. Was he a New-Zealander?—Yes, sir.

29. Do you remember which regiment?—A South Island man.

30. Do you know which squadron he belonged to?—I could not say, sir. I did not know many of the South Island men.

31. And you, being employed in the capacity of cook, took no notice of it?—No, sir; I had nothing to do with it.

32. Did you recommend the troopers to do anything?—I recommended a trooper to take it once to the orderly officer.

33. And did he do so?—I heard he had done so, but I could not say so.

34. Were there enough vegetables put in the soup?—No, there were not.

35. You say they were not cooked?—No; they were hard.

36. Were they not sufficiently long in the soup, or was the vegetable bad of its kind?—It was not bad of its kind, but there was not sufficient time given to make an essence of the vegetables. Supposing you put in parsnips and turnips to make a flavour, you have to boil it for half an hour for the essence to come out to make soup.

37. How long were they cooked?—I should say they were only in about three or four minutes.

38. How often did you go down to the mess-dinner?—I used to go very nearly every afternoon.

39. Did you go down to dinner?—No, sir.

40. How often did you go down to dinner?—Never once.

41. Then, were you down during the time they were at dinner?—No, sir.

42. Then, how did you know about the food supplied?—I would see it supplied from the galley.

43. You were in the officers' galley?—In the saloon galley.

44. The coffee you say was very poor?—Very poor coffee. It had been boiled at night, and then left overnight and boiled up again in the morning.

45. Are you accustomed to cooking—that is, do you know whether that is a common or uncommon thing to do with coffee?—You would not boil it overnight. A good cook would not boil it twice.

46. You say that the boilers were not clean before the coffee was made?—They were not.

47. Did you examine them yourself?—I did, sir.

48. What was done in the way of cleaning the boiler before the coffee was made?—They would get a dipper and dip the soup or the water the meat had been boiled in out, and then wipe it round with a dirty cloth.

49. A dirty cloth?—Yes, a dirty towel.

50. There was never an attempt made to clean the copper properly?—Not to clean it properly.

51. Was boiling water put in it?—Cold water was put in.

52. Was the water brought to the boil at all before putting in the coffee?—Yes.

53. It was more or less washed with boiling water?—Yes.

54. Then, there was something more than a greasy cloth put in after the soup was taken out?—That was all I saw.

55. Was it simply emptied and wiped with a greasy cloth, or was there a pretence of washing it with boiling water?—No pretence. They put in cold water after wiping with a cloth.

56. The fragments of the potatoes left from the soup in the boiler would be there, and the coffee was put into that?—Yes, sir.

57. You say there was no notice taken of complaints at first?—Not at first.

58. What was the nature of the complaints?—The complaints were that they did not have sufficient rations served out to them.



59. Will you tell us of an instance where a complaint was made and no notice taken?—Complaints were made the first few days out from Durban, and no notice was taken.

60. Complaints were made to your own knowledge?—Yes.

61. To whom were the complaints made?—To the orderly officer.

62. Who was he?—That I could not say. There was a different officer every day.

63. On any one occasion, name any officer who was orderly officer?—I could not say.

64. It is not that you will not remember, but that you cannot remember?—I cannot remember.

65. Can you tell us any method by which we can fix the day upon which the complaint was made: can you fix a Sunday when you got out from Durban?—I can fix Monday and Tuesday after we left Durban.

66. *The Chairman* (to Colonel Davies).] Will you kindly show me who were the officers of the day on these days?—Here they are, sir. [Book produced.]

67. What date was the Monday?—The 7th July.

68. *The Chairman* (to witness).] What was the nature of the complaint made?—The complaint made was that the dinner served out to them, and the breakfast, was not sufficient—that was the complaint.

69. Who made that complaint?—The troopers themselves.

70. Can you give me the name of any one trooper?—No, sir; they all went up together a day or two out from Durban.

71. On the Monday after you left Durban there was complaint?—Yes; complaints were made at the mess-room table, and the orderly officer would come round.

72. Were they made to the orderly officer?—Yes.

73. You said just now they went up in a body: what do you mean by that?—They did not go up in a body on a Monday.

74. What did they do on the Monday?—On the Monday they made a complaint at the mess-table.

75. You said just now you were not down at the mess-table?—No; this was told to me. I did not hear it at the mess-table.

76. You have sworn that complaint was made on the Monday to the orderly officer?—Yes, I know that.

77. Did you hear it yourself: how did you know it?—The troopers told me.

78. All the troopers?—Well, two or three of them.

79. Give me the name of one: can you remember a name?—I know them by sight, but I cannot think of the names of a lot of them. I could say the name of one, but he is dead now; he is no use.

79A. We want the name of one live man. Take your own mess-table: Can you tell us of a man at your own mess-table who made that complaint?—Yes, I can tell you one. He is a corporal in the New South Wales or Queensland, I believe.

80. Is he in New Zealand now?—He is here in Wellington.

81. Give us his name?—Corporal Moore.

82. What was the nature of his complaint?—His complaint was that there was not sufficient food.

83. Did you hear him make it?—No, I did not.

84. Do you know of your own knowledge that he made it?—Corporal Moore told me.

85. When?—He told me afterwards on deck.

86. He complained that there was not sufficient?—He told me so.

87. And he made that complaint to an officer?—I could not say.

88. You do not know that he made a complaint to an officer—he complained to you?—Yes, sir.

89. You do not know that he made any official complaint?—I could not say.

90. Then, all you know about the first day is that somebody told you that he had not enough to eat?—Yes, sir.

91. But that he did not report that to an officer?—I could not say.

92. Did he tell you that he reported it to an officer?—He did not.

93. As far as official complaints, we have done with that day. Will you give us another occasion?—On the second day I was told of the same—that was on the Tuesday. They complained they did not have sufficient.

94. Did they tell you they had complained to an officer?—No.

95. Did you see the food they got?—Yes.

96. When did you see it?—I saw it served out.

97. Did you see the portion served out to each particular man?—Not to each particular man.

98. You do not know what each man got?—No. I know from each orderly that came up from the mess-room table what quantity they got for each mess-table. It had to last sixteen men.

99. What do you consider sufficient for each man?—A pound of meat a day.

100. You consider that is enough?—Yes.

101. And if there is evidence brought that a pound of meat was given, would you say it was false?—I would say that, according to the meat served, it would not last sixteen men.

102. Now, the meat was blue when it was brought up?—Yes.

103. How often?—On two or three occasions.

104. Were you present in any capacity at the serving-out of the meat?—I was present, sir, on some occasions—not all occasions.

105. Were you there as cook's mate, or what capacity?—I was there as vegetable-cook's assistant.

106. And you say the meat was blue?—Yes, sir.
107. Was any notice taken of the meat being blue?—I believe there was.
108. Do you know that there was?—No, I do not.
109. To whom was complaint made?—To the orderly officer.
110. Can you tell us any one particular occasion when complaint was made to the orderly officer?—I could not say that. I know there was complaint, but I could not say when.
111. Did you ever see a medical officer present?—I saw Major Fearless.
112. Was complaint made to him?—I could not say.
113. You say complaint was made: was Dr. Fearless present on the occasion when the complaint was made?—I would not say that.
114. Was any veterinary surgeon in attendance when the meat was issued?—I could not say that.
115. Did you know there was a veterinary surgeon on board?—Yes, there was a veterinary surgeon on board.
116. Did he attend at the serving-out of the meat?—I could not say.
117. How often were you at the serving-out of the meat?—There were two servings-out of meat. I was not present at all.
118. Not at all! Then, how did you know about the complaints?—By hearing from the troopers.
119. You know nothing yourself about the complaints?—No.
120. No notice was taken of them at first, but later on when the upper deck was rushed?—Yes; but I could not tell you what day.
121. On what occasion was the upper deck rushed?—About their not getting sufficient food.
122. Who rushed the decks?—The troopers.
123. Of which regiment?—Both regiments.
124. How many men altogether rushed the decks?—I should take it to be about forty.
125. What squadron did they belong to?—All squadrons.
126. Were any of the men of your own squadron there?—Yes.
127. Tell us some of their names?—I can tell you a lot of them, but I do not know their names.
128. Not even of your own squadron?—No; I was never in my own squadron.
129. Were you not in the squadron in the field?—Yes; I was only a day in the squadron. I was in the mess-room—the officers' mess.
130. You say there was not enough food to keep the men alive?—Yes.
131. What is sufficient, do you think, to keep a man alive?—I reckon if a man gets a pound of meat a day and vegetables he is all right, and bread-and-butter.
132. Did they ever get any butter?—Yes.
133. Good butter?—Yes.
134. Any jam?—Yes.
135. How often?—I could not say how often. I know they got jam, and I know they got marmalade.
136. Was the bread bad?—It was good, but sometimes it would be a bit doughy.
137. Biscuits?—I could not say.
138. You have told us there was not sufficient food?—Yes, sir.
139. To keep the men alive. That is a very grave statement, and you have told us they got bread and biscuits?—I did not say about biscuits.
140. You say there was not sufficient food to keep them alive?—I said there was not sufficient rations to keep them going.
141. Did the men get thin on the voyage?—Yes; a lot of them.
142. Did they lose much?—I could not say.
143. What weight did you lose?—I never lost any; I gained.
144. You took care of yourself?—Yes; I was in the galley.
145. How often did the men have stewed apples?—On one occasion.
146. And only one occasion?—Yes.
147. You say the blankets were full of vermin?—Yes, sir.
148. Did you examine them yourself?—Yes, sir.
149. What appearance had the blankets: did they appear clean or dirty?—They appeared clean, and looked clean.
150. How many lice did you find on the occasion you looked for them?—Five or six.
151. Were they easy to find?—Well, you would have to look for them, of course.
152. Did you take any steps to have your blankets cleaned?—I gave my blankets in again.
153. To whom did you give them in?—To Quartermaster McDonnell.
154. Why did you give them in?—Because there were vermin on them.
155. What made you look particularly at the blankets?—All the others were looking at them.
156. Did any one else report vermin to anybody?—I believe they did; I could not say, sir.
157. You say there used to be a great rush for hammock-space?—Yes, sir.
158. Where did you sleep?—The first time I slept down below—the first night out.
159. And after that?—Down below in D squadron.
160. You always slept there?—Only the first night.
161. After that?—I slept down with the cooks.
162. How often were you down of an evening when this rush took place for hammock-space?—Two or three occasions.
163. How many hooks do you think there were for each mess-table?—There would be about six or seven.

164. And how many men were there at the table?—Sixteen.
165. Out of every sixteen men had nine to sleep on the deck?—I should say so.
166. How often did you go down and have a look at them?—Very often at night.
167. And you found more than half unable to get hammock-space?—Yes.
168. Was it because they had no place to hang the hammocks?—Yes.
169. Did you take actual notice?—I did not take actual notice.
170. Did you look to see if there were hooks?—The men told me so. On my own knowledge I did not know that there were not enough hooks.
171. Did you know how far the hooks were apart?—I could not say.
172. Did you ever notice the hooks on the beams?—Yes, I noticed the hooks.
173. Can you give us any idea how far apart they were?—I could not say.
174. Have you any idea whether they were 1 ft. or 3 ft. apart?—I do not think they were 1 ft. apart, but they may have been.
175. The hooks for hammocks were not 1 ft. apart?—They may have been 1 ft. I could not say.
176. Surely you have some impression?—I never took particular notice.
177. And yet you say that they were 1 ft.?—They may have been more than 1 ft.
178. What did you say?—I cannot say.
179. Did you ever notice at all?—Yes, I noticed.
180. What did you notice?—I noticed hooks. I could not say how far apart they were.
181. And you have no impression how far apart?—No.
182. You told us that there were some bags of rotten vegetables?—Yes, sir.
183. Do you think these vegetables could have been kept from going bad?—Yes, sir.
184. What steps could have been taken?—By issuing them before they began to get rotten.
185. How many days out from Durban was it when they began to get rotten?—A week out from Durban.
186. What were the vegetables?—There were parsnips, turnips, cabbages.
187. Do parsnips and turnips go rotten in a week?—They must have been on board a week.
188. Do you think the men ought to have been made to eat them?—They should have been used before.
189. You think the throwing overboard was justifiable?—Yes.
190. What pay did you receive for going into the saloon galley?—No pay.
191. You asked for nothing?—Yes; I asked just to get into the saloon galley.
192. Why did you go to the saloon galley?—Because I am a steward. I applied to go into the saloon, but I did not have a uniform, so I went into the galley.
193. Did they give you any pay?—No.
194. Any liquor?—No.
195. Why did you go?—Because it breaks the monotony of the voyage and passes away the time.
196. You say a certain amount of water was allowed?—No, I could not say.
197. How much: was it enough?—I could not say.
198. Why did you make any remark about the water?—Well, by hearing the troopers say so; that is all I know about it.
199. You do not know what water they were getting?—No; I always had plenty.
200. You had plenty of everything always?—Yes, sir.
201. You say tea and coffee were made in the troops' galley and sold?—Yes, sir.
202. Was anything sold beside tea and coffee?—Yes; sandwiches.
203. Had you anything to do with the sale of it?—No.
204. Did you serve them?—No.
205. You never served them with tea, coffee, or sandwiches?—No.
206. The cooks and the cooks' mate were always serving?—The second cook and his mates.
207. How many were in the galley?—The chief cook, the second cook, the third cook, the fourth cook, and vegetable-cook, and myself.
208. Was this done openly?—Yes.
209. Did the chief cook know of it?—Yes.
210. And all the other cooks?—Yes, sir.
211. What stores were being used? Where did the tea come from? Were they from the ship's stores?—That I could not say.
212. Was it made out of the same tea given to the men?—Yes, out of the same tea as given to the men.
213. And the coffee?—That used to be issued at night to the cook.
214. Then, the cooks were selling the ship's stores?—Yes, sir.
215. And you knew that?—Yes, I knew that.
216. Did you make any remonstrance?—No, sir.
217. Did you report it?—No, sir.
218. What were the sandwiches made of?—Made of roast beef—sometimes mutton—and bread-and-butter.
219. Were those ship's stores?—Yes, sir.
220. They were sold by the cooks?—Yes, sir.
221. What became of the money?—The cooks kept that themselves.
222. And you got no share?—No, sir.
223. What did they charge for these sandwiches, tea, and coffee?—Sixpence.
224. Never more than 6d.?—I could not say that.
225. You complain that people got wet-footed in the latrines. What was the nature of the wet: was it urine or was it water?—It was urine and water.

226. Were they generally dirty or clean?—Generally clean.
227. Was the water constantly in the latrines of a night?—Yes, of a night-time.
228. Was it the latrines overflowed—or where did the water come from?—They overflowed. I could not say where the water came from that made them overflow.
229. They were flooded at night?—Yes, sir.
230. Constantly?—Yes.
231. *Mr. Millar.*] You were in the saloon galley I think you said?—Yes.
232. How often did you attend the butcher's shop when he was giving out meat?—On very few occasions. I used to be there getting vegetables at the time the butcher would be serving out.
233. Did you ever yourself see any of that blue meat issued out?—I did.
234. Did you ever see any of the blue meat go into the saloon galley?—Into the troopers' galley.
235. None into the saloon?—No, sir.
236. Do you think you would have seen it had it gone in? Meat in a different condition was issued to the troopers from that issued to the saloon mess?—That I could not say.
238. You stated just now that you saw, yourself, meat which was blue issued from the butcher's shop?—Yes; for the troopers' galley.
239. Did it appear blue after it was cooked?—It appeared black after it was cooked.
240. When did it have the blue appearance?—When it was fresh.
241. It was at the butcher's shop you saw it issued to the troopers—you saw the meat at the troopers' galley?—Yes.
242. Did you never see any meat of the same class ever given to the saloon galley?—No, sir.
243. Was it always good?—Yes.
244. Do you think that meat which shows blue or green on the outside could be good in the inside?—No; I could not say. I have not sufficient knowledge.
245. Then, in reply to the Chairman, you said that the cooks kept the money which they received for the tea and sandwiches: how do you know?—I know for a fact; I saw them divide it.
246. They were not serving the stores on behalf of the ship?—No; on behalf of themselves.
247. *Be* those men that used to lie down 'tween decks who could not get hammock accommodation: did they lie on the bare boards?—They laid their hammocks down and put their blankets on top.
248. Did they prefer that to a hammock?—I could not say whether they preferred that for choice. Some of them slept on deck.
249. You were not down there much yourself?—I was always down of an evening with the boys.
250. You were not down after the men turned in?—Yes.
251. You were not in the habit of remaining there altogether?—Not altogether.
252. What time would you leave?—About 8 o'clock.
253. *Mr. McNab.*] You were in the saloon galley coming back in the steamer?—Yes.
254. And previous to that you were in the officers' mess?—Yes.
255. In South Africa?—Yes.
256. When were you taken on in the officers' mess?—From Durban.
257. You were one day with the troop?—Yes.
258. And you went out in the Eighth in what vessel?—The "Surrey."
259. Were you ever in the Volunteers before that?—Yes, sir.
260. How long?—For two years.
261. So that while you were on active service you were in the troop going out in the "Surrey," and one day in South Africa, and then you had a position in the officers' mess, and subsequently in the saloon galley?—I was in the baker's shop going across in the "Surrey."
262. The whole way?—From Wellington to Albany, and at Albany I went back into my troop.
263. You were only attached to your troop from Albany to Durban and one day afterwards?—Yes.
264. Your occupation, you say, was a waiter, and subsequently on the stage?—Yes, sir.
265. For how long have you followed these two occupations?—I could not say, because I have been off and on. I have been in the Union Company for two years and a half.
266. Have you ever followed outdoor life: have you ever camped out?—Yes, I have camped out in the bush for a holiday for about a week.
267. I understood you to say that you saw the food issued from the galley to the men?—Yes.
268. How many galleys were there on board?—Two galleys.
269. Were they far from one another?—Quite close.
270. The men's food was issued from the troopers' galley, was it?—Yes.
271. You were employed in the saloon galley?—Yes.
272. How could you see the actual stores that were supplied to the men?—When sitting down peeling potatoes; they would come and show me.
273. You saw this food that was thrown overboard a week after you left Durban?—Yes.
274. Did I understand you to say that that food when thrown over was unfit for human consumption?—It was all soft—rotten.
275. It was not food that should be given to the men?—Oh, no.
276. There was only a week that the vessel had been at sea?—One week.
277. So that if the ship's company had decided to use that food they had only a week to use it immediately before it was unfit to be used?—They had a fortnight.

278. Where does the other week come in?—A fortnight from Durban to Albany.

279. I want you to notice that you told me that it was a week out from Durban when it was thrown overboard: do you admit that they only had a week to use it in?—If they had used it before, it would have been used.

280. It would never have been used by the troops that had come in the "Britannic"?—They could if they liked to have done so.

281. To be used by the troops on the "Britannic" means it could have been used between Durban and the day it was thrown over?—Yes.

282. And you have told us that that was a week?—Yes.

283. Then, if it was used in a fortnight before outside of the week, it must have been used by some one else than the New Zealand troops on board the "Britannic"?—Yes.

284. The question of issuing that food or throwing it overboard: was it purely a matter for the owners of the vessel to consider?—Yes, I should say so—the chief steward.

285. You say there were sixteen to twenty sacks of fish lying near the latrines?—Yes.

286. Did they lie there for the whole passage?—No, not the whole passage.

287. For how long?—They lay about a fortnight, or very near.

288. What fortnight was it?—Within a few days of Albany.

289. That is, they lay there after leaving Durban and before they reached Albany?—Yes.

290. And you state that the men rushed the upper deck: was it a complaint about fish or other meat?—I could not say. It was a complaint about the tucker not being sufficient.

291. It was not a case of complaining specially about fish?—No.

292. Do you remember how often they rushed the upper deck?—Twice.

293. On the second occasion what was the cause?—It was fish, I think.

294. There was one other occasion than the fish when the troops rushed the deck?—Yes, there was one other occasion.

295. You saw it?—Yes.

296. *The Chairman.*] Whereabouts were the latrines on the upper deck?—Aft of the ship. The deck we were in was a flush deck.

297. Were there one or two latrines?—One aft and one fore.

298. Alongside which was the fish?—On the aft one.

299. How close to the latrine?—Very close to the latrine.

300. Close alongside—a foot or a yard?—About a couple of feet away.

301. Was there leakage all round the latrine?—Through the door.

302. How far were the fish away from the door?—About 2 ft. or 3 ft.

303. And the latrines used to be so flooded that it oozed out from the door?—When she rolled it would roll from one side to the other.

304. *Mr. Millar.*] Do I understand that the fish lay on the deck for fourteen days?—That I could not say.

305. Did you say that it lay there all the way to Albany?—I could not say.

306. How long did you see it lying on the deck?—I saw it lying there four or five days. There were fourteen or fifteen sacks.

307. What sort of fish was issued?—Salt ling.

308. Was it on a grating?—Yes, on a grating aft.

309. How high up was the grating from the deck?—Not very high. All of it did not lie on the grating; some of it lay on the deck.

310. Is that the fish that the complaint was made about—the same class of fish?—Yes.

311. And you saw it lying on the deck for four or five days?—Yes.

312. Did any one give instructions for it to be removed?—I believe they did. I know it was removed, but I do not know who did it.

313. *Mr. McNab.*] Do the answers you have just given to Mr. Millar regarding the fish relate to the sixteen or twenty sacks you referred to at the beginning of your examination—those that lay near the latrines?—Yes.

314. Then, these whole sixteen to twenty sacks did not lie there for a fortnight as you stated to me?—I could not say.

315. You do not know?—No.

316. Can you tell me how long the sixteen to twenty sacks did lie there?—No, I could not.

317. Can you tell me whether the sixteen to twenty sacks were the same as you saw another day?—No; some had been used.

318. How many sacks would be used in a day?—I could not say.

319. Is it possible that the fish you saw there one day was not the fish you saw there four days afterwards?—That I could not say.

320. Do you want the Commission to understand that the ship's company brought out a large supply of fish and left it on the open deck near the latrines for a long period of time?—Yes, I would say that.

321. In spite of the fact that you cannot identify the fish of to-day being the fish that was there three days after?—I would not say that.

322. *Colonel Davies.*] When you talk about men rushing the deck you say forty or fifty of them went?—I would say about that.

323. Do you mean on the occasion when they came to see me with some food in a tin?—Yes.

324. Were you with them?—No, I was not, sir.

325. Are you perfectly certain that they came up twice?—That I could not say. I would not be sure that it was fish on one occasion or the tucker.

326. Suppose I tell you for an absolute fact that, as far as I am concerned, they only came up once, and on that occasion two Australians brought up fish, and they never came up again: would you believe that?—I could not say.

327. Have you any reason to suppose there was more than once?—I understand that on one occasion they came up for more tucker. I know nothing at all about the fish.

328. Why do you imagine this?—On one occasion they came up and rushed the deck for more tucker.

329. Who told you?—I saw them run up myself.

330. Now, suppose I told you what occurred was this: that two Australians brought up a tin of fish, that when I had inquired into the fish business I asked if there was a man from either of the New Zealand regiments who had anything to say, and that then a man from one of the regiments did say they would like more food?—Yes, sir.

331. So that actually both things were dealt with at the same time—both the fish and the quantity of food?—Well, that is what I noticed. I only know about the quantity of food. The two cases may have been one.

332. You say you are perfectly certain that the boilers were not scrubbed out after meat was cooked and before tea was put in?—Yes.

333. If I tell you that I had been in the galley several times myself with the purser and the chief steward, and have asked those cooks whether the boilers were scrubbed, and they assured me they were, you mean to say that those cooks were liars?—No, I would not say they were liars; I would say they told an untruth.

334. You do not think the meat was sufficient?—No.

335. You say that because you saw the mess orderly with a mess-tin with a certain amount of meat?—Yes.

336. How much, at a guess, would you say that meat was enough for—say there were sixteen at a mess-table?—Some tables did not have sixteen. I should say it would not be enough for sixteen men.

337. Would it be enough for fourteen?—Twelve or thirteen.

338. What table was this particular dish for?—I could not say what particular table it was for.

339. You never heard what table it was for?—No.

340. You do not know whether it was for a table of sixteen or ten?—He told me it was for a table of sixteen.

341. Otherwise you know nothing about it?—No, not that.

342. You say you handed in your blankets to Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell?—The first night I kept my blankets, and gave them in next morning.

343. Why did you hand them in?—I said, "Take these blankets, they are not wanted."

344. Did you give any reason?—No.

345. You did not tell him anything about their being lousy?—No.

346. You did not tell any officer?—No.

347. You did not make any complaint?—No; just gave them back again.

348. And said nothing at all?—Yes.

349. Why did you not want them?—Because I did not want to get vermin.

350. And how were you going to avoid getting vermin?—I had my own blankets.

351. You brought them on board?—Yes, sir.

352. Although you knew that there were strict orders issued in Africa that they were not to be brought on board?—That was the order, sir; but a lot were brought on board. The New-Zealanders' blankets were allowed to be brought on board, not the Government blankets.

353. Then, you handed your blankets back knowing them to be lousy, and went to sleep somewhere else in other blankets?—Yes; I went to sleep in my own blankets.

354. And did you suppose from the fact of your blankets being lousy that the other men's were lousy?—Yes, I suppose, because they all chatted about them and said, "My blankets is bad."

355. Can you tell me of any man who reported to any non-commissioned officer?—No, I could not.

356. Can you tell me the name of a single man who reported on the ship?—No, I could not.

357. Did you say that you saw Surgeon-Major Pearless at the butcher's shop inspecting an issue of meat?—No; I saw him at the galley.

358. *Captain Lewin.*] You say that the meat that was given into the officers' galley was quite good?—Yes, sir.

359. You say, also, the meat going into the troopers' galley was blue?—Not all of it—on two or three occasions.

360. Who do you consider responsible for drafting that meat, so that the bad meat went to the troopers and the good meat to the officers?—I should say the quartermaster.

361. You hold me responsible, then, for sorting that meat out and sending the good meat into the officers' galley?—No, I would not say that—not the sorting it out.

362. Are you aware the meat was inspected by a veterinary surgeon?—No, I am not.

363. You say about the latrines that they were in a bad state at night?—Yes, sir.

364. Do you know Sergeant Henderson?—Yes, by sight.

365. Do you know what his duties were?—To look after the latrines.

366. Did he keep them clean?—They were very clean in the daytime.

367. And the lavatories also?—Oh, yes.

368. How do you account for them getting into this state?—I could not say. They overflowed.

369. Do you belong to D squadron?—Yes, sir.

370. The same as Corporal Moore?—Yes, sir.

371. Captain Cameron's squadron?—Yes, sir.

372. You saw those latrines aft of the ship?—Yes, sir.

373. Do you remember how the place was built?—Yes, sir.

374. You know you had to step over a bit of water-board?—Yes.

375. Now, if that water was sluicing about to go over that board, would it not go down among the men?—Some of it did go down below.

376. If that water was going at the rate that it would go over that board, it would be about 1 ft. to 15 in. deep?—A foot deep, I should say.

377. There were only about 4 in. to go for it to get down into the men?—It would not go down into the men as the ship rolled it—

378. About 3 in. or 4 in. to go down to the men?—Yes.

379. You are perfectly certain that those latrines overflowed on to the fish?—At night-time, yes.

380. Every night?—No, I would not say that.

381. How high was the grating?—I could not say; it was not very high. I should say about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.

382. I may be wrong, but I thought it was 6 in. high?—I would not say so. I would take it to be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.

383. *The Chairman.*] What was the greatest depth of water you ever saw sluicing about in the latrines?—I think it would be about 1 ft. deep when she was rolling.

384. But when on the level?—It would be about ankle-deep, 3 in.

385. How far had it to rush when the ship rolled—how far was it from the latrine to the coaming?—I could not say how far from door to door.

386. Was it 4 ft.?—I could not say.

387. Can you give us any idea?—It would be more than 5 ft.

388. And you have seen it 3 in. deep?—I have seen it deeper than that. I have seen it over 1 ft. deep.

389. Was there any place for the water to escape except over the coaming on the deck near the fish?—Not into the alley-way.

390. Could it get out of the latrines except on to the deck?—Yes, by pulling the plugs out.

391. Was there no door or other means of exit?—There were two doors, one on each side of the alley-way.

392. Were they equally high—the coamings?—Yes.

393. What height were they?—I could not say.

394. 1 ft. or more, or less than 1 ft.?—I could not say.

395. Can you give us any idea by looking at that wall?—About 1 ft.

396. How far was the water from the top of the coaming when you saw it at its fullest?—1 ft. deep.

397. How far was it from overflowing when the ship was not rolling?—It would be right over the top.

398. Was it 6 in. from the top, or what?—It would sluice up.

399. It was practically full up the whole time?—Yes.

Trooper GILBERT WALDIE sworn and examined. (No. 15.)

400. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your name?—Gilbert Waldie.

401. And you are a trooper in which contingent?—The Eighth.

402. What rank are you?—Trooper.

403. We understand that you desire to give evidence in connection with the complaints made in the "Britannic": have you any complaint?—What I have to complain about is the accommodation—sleeping-apartments. There was supposed to be a hook per man for hammocks, and there was not a hook per man. They had to sleep on the floor.

404. Were there many sleeping on the floor?—Yes, a good crowd. The decks were very wet all the time.

405. The lower deck?—Yes, it was wet.

406. Did you count the hooks?—No, I did not count them. I counted them some nights. I had to fight for it one night, and I got it.

407. Have you anything else to say about the accommodation?—No, nothing more about the accommodation. The tea and coffee was very bad; I could not drink it. I do not think I had two cups of tea all the time coming over.

408. What was wrong with it?—Well, it was strong, and it was sometimes cold. I do not know what sort of coffee it was; it had not a very nice taste, anyhow. The meat was uncooked at times. Sometimes we got a very nice piece of meat, but it would never go all round. There was generally a squabble on the deck about the issuing of it. And the bedding was a little bit lively when we had it given to us, so we had a lively trip. I think that is all I have to complain against.

409. Your complaints are that there was not sufficient sleeping-accommodation, there was no room to sling your hammocks down below, tea and coffee bad, and meat was badly cooked and not enough of it, and the bedding was not too clean?—Yes, that is right.

410. Upon how many occasions did you yourself find the lower decks at night-time wet?—Well, it was always wet.

411. What caused them to be wet?—They did not have enough ventilation to let fresh air in, so that they had to open the hatchway, and a sea would break over. And in calm weather it was scrubbed out, and it had not time to dry.

412. How often was it scrubbed out?—I could not tell you. I should think, about four or five times a week.

413. That was on your own deck?—Yes.
414. Were you on the upper or lower 'tween deck?—Lower 'tween deck.
415. What means of ventilation had you down there?—We had one windsail.
416. And an electric fan?—Yes.
417. Did they ventilate the place sufficiently?—No, they did not.
418. Do you know whether any complaint was made to the officers as to the ventilation?—I could not state.
419. You say the meat seemed to be fairly good in quality, but that it was not cooked sufficiently?—Some of it was, and some of it was not altogether. I was not a great eater of meat, and did not take much at all. They used to serve it to me, but I did not have it.
420. You cannot say from your own personal experience whether it was very good or very bad?—No.
421. Did you ever see any bad meat?—I did not.
422. Then, you say there was not enough—or do you mean that there was not enough per man, or enough per mess?—Enough per man.
423. How many men were in your mess?—Sixteen.
424. What quantity of meat would be sent down for the sixteen?—Sometimes a small roast would be sent down. I should think, about 8 lb. or 9 lb. of meat.
425. Was that for dinner?—Yes.
426. Was there meat in addition to that for breakfast?—Yes; I think there was bacon or fish, whatever it might be, and stew which was made of potatoes. There was very little meat in that.
427. Do you think the men got 1 lb. of meat a day?—No, they did not.
428. Did you ever hear any complaints about the quality or quantity of the water?—There was never enough fresh water. We could not get any to wash any clothes. We could get plenty of drinking-water.
429. And plenty to wash yourselves?—You were lucky to get a wash in the morning. You could not get it afterwards unless you stole it from the guard on the tap.
430. You got no water for washing clothes?—No, unless it was salt water.
431. When did you first notice that your bedding was not too clean?—Well, I noticed it about two days after I got on the boat.
432. Did you take any action in connection with it when you found this out?—I just grinned and bore it.
433. And it was pretty general throughout the ship?—Yes, it was.
434. *Mr. McNab.*] Did you make any personal complaint to any non-commissioned officer or an officer regarding the accommodation in the way of sleeping?—Yes, sir, I have.
435. To whom did you make a complaint?—To the quartermaster.
436. But what was his name?—Quartermaster-Sergeant King.
437. What did the quartermaster-sergeant do: what did he say?—I asked him for more blankets. He said he would requisition for them if there was a chance of getting them.
438. What did he say?—He said he would get them, and we did get them about a week after.
439. You complained about a want of blankets and the quartermaster-sergeant attended to it, and got the blankets?—Yes, sir.
440. Did you make any complaint about the want of room?—No, not to any non-commissioned officer.
441. Did you make any complaint about tea or coffee?—No.
442. Did you make any complaint about the meat being uncooked?—I never complained to any officer. Of course, it was general.
443. Did you make any complaint about the bedding being lousy?—No, I did not.
444. You said that sometimes a small roast came down to sixteen men?—Yes.
445. If a trooper says that the meat was always boiled, never roasted, he is telling what is not correct?—That might be.
446. You told the Commission that a small roast came down to sixteen men: do you still persist in this statement?—Yes, I have seen a small roast come down.
447. Then, a trooper told us what was not correct when he said they never roasted the meat?—He might not have got roasted meat.
448. He said they never roasted the meat: is he stating what is not correct?—Well, he might never have seen roasted meat.
449. Did you have roasted meat?—Yes, I had roasted meat.
450. Then, he told us what was not correct when he said that meat was never roasted?—Yes.
451. Regarding the wash—you say men were lucky in getting a wash: what time did reveille go in the morning?—Half-past 6.
452. Supposing a man got out of his bed when reveille went, would it be possible for that man to get a wash before the water was shut off?—Yes.
453. When was the water shut off?—Well, of course, I cannot tell you exactly to the minute. I generally happened to get a wash about a quarter-past 7 myself.
454. Can you tell us when reveille did go?—Half-past 6.
455. Well, if the orders state it was 6 o'clock the orders must be wrong?—I might be wrong.
456. Well, I want to know whether the orders are wrong—I have them here?—Well, I must be wrong. I am wrong, then.
457. Might you not be wrong about the men getting a wash when the reveille went?—It all depends on the "go" of the man. If he liked to bustle he would get a wash; but he would have to be a bustler.
458. If he preferred, in place of bustling, to take out another half-hour, and imagined that reveille was at half-past 6 instead of at 6, and took a little advance on half-past 6 in his bed, he



would not be able to get a wash?—I always got a wash immediately after I got up. I was up at a quarter-past 7 myself.

459. Do you want the Commission to understand this: that if a man got up when reveille went he was able to get a wash, and if he did not get up he would not get one?—Yes, sir.

460. *The Chairman.*] It was a quarter-past 7 when you went to wash: how many men were as a rule waiting there?—They were full to the doors.

461. How long did you wait?—Quarter of an hour. I have never waited longer.

462. Did you ever get in at once at a quarter-past 7?—No, I never have.

463. On what days in a week did the men get boiled meat for dinner?—I could not tell you.

464. Did they get the same dinner every day?—Well, it was generally the same meat, but there were different puddings.

465. Was the meat boiled or stewed: what sort of dinners did you get as a rule?—Generally boiled meat.

466. How often did you get roast meat?—Not more than once a week.

467. Was she what is called a wet boat—the “*Britannic*”?—Yes, a very wet boat.

468. How often did the seas come over to the lower deck?—The second week we were out. it came over a good few times.

469. Every day, or every other day, or what?—Sometimes it would be two or three days running, and then there would be a spell.

470. Did you get green seas, or only a spray?—I suppose it was spray.

471. Did it flood the lower deck?—No; it just wet it over—gave it a good wash.

472. Do you think you got down a bucketful?—Yes; but when it spreads out it looks a lot.

473. How often would a bucketful come down?—Two or three would come down before they would shut down the hatchway.

474. On how many days?—I could not tell you; I could not say how many.

475. There was no time to dry it up when it came down?—The mess orderlies got a cloth and dried it up.

476. And did it run from end to end of the deck?—Well, it ran across the deck.

477. How often did it get down to run clean across the deck?—I could not tell you how many times. I was not always down below when the seas did come over.

478. Did you sleep below?—Yes, sir.

479. Did you sling your hammock?—Yes; I did not sling it for the first week, because I slept on the floor.

480. Why did you sleep on the floor?—Because I had no hook, and I had such a cold.

481. How many men were obliged to sleep on the deck out of your own squadron?—I could not tell you how many; they were all over the place.

482. Were there hooks for all of them?—No.

483. For three-quarters?—I should think so, sir.

484. How far apart were the hooks?—Well, they would not be more than about 18 in.

485. What size was the electric fan: how broad was it?—It would be 2 ft. square.

486. Did it make a good current of air?—No.

487. Would it have blown out a candle?—Yes.

488. How far off?—I could not tell you that.

489. There was only one windsail?—Yes.

490. In the lower deck?—Yes.

491. Did a good current of air come down?—It would not be more than 18 in. across.

492. Do you know whether it was properly adjusted to the wind, or care taken about it?—The method was for it to go against the wind with the boat.

493. Do you know whether there was a fair current of air?—I could not tell you that.

494. How far was it from the hatchway?—It would be about 5 ft.

495. How far from the electric fan?—About 5 ft. or 6 ft.

496. Were you able to sleep at night?—Not altogether, no.

497. Why not?—Generally the early part of the evening it was warm, and until 12 o'clock, and then when we would wake in the morning it would be cold.

498. It was cold, as a rule, when you woke up every morning?—Not every morning, but some mornings colder than others. It all depended on the weather.

499. Generally, was it very hot below?—Oh, no, not altogether very warm; on some nights it was very stuffy.

500. Can you account for its being stuffy on some occasions and not on other nights?—It all depended on the weather. Some nights it was very calm, and it would get very close with so many below.

501. Did very many of the men go up on the deck at night?—I do not know.

Trooper MUIR sworn and examined. (No. 16.)

502. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name?—Trooper Muir.

503. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

504. You desire to give evidence before the Commission that is sitting to inquire into the transportation of the men on board the “*Britannic*.” If you wish to make a statement, give your complaints, or otherwise, the Commission will be only too happy to hear?—I know very little about the hospital. There was one man troubled with lumbago or sciatica, and there were two men pulling this man about the deck, and they told me the authorities would not take him in.

505. Do you know of your own knowledge?—No; they told me that the hospital authorities would not take him in.

506. We would prefer that you would confine your evidence to what came within your own

knowledge, and what you can swear to on oath, and that you will be cross-examined?—Then, as for the tucker on board the ship, to my own knowledge it was quite green. I saw it three or four times. And on another two occasions the soup was made of salt water. And then the overcrowding—the hammocks—there was not nearly enough hooks for the hammocks for the men. The hammocks were always swinging, rubbing against each side, and you could not possibly sleep. There were also men lying on tables and forms, and others slept on the floor. And, also, there was some of them preferred to hang their hammocks on the top deck. That is about all.

507. In regard to the food, was meat ever supplied to you that was not green?—Yes, sir.

508. Did you make a complaint to a non-commissioned officer or to an officer?—I never, sir.

509. Daily there were appointed officers and non-commissioned officers to take complaints, were there not?—Yes, sir.

510. You never complained to them?—I never.

511. Did you ever make a complaint in regard to the soup?—I never, sir; but there were complaints made.

512. In regard to the overcrowding, did you make any complaint?—No, sir.

513. Is the Commission to understand, in regard to the complaints you now make, that when on board the troopship you did not make these complaints to a con-commissioned officer or to a commissioned officer?—No, sir, I made no complaint.

514. There were non-commissioned officers and officers appointed by the officer commanding to receive complaints?—Yes, sir.

515. The men on board the ship knew who were appointed officers for the day, and who their non-commissioned officers were, did they not?—Yes.

516. So that you do not suggest that the complaints were not made because you did not know who to complain to?—I never made any complaint, but others did.

517. You are speaking for yourself?—Yes, sir.

518. *Mr. Millar.*] As far as the overcrowding was concerned, it would be no use making complaint to an officer, because she was full?—Yes, sir, she was.

519. You say you got bad meat yourself?—Yes, sir.

520. On many occasions?—About three or four occasions.

521. Did you hear much complaining among the men as to the quality and quantity of the food?—Yes, sir pretty well all over our troop-deck. On one occasion we paraded the saloon-deck with fish.

522. That was the only occasion on which you know they brought the matter before the notice of the officer commanding?—Yes, only that, sir.

523. Did the non-commissioned officers move round and make any attempt to look after the cleanliness or comfort of the troopers under them?—To a certain extent they did.

524. So you have no complaint to make against any of them?—Not against any non-commissioned officer.

525. They looked after you as much as they could?—Yes.

526. Did the officers look after you?—Not as regards food.

527. You think the officers could have done more than they did in connection with looking after your food: the quality or quantity, or both?—Both.

528. Do you know the names of any in your own troop who did complain to the orderly of the day?—Yes; I recollect there was Trooper Mulhern.

529. Do you know what he complained about? Did you hear him make a complaint?—He was on one side of the mess-room and we were on the other.

530. Do you know what he complained about?—It was just about the food.

531. How was the ventilation down below?—Very poor.

532. Did you find it high at any time?—Very high.

533. Did you sleep in a hammock or on deck?—I had a hammock, but I preferred to lie on the table. On one occasion there was one of our squadron—a sergeant—had a very bad cold, and he was always lying on the table, or else the form, or else the floor, so I gave him my hammock and I slept on the floor. I took his place on the floor.

534. Did you find it colder on the floor than in the hammock?—Yes, sir.

535. A hammock is a pretty warm thing to sleep in?—It was warm down below.

536. Do you think the ventilation could have been improved by having more windsails?—Oh, yes.

537. Were there any hatchways that could have been utilised to ventilate the holds?—Well, there was just like one hatchway.

538. Where did they come down?—Down at the end of the troop-deck.

539. What ventilation did they have at the other end?—There were just the portholes, and most of the voyage we could not open them.

540. Was it on the lower deck or 'tween-decks?—Yes, 'tween-decks.

541. That was the upper troop-deck?—Yes.

542. There was just the one windsail?—Yes; it went below us.

543. You had just the hatchway?—Yes.

544. Did you have any electric fans?—No, sir.

545. Was the whole supply of pure air obtained through the hatchway.—Yes, sir.

546. Did you ever see any of the officers go through these 'tween-decks at night-time when the men were asleep?—No, sir, never.

547. Do you know if they did?—I never heard of any one.

548. So far as you know, the officers had no knowledge of your condition below there, from your personal observation?—From personal observation, yes; they came round in the day-time when the decks were at their best, because they had just been cleaned up in the morning.

549. Did you see much drunkenness on board?—No, very little.
550. Was there much gambling going on?—Not to a great extent: there was not.
551. Just as much as you might expect among any crowd of men?—Yes, sir.
552. *The Chairman.*] You say the meat was green three or four times?—Yes, to my knowledge, sir.
553. What did you think of the meat?—I thought it was not very bright.
554. What was wrong with it?—The look of it, also the smell; it did not have a pure smell.
555. Was this after cooking or before?—After cooking.
556. You did not see it green on more than three or four occasions?—Just on three or four occasions, to my knowledge.
557. What did you say about the soup?—Made with salt water.
558. How often?—Twice, to my knowledge.
559. Otherwise how was it?—Sometimes it was very good, but the vegetables in it were not properly cooked.
560. In what way do you mean not properly cooked?—To my taste they felt a little raw.
561. Did you say there were not enough hooks to hang all the hammocks?—No, sir.
562. Were all the hooks occupied?—The first two or three nights after we left Durban they were not all occupied, because we all felt warm and preferred to lay on the decks, but after that it got very cold and we were forced to use the hammocks.
563. Who regulated the hanging of the hammocks—who saw to it? Did every man put his hammock up where he chose?—There was a certain time in which we were to get our hammocks up from down below, where they were put in the morning.
564. Did each man get the same hammock every day?—Pretty well; but there were several that never.
565. Do you think it is possible that the hammocks were slung crooked instead of being slung true fore-and-aft? Were any hooks missed?—There were no hooks missed.
566. How many men were compelled to sleep on deck?—It is hard to say for my squadron, because we had one table on one side of the ship and the rest of the squadron was on the other side. There were only just about five or six hooks to our table.
567. How many were at your table?—Sixteen.
568. Then, out of sixteen, eleven had to sleep on the floor?—Yes, there were, to my knowledge; and they always preferred to sleep on the floor.
569. Do you think there were only hooks for five out of sixteen men?—Yes; for five or six.
570. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—A ploughman and miner, sir.
571. *Colonel Davies.*] Which was your regiment, second or first—which was your squadron?—Second E squadron.
572. Who was in charge?—Captain Fookes.

Quartermaster-Sergeant McDONNELL further examined on oath. (No. 17.)

573. *The Chairman.*] Do you know a man named Silby who was on board the “*Britannic*”?—I knew him well.
574. Do you remember his returning his blankets into store?—No. He may have done so, but never to me.
575. Did any other men return their blankets to you?—No.
576. *Mr. McNab.*] If Silby swore on oath, “I returned my blankets to Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell,” and subsequently said “I do not think Sergeant McDonnell saw the blankets were crawling,” do you assert the first statement was absolutely untrue?—He never returned them to me.
577. What sort of reputation had Silby in the company as to his truthfulness?—I do not know. I know that when he came on board at Durban he went into the saloon galley and worked there of his own accord. It was the same on the “*Surrey*.” He went into the bakehouse, and he was in it all the way on the “*Surrey*.”

Trooper FREDERICK EDWARD MOORE examined on oath. (No. 18.)

578. *The Chairman.*] To what contingent did you belong?—I went out with the Tenth, and afterwards joined the Eighth.
579. Did you return with the Eighth on the “*Britannic*”?—Yes.
580. You have expressed a desire to come before the Commission. Will you make any statement you may think fit?—Well, the first statement I have to make is with regard to the accommodation on board the troopship “*Britannic*.” In the first place, we went on board on Saturday evening and had blankets served out. I had a pair of blankets served out to me by Sergeant Nairn. I found they were very dirty.
581. What about the accommodation?—I was attached to A squadron. I was orderly of the A sergeants’ table. We had enough hooks for the A squadron sergeants to hang the hammocks to; but, looking round, I could see that there were not sufficient for the men who were living on our deck. Consequently many of the men had to sleep on the deck. The deck was often wet on account of the water capsizing that we used in washing up the dishes. The passage was rough from Durban to Albany, and water was capsized sometimes. On account of the portholes being low they could not be opened, so that the deck did not dry, and the men were sleeping on the wet floor. Sand was put down to try and dry it. Sometimes it did when the wind came down the windsails, but if the ports were shut through rough weather I should certainly say there was not enough air for the men down below. Then, going on to the meat: I did not see the meat before it went to the cook’s galley, but I saw it when it was being served out down below.

582. That is, after it was cooked?—Yes, after it was cooked; and I can safely say there was not 1 lb. of meat for each man, and some of it was not fit for food. Corned beef in some cases was served out for the men on account of there not being enough of the other, and even then there was not enough. As for the jam served out, I have seen Quartermaster Horne with rhubarb-jam which he would not give to the troops, it was so bad. I saw it because it was served out from our tables. He was serving out butter too, and there was no fault to be found with it, but some of the jam was so bad he would not give it. He said he would report it, but whether it was reported or not I do not know. Then, we got coffee in the morning from the boiler which had been made overnight, and there were very few at my table who would touch the coffee. It was the same with the tea, because after dinner they used the boiler in which the meat had been boiled, and the tea for the evening was made in it. Then, the fish that was served out to the men was put on the deck close to one of the men's latrines. It was about 3 ft. from the latrine, and no one would touch it. There was a grating under some of the fish and no grating at all under the rest. This fish was in sacks, and when there was room it was put on the grating, but if there was no room it was put on the deck. Then, these latrines in the evening got blocked up, and as the ship rolled the contents were washed round the fish. We also had dogs on board, and I have seen them making water on the fish. That same fish, after being there for two or three days, was sent to the troops' galley and served out to the men. When the men got the fish from the troops' galley they did not care to eat it, and the South Island men went at once and complained about it. They had to eat the fish or else go without it. Then, the A squad men of the Eighth were on the troop-deck, and there was no room to clean the deck where the men were standing about. They were in the place where the hospital was, and the men who went to see the doctor had to go through the A squad to get to the hospital. They were standing in such numbers we could not get room to wash up the deck. These were men who were going to see the doctor, and they were sitting on the tables and seats and they were spitting about the deck, and just where we wanted to clean it they were standing about. Steps were taken to have this prevented by putting canvas up, but when we arrived at Albany the canvas was pulled down, and we had to use blankets so as to keep the sick away from our tables. They had pulled down the canvas.

583. Was this all before you got to Albany?—Yes.

584. What next?—I should certainly say there was not enough space for the men to walk about on deck. There was very little water for washing, and when the water was turned on there was always such a rush to get a wash that many could not get one because the water was turned off before they could get there. I do not think there is anything else I can think of.

585. What was your occupation before going into the contingent?—A carpenter.

586. You say there were enough hooks for the sergeants but not for the men. How many men were there in A squadron?—I could not tell you.

587. About a hundred?—About a hundred.

588. Out of a hundred how many had space to hang their hammocks?—They were lying on the tables and on the deck.

589. They had no hooks?—I could see there were not enough hooks.

590. Any hooks unoccupied?—I could not say.

591. You were sixteen men in mess: out of those how many had no hooks?—Three or four.

592. You say the blankets were dirty?—Some of them were clean, and some of them were very dirty.

593. Your own?—Mine were dirty, but I thought I had better not say anything about it. I had the blankets and would have to use them.

594. When you say "dirty," what do you mean—dragged on the deck, or what?—They had been used before.

595. Were they worn-out blankets?—No.

596. How were they served out?—In twos.

597. Were they rolled blankets, or were they lying about in a heap?—They were lying in a heap.

598. Was there any other cause for the deck being wet except the washing-up water?—No, except a drop of rain now and then.

599. What deck were you on?—It was a single deck by itself.

600. Any troops below you?—No; just below was the armoury.

601. Was there any other reason for the deck being wet besides the washing-water?—Just when we washed the deck ourselves.

602. Did any of the men pump-ship in the scuppers?—No.

603. You never heard it talked about?—No.

604. How often did it happen that you got the salt water down?—Once or twice, and in some cases when we left the portholes open it came in there.

605. As a rule it did not come down?—No.

606. You did not see the meat as it came from the refrigerator?—No.

607. What was it like when it came from the cookhouse?—It was black.

608. Was this fresh beef or salt beef?—Fresh beef.

609. What makes you think there was not 1 lb. of meat served out to each man?—By the way in which it was served out; and when it was cut up, two or three of the men would have to go without meat.

610. Any meat for breakfast?—We got a little stew.

611. What did it consist of?—Potatoes and a bit of meat, and sometimes you might have a speck of vegetables; that is all.

612. For dinner?—We had meat.

613. And for tea did you have meat?—Yes.

614. Then you had meat three times a day?—Yes; but not sufficient of it.

615. You say the meat, when cooked, did not smell well: what do you mean—did it stink. or was it rotten?—Not exactly rotten, but it was not to be compared to what it should have been.

616. Was it high, like game?—Not quite that.

617. Can you be precise? These are points we want to get at. It was not rotten, it was not gamey—what was it?—It was like as if it had been lying about for days and then used.

618. That is, it was kept too long?—No; because some meat will keep a long time and some will not.

619. You did not like it, but you cannot describe what was wrong?—We did not like the meat at all, and in most cases it was not properly cooked.

620. You say the jam was bad?—The rhubarb-jam.

621. Anything but rhubarb?—Yes, sometimes.

622. How often did you have rhubarb-jam?—Once or twice a week; sometimes we had apple and plum.

623. How often on the voyage?—On two occasions.

624. What was the matter with the jam?—It was green, and as soon as the tin was opened a bad smell came from it.

625. The other jams right?—Yes.

626. What about the butter?—I have no fault to find with the butter.

627. The bread?—That was good.

628. The biscuits?—I never touched them, but they were quite fit to be eaten.

629. You say the coffee was made overnight?—Yes.

630. Boiled overnight?—Yes, boiled overnight. It was not the same coffee as was sold by the sailors.

631. Were the sailors selling coffee to the men?—Yes. It was not the same coffee at all. Our coffee was made overnight and heated up in the morning by steam.

632. Was there a reason for that?—It seemed to me that they would not get up in the morning to do it.

633. Do you think that with so many men on board it was necessary to get the coffee prepared overnight?—No.

634. Did the cooks get up?—I do not know. I have seen them up at night at 11 o'clock.

635. Were the cooks then at work?—They were sitting down, some inside and some outside. On one occasion I saw them making coffee myself just after 9 o'clock.

636. Then, you think they should have been in bed, in order to be able to get up early in the morning to make the coffee?—That is what it seemed to me.

637. Was there accommodation in the galley sufficient to have kept boilers for making tea and coffee for over a thousand men, as well as cooking the meat for them?—No. There were just three boilers.

638. Then, there was no blame to the cooks for using the same boiler?—No; you could not blame the cooks. There should have been more space.

639. Do you think they took reasonable care to clean the boilers?—No; I never saw the boilers boiled out once.

640. They never put in a jet of hot water to clean them?—They wiped them with a cloth, without a drop of water, and then they put in the soup for dinner.

641. After the soup?—I do not think they used a drop of water; and I never saw them take the grease off the side of the boiler.

642. What about the latrines: were they generally fairly clean?—Yes, fairly clean; but I do not know why it was the case, but in the evening they seemed to be blocked.

643. The closets or the urinals?—The closets near where the fish was put. There was no urinal where the fish was.

644. And you saw water from the latrines overflowing?—In the morning I have been there when the grating has been swimming about. There was at least 6 in. or 8 in. of water there.

645. How often did this happen?—Well, it happened while the fish was there.

646. How often?—Five or six times.

647. Where did you have rough weather?—The roughest was between Durban and Albany.

648. Were the seas breaking over the ship?—No.

649. This water in the latrines could not have been caused by the sea?—No.

650. Then, what was it?—The waste water from the washing-place alongside the closet. They were cleaned out every morning, and I must say that both the closet and the washing-place were well cleaned in the morning.

651. What was the height of the step into the latrine?—About 1 ft.

652. How high over that did the water come?—I have seen the water come over it.

653. Used the men to go into it when it was in that mess?—No. Steps were taken when it was found out to rectify it.

654. You say you saw it several times?—Yes; because I went in there when it was like that, and on one occasion the water went into my boot.

655. Was that often?—It was when the water was there and the gratings were swimming about.

656. Was there any man in charge of the latrines?—There was a sentry there over the canteen, but whether he looked after the latrines I could not say.

657. You say the dogs cocked their legs on the fish, and the men had to eat it?—Yes; it was taken to the cooks' galley.

658. Did they eat it?—Some did, and some threw it overboard.
659. Was there anything given in its place?—I believe there was stew given to them.
660. When you said the men had to eat it, was not that rather an overstatement?—Well, they either had to eat it or go without, or complain about it.
661. Could they not complain about it?—Two Australians did take it up and complain.
662. Your own men?—I could not say. They went from the Australian troop deck.
663. You say they ate it and did not complain?—No.
664. Did they eat it?—Very few.
665. Can you give the name of one?—I was sitting at our table, and I knew very few on board.
666. Then, you do not know whether they ate it or not?—I saw them eat it.
667. Men of your own squadron?—I cannot say. I was only attached to it when I came on board.
668. I understand that before you got to Albany the men who went down for the doctor's inspection incommoded the men on the A troop deck?—Yes.
669. How long before you got to Albany?—From just after we got to sea, and it was the same all the way during the voyage.
670. How many men were there who went for the doctor's inspection?—Never less than ten or twelve men.
671. This was between Durban and Albany?—Yes.
672. And constantly?—Yes.
673. So much so as to prevent the A deck being cleaned?—Yes.
674. Was any effort made to get the men out of the way?—Yes; they were told to go upstairs.
675. Was a complaint made to the hospital authorities of the number of men who went there?—A complaint was made to the deck sergeant.
676. Did he take any notice?—On two or three occasions he tried to tranship them, but it was so cold on deck the men would not go.
677. You say there was very little water to wash with?—Yes.
678. When you washed how much did you get?—About half a basinful; but you would have to be pretty early to get it.
679. Was that a great hardship?—It was not a hardship to get up early. In most cases I got up at half-past 5 o'clock.
680. When was the water turned on?—At 6 o'clock. Sometimes it was not turned on and the officer came down and had it turned on.
681. Did other men go early?—When it was turned on there was a big rush and there was no room to wash. At first there were only three basins, and then when a complaint was made there were six basins.
682. Six basins for a thousand men?—No; only for the A and B men.
683. How many would that be?—Over two hundred.
684. Not more than six basins?—Yes.
685. Could you get buckets to wash in?—No.
686. Was the water turned on at any other hour except in the morning?—No; it was turned off just before inspection and was never turned on again.
687. How much do you think would give you sufficient space on deck?—There was not sufficient space, because men would have to sit down while others were walking about. They could have done with twice the space.
688. Do you know the transport regulations?—No.
689. Were you not in the position of a man of the Imperial service, and in that capacity you would come under the discipline of those who paid you?—We were under the officers.
690. Did you get pay from the New Zealand or the Imperial Government?—I always understood it was the Imperial service and we were under the army orders.
691. *Mr. Millar.*] About the latrines, which you say were constantly flooded: could that be avoided?—As soon as it was noticed that it was flooded, because the pipe was stuffed up, the pipe was cleared out.
692. Did it occur again?—No, not in the daytime; but in the morning when the men were there the pipe was blocked up, and that was remedied.
693. Were the latrines cleaned out only once a day?—In the morning, before inspection.
694. Would it be possible to clean them oftener?—I do not think it was necessary to clean them more than once a day.
695. What caused it to flood at night-time, when nobody was using it?—The pipe was too small.
696. Could not some attention be given to it at night-time?—It could have been done, but whether it was done or not I do not know. While the men were in there, and using the paper, instead of putting it on the seats they dropped it on the deck, and it went into the pipe, and that caused it to block up. There were no lights in this latrine.
697. The "Britannic" had a big deckhouse running fore and aft along the centre of the deck?—Yes.
698. You had the two alley-ways?—Yes; but there was the canteen on one side and the butcher's shop and the bakehouse on the other.
699. That was all the deck-space available?—Yes.
700. Were the latrines on the deck?—Yes, on the troop-deck.
701. The only space you had for exercise was in this place?—We had the space alongside the cooks' galley, but somebody would be working there peeling potatoes and getting the water we wanted to wash our dishes, so it was not much use to us.

702. Do you know of a complaint being made to an officer and no attempt made to rectify it?—No, sir. As far I know, the complaints made to officers were rectified. I can say about this complaint as to the sick being on the tables when they came for the doctor's inspection it was rectified by canvas being put up, but at Albany the canvas was pulled down and we had to put up blankets.

703. At all events, an endeavour was made to rectify what you complained of?—Yes.

704. Do you think the officers during the voyage tried to make things comfortable for the men?—As far as I am concerned, I think so.

705. How long would it take you to wash—that is, from the time you got into the wash-house until you dried yourself?—I used to go up in my singlet, wash myself, and go outside and dry myself; I think it would take me four or five minutes.

706. Would that be a fair average?—No; some men would dry themselves properly and some would not.

707. Would any take over five minutes?—No; because as soon as you got there you would hear a man calling out, "Hurry up there; it is my turn."

708. The men from forward could not come to your place, and you could not go to theirs?—No, sir.

709. You say there were about two hundred men in A and B squadrons?—Yes.

710. Could the men get their wash after 8 o'clock?—After 8 o'clock the water was turned off and the wash-houses were cleaned up for inspection. Shortly after 8 o'clock, when they were cleaning up for inspection, the men were not allowed to go in.

711. Only six basins?—Yes.

712. That would leave 25 per cent. of your men who could not get a wash, or seventy-two men, allowing five minutes for each man?—On one or two occasions I had to go without a wash.

713. You say there was not sufficient time to allow the whole of the men to wash?—No.

714. Was there any room in the galley to put more than three coppers in it?—They could have put one more copper in between the oven and No. 3 copper.

715. What size were the coppers, roughly speaking: how much would they hold?—I have no idea.

716. Did you ever see them cleaning the coppers with a bucket of hot water, or anything?—No, sir.

717. *Mr. McNab.*] With regard to the washing, do I understand you to mean that if there had been only one basin only twelve men could wash in that basin in an hour?—No, sir; certainly not.

718. How many men do you think could have washed in an hour in that one basin, not taking the time to dry themselves, but washing their faces and hands?—I should think twenty men could have washed in an hour.

719. And very easily, too?—Yes.

720. In fact, it would not be pushing a man too much to give him two minutes to wash his face and hands, not having a shave or bath, drying himself outside?—It would, because sometimes he would have to wait for the water to come. You would put your thumb, and it would take a couple of minutes to get the water. As the boat rolled the water would go to one side and then it would come back to the other. I know I have had to wait two or three minutes before I could get half a basin of water.

721. Did you ever complain to the officer about that?—No.

722. So far as you are concerned, the officer in charge might have supposed that the water was coming all right?—He might have.

723. And the water was on for two hours, from 6 to 8?—Yes; because just after 8 they began to clean up for inspection, and no one could go in when they were cleaning up.

724. How much meat, on the whole, do you think would be issued per man at breakfast-time?—About 2 oz. or 3 oz.

725. How much at the midday meal?—There would not be much more, because there was very little meat served out. It would be about the same quantity.

726. Not more than at breakfast?—No, sir.

727. In what form was it issued?—In lumps.

728. Boiled or roasted?—Boiled.

729. In the morning?—Mostly in the way of stew.

730. Was it pretty thick stew?—No; it seemed mostly water.

731. Do you suggest there was no more meat given to the men at the midday meal?—I cannot say exactly.

732. You told us it was the same?—I could not say exactly; I never saw the meat weighed out.

733. If I were to show you a piece of meat the size of this carafe of water, could you tell the weight of it?—No; I am not in the butchering line.

734. How much did they get in the evening?—In my opinion, they would receive more in the evening than at dinner or breakfast.

735. Double as much?—No.

736. Fifty per cent. more?—I do not think so.

737. Would they get from 4 oz. to 5 oz.?—I should think from 4 oz. to 5 oz.

738. You think, on the whole, you got about 11 oz. a day?—Yes.

739. You admit that you are not familiar with the weight of meat?—I have not been a butcher, and cannot say much about it; but, of course, I could tell by looking at what a bit of steak is. I should say if all the meat we got on board for the day were compared with a bit of steak, it would not make a pound a man.

740. If the veterinary surgeon swore that over 1 lb. per man was given, would you still swear it was not so?—Of course, I do not know that it was not so, because he had more experience.

741. With regard to the complaint about the latrine, I understood you to say that when it was complained of it was remedied?—Yes.

742. Then, your complaint was that the ship's arrangements for the latrines were not up to what they should be?—Yes.

743. Did the officers do what they could to remedy it?—Yes.

744. With regard to the cooking of the meat, your complaint is generally that the galleys were not big enough?—Yes.

745. Of course, you cannot blame the cooks for that?—No.

746. *Colonel Davies.*] You say the blankets were not rolled when issued?—No.

747. Not rolled in swags?—No. They were folded in heaps, just as you would double a blanket up and lay it down.

748. When did you go to South Africa?—I went in the "Drayton Grange."

749. You landed on the 17th May, or about that?—I cannot tell.

750. Did you ever hear of men applying for more meat and being refused?—No.

751. You never heard of a man making a complaint that he did not get what he asked for?—No. I saw the quartermasters get 14 lb. tins of meat and give it to the men, in addition.

752. Was there any reason why you should not have a full basin to wash in?—No; but you had to consider your friends. If you stood there, it would certainly mean that your friends would have to go without a wash.

753. There was plenty of water?—Yes. It was the want of time.

754. You say you had the alley-ways to walk about in: were there not the poop and the fore-castle also?—Yes; but the men were sitting down to allow the others to pass.

755. You had the poop and the fore-castle as well as the alley-way?—Yes; we used to go forward to them, and they came aft to us.

756. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] The sick men paraded before the hospital-door?—Yes.

757. Was there any other place except your deck for these men to parade on?—Only the top of the steps by the canteen.

758. You think fourteen men was the average attendance outside there?—I saw them come and stand there so that we could not clean the deck.

759. You preferred that sick men should stand up on the upper deck rather than you should suffer any inconvenience?—If they stood aside until we finished our breakfast we could have cleaned up our deck.

760. You would prefer to see sick men standing in the cold rather than you should be inconvenienced?—No, sir; but they used to be down there till close on dinner-time to see the doctor.

761. When was the hospital parade?—I do not know much about it.

762. You say they could only be where they were, or up on the cold deck?—Yes.

763. Where else could they go?—I do not know.

764. *Mr. McNab.*] Did the colonel at his inspection ever complain that you had not your deck clean?—No. I have heard him say, and I have heard the lieutenant say, it was the best-kept deck he saw. There were two or three of us who were not satisfied until our part of the ship was clean.

765. You did not come under the displeasure of Colonel Davies because your deck was not clean?—No, sir; I have stood at the table and have heard him say it was the cleanest deck in the ship.

766. *Mr. Millar.*] How was the meat sent down from the galley to the mess-table: was it in one piece?—Yes.

767. Did the mess orderly cut it into pieces?—Yes, he served it out to the men. He could only cut it into pieces and give some to each man.

768. *The Chairman.*] You say you saw 14 lb. tins of preserved meat given to the men in addition to other meat?—Yes.

769. How many was that divided amongst?—Sixteen men.

770. So that on that occasion the men had a bellyful?—Yes.

Sergeant OTTO RICHARD COOK examined on oath. (No. 19.)

771. *The Chairman.*] Were you in either of the contingents?—No, except in the Eighth. I was over there in Kitchener's Horse.

772. What was your rank in the contingent?—Sergeant.

773. Where did you join?—In Christchurch.

774. You expressed your desire to give evidence before this Commission. Will you make any statement you think fit?—I have travelled on several boats. I went to South Africa in the "Ormazan" in the first place. I returned in the "Orient" as far as Sydney with the New South Wales Bushmen. Afterwards I went out again in the "Cornwall," and returned by the "Britannic." Comparing the "Britannic" with the other three boats, it was the worst of the four. In the first place, we had too many men on board. They had not quite sufficient cooking-accommodation to supply the food properly to the troops. The food was very bad indeed, and there was not sufficient of it. The sleeping-accommodation was very deficient indeed. There was not nearly enough room for any of us. Another thing was that there was not nearly enough space for us on the deck. We should have had more space. I think that is all. If any questions are asked me I shall answer them.

775. Is there anything else you would like to give evidence about?—That is all.

776. *Mr. McNab.*] You have been in two vessels coming with troops from South Africa to the colonies?—Yes.

777. And on two vessels going to South Africa?—Yes.



778. How many had the "Orient" on board coming back?—About eleven hundred.

779. On how many decks were you stationed?—On two.

780. The "Orient" was returning with troops during the war?—Yes. We left South Africa on the 16th June twelvemonths.

781. When the "Britannic" was sent the war had ended and the troops were being sent away all over the world in thousands?—Yes.

782. You would expect to be packed in this case, would you not?—Yes; but there was plenty of transport service there.

783. Do you know of any vessel that left South Africa with troops for Australia within a month before the "Britannic" started, or during the month after, with less troops in proportion to her size?—I do not know.

784. Do you know of any of the transports that left South Africa for the Mother-country with fewer troops in proportion to her size than the "Britannic"?—No.

785. Why do you say there were plenty of transports?—Because there were plenty of transports at Durban when we left.

786. Do you know what transports were left at Durban?—No.

787. Did you complain at any time during the voyage to your orderly officer about, first of all, the cooking of the food?—On one occasion only.

788. You complained?—The men complained through me as orderly sergeant.

789. To whom?—To Lieutenant O'Callaghan.

790. What was done as the result of the complaint?—There was an issue of preserved meat. The uncooked meat was called in, and they issued preserved meat.

791. That matter was attended to?—Yes.

792. And that was the only formal complaint you made regarding bad meat?—Yes; the only complaint I made myself was attended to by Lieutenant O'Callaghan.

793. Do you remember how many hooks were provided over each table for the men to hang their hammocks on?—It was a subject I never paid much attention to, and I cannot speak absolutely, but I think there were ten or eleven hooks, and there were between twelve and sixteen men at the table.

794. If every hook was occupied there must be some men who had to lie on the table or on the floor?—Yes; I slept on the floor every night.

795. Did you notice if the atmosphere was very hot?—Yes, especially in the morning.

796. Was it worse in the lower deck or in the upper deck?—In the lower deck, because they could not open the ports on account of the sea. On the upper deck they were open in fine weather.

797. Did you lose any men from your squadron during the trip or since you landed?—Since we landed we lost one man that I know of.

798. You were in the upper 'tween decks?—Yes.

799. When was it he commenced ailing?—I noticed it myself just after leaving Durban. He was a big, strong man of about 14 stone. He was in No. 2 and I was in No. 3 troop. I used to "barrack" him about his falling away, and he said he caught a slight chill coming down from Elandsfontein. It was a day or two before we got into Wellington he went into hospital. It was between Melbourne and here.

800. He caught his chill before going into the ship?—Yes.

801. What was he admitted for?—I think it was measles. I know he used to attend the hospital for a chill, and he got medicine from Dr. Pearless which he took, and afterwards went in for measles.

802. *Mr. Millar.*] You said you occupied the position of sergeant?—Yes.

804. Did you have a separate mess from the men?—Yes.

805. For all the voyage?—For the first four or five days we did not, and then we arranged a mess.

806. Was the discipline good?—It was very good. Of course, for the first two or three days it was indifferent, but afterwards it was very good.

807. How did it compare with that of the troops in the "Orient"?—It was as good. I may add that we could not have had anything better than we had in the "Orient." The food was good, and accommodation was good, and the cooking was good. We were a little packed, that is all.

808. The 'tween decks were a little higher in the "Orient"?—Yes. That is one of the faults in the "Britannic."

809. The height is only 6 ft. on the "Britannic"?—Yes. Standing up I could reach it by stretching my arm.

810. Was it not 8 ft. in the "Orient"?—Between 8 ft. and 9 ft., and that makes a lot of difference.

811. Did you have many men catching cold from going up on deck from the hot atmosphere of the 'tween decks?—Yes, they were likely to.

812. Did you see them yourself?—Oh, yes; I saw many of them go up. A lot of the men slept upstairs if the deck was dry.

813. Do you think the officers paid due attention to the comfort of the men?—Yes.

814. You do not know of any case that was brought under their notice that they did not attempt to rectify?—No; I have nothing to say against the officers.

815. The cooking was very bad?—Yes.

816. Do you think the size of the galley would interfere with the cooks?—Yes; the galley was too small.

817. That would account for part of the bad work turned out of the galley?—The galley was too small, and the cooks not good, and the place too dirty.

818. Did you see much bad meat yourself?—On one occasion.
819. Was it cooked or raw?—Raw.
820. Where did you see that: at the galley or in the cook-shop?—The meat was away forward, and it was on the deck I saw it, and it was green.
821. Did you ever see any fresh meat in the butcher's shop?—No.
822. You do not know whether the meat which you saw, and which was green, was used?—I believe the chief steward ordered it to be thrown overboard.
823. Do you know of the crew selling meals?—Yes.
824. Who were selling them?—I could not say, because it was issued from a porthole on the starboard side of the boat, and I never dealt in that line.
825. Do you know whether the seamen sold coffee?—Yes; on one occasion I did see them. That was in our part of the boat.
826. Do you think that any portion of the meat which was issued for the troops was kept by the cooks themselves?—I could not say.
827. Do you think the men were given a full pound of meat a day?—No, I do not believe they were; because a pound of meat a day, with vegetables and bread, is quite sufficient for any man. I do not say that for certain.
828. You never saw it weighed?—No, I had nothing at all to do with that. That was the quartermaster's work.
829. *The Chairman.*] Was the "Orient" as large a ship or larger than the "Britannic"?—I think she was a little larger, but not much.
830. Were you not crowded on board the "Orient," on the upper deck?—No.
831. More room on the upper deck?—Yes.
832. And more room down below?—I could not say, because I never lived in that part of the ship. I was a passenger, and had to live in a certain part of the boat and keep to it.
833. How did you come back, as a passenger or as a trooper?—As a private passenger. We could not be put on duty, but we were under the colonel's orders.
834. Did you get the same food as the troopers?—Yes; some of them lived with us.
835. It was very good food?—Yes.
836. Could anything be done to make it better on the "Britannic"?—No; I think the officers did what they could.
837. If you had the "Orient" cooks on board the "Britannic" you think the food would have been good?—I think so. It was the fault of the cooks.
838. Was the tea and coffee on board the "Orient" made in the same boiler as the meat?—I could not say; I was never in the cook-shop. The cook-shop on board the "Orient" was far larger.
839. Then, you think the main cause of the discomfort was owing to the bad cook-shop and the bad cooks?—Yes. We were overcrowded.
840. What about the atmosphere on board the "Orient": was it better down below than on the "Britannic"?—Yes.
841. Why?—There were three or four windsails down to one deck, and the ship was higher out of the water, so that we could keep the portholes open.
842. Was there an endeavour to get more windsails on the "Britannic"?—I could not say.
843. *Colonel Davies.*] Which was your squadron?—F; Captain Rhodes.

Sergeant-Major ALEXANDER PENDER examined on oath. (No. 20.)

844. *The Chairman.*] Were you in either of the contingents?—In the Eighth Contingent.
845. What was your rank?—Sergeant-major.
846. What do you want to give evidence about?—The treatment in the hospital, and the discipline, so far as I knew, before I went into the hospital.
847. When did you go into hospital?—Eight days after leaving Durban.
848. Where you satisfied with your treatment in the hospital?—Yes.
849. What doctors attended you?—Surgeon-Major Pearless, Captain Eccles, and Captain Rogers.
850. Were you fairly comfortable in the hospital?—Yes, until we arrived here, and then when we got to Wellington there were some men with measles.
851. Was the hospital fairly managed?—I have no fault to find with it.
852. Ample space and clothing?—Yes.
853. And the doctors were attentive to you?—Yes, sir. When we came to Wellington some of the fellows told me that they reckoned I was going to die on board. I thank Major Pearless and Captain Eccles specially, because they came and saw me day and night.
854. Were there many in the hospital before you got to Melbourne?—I was on one side of the vessel where the worst cases were, and next to me and lower down were two who were very bad indeed.
855. Have you any idea of what made you ill?—No, sir; I had the same complaint in India before.
856. What was it?—Pneumonia.
857. Your evidence is that you were satisfied with the hospital and the treatment?—I was more than satisfied with it.
858. *Colonel Davies.*] What about the discipline?—I was quite satisfied with the discipline in the A squadron, of which I was sergeant-major. I should like to say that I do not believe anything that has been said in the papers in regard to the discipline of the ship, as far as the A squadron is concerned.
859. As far as you know, it was good?—Yes. I should like to speak about the officers coming

round and looking after the ship. I think it is due to me to say that the statements in the papers are made by very young men of from eighteen to twenty years of age, who know nothing about such matters.

860. In what regiment were you before?—The 5th Dragoon Guards.

861. What rank had you?—Troop corporal and sergeant.

862. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us anything about the comparison between the treatment which these men received and that of the ordinary Imperial troops on board ship?—In an Imperial ship they do not get the same allowances. I think in this troopship they did not know how to go about it. When I was in an Imperial troopship we could hang two hammocks on three hooks. These men wanted four hooks for one hammock. When I was an Imperial soldier we got meat once a day; here they got it three times.

863. You imagine they got enough?—I could live on meat once a day, and have done it, and I think they could also.

864. Were these men more crowded than troopships generally?—I went to India in the "Serapis" with over eleven hundred men on board and one hundred and forty women and children.

865. Was she a bigger steamer than the "Britannic"?—She was not so big.

866. Then, generally, you think there was no cause for dissatisfaction?—No, if the men did as they were told. Of course, there was rough weather coming across, and the meat was not always what it should be; but with fresh meat you could not always get it of the best. They were calling out for bully beef when there was fresh meat, and I could not understand them.

Trooper GERARD BRANTAL COPE examined on oath. (No. 21.)

867. *Mr. Millar.*] To which contingent did you belong?—I went with the Tenth, and afterwards joined the Eighth.

868. What was your rank?—Trooper in F squadron.

869. Do you desire to give evidence in connection with complaints made by sundry troopers? Will you kindly state what fault you had to find? What did you see wrong on board the "Britannic"?—In the first place, I only had one singlet and one uniform, and I came home in the same clothes as I arrived in at Durban. The food on the boat was by no means good. I could not eat it myself. All I lived on was bread-and-jam for breakfast, potatoes for dinner, and bread for tea. As for the tea and coffee, they were very bad, and I only drank water. I think they must have boiled the tea and coffee in the same boiler as the soup was made in, because there was a little fat on top of the tea when we got it. They gave us fish once, and it tasted as if it had been lying in the sun for a day before. It was aft by the butcher's shop. I do not think the blankets could have been clean when they gave them to us. I could not swear to that, but I do not think they were clean.

870. Anything else?—As for a wash, you could hardly get a wash in the morning, because they turned the water off. I could not say the time, but if you went up after breakfast you could not get a wash. The water was turned off then.

871. Anything else?—I do not think there is anything else at present.

872. What was your occupation before you went out?—A clerk.

873. You say you only had one uniform and one singlet?—When we got to Newcastle Mr. Tapper instructed us to take only one change with us, and so I lost all my other clothes.

874. That was not the fault of the authorities?—No, but when I asked for a singlet I could not get one.

875. You had to wear the same one the whole way?—Yes, and it was very dirty and I did not get much rest.

876. What about the food?—One day the meat was very bad, and we took it up and got other meat instead. Then, one day we got stewed apples; I do not know what was in them, but it was some kind of lice.

877. Did you complain of the meat?—Yes.

878. Did you get other meat in place of it?—I cannot say whether we got it that time, but generally we got other salt meat instead of the stewed.

879. Then, the officers tried to get other meat for you?—Yes. For the first few days there were complaints going on, and then Mr. Heckler got us tinned meat, and whenever the meat was bad in the future we got tinned meat instead.

880. Then, that is not a complaint against the officers for not attending to complaints?—No. I do not think it was the officers' fault.

881. The ship gave you other food when the meat was bad?—Yes.

882. Then, the ship did what it could?—I think the meat was bad before it was put on the ship.

883. The grease on the tea and coffee, was that the fault of the cooks?—I could not say, but I think it was from not washing the boilers.

884. Do you think the galley was large enough to cook for all the troops?—No; I think it was too small.

885. That case of the tea we have heard about, because it was admitted that it was rectified?—Yes.

886. You never had bad fish on another occasion?—No; it was all right after that.

887. How many wash-basins did you have for the F squadron?—We had E, G, and H down there too, and there were only three or four basins for the North Island contingent. Then they put in another, and then we had seven, and we used to get the North Island men there. I suppose there would be six or seven basins in each place.

888. How many men were there in the four squadrons?—About five hundred, roughly speaking.

889. Fourteen basins for five hundred men?—Yes; and we had the North Island men often down.

890. Your principal complaint is that the water was turned off too soon to enable the men to have a wash. Could you get a wash at another time in the day?—I went two or three times, and I could not, unless I went before breakfast.

891. Did you ever see men washing after 8 o'clock?—Only with the water they could get out of the water-tap.

892. Do you know there was an order they could wash after that hour?—I did not know there was an order. We used to get our meals from the saloon galley by paying for them.

893. Did you buy meals for yourself?—I had to.

894. Was that general amongst the men?—Yes. We used to get coffee there at night.

895. Did you buy it from the seamen?—At the first part of the voyage we did; but gave that up, and got it from the cooks.

896. Do you think the men had sufficient meat issued to them?—I think there was sufficient in that way.

897. If the quality was all right, and the cooking all right, and the quantity all right, then what was there to complain about?—There was only once that it was short, and if we complained to the officer of the day we got a little more.

898. We can take it that the men had enough food?—Yes. The bread was a little short, but you could make it up.

899. Always plenty of biscuits?—Yes.

900. And they could help themselves?—Yes.

901. *The Chairman.*] Could you give us any idea of how many bought food every day from the cooks?—I could not say.

902. Twenty?—More than that.

903. Fifty?—Between fifty and a hundred.

904. All the voyage?—Yes, from the start.

905. What did you pay for a meal?—A shilling.

906. Then the cooks would get £4 or £5 a day?—More than that, because they could make cakes and charge extra for them.

907. What did you pay for a cake?—For the smaller ones I paid 6d.

908. It was a sort of regular confectioner's shop?—It was only at certain times that you could get anything there, chiefly at night.

909. Why did you not buy a singlet and shirt for yourself?—Because I had no money.

910. How long were you at Newcastle?—About three days.

911. Could you not have bought them?—I had no money till we got to Newcastle, but we left next morning and I never went into the town.

912. *Colonel Davies.*] You were in South Africa about six weeks?—Yes.

913. Where did you enlist, in South Africa or in New Zealand?—In New Zealand.

914. *Captain Lewin.*] When you were at Albany did you get served out with a dungaree frock and singlet?—No.

915. Did you ever ask the quartermaster for anything?—I went to our own quartermaster, and he said he could not get anything for me.

FRIDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1902.

Captain HECKLER sworn and examined. (No. 22.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—Henry Thackeray Heckler.

2. To what contingent did you belong?—I belonged to the Fourth previously, sir, and the Seventh, and went back with the Tenth.

3. Did you return in the troopship "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

4. What rank were you?—Captain, sir.

5. Did you come voluntarily before the Commission?—Yes, sir; knowing that some of my men were giving evidence, I volunteered.

6. What troop did your command?—Altogether, eighty-six men of the Tenth. We were sent for to fill up the boat.

7. It will be best if you make any statement you choose to the Commission as to the comfort on board, or the lack of comfort, and conveniences generally?—Well, in the first place, measles and influenza were amongst my men before we left Newcastle—amongst the Tenth. In my own squadron I had as many as twenty-two on the sick-list at one time, principally through measles and influenza. This was at Newcastle. My men came away short of clothing. We only had half an hour's notice to entrain, and our kits were stationed at Maritzburg. We could not get our kits. I spoke to the R. S. O. at Maritzburg about our kits, but we could not get them. They are coming on, I believe, by the "Montrose." I reported my men short of clothing to the quartermaster, Captain Lewin, and he spoke to Colonel Davies about it, with the result that Colonel Davies advised me to get them some clothes at Albany. They got a pair of socks, a jersey, and a pair of slat trousers, so that they could wash their others. During the voyage, as orderly officer, I inspected the rations—all issues of rations. Only on one occasion did I complain—about the tea. There was not sufficient sugar in it. I tasted the tea myself, and I asked the cook's man to put more sugar in it, which he did, I believe. The only complaint I had from my men was one day they came to me with a leg of mutton. It was not quite cooked. That is the only complaint I had from my men. I may say that some of the men were not fair to their officers in this way: they would not complain to their own officers.

My men were the most cramped of any. They had seventeen at table, and the others had fourteen or fifteen sitting at a mess-table. They had as much sleeping-accommodation as what they had when they went over in the "Drayton Grange." There was never a complaint on the "Drayton Grange." The quarters were scrubbed out every day in my men's quarters, and likewise all the others. We had inspection every morning at 10 o'clock, by Colonel Davies himself, or by Colonel Chaytor, as the case might be. I inspected my men's quarters previously. The only complaint made was about throwing rubbish in the scuppers, and I advised them not to do it again. I know that the men were what is called lousy. They were in that state before they left. But a soldier never minds that. There was no rabble. The discipline was good. I think that is all I have to say, sir.

8. I understood you to say that your portion of your troop were put up on board to make up the number required?—The required number to fill the boat, yes.

9. Do you know how they arrived at the number to put on board the boat?—I could not say. Major Andrew got a wire to send eighty-six men, and we were off at half an hour's notice.

10. What I want to get at is the question of overcrowding?—The transport officer at Durban arrived at the numbers.

11. Were you told that it was to make up the required number?—I was told that. I was attached to the South Island battalion, and when I reported myself to Colonel Chaytor he said, "Well, I do not know about it; but you had better come, though." I then had to get rations for the men, and everything was bustle. This was at Newcastle. He said, "You had better come along. Colonel Davies is making arrangements down the line." I never saw Colonel Davies until I got to Durban.

12. You say there were measles among your men before you left Newcastle?—Yes, sir; and also influenza.

13. Were any of the men who went down with you from Newcastle sick?—No, sir.

14. None of them reported themselves sick?—No, sir.

15. So far as you know, they were not sick?—Yes, sir.

16. Had any of these men who went down with you, to your knowledge, measles before they started from Newcastle?—Well, there were only five-and-twenty from my own squadron there, and others from other squadrons. I could not say positively if they had.

17. You say discipline was good on board?—Yes, sir.

18. You have made other return voyages from South Africa to New Zealand?—Yes, sir.

19. How many?—Once, returning.

20. What ship was that in?—The "Delphic."

21. Was the discipline as good on the "Britannic" as on the "Delphic"?—Yes, quite.

22. When the officers went round the men's quarters, was it what would be called a perfunctory visit, or do you think the officers did their duty? Did they seek out causes of complaint?—Yes, sir.

23. Did they go round in an indifferent manner?—No, sir. They went round and asked for complaints, and quarters were always visited before the general inspection. And then Colonel Davies used to say, "Have you men any complaints?" There was only one occasion. One of my men said he had not enough to eat. Colonel Davies said to me, "Has this man reported to you?" I said, "No, sir." I said, "A few minutes ago, when I asked for complaints, he never said a word."

24. What contingent did you first go in?—Fourth, sir.

25. What rank were you?—I went as a trooper.

26. And you rose from the ranks to a commission?—Yes. I rose from trooper to sergeant in the Fourth; I was made a lieutenant in the Seventh, and served six months; and was then made a captain in the Tenth.

27. And you know what discipline in the ranks is as well as of a commissioned officer?—Yes, sir.

28. Do you consider that the officers in the "Drayton Grange" looked after the men as well as the officers looked after you when you were in the ranks?—There was no doubt at all; the officers did all they could for the men.

29. You think any assertion on the part of the men that the officers did not look after their men was unfounded?—Yes, sir, I do.

30. What were your duties when you were captain of the day?—To visit the guard twice a day and twice at night; to see to the issue of rations, and that sort of thing; and go round on the general inspection with the colonel.

31. Where were your sentries posted?—In various places.

32. Had you any squadrons on the lower deck?—I could not tell you exactly that. I did not visit all the sentries. I always visited the guard.

33. Was there anybody over the latrines?—Yes, sir. There was a sentry over the latrines.

34. Was it part of your duty as captain of the day to inspect the latrines?—Yes, sir.

35. In connection with the colonel?—Yes, sir.

36. Yes; but as captain of the day?—It was not compulsory.

37. Did you ever visit the latrines?—Yes, sir; because the sergeant reported to me one day that they were not clean. Some men had been abusing them in some manner, and I ordered the sentries to see that the men did not do it again.

38. Do you know who was in charge of the latrines—who was the officer or the non-commissioned officer who was in charge of the latrines?—The quartermaster.

39. Do you know which quartermaster?—Quartermaster Lewin.

40. He would have the general supervision; but each day was there anybody whose business it was to see they were kept clean?—Yes; an orderly sergeant, sir.

41. There was a different man every day?—Yes, sir.
42. When you were on duty was it ever reported to you that the latrines were filthy?—No, sir, except this one occasion, and that was when just on a casual visit.
43. What was the matter then?—He had been easing himself in the latrine.
44. Did you ever find a quantity of water sluicing about in the latrines?—No, sir.
45. Do you think that could have been a matter of common occurrence without your knowing it?—No, sir.
46. How often did you use to be on duty?—On about six or seven days.
47. Did you ever upon any occasion see 3 in. or 4 in. of water in the latrine?—No, sir, I never did.
48. Do you think if there had been 3 in. or 4 in. it would have been reported to you?—Yes, sir.
49. Then, you, I suppose, will say there was never a foot of water sluicing round in the latrines?—Oh, never; no, sir.
50. Do you think it possible for a foot of water to be in them?—Just for a moment—there might have been a heavy sea.
51. I am speaking of an overflow?—No, there was not.
52. If we have evidence given that there was a foot of water overflowing, would you say it was untrue?—I would say it was untrue, sir.
53. When did you report to Captain Lewin the shortness of clothing for the men?—Shortly after we left Durban.
54. And what did Captain Lewin say: did he report to Colonel Davies?—Yes, sir.
55. And did the men get any clothing?—Not until we got to Albany.
56. Why was that?—There was not sufficient on board.
57. Do you think Captain Lewin was anxious to help you?—Yes, he was anxious to help me.
58. Well, you think if the men were not given clothes he was not responsible for that?—No, he was not responsible at all.
59. Now, you told us about one leg of mutton being badly cooked?—Yes, sir; that was the only time my men complained.
60. Could any men have eaten it?—Yes; some who were fond of underdone meat could. It was not very raw.
61. It was not what you consider unfit for food?—I think it was quite fit.
62. You would not say it was unfit?—No, sir.
63. Could you have eaten it yourself?—Yes, sir.
64. How often did they complain?—Only once, sir.
65. Do you think it happened oftener?—No, I do not, because I went down for complaints every day.
66. Did you take the trouble to look at the food?—Yes, sir. I always tasted the soup to see whether it was hot or cold, and tasted the tea, and inspected the potatoes and everything. On one occasion I complained to the cook about the potatoes not being washed properly. He said, "It is your own men, sir." There was a fatigue party whose duty it was to wash the potatoes and assist the cook, and they did not do it properly. I said, "If it is our own men it is not your fault."
67. What sort of quality were the potatoes?—They were very good; they were very much better than we got in the saloon.
68. Than in the saloon?—Yes, sir. We got little things about the size of the top of our fingers in the saloon, and they got big ones.
69. Were they similar in size to that ink-bottle [about 2 in. square]?—Similar and larger.
70. Were they what could have been called pig potatoes?—No, sir; they were not. They were fair potatoes.
71. You say the sleeping-accommodation was the same as the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes, just about the same.
72. Were there hooks to hang every hammock?—Yes, sir.
73. Are you sure of that?—In my quarters there were.
74. If any man slept on the tables or on the floor it was that he did not choose to hang his hammock?—That is so, sir.
75. How many hooks did it take to hang a hammock?—Two, sir.
76. How many hooks did it take to hang two hammocks?—I could not say that, sir; I could not really state.
77. Did they hang two hammocks on three hooks?—Yes, sir; some did. If I remember right, one man's feet was at the other man's head; I am not quite sure of it.
78. What I want to arrive at is, was there space wasted or not?—I do not think so.
79. Then, if we have evidence (as we have) that there was not hanging-room for more than three-quarters of the hammocks, as far as your troop is concerned that is a mistake?—Yes, as far as my troop is concerned. They never complained to me about not having hammock accommodation.
80. Were you ever in the lower deck after the men had gone to bed?—No, I was not.
81. Was the ventilation on board the "Britannic" as good as that on the "Drayton Grange"?—Not on the lower deck where my men were. I do not think it was as good.
82. Was any attempt made to make it better?—Well, I think windsails were put down. The weather was bad, certainly; and when the weather was dirty the boat was wet occasionally.
83. Was any attempt made to put down more windsails?—I do not think so, sir.
84. Then, you believe that the ventilation could not have been improved?—I do not think so, sir.

85. Did you receive any complaint about the ventilation?—No, I did not—not from my men.

86. Do you consider that the men suffered on board the “Britannic” more than they do on an ordinary transport from want of ventilation?—Not a bit.

87. You think that their case was no worse than that of a larger body of men packed together?—No, sir.

88. The ventilation was not so good as the “Drayton Grange”?—Well, there was not so much difference, with the exception of the troop-deck I spoke about. There was perhaps one troop-deck a little worse.

89. Was the “Drayton Grange” as crowded when you went on board her as the “Britannic” was when you returned?—Just about the same.

90. You told us that a good many of the men were lousy at Newcastle?—Yes, sir.

91. What number out of a hundred do you think would have been lousy at Newcastle?—I could not say.

92. Was every second, third, or fourth man?—Perhaps; I could not say so much as that.

93. Can you give us an idea: how many do you think?—I could not say; I know some of them were.

94. Was it a discredit to a man?—Not the slightest.

95. Did some men take it more freely than others?—Fair people were the worst—worse than the dark; that was my experience.

96. Do you know anything about the issue of blankets at Durban?—My men had their own blankets, and they had blankets issued on board. They brought all New Zealand blankets back with them.

97. Those blankets may have been lousy?—Yes, sir.

98. Did you see the blankets served out on the “Britannic”?—Yes; Quartermaster Lewin got my blankets for my men.

99. Did you see them yourself with your own eyes?—Yes, some of them. They were white blankets. I ordered the men to keep their own blankets, which was done.

100. What order were the blankets in?—Fairly good.

101. Did they look clean?—Yes, they looked clean, sir.

102. Did they look as if any effort had been made to clean them?—They looked fairly clean—they were rolled.

103. Then, they had been put away properly apparently after being previously used?—Yes, sir.

104. How soon after embarkation did you hear complaints of lice?—I could not say, sir, how soon it was. I know several complaints were made about being lousy.

105. Do you think it was a day after or a week after?—Perhaps a week after; I could not really say.

106. What was the condition of the water supplied for washing when you were a trooper?—When I went over in the “Monowai” it was very poor. In the “Drayton Grange” it was very good.

107. On board the “Drayton Grange” it was better than the “Monowai”?—Yes, sir.

108. What were the regulations on the “Drayton Grange”?—There was a certain amount given; some one stood over you and you took a certain amount.

109. At what hours?—10 to 5.

110. For washing?—Yes, sir. It was half-past 9 or 10 after we finished stables.

111. You did not get your water until after 10 o'clock?—No, not on board the “Drayton Grange.”

112. And you had it from 10 to 5?—Some used to abuse it and take water for all sorts of things. You were allowed a certain amount.

113. Water was available for washing from 10 to 5?—Yes, sir.

114. What hours was it available for washing on board the “Britannic”: was it from 6 till 8 in the morning?—Yes, sir.

115. Was there any other time when the men could get a wash on board the “Britannic”?—I had no complaints about shortage of water from my men.

116. Do you think if men bustled about they could get a wash every day?—Yes, sir. If they cared to wash they could get it every day.

117. When you were officer of the day was it part of your business ever to attend the issue of uncooked meat?—No, sir. The veterinary officer and medical men generally did. It rested with the officer of the day whether he cared to do it or not.

118. Who was present on behalf of the men when the meat was issued of a morning?—The quartermaster and the veterinary officer.

119. Not the officer of the day?—Not necessarily.

120. Nor his subaltern?—No, sir, not necessarily.

121. Was it customary on the other ships?—We did not do it on the “Drayton Grange.”

122. Then, you cannot give us reliable information as to the issue of raw meat to the men?—No, sir.

123. *Mr. McNab.*] You were on duty as officer of the day about one day in six?—About that; I could not say from memory. I was officer of the day for about four times, I think, on the journey.

124. That would be practically one-seventh of the time you were on duty?—Yes.

125. During that time you only received one complaint about bad cooking?—That is all, sir.

126. Did you receive any complaints about not sufficient food?—Well, my men complained, just as I told you, to Colonel Davies one day. One man spoke up, and he said that he had not had enough since he had been on the boat. The colonel then asked me if the man had complained to me.

127. Were you satisfied that if a complaint had been made to you about not sufficient food, that you could have remedied it?—Yes; I should have reported it to the brigade-major. It would certainly have been remedied.

128. You say that the potatoes were washed by the troopers, who were told off for that duty?—A fatigue party was told off every day.

129. So that if a man complained that they were not clean it was their own men who were to blame?—Yes.

130. *Mr. Millar.*] I think you said that before you left Newcastle you had twenty-two of your men sick?—Yes; twenty-two out of my squadron.

131. Did they have measles?—They had been sick, not all measles. They had measles and influenza.

132. Was any portion of that number put on board the ship?—Well, I could not say how many; there was bound to be some of them.

133. Were some amongst the contingent you took on board?—Yes, sir.

134. Then, the Imperial authorities practically allowed men to embark there with measles?—They had had measles.

135. Had they been in hospital with the measles?—No doubt some had, sir. I could not say what proportion of them.

136. You know that some of those men were allowed to embark on board this ship?—Yes, sir, after getting well.

137. They were quite well when they left Newcastle: had they returned to duty?—Yes, sir.

138. Measles are supposed to be very infectious, are they not?—That is an opinion; I am no authority on that.

139. Do you imagine that if you had measles in your squadron, and men had been in the hospital, that it was probable that infection might occur throughout that squadron, more or less?—No doubt it would be throughout the squadron, but not necessarily to any extent.

140. Notwithstanding the fact that you had men in the squadron who had had measles, you say a certain portion of your squadron were detailed to go on board the ship?—Yes, sir.

141. Were the medical authorities at Durban aware that your squadron had had measles?—I could not say that, really.

142. Did they make any inquiries to your knowledge?—No, they never asked me.

143. Who would they be likely to ask: who was in charge of that?—I was attached to the South Island battalion. Colonel Chaytor was in charge of the men.

144. Had you a medical officer in charge?—There was a medical officer in charge, but I did not know the officer until I got to Durban.

145. Had you a medical officer in charge with the number of men you took down?—I had none.

146. You were in command of that particular body that was ordered down to join the boat?—Yes, sir.

147. And no inquiries were made from you at all?—No, none.

148. Was any medical inspection made of those men?—No, sir, there was no medical inspection.

149. They were simply allowed to go on board when they came from a squadron known to be infected, so far as you know?—Yes, sir.

150. I think you said you saw every day's issue of meat?—Not every day, sir; that was when I was officer of the day. I inspected my own quarters and asked for complaints after they had got their rations issued to them—for instance, at a quarter-past 12, or ten past, whatever it might be.

151. When you were at the galley inspecting that issue did you ever see bad meat going out?—No, sir, I never. They never had any roast meat. I complained myself to the cook about it. It was always boiled meat.

152. You never saw it discoloured?—No.

153. You say there was a leg of mutton not properly cooked?—Yes; a complaint was made by my own men.

154. Did you ever see any badly cooked meat in the saloon?—I could not say from memory.

155. Was it often?—I have seen some, but not often, sir.

156. And I think you said the potatoes in the saloon were worse than those given to the men?—Yes, the men got better potatoes.

157. Have you ever had experience before as a saloon passenger?—Yes.

158. And do you think it is at all likely to have taken place this time with a thousand troops on board and any quantity of stores: do you mean to tell me that a poorer class of potatoes went to the officers than to the men?—Well, we passed remarks among ourselves about it. Independent of the officers of the day, there was always a squadron officer told off to superintend the issue of rations besides. But we used to pass remarks among ourselves that they were getting better potatoes than we were getting.

159. You had a separate galley for the saloon?—Yes, sir.

160. With a separate staff of cooks?—Yes.

161. And they belonging to the ship, and being regular cooks, do you think they would permit food of this description to be sent to them when they knew better was on board?—I know that such was the case.

162. How often were you troubled with these small potatoes?—Very often.

163. If it is stated that those potatoes were constantly given to the men, would you deny it?—I never saw small potatoes given to the men.

164. I say if it has been stated on oath here that those small potatoes were given to the men, you say they were also given to the saloon?—Yes.



165. There was nothing but small potatoes on board, then?—I could not say that, because I saw some decent potatoes on board.

166. Were the bulk of the potatoes on board small?—I could not say.

167. You say you had small potatoes in the saloon?—Yes; smaller than were issued to the men.

168. You said there was not as much sleeping-accommodation on board the "Britannic" as you had on board the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes.

169. Did you ever go through the "Drayton Grange" of a night-time when the men were asleep?—Yes. I was not a trooper on the "Drayton Grange"; I was a captain. I was a trooper on the "Monowai."

170. When you were a captain on the "Drayton Grange" how many men did you see sleeping on the floor?—I saw a lot sleeping on the floor, preferring that to slinging their hammocks.

171. I think you said that in the "Britannic" there were any quantity of hooks to swing the hammocks?—I think so, sir.

172. How many men were there at a mess-table—your men?—Seventeen.

173. How many hooks above the table?—I could not say.

174. How can you say, then, that there was any quantity?—For instance, when I went down at night—

175. In reply to Sir William Russell, you said you were not down at night?—I was down one night to rouse a sergeant about a certain thing. I had to go through part of another squadron to get to my men.

176. Did all your men appear to be in the hammocks?—There appeared to be plenty; they never complained.

177. Did you go through any length of the troop-deck?—No, not far.

178. Had you any trouble to wend your way through the hammocks?—I had to stoop down to get along.

179. You had practically to walk beneath them?—Yes; there was only a short distance to where my men were.

180. The hammocks were so closely packed that there was no alley-way to walk betwixt them—you had to stoop?—Yes; that was my experience.

181. In that particular portion you are referring to, if the hammocks were so close that you could not walk betwixt them, and had to stoop and walk underneath, is it fair to assume that any more hammocks could be swung?—Not in that particular portion.

182. If there were men sleeping on the floor, do you think it possible for them to have swung hammocks under the circumstances named?—None of them ever complained to me about it.

183. What do you think the duty of an officer towards a trooper is? Is he supposed to have any further interest at all than to go through the ordinary discipline of the day?—Yes; to get complaints, if any, and get them remedied.

184. According to you, you had no complaints. Did you make any effort—I am not referring to you individually—did you ever put yourself out of the way to find out whether there was any reasonable cause of complaint or not?—I was always in touch with the men. I would say to them, "How are you getting on? Have you anything to growl about?" and they said, "No; we are being fairly treated." I myself did this, and the other officers did the same.

185. Did you ever have any complaint about the ventilation?—Oh, I have heard them say it was a bit stuffy. There were no general complaints.

186. Did you ever go down yourself of a night-time?—Just the once I spoke of.

187. You never went through the troop-deck?—No.

188. Do you know if it was the duty of any officer, or was any order issued to that effect, that some officer should go down at night-time?—It rested with themselves whether they went down or not.

189. If there is no such thing as a report ever having been made as to the state of ventilation, do you think that this is simply because no officer went down?—The quartermaster may have done, or the medical officer. I did not myself, I must confess.

190. What were the duties of the captain or subaltern of the day?—To superintend every issue of rations, and see that men got a fair amount, and that sort of thing. They had to visit the guards at certain times, and write out a report if there was any complaint. They would write any report the next morning and hand it in to the brigade-major.

191. In any report you ever made did you make any remarks about the ventilation?—No, sir, I did not, because it was not a general complaint. They might have said it was a bit stuffy.

192. When there was any sickness on board was any attempt made to better the ventilation?—I could not say what the medical authorities did.

193. Where does the medical authority come in and the military authority cease: does the medical authority come in when a case of sickness is reported?—There is always a sick-parade every morning.

194. And that was the duty of the medical staff?—Yes.

195. Whose duty was it to see that the troop-decks were kept clean?—The commanding officers always saw to that, assisted by the others.

196. I presume that the officers of the day appointed by the commanding officers would attend to matters of detail such as that?—It rested with themselves, I think, sir.

197. Then, if no reports of that description ever were made, are we to assume that the officers never troubled themselves about it?—I had no general complaint about it, so I made no report.

198. In your opinion, do you think it is healthy for a man to live in such a vitiated atmosphere?—I do not suppose it is.

199. If that is the case, do you not think that special efforts ought to have been made to

prevent men living in a vitiated atmosphere?—Oh, I think something should be done in those cases, of course. The troop-decks may have been a little stuffy through the muggy, dirty weather.

200. How many windsails were there in the ship?—I could not say, sir.

201. Did you have any drill of any description on the trip home?—No, sir; any amount of sports, and that sort of thing.

202. But no regular drill parade of any description?—No. The officers subscribed and got up sports for the men—tugs-of-war, potato races, and all sorts of races.

203. *The Chairman.*] Was there any parade of the men to see to their cleanliness?—I do not think so, sir.

204. Was it customary on the "Drayton Grange" to parade men on the return trip?—No, we never had any parade. A corporal was told off to collect the sick and parade them, and if they were too sick to parade the doctors went to them.

205. About the hammocks once more: how far did the tables extend from the side of the ship—the men's tables?—My men's tables ran right into the side of the ship.

206. And how far towards the centre?—There was a space about 6 ft. or 8 ft. between the tables. The others were somewhat similar. There would be just sitting-accommodation between the tables.

207. Were the hammocks hung across that 6 ft. alley during the night?—They were hung across the alley in the case of my men.

208. They were slung over the tables and across the alley?—Yes; across the alley, too. I do not know if they were in the others or not.

209. On board the ship they would be slung from side to side without an alley?—In this particular corner they were. I do not know about the others; I do not think they were.

210. *Colonel Davies.*] About the issue of kits to your men: you left your kits at Pietermaritzburg?—Yes, sir.

211. You did not belong to the Eighth Contingent?—No, sir.

212. My quartermaster had no opportunity of knowing that your men had not got clothing until after we sailed?—No, he did not, sir.

213. When you reported it to him he told you he would report it to me?—Yes, sir.

214. And then you were aware that I gave him an order to a merchant in Albany, signed by myself, to supply these things to your men?—Yes; I signed a requisition to you for them.

215. I signed an order on a merchant in Albany?—Yes, sir.

216. To supply your men with the necessary clothing?—Yes, sir.

217. I consulted with the quartermaster as to what we were likely to get, and he said, "We will get them jerseys, a pair of socks, and a pair of pants." I signed the requisition that you applied for?—Yes, sir.

218. And bought them in Albany for you?—Yes, sir.

219. That was the first opportunity that my officers had of attending to your wants?—Yes, sir. I spoke to Colonel Chaytor about it coming down on the train, and he told me he would see what he could do. We were told off so hurriedly that we had no time to get our kits; we were rushed on the ship.

220. You think the ventilation was rather better on the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes, sir.

221. You were going the opposite way on the "Drayton Grange," and the wind was generally ahead?—I do not know.

222. The prevailing wind is from west to east, therefore it was generally a head wind or astern in the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

223. Do you remember, on the occasion when I was inspecting your quarters, that you mentioned, when a man said in answer to my inquiry if any one had any complaint to make, a man stepped out and said, "I have not had enough to eat"?—Yes. He said, "I had not enough to eat."

224. And I turned round and said to you, "Has this been reported to you"?—You did, sir; and I said "No."

225. Do you remember my saying then, in answer to the man, "There is no limit to quantity"?—Yes; you told him that.

226. And do you remember my turning to the purser and asking him if that was correct?—Yes, sir.

227. And he said, "If they ask for more, they can get it"?—Yes, that is right.

228. Now, you did not belong to the brigade under my command: you were in command of a small detachment that was put on board with practically a complete brigade, and attached to it?—Yes, that is so.

229. Do you think that in any way whatever you, your junior officers, or any of your men suffered in any way in the want of attention on the part of my staff?—No, sir, none whatever.

230. You do not think you were treated differently to the brigade by the officers or any of the men under me?—We had similar treatment, sir.

231. You were perfectly satisfied?—Perfectly satisfied.

232. *Mr. McNab.*] How many men was it you brought on board?—I told off eighty-six.

233. Have any of your men died?—No, sir.

234. *The Chairman.*] Were any of them taken sick on the voyage?—Yes; some of them are on the island now.

235. *Mr. McNab.*] They are all recovering?—Yes; none of them died.

236. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you see much drunkenness on board the ship?—I saw no drunkenness whatever. If a man had a cold, or anything like that, I sent him a little brandy, but not in any quantity.

237. If a statement was made that there was a lot of drunkenness on board the ship, you state that, as far as you saw, you never saw drunkenness?—I would say it was untrue.

238. *Mr. McNab.*] Was there any shortage of sugar in the supplies?—Well, only once when I tasted the tea.

239. Was there any shortage in the store?—I never heard of it.

240. Was there any shortage of milk?—I never heard of that either.

Veterinary-Surgeon-Captain YOUNG, M.R.C.V.S., sworn and examined. (No. 23.)

241. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name, please?—Alexander Reid Young.

242. Were you a member of any of the Contingents?—I was veterinary captain of the Eighth Contingent.

243. You returned to New Zealand on board the "Britannic"?—I did, sir.

244. Had you any duties on board the "Britannic" in connection with the issue of rations to the men?—None, until about ten days before the time we arrived in New Zealand.

245. How was it you were put on duty then?—Captain Matthews, the chief staff officer, asked me to undertake the duties.

246. What were those duties?—Inspection of meat.

247. And how did you inspect it?—I went twice daily, or three times if required, to the butcher's shop to see the meat, and also called occasionally at the galley to see it after it was cooked.

248. Were you present of a morning when it was issued to the men?—When it came out of the refrigerating-chamber I went to the butcher's shop and examined it in bulk. I remained there and examined every individual piece, and saw that every piece was sound and dressed. I did not leave the butcher's shop until it passed into the cooks' galley.

249. Do you know why you were called upon to do this duty?—I do not, sir.

250. Was it consequent upon complaints?—I only heard indirectly that complaints were made that the meat was bad, but I am not sure whether it was through that.

251. When you were first ordered to take this duty was there any reason urged, or were you simply ordered to do it?—Captain Matthews asked me if I would undertake the supervision of the meat, as I would probably give greater satisfaction, as the men had been making some complaint. I said I would be only too pleased.

252. Does your profession give you special capacity to judge the quality of the meat?—I was five years and a half in the Public Health Department, Edinburgh.

253. Before the meat came under your eye had any other inspection been made?—I examined it in the bulk. I then examined every individual piece.

254. Before it came under your eye did the purser or head steward weigh the meat and separate it?—It was my instructions to them that they were only to present the meat to me as it was ready to be issued. If they chose to condemn a carcass, that was nothing to me.

255. Do you feel sure that no meat was served out to the men that had not been inspected by you?—I am absolutely positive, sir, I was too wide awake to them ringing on bad meat.

256. You are sure that only good meat was issued for consumption?—Quite sure.

257. Did you have any check upon the weight of the meat?—I made no check upon the weight at all. I had nothing to do with that, only as to the wholesomeness of the food.

258. How often did you find indifferent meat?—Only on two occasions when I condemned two small pieces off the flanks, and it was probably because it was a little too fat, not because of any unwholesomeness.

259. Had you any green meat?—Never, unless two pieces stained.

260. Had you any occasion to reject meat on account of its being green?—Only one or two small pieces which were inclined to be a little bit fat and stained.

261. Was any meat that had any green on it passed for consumption?—No green meat was passed by me.

262. What was the cause of meat being green?—It must have got stained before it was put into the refrigerator.

263. Are you aware, of your own knowledge, whether any putrid meat ever came out of the refrigerating-chamber?—I am not aware of it.

264. Do you think it could have come out without your knowing it?—I do not think so, sir. The fact is that no putrid meat could be in the refrigerating-chamber.

265. Supposing it had been put on board putrid?—It does not appear as at all likely.

266. There are distinct allegations of putrid meat, and we want to find out the truth of it?—The thing is absolutely absurd. If putrid meat were put into the refrigerator it would only be a waste of time and money. It could not improve there; it would be rotten in any case; and it would be a dead loss to the shipping company to allow putrid meat to go in. Wholesome meat would not go putrid.

267. Do you know at what temperature the refrigerating-chamber was kept?—I did not take any note of it, but at that time I put it down to my satisfaction.

268. You think it was always kept below freezing-point?—Yes, sir, I am sure of it. I asked about it at the time, and I was satisfied that it was correct.

269. Did the meat present the appearance of having been properly frozen?—Oh, yes. The great difficulty was to get it thawed in time to cut and cook for the men.

270. What was the general condition of the meat?—It was not inferior; it was not first-class prime stuff; but it was the stuff usually sold to the general public as good, wholesome, and sound meat.

271. How would it compare with meat hanging up in Gear's shop in Wellington?—I should not tell you that; it was American chilled meat.

272. We want to form an opinion of what it was like. Did the meat present the appearance of having been well grown?—Yes, sir.

273. Did it present the appearance of having had any disease during the time it was alive?—  
No, sir.

274. Was there a proper amount of fat?—Yes, sir.

275. Was the colour good?—Yes, it was.

276. Do you suppose that the meat supplied to the officers' mess was in any degree better than that you saw issued to the men?—It was all off the same carcass.

277. You do not believe that there was a selection for the officers?—I know it was not the case.

278. How do you know?—Because the meat was all passed by me both for officers and men. I do not suppose the men got the roast beef, though, as there would not be enough to go over them all. I am positive that it was all cut from the same carcass.

279. Do you think that before you were appointed to examine the meat that bad meat had been passed for consumption?—In that case I can only speak from rumour. I heard there were complaints about the meat. Further than that I can give no information whatever. There is one statement that I would like to make, and that is that the chief steward was most anxious that no bad meat should be supplied to the men. There was one case where the meat in the galley had been contaminated through some carelessness of the cook. It was pork. I called attention to this, and said it would not do. The value of the meat was £22, and the chief steward ordered it to be thrown overboard. He then made inquiries, and found it was bad owing to the carelessness of the cook by letting one piece fall on the floor.

280. By contamination do you mean the meat was bad?—I mean that it was not clean, as it contained particles of sawdust, or something of that sort. The finding of this piece which had been contaminated led to the chief steward ordering the whole lot to be thrown overboard. I only mention this to show that the chief steward was anxious to see that everything was right.

281. In the course of your duties in connection with the meat, did you observe the conditions of the other food that was supplied to the men—I do not mean professionally observed?—No; I never examined it.

282. Did it come under your observation?—On one occasion the fish was not good at the officers' mess.

283. Why was it not good?—It was tainted. I did not call attention to it, but I thought it should not have been given.

284. That was on one occasion?—That was in the saloon.

285. How often did you have fish?—I could not say, sir.

286. Was it a common dish?—Yes, sir, if I remember right.

287. Was it salt fish?—Well, I really did not pay much attention. I was perfectly satisfied with the food altogether.

288. Did you ever taste it yourself?—Yes, I tasted salt fish; and I think we had ling fish two or three times.

289. Was it such as might be fairly put before a man for food?—Yes, except on one occasion.

290. And you yourself ate it for choice?—Yes.

291. You were not short of breakfast on that occasion?—No, we were never short.

292. You consider that generally the fish was of good quality?—My opinion is that the food on board the ship was sufficient and of fairly good quality.

293. In the course of your observation in connection with the meat, what did you think of the cooks?—Well, the cooking-galley was not so large as it might have been, therefore the cooks were hampered.

294. Do you think, on the whole, that the cooks were up to the average?—As far as my observation went, sir.

295. Have you had any experience in transports?—Yes, on four or five transports. I went from Lyttelton in the "Gymeric," and I went from Cape Town to St. Helena, and I went to England and back again, then from Lyttelton on the "Cornwall."

296. Do you believe that the meat and the food supplied on the "Britannic" was equal to that supplied on the other transports you have been on?—It was superior to that given on the transport "Victorian" to the Imperial troops.

297. Do you think that a man in ordinary health had anything to complain of?—I think not.

298. *Mr. Millar.*] Was it before or after your departure from Albany that you started the inspection of meat?—It was two or three days before we got into Albany. I remember that it was two or three days before we got into any port. It was therefore bound to be two or three days before we got to Albany.

299. Well, at any time in your inspection did you permit green pieces to be trimmed off from carcasses—I mean in the butcher's shop—and sent to the cooks' galley?—No, sir, I did not; but I can tell you how that has arisen. When I took over the inspection the meat had not only to be of good quality, but I told the butcher that he must take off the trimmings, and the consequence was that every piece of meat was trimmed in the butcher's shop, not because it was unwholesome, but because it had to be trimmed before it left the butcher's shop as if it were to be sold to the public.

300. At any time from the date on which you took charge of the inspection of the meat till your arrival in New Zealand no bad meat was ever issued?—No complaints were made about the meat as far as came under my notice. I think one day the captain on duty said there was some complaint, but it was only because a small piece of meat was not sufficiently cooked.

301. If the statement had been made on oath, Mr. Young, that green meat had been issued, it must have been prior to your taking over the inspection?—It must have been; but I wish to point out that perhaps they did not know what they were talking about. The men were about when the meat was being trimmed, and the men saw this being done—it was not done in secrecy—and perhaps they thought bad pieces were being cut off.

302. I think you said that you had five and a half years' experience in the Public Health Department in Edinburgh?—Yes; I resigned to come to New Zealand.

303. Then, you ought to have, I presume, some practical knowledge of ventilation?—I am qualified to speak on all matters of public health.

304. Did you ever go down the troop-decks?—No, I never went down; I had no authority to go down, and I had no more right to go there than a man had to come to my cabin.

305. You were never asked to do it?—No, sir.

306. In the other troopships you were in did you ever take any notice of the ventilation?—I had to give specifications of what air-space and ventilation there was for horses on board the ship.

307. What amount of space did you allow for each man on board?—I did not go into that allowed for the men, only for the horses.

308. What cubic space is allowed for a horse on board?—Well, two or three hundred. I do not remember what the Imperial regulations are, right off. The ship we went across in was very much overcrowded. The air-space was for 575, but we carried 622. I may say this: that from the construction of the transport "Britannic" I should say that she is a very good ship to have proper ventilation carried out on.

309. You think she was a very good ship?—Yes, from the general observation from outside and from the appearance of her portholes.

310. The portholes can only be taken into consideration for ventilation under favourable circumstances?—Yes; but that is not a thing I should like to go into, as I was not down in the men's quarters, and I am not therefore qualified to give an opinion in this case.

311. You saw the hatchways on deck?—Yes.

312. How many were there?—I do not know, but all ships are much alike in that respect.

313. Do you think, from the number of hatchways that you saw on board the ship, that she could be thoroughly ventilated?—Well, one thing that did strike me was this: that if they were not properly ventilated they had too few windsails up. She was a vessel that could have carried at least a dozen windsails.

314. You say she could have carried a dozen windsails if required?—Yes, if required.

315. Were there any openings on deck that they could have used for ventilation other than the hatches?—No, sir, because the other openings were already filled with ventilators.

316. Were there many ventilators on the decks?—I do not know the number. As a matter of fact, I never was asked to undertake any duty in connection with the ventilation, so I did not pay particular attention.

317. *Mr. McNab.*] In regard to the condemnation of some boiled meat, was it condemned because it was unfit for human food—some boiled pork?—Certainly not, sir.

318. You might again, to emphasize it, tell us why it was condemned?—The pork was passed as absolutely sound, wholesome, and good. It went to the cooks' galley, and part of it apparently had fallen on the floor. It got soiled on the floor, and, not having been properly washed and clean, it had been put in the boiler amongst other parts. I detected this after the food was cooked, and had the whole of it condemned due to that incident. It was not because it was not wholesome.

319. You never heard it stated, did you, that there had been a leak at any time in the freezing-chamber?—No, sir, I do not think it is possible. If there was you would very soon know of it.

320. You do not think it is possible?—No. The meat would very soon begin to get soft.

321. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us as to the general cleanliness of the galley?—Both the butcher's shop and the galley were kept fairly clean after I undertook the inspection of the food. It is a difficult matter, of course, to keep a galley thoroughly clean, especially in rough weather.

322. You do not know anything about the cooking of the tea or coffee?—No, sir.

323. *Mr. McNab.*] You are in private practice, are you not?—Yes, sir.

324. And you are quite independent of the Government?—I have no interests in the Government.

325. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] Have you ever been on Somes Island?—Yes, many times.

326. Do you know whether it is dry or damp?—Very damp, I consider.

327. Any idea what the water-supply is like?—I think, as far as I can remember, it is rain-water collected in tanks principally.

328. Do you consider Somes Island a suitable place to quarantine men from South Africa?—Certainly not.

329. *Colonel Davies.*] You say you have travelled on three or four other transports?—Yes, sir.

330. What was your opinion of the discipline on board the "Britannic"?—I consider that the discipline was as good as it was possible to make it under the conditions upon which troops are raised in New Zealand.

331. You think it is as good discipline as you have seen amongst colonials?—Perfectly certain of it; I never saw any reason to complain about it.

332. You never came back to New Zealand on any other troopship?—No, sir.

Trooper VALENTINE ANDREWS sworn and examined. (No. 24.)

333. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your name?—Valentine Andrews.

334. What contingent did you belong to?—Eighth.

335. What rank did you hold?—Trooper.

336. What squadron?—E squadron.

337. You volunteered to give evidence in connection with the conditions and the treatment, and so forth, of the troopers in the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

338. Will you kindly state what complaints you have to make: what were the particular points you objected to?—The sleeping-accommodation and the food.

339. Nothing else?—Nothing particular.

340. Will you tell us what was wrong with the sleeping-accommodation?—There was not enough room for the men to swing the hammocks. There were about sixteen at each table, and there was only sufficient room for about ten men to sleep, and the other men used to have to sleep on the tables and floor.

341. Was any complaint made about this to the officers?—I could not say.

342. Do you think it could have been rectified if complaint had been made: was there any more room?—No, there was not.

343. There was no more available room for more than were swung?—No, none at all.

344. Could not the officers have rectified it?—No, not in our quarters, sir.

345. What was the matter with the food?—Well, the meat was tainted at times.

346. Was any complaint made about the food being bad?—Yes, some complaints were made at times.

347. Who were they made to?—I could not say exactly—to the orderly officer.

348. When those complaints were made was any attempt made to rectify the matter?—Yes, sir, at times. The meat was bad, and we had preserved meat sent to us instead.

349. Do you know of any occasion when complaint was made to an officer and it was not rectified?—No; I could not say.

350. The meat, you say, was tainted: was that beef or mutton?—Beef. It was very badly cooked. It was pretty well raw.

351. Were you given anything else in place of it?—Sometimes; we did not always trouble about it.

352. Is there anything else in connection with the food?—I have seen preserved apples going down with worms in them.

353. How often did you see that?—I think that was about twice.

354. Upon those occasions when the preserved apples were sent down with worms in them, were they taken away and thrown overboard and something else given in place of them?—They generally came down, and we chucked it away. Nothing was said.

355. As far as you know, you had to go without when they came down in that state?—Yes. They did not trouble to complain.

356. Was anything wrong with the other food?—The tea was very bad, too.

357. Was it inferior in quality?—It tasted just like stewed tea. It was very seldom drunk.

358. Do you think it was the fault of the tea or of the cooks?—The fault of the cooks.

359. The tea itself was good: it did not get proper treatment?—Yes, sir.

360. The meat was badly cooked and the tea was badly made: then, it is a complaint against the cooking principally?—Well, the meat was tainted.

361. Was it cooked properly?—Sometimes it was. It was very often tainted on the outside. It seemed as if it had been thawed and frozen up again.

362. Was that meat ever eaten?—Sometimes we would cut the top off and cut the centre out.

363. You have known that meat to be eaten?—Not the outside, sir.

364. Yes, but some portions of that meat were eaten?—Some of the men used to eat some of it—not all.

365. Do you know if the attention of the officers or the orderly was ever drawn to the fact that the meat was tainted?—Yes, several times, sir.

366. Did he ever take any steps to get the men something in place of it?—Yes; we used to get preserved meat in place of it.

367. You did get a meal, even if it did come down badly cooked: you got it in some other form?—Yes, sir.

368. Is there any other matter that you wish to bring before the Commission?—In the mornings, when the orderlies were cleaning out the place, all the men used to be on deck. That would be about half-past 10, and the spray would come over, and it would be very damp for the men. That is how the men caught most of the colds.

369. What time was that, after breakfast?—After breakfast; yes, sir.

370. Were the men often on deck in cold and wet weather like that?—We had to do it to allow the place to be cleaned up.

371. Was there any shelter on the upper deck to prevent the men getting wet?—It depended which way the wind was. We were able to get the shelter of the cabin.

372. The whole of the men would not be able to get in the shelter, would they?—Barely, sir.

373. A portion of the men would get wet on the decks in bad weather?—Yes. It was very wet under foot, too.

374. Would it have been possible to clean up the decks without the men going on the upper deck?—Not very well, sir; it was too much crowded.

375. It would not even be healthy for the troops to remain below in dirty quarters?—No; I should not think so.

376. Do you think many men caught colds when they were up in the daytime like this?—I think so. It was rather cold weather, and they went up out of a warm place.

377. Was the attention of the officers ever drawn to this fact?—I could not say.

378. Did you have much bad weather between Durban and Albany?—No; it was always the spray that was the trouble on the deck.

379. Do you know anything about the latrines?—They used to be very bad towards the latter part of the evening. They used to get blocked and overflow.

380. What was the result of that overflowing?—The pipes, or something, used to get blocked. They seemed all right up to about 3 or 4 o'clock. They used to be clean early, and then block up at that time.

381. Did that happen every day?—It happened very often.

382. Was there any one detailed to look after the latrines?—That I could not say. They were always cleaned in the morning by a fatigue party.

383. But not afterwards?—Not in the afternoon.

384. Was it possible for any one who saw the latrines in that state to clear them?—I could not say.

385. If a trooper went into the latrine and saw it blocked, was it possible for him to clear it?—I could not say what was the cause of the stoppage.

386. Did you often see it overflowing?—Yes, sir.

387. How often?—A good many times. It used to work with the boat. The water used to bash about.

388. What time did they generally get into that state?—Later on the evening; the evening would be the worst.

389. Before dark?—It would be towards evening.

390. Have you any other complaints to bring before our notice?—No, sir; I do not think so.

391. Did you find it very stuffy down below?—Yes, very stuffy when all the men were down.

392. Do you think many men got colds by going up of a night-time to get cool?—I could not say, sir.

393. Do you think they would be more likely to catch cold after breakfast than after dark?—The place seemed to be warmest after breakfast.

394. Just after breakfast was warmest?—Yes; after they had slept all night.

395. Had you a hammock yourself?—Sometimes, sir; I did not always get mine.

396. You did not always get the same hammock?—No; they used to hang too tight together.

397. *Mr. McNab.*] How many hooks did they take to swing a hammock?—They took two.

398. Then, where there was a hook and a hammock swinging from it towards the stern of the vessel there was no hammock swinging from that hook forward of the vessel on to that hook?—No; they were between the hooks.

399. The men did not take advantage of the hooks facing the hammocks continuously lying from end to end of the vessel?—It was a sort of zigzag.

400. They did not take advantage of the hooks to continuously swing the hammocks right straight aft?—No; the hooks would be turned the wrong way for them to do that.

401. Was it impossible to have the eyes of the two hammocks hanging from the one hook?—They could have done it by tying the ropes.

402. Could not they hook the hammocks on to the hook in the ordinary way?—The other way seemed to be the handiest, by zigzagging; they all fitted in so well.

403. *The Chairman.*] How did the meat show when it was tainted?—It was a sort of dark colour at the top.

404. Was this before it was cooked?—After it was cooked.

405. Did you see if it was tainted before it was cooked?—Yes, sir, on one occasion.

406. What period of the voyage?—Coming out from Durban to Albany; I saw them taking out some meat from the hold.

407. Did you see any tainted meat after you left Albany?—I could not say. I only saw one lot.

408. You think it was before you got to Albany?—I think so.

409. Do you think you saw any after that?—I could not say, sir.

410. You say that the men were obliged to go on the deck while quarters were being cleaned?—Yes, sir.

411. What could be done to prevent that?—It could not very well be prevented. They had to be washed out.

412. It was unavoidable?—Yes; all hands had to come on deck.

413. Can you suggest any means of getting the decks clean without bringing the men on the upper deck?—No, sir.

414. Was it a hardship to go on the deck?—Yes, sir, it was cold; and it was very unsatisfactory sometimes.

415. You did not like being up in the fresh air?—We used to get down as soon as we could, as it was too cold.

416. What occupation did you follow before you went with the contingent?—I was a storeman, sir.

417. You say that it was hard lines being sent on deck because of the sprays?—It was very cold and the sprays used to come over.

418. How often were you wet through?—I was wet through four or five times going along.

419. Right through all your clothes?—No, not through the tunic.

420. Had you any greatcoats?—Some of us had them. Some had them in their kits.

421. Did you not use your coats?—They used to use them at times.

422. When you did not use your greatcoats it was your own fault?—Yes.

423. If you had used your greatcoats you would never have felt the cold so much?—Yes, sir.

424. Why did the men not use them more generally?—A lot of the men had them in their kits, and did not trouble to get them.

425. Could they get them?—That I could not say.

426. Could you get yours?—I had mine.

427. You think going up on deck caused men to get colds?—Yes; it was very cold after sleeping all night down below. That was the worst part of it.

428. Did you sleep below in a hammock?—Sometimes; not always.
429. Why did you not sleep in a hammock?—Sometimes, if I was late in putting up my hammock, my space would be taken.
430. Did men constantly go up on deck during the night?—That I could not say.
431. Did you often go up during the night?—No, I never went up.
432. The latrines, you say, were dirty: were they very dirty?—It was just the overflow of water that made them uncomfortable; it used to come over at one end.
433. Was it not all over the floor?—It worked backwards and forwards.
434. What would be the depth of one end?—It would be about an inch at one end, unless it worked back.
435. Did you ever see it 3 in. or 4 in. deep?—No, sir, I could not say that.
436. Did you see the gratings awash?—Yes, everything used to get washed.
437. Did you see the gratings swim about from one end of the latrine to the other?—I have not seen that, sir.
438. Was this latrine near where the fish was?—This was the forward one.
439. *Colonel Davies.*] You say that the men were always ordered up on deck after breakfast so that the quarters could be cleaned?—Yes, sir.
440. Do you remember, on perhaps three or four cold, wet mornings, when orders were given that the men were not to be turned out of their quarters, and you were not turned out on deck?—I remember one or two mornings we stayed down below.
441. *Mr. Millar.*] Have you any fault to find of the want of attention on the part of any officers during the trip?—No, sir; none.
442. You think that your commissioned officers and your non-commissioned officers paid as much attention during the trip as it was possible to do?—Yes, sir.
443. *Mr. McNab.*] Your complaints are more in regard to the ship as a ship?—Yes, sir.
444. And to the effect that there were so many men on board that you had to suffer a good deal on account of the crowding?—Yes.

Sergeant EDWARD JOHN MASSEY examined on oath. (No. 25.)

445. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your rank?—Troop-sergeant of H squadron.
446. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation on board the "Britannic." The Commission will be pleased to hear you?—As regards the food, I have been in four transport-ships now, and I think the food on the "Britannic" was equal to anything I had in any of the other ships. In troopships going out, no doubt, the food is better than in those coming home. Still, I had worse food on board the "Gymeric" going out than I had on the "Britannic." As regards the sleeping-accommodation, there would be hammocks, as usual, in troopships. In the quarters in which I was there seemed to be plenty. There were always plenty of hooks to spare at night, but most of the men preferred sleeping on deck. The only fault I have to find with the ship is that there was not much room to knock about. She was a very wet ship on deck. That is about all. I will answer any question.
447. First of all, regarding the meat: did you see meat which was not fit for human consumption?—I never found any fault with the meat.
448. Were you in the sergeants' mess?—Yes.
449. Did you see much of what went on amongst the troops?—Yes; the sergeants' mess was alongside F squadron of the South Island regiment.
450. You saw the F squadron: was the meat they got wholesome food?—Yes. No doubt on one or two occasions they had cause to complain.
451. What was the cause?—The meat was not cooked.
452. Then, you would say that when they made reasonable complaint it was really a complaint against the cooking, and not against the food itself?—Yes, against the cooking.
453. You spoke of the sleeping-accommodation: did you refer to the sleeping-accommodation of the sergeants or of the troops?—It was all the same; we hung our hammocks on the same hooks.
454. Then, in your quarters there were troops as well as sergeants?—Yes. I do not know the number, but there were two squadrons on that deck.
455. Do you mean that all the men allotted to a particular table could get hooks for their hammocks?—Yes; there were plenty of spare hooks.
456. You sometimes slept on the table?—I always slept on the table.
457. Was that from choice?—Yes.
458. Could you have got hooks for your hammock at any time?—Yes.
459. How many men were there at your table?—Sixteen.
460. When you say that there were plenty of hooks do you mean that you could take the hook of a man at another table?—Yes; there were always plenty of hooks for the sergeants.
461. There were sixteen sergeants at your table?—Yes.
462. And the sixteen sergeants could hang their hammocks over the table?—I do not know that there was accommodation for sixteen, but all those who wanted could do so.
463. When all the hooks were occupied how many were sleeping in hammocks?—There never was a night the hooks were all occupied.
464. How many could sleep in hammocks over the table?—About eight, or half the men.
465. Then, out of the sixteen only eight could get sleeping-accommodation over the table?—Yes.
466. Was there any other place than over the tables to hang hammocks?—Yes.
467. Where was this?—Between the two squadrons in the centre of the ship.
468. Then, the tables on each side could get half that space?—Yes.



469. How many men could get hammock accommodation in the half-space in the centre?—I could not tell you.
470. Would it be four?—More than that.
471. Six?—About six, I should think.
472. Then, over the table and in the space in the centre you might have fourteen men?—Yes, comfortably.
473. Was there any other space associated with each table that you could get hammock accommodation in?—Only just across the top of the table.
474. Then, there always would be two men at least who could not get sleeping-accommodation if the whole sixteen were there?—Yes.
475. At your mess did any of the men sleep on the floor?—No; they slept on the table and in their hammocks. There may have been a night when they slept on the floor.
476. Were you on the lowest deck of all?—No; in the 'tween-decks.
477. Did you find the atmosphere stuffy and close?—Where I was we could always open the portholes. We used to open our portholes in the morning.
478. You had no reason to complain of unwholesome atmosphere for any length of time?—No.
479. When you made complaints to your superior officer were they attended to?—Yes.
480. Was it known to you that if at any time you were short of food you were to ask for it and you would get it?—Yes; we could always get plenty of tinned meat.
481. From your recollection of the men who went into hospital could you say whether a majority of them came from the upper deck or from another deck?—I could not tell you.
482. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you find any difficulty in enforcing discipline?—No.
483. Was it good?—As good as could be expected on board a troopship.
484. Did you ever see much drunkenness on board?—No.
485. At any end of the ship?—I only stayed at my end.
486. Which deck were you on, the upper or the lower?—Upper troop deck.
487. In the forward end of the ship?—Yes.
488. How many men were there?—Two squadrons; about two hundred and forty men. That is, if the squadrons were full.
489. How far was it from the hatchway forward to the foremost part of your troop deck?—I have no idea.
490. Did the companion-way go down the middle?—There was one in the centre and one at one end.
491. You never experienced any inconvenience from hot air?—No.
492. You said you went out in the "Gymeric"?—Yes.
493. Were the men in the "Gymeric" as numerous in proportion to the size of the ship as they were on the "Britannic"?—More so, I think. There was no room at all in the "Gymeric."
494. Where were the troops in the "Gymeric"?—I think, on the 'tween-decks.
495. Where did you carry the horses?—On three decks. The men slept in No. 1 and No. 4, and the horses were in No. 3 and No. 2.
496. What is the advantage of sleeping on deck to a man who has a hammock?—I myself liked to sleep on deck in all these troopships even if there were plenty of hammocks—that is, on the upper deck.
497. You mean the upper troop deck?—The main deck.
498. How many men preferred to sleep on the main deck in the "Britannic"? We heard that the spray was coming over, and the men complained that they could not keep on deck?—There were plenty of places there where you could sling your hammock and get away from the wet.
499. You preferred sleeping on the table itself to sleeping in a hammock?—Yes.
500. Not because you could not sling your hammock?—No; there were plenty of hooks.
501. Do you think that the officers, as a whole, took that interest in their men which they ought to do?—Yes.
502. No complaints were made to the officers that were not attended to?—They looked after us as well in the "Britannic" as in any other ship.
503. *The Chairman.*] I suppose the sergeants had a separate mess?—Yes.
504. Was their food cooked at the same time as the men's?—Yes.
505. Was it from the same galley?—No; there was a special galley for the sergeants.
506. Was the food the same as the men's?—We may have got a few extras.
507. What ship did you come back in?—The "Tagus."
508. Did you ever parade for inspection on board the "Tagus"?—I had not much to do with that; I was away with the band.
509. Did the men parade for inspection?—That I could not tell you. I pretty well forget the trip in the "Tagus."
510. What was the length of your table?—About 16 ft.
511. What was the width between the tables alongside one another?—About 3 ft. The tables varied in length.
512. In your place?—The table was 16 ft. long.
513. The table at the other side; was that the same?—I was never there.
514. How far was it from side to side?—About 20 ft.
515. Then, the men who fed at these tables had with the space in the centre of the ship enough room for their hammocks?—Yes.
516. What was the width of the table?—It would be about 2 ft.
517. How far between the two tables?—About 3 ft.

518. You only returned in the "Tagus" and the "Britannic"?—Those were the only two ships I returned in.

519. Was the discipline very different in returning from South Africa to what it was going there?—The men were kept pretty hard at work with their horses going out.

520. Do you think it made them content and happy?—They always seemed to be happy and contented.

521. Do you think it would have been a good thing if the men were paraded coming back?—There is no room to parade on troopships coming here.

522. Then, they could only be inspected and dismissed?—That is all.

523. Was the "Britannic" a very wet boat?—Yes.

524. How often did the sea come on board?—I could not say there was a sea came on board, but there was spray. She was low in the water.

525. Did you remain below or go on deck?—I went on deck.

526. How often did you get spray over you?—I was too cunning an old sailor to let that happen.

527. Was it a common thing for the men to get wet?—They would get a little wet, but there was only one day, when some men were going to the cook-house for their food, that they got a proper ducking. They went below and changed their clothes.

528. Where was the wind generally?—On the beam.

529. With a beam sea?—Yes; we had a beam sea nearly all the way across.

530. What was your occupation before you went into the contingent?—I was a shearer between here and New South Wales.

531. How did the food on board the "Britannic" compare with the food given to shearers?—They do not get so well fed here as they did in New South Wales. The food on the boat was about the same as the shearers in New Zealand got when I was shearing here. When I was on a station here shearing I was nearly starved.

532. Then, you think the food on the "Britannic" was as good as shearers in New Zealand got?—Yes.

533. *Colonel Davies.*] You know the deck the non-commissioned officers had on the upper deck?—Yes.

534. You remember the portion of the promenade deck which was set aside for them: it was never too crowded?—No.

535. There was always plenty of room for the non-commissioned officers?—Yes.

536. They could play quoits?—Yes.

537. Could you sit about under the lee of the house?—Yes, when the weather permitted.

538. They could go from one side to the other?—Yes; I used to go myself.

539. One non-commissioned officer has stated he had to stand on the main deck—I think he said in the wet—all day because he could not get a place to sit down: is that correct?—I never noticed it. There was room enough for twice as many non-commissioned officers as there were on board.

Trooper WILLIAM McLOUGHLIN examined on oath.\* (No. 26.)

540. *The Chairman.*] What contingent did you belong to?—The Ninth.

541. What troop?—In the second battalion.

542. What squadron?—E.

543. Did you return in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

544. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—Working in a stable.

545. You have volunteered to come up and give evidence: what would you like to say as to the condition of the food, or as to the ventilation, or the water, or anything with regard to the discipline on board; we shall be glad to hear you?—Well, sir, the discipline was good; the food was not good, and it was not half-cooked. The tea and coffee the men could not drink; it was not fit, and there was not enough sugar in it. We had not half enough room down below; we had only about nine or ten hooks to hang our hammocks from, and there were fourteen men at the table.

546. What about the meat?—It was not nearly half-cooked, and it was very bad; most of it was thrown out of the porthole. The bully beef was all good. We used to have to go up on deck till 10 o'clock in the morning to allow the mess orderlies to clean up. Some mornings when it was very cold we did not go. There was no room at the place where we went to wash. It was closed half an hour after you got there. If you were not there in the rush you could not get a wash. That was until the last few days; then there was plenty of water.

547. What about the drinking-water?—I could always have a drink. There was always a guard on, but he would allow you to get a cup of water when you wanted it.

548. Anything else?—One day we got fish which had been lying on the deck for two or three days. It was cooked for us, but it was not eaten; it was thrown overboard. The blankets and the hammocks were very dirty. We had no place to hang them out. We had to roll them up in the morning and they were packed down below.

549. Anything else to find fault with?—That is about all.

550. Do you think it was wise to take your blankets and place them down below, or what would you like to do with them?—Hang them out.

551. Where?—On the deck. It would have been better for them.

552. Do you know where 2,200 blankets could be hung?—No, sir, I do not suppose they could.

553. Do you think the officers were to blame because you could not hang the blankets out, or the officers of the ship?—I do not blame any one, but I should like to have hung them out.

\* This evidence was sent to witness to revise, but was not returned.

554. Can you say where they could be hung?—I do not know.
555. You see, when you make a formal complaint you should say what should be done to remedy it?—They could not be hung out.
556. Were the blankets dirty when handed out to you?—They were dirty.
557. Were they flopping about on the floor or were they folded up?—They were folded up.
558. Were they dark with the dirt, or what was it?—When you slept in them that night you could smell them.
559. What smell was it?—It was mouldy.
560. And was your hammock dirty?—Yes.
561. Somebody had used it, and it had not been washed when given to you?—Yes.
562. What signs were there to show that the blankets were not clean?—To look at them.
563. How do you mean?—If a blanket was clean it would be nice and white.
564. Did you complain about this to anybody?—I did not complain to anybody.
565. Then, you think there was no officer on the ship who was responsible for handing you dirty blankets?—No, sir.
566. Did they refuse to give you clean blankets when you asked for them?—No, sir.
567. How many days did the voyage last?—Twenty-six.
568. Had you bad fish on many of the days?—Once, until I was in the hospital, and did not know anything about the rest.
569. What was the matter with the fish?—It was upon the deck for three days, and when it was cooked you could smell it.
570. Was it putrid?—Yes.
571. Were you obliged to eat it?—No, sir.
572. Did you make a complaint about it?—Yes.
573. What happened then?—We got bully beef.
574. Then, you did not go empty on that occasion?—No.
575. You got a good square meal?—Yes.
576. How long were you in the hospital?—About five days.
577. During what part of the voyage?—Before we got to Albany.
578. What was the matter with you?—I do not know.
579. How were you treated in the hospital?—I was well treated.
580. Comfortable?—Yes.
581. Plenty to eat?—I got plenty of milk and soda.
582. Was that the proper diet?—Yes.
583. You say the water was closed off half an hour after you got there?—Yes, during most of the voyage.
584. At what time did you get up?—The reveille was sounded about a quarter to 7, and I got up a quarter of an hour afterwards.
585. You are sure that the water was turned off in half an hour?—I think, about that.
586. If others have stated that it was turned on for two hours, would you be wrong or would they be wrong?—It could not be said it was turned on for two hours.
587. When you got up at 7 o'clock was it turned off then?—In half an hour.
588. You got up a quarter of an hour after reveille sounded?—Yes.
589. You think the water was turned off, at any rate, three-quarters of an hour after reveille went?—Yes; far too soon for the number of men.
590. And you were too late to get a wash?—We always had to bustle in.
591. But you say that long before 8 o'clock the water was shut off?—Yes.
592. And if there is evidence from a number of people that it was running till 8 o'clock or past 8 o'clock, that evidence is wrong?—It is wrong.
593. You are sure it was not running long after 7 o'clock?—No, it was not.
594. How many hammocks was there room for over a table?—Nine or ten.
595. When you got past the end of the table, what about the centre of the ship?—I could not say.
596. Were there hammocks between the tables on both sides?—Yes.
597. How many was there room for there?—About four more hammocks between the two tables.
598. How far were the tables apart?—I do not know.
599. Do you know the width of this room, or the length of the room—I mean the room in which we are now sitting?—I do not know.
600. You surely have some sort of an idea: was that centre place the length of this room or the width of it?—I do not think it was the length of this room.
601. Was it the width of the room?—I think, a little bit more.
602. Would it be 20 ft., or less, or more?—I do not know.
603. Supposing it to be 20 ft., would there be room to hang four hammocks there?—No, not across.
604. But lengthwise?—We did not hang them that way.
605. Why?—There were no hooks.
606. Only about four hammocks could be hung in that part of the ship?—Yes.
607. Did the men complain that there was not sufficient sugar with the tea and coffee?—Yes, at our table.
608. Did you buy food?—Yes.
609. How often?—Every night.
610. Did you make a contract?—Yes.
611. There was a good deal of buying food?—Yes; we had to do it.

612. How many do you think bought food every day?—Some nights there were a hundred or more. There were two or three places where you could buy food. You could buy it from the engineers, from the officers' galley, and from the sailors you could get a bob's worth.

613. *Mr. McNab.*] You complain that the food was not half-cooked, that the tea and coffee were not fit to drink, that there was not sufficient sugar, and there was not sufficient room?—Yes.

614. Did you ever complain during the voyage about any of these things?—There used to be an officer of the day who came round at meal-times.

615. Did you complain to him?—Yes; I stood up and said the tea and coffee were not fit to drink.

616. What officer was it?—Lieutenant Vallance.

617. What was the complaint you made to him?—That the tea and coffee were not fit to drink.

618. What did he say?—He said, "Yes; that is the general complaint all round."

619. Did he promise to inquire into it?—He said he would see what he could do.

620. What did he do?—I do not know whether he did anything.

621. Did you make a complaint to any other officer yourself?—No. I heard the men making complaints. There were complaints by others besides me. There was a different officer every day.

622. Do you still insist that the water was not kept on beyond about a quarter past 7?—I was not kept on more than half an hour.

623. When I tell you that every man so far who has complained about the water has admitted that it was kept on till 8 o'clock, will you still persist in saying that it was only allowed to run for three-quarters of an hour after 6 o'clock?—The reveille was at a quarter to 7.

624. How often was it at a quarter to 7?—I do not know.

625. Did the reveille ever sound during the trip at a quarter to 7?—I could not swear to it. I had not a watch.

626. What makes you think it was a quarter to 7 if you had no watch?—I used to ask somebody some mornings, and they said it was a quarter to 7.

627. Was it taking the reveille at a quarter to 7 that you came to the conclusion that the water was turned off in three-quarters of an hour?—About three-quarters of an hour. 2870

628. Here is the copy of the orders of the 6th July, 1902, which I show you, and which says that reveille was at 6 a.m.: do you now say that reveille sounded at a quarter to 7?—I will not swear to it. I understood that it was a quarter to 7.

629. Will you still say that the water was turned off three-quarters of an hour after reveille?—About three-quarters of an hour. I used to go up, and when you got up you could not get a wash.

630. You say all this on oath. Then, are we to believe those witnesses who stated to us that the water was running up to 8 o'clock?—I would not say they were not to be believed.

631. Are we to understand these witnesses may be correct in their statement?—Yes.

632. *Mr. Millar.*] Was there any improvement in the coffee after the complaint to Lieutenant Vallance?—No; it was the same.

633. Was it ever improved?—No.

634. Do you know of any other complaints which were made and no attempt made to rectify them?—No; we used to complain about the meat, and we got better.

635. That was attended to?—Yes.

636. As soon as the officer's attention was drawn to it it was remedied?—It might be worse another day, but it was changed.

637. Have you any complaint against the officers or non-commissioned officers during the voyage?—No.

638. Did you see any drunkenness in any part of the ship during the voyage?—No. I understood there was drink on board.

639. You never saw it taken to excess?—No.

640. There was no regular drunkenness on board the vessel?—No. They used not to drink the beer, so threw it out—that is, some of them did not drink it. It was not fit to drink.

641. Did you ever get water to wash your clothes?—We got some two or three days before we arrived here.

642. Plenty of water to drink?—Yes.

643. Your only complaint is there was not sufficient time to wash in the morning?—No.

644. Not if you got up immediately?—You might.

645. But if a man remained in his bunk after reveille he would not?—You had to wait, because the hammocks had to be put away.

646. When was breakfast?—About 7 or a quarter past 7 o'clock.

647. I suppose some men would get breakfast while others were washing?—Yes; and some would go without breakfast to get a wash.

648. You think the water should have been kept on longer?—I think so.

649. Was there any scarcity of water when it was on?—Sometimes the taps would not run.

650. Was not that the rolling of the ship?—Yes.

651. You could not prevent that?—No.

652. You have no other complaint?—No.

653. *Mr. McNab.*] What age are you?—Twenty-one.

654. *Colonel Davies.*] Did you go out in the "Surrey"?—Yes.

655. You belonged to the E squadron?—I was transferred to it.

656. How often did you try to drink the tea?—Not very often.

657. Did you taste it every day?—No; I did not go down very often. I would go sometimes to taste the tea to see what it was like.

658. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You say you got nothing but milk and soda for the first few days in hospital?—Yes.

659. What was the matter with you?—I do not know.

660. Were you feverish?—Yes.

661. Do not you think the doctor would give you the best food for your complaint?—Yes; I do not complain of that. I said I was treated right.

Trooper CECIL HAROLD DAVIS examined on oath. (No. 27.)

662. *Mr. Millar.*] What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

663. What squadron?—E.

664. What were you?—A private.

665. What occupation had you before you went?—A driver.

666. You volunteered to give evidence in regard to the "Britannic": would you kindly state what are your complaints about the "Britannic"?—In the first place, there was not sufficient accommodation—there was no sleeping-room. Whenever the men got into their beds they were bumping up against one another if they were sleeping in the hammocks. The food was not satisfactory. It was very poor food we got sometimes. In the wash-house, for the men to wash in, there was not sufficient water. As for the hospital, I cannot say much about that; but what men were there thought that the hospital orderlies did their duty, but there were not sufficient men to do the duty. That is all.

667. When you say there was not sufficient accommodation do you mean that there was not sufficient room to hang the hammocks?—When all the hammocks were up there was not enough room for every man to put up his.

668. Did that apply to your own squadron?—Yes.

669. Did you see many men who could not find hooks?—They used to sleep on the floor and on the tables, and elsewhere. I slept in the wash-house.

670. Any hooks not used?—No.

671. Do you think men would prefer to sleep in a hammock if they could get one?—Certainly they would.

672. What do you mean when you say the food was very poor—the quantity or the quality?—The quality.

673. Did you have sufficient of what there was?—Yes.

674. What was the fault with the quality?—It was not proper food to give to men at all.

675. What do you mean: was it unfit for human consumption?—I do not think it was fit for me.

676. What food was it?—Both the meat and the fish.

677. Are you referring to one occasion about the fish when it was lying about the deck?—Yes.

678. Is that all you know about the fish?—Yes.

679. On that occasion it was thrown overboard?—I did not see it thrown overboard.

680. Was it eaten?—No.

681. Did the men get other food?—Yes; bully beef.

682. Then, the attention of the officer was drawn to the condition of the fish, and other food was provided?—Yes.

683. Did the men not eat that fish?—No.

684. What about the beef?—It was very bad.

685. Do you mean tainted?—Yes, tainted.

686. Was the attention of the officer called to it?—Yes.

687. Did he get it rectified?—Yes, on several occasions.

688. Did you ever eat that bad meat?—No.

689. Was anything else substituted for it?—Oh, yes. If it was very bad we always got something else for it.

690. How often was that done, do you think?—On pretty nearly every occasion when there was a complaint made.

691. You have no complaint against your officers for not trying to rectify it—it is a complaint against the food supplied to you by the ship?—Yes.

692. You say there was not sufficient room in the wash-house?—No.

693. How many basins were there in your wash-house?—Six.

694. How many wash-houses?—Four.

695. How many basins in each?—There were four in two of the wash-houses and six in the others.

696. Was your wash-house on the deck?—Yes.

697. Was it 6 ft. high?—I could not say exactly.

698. Do you think the utensils provided for washing would be equal to a trough 21 in. by 16 in.?—No.

699. You had two squadrons on your deck: how many men would there be?—About 250 men.

700. You had fourteen basins?—Yes.

701. How long does it take a man to wash?—About five minutes if he can get the water.

702. Five minutes for each man?—Yes.

703. That is twelve men an hour for each basin, and there were fourteen basins?—Yes.

704. Then, there would be about seventy men who would not get a wash?—Yes; the water was turned on from 6 o'clock till 8 o'clock.

705. They took five minutes each to wash?—Yes.

706. Would not their fellows be trying to rush them on?—No; they would be trying to get their hands in at the same time.

707. Was there room on deck to make the wash-house larger?—Not as far as I could see.

708. You had not too much room on deck as it was?—There was very little room to take any exercise.

709. And the wash-houses were taking up some of that space?—Yes.

710. About this question of the hospital, you say the hospital accommodation was all right, and the attendants were all right, but there were not sufficient orderlies: at what period of the voyage was that? Do you mean that there were more men in the hospital than men to look after them?—Yes.

711. When was that?—Right from the start.

712. How many men were in the hospital between Durban and Albany?—It was full all the time.

713. That is thirty-two men?—Yes.

714. How many orderlies?—There were three, as far as I know.

715. Were you in the hospital yourself?—No.

716. Did you hear the men in the hospital complain about this?—Yes.

717. Did they make any complaint about it?—I do not know.

718. Any complaint to the officers?—I could not say.

719. Do you think the doctor could see, himself, that he had not sufficient men?—He could have had more men, I should think.

720. What I want to get at is this: Do you think that the doctor with the number of patients he had should have seen that he had not enough attendants, and should have requisitioned for more?—Yes, certainly.

721. Then, in your opinion, the doctor did not take sufficient care of his patients?—No.

722. You do not know of any complaint having been made?—No.

723. *Mr. McNab.*] You were not in the hospital yourself?—No.

724. What you have stated to the Commission is what you have heard others say about the hospital?—Yes.

725. I suppose you have heard other men speaking very well of the hospital?—On some occasions I have.

726. If a man who was in the hospital came before the Commission for the one purpose of thanking the doctors for the attention they paid to him in the hospital, would you still think the doctors did not treat their patients well?—Not as far as I am concerned I would not.

727. You admit you know nothing about it?—I know nothing about it myself.

728. You say the water was put on at 6 and remained on till 8?—Yes.

729. If a trooper from E squadron comes here and tells the Commission that the water was put on for only three-quarters of an hour he was stating what was not true?—I should think he was.

730. In fact, you know he was?—Yes.

731. Supposing there was a basin about 16 in. in diameter, and fitted with a plug so that it could be emptied at once, how many men could wash their face and hands in it in one hour—I do not mean stand there and complete their toilet, but go in, have a wash, and go out and dry themselves?—I think a whole squadron would get through like that in an hour.

732. *Mr. Millar.*] In furtherance of this hospital-orderly question you stated, in reply to *Mr. McNab*, that if a hospital patient said certain things it would not alter your opinion?—No, it would not alter my opinion.

733. This is a very serious matter. Can you give us the name of the man who made the complaint?—There is only one man that I know of, and he is dead.

734. You cannot give the name of another man who can substantiate the charge?—No.

735. So that we are in the unfortunate position that you make a charge and we cannot get the proof which is necessary to go on. You cannot give the name of a man in your squadron who made the charge?—I do not think I can.

736. Was the man in the hospital who complained to you?—Yes.

737. Is his name Grubb?—No; Nicholson.

738. *The Chairman.*] What was his complaint: what did he say?—That there was not sufficient attendants to attend on the patients. That is the only complaint he made.

739. Did he complain to the doctor?—I could not say.

740. The only complaint was that there was not enough attendants?—Yes.

741. Was it before you got to Albany or Melbourne?—It was after we had left Melbourne for New Zealand.

742. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You say he only complained about the number of hospital orderlies?—As far as I know.

743. What number would be sufficient?—I should think six.

744. As I happened to have fifteen, do you think that would be enough?—That would be enough.

745. *Colonel Davies.*] You say that it was only two or three days before you got to New Zealand that you could get water to wash your clothes?—Yes.

746. Did you ever ask for it?—Yes.

747. Who did you ask?—The sergeant-major.

748. Who was he?—Sergeant-Major Collins.

749. Can you remember when?—I could not recall it.

750. You are quite sure you asked for water to wash clothes?—Yes.

751. Did he say to you that he would do what he could?—Yes.

752. What was the result?—Two or three days after, or on the next day, we got the fresh water.

753. Then, as soon as you asked for it you got it?—We got it then.

754. That was the first time you asked for it?—Yes.

755. Do you know of anybody who asked the non-commissioned officers for fresh water to wash clothes during the voyage and did not get it?—I do not.

Trooper WILLIAM WESTWOOD CRAIG examined on oath. (No. 28.)

756. *The Chairman.*] What contingent did you belong to?—I went over in the Seventh details in the "Cornwall," and joined the Eighth afterwards in A Squadron.

757. What was your occupation before you joined?—A painter.

758. You have volunteered to give evidence as to the accommodation, the food, and the dissatisfaction in the "Britannic": what do you complain of?—In the first place, I did not go out there expecting luxuries. I have roughed it before. We did not expect luxuries coming back, but we expected a little better treatment than we got. When we first got on board we went to our deck. I think it was deck No. 5. It was the first deck down in the 'tween decks. There was a fair amount of room, but not enough. We were sleeping on the tables and on the floor, and when they got a lot of sickness they made a hospital on that part of the deck. They took away 20 ft. lengthwise and half the ship across. Of course, we were all jammed into the other part, and it caused much inconvenience, and we could not sleep down below, and had to go on deck. Another thing was, I think the meat itself when it came up seemed to be all right, but it was not cooked properly, and we could not eat it. I myself bought food from the engineers' mess. Of course, when the officers came down we complained, but there did not seem to be much attention paid to it. Whether it was the want of space in the cooks' galley I do not know, but I believe that was it. We had some fish once, which was brought up from below somewhere and put down on the port side of the deck, near the latrine. This latrine got blocked, and overflowed while the fish was there. Also the dogs came along and pump-shipped on it, and that was cooked for us. We took that up to Colonel Davies on the bridge deck. The food was not very good. It was very bad. We got rice two or three times, and there were maggots in it, also in the apples. I think that is about all I have to say. If the food had been cooked right I do not think there would have been many complaints.

759. Do I understand you to say that at first you had fairly good room?—Yes, fairly good room.

760. Until when?—I cannot give dates. It was about three days before we got into Albany.

761. Then they enlarged the hospital?—Yes, before we got to Albany.

762. Could they enlarge it anywhere else?—I do not think so.

763. Who was to blame: was it the doctor?—I do not know.

764. Was it wrong to enlarge the hospital?—No; but we were jammed up.

765. Are you sure it was before you got to Albany?—I am not sure.

766. Was it before you got to Melbourne?—Yes.

767. You are sure of that?—Yes.

768. Could the hospital be put elsewhere?—No, there was nowhere else; but every one was jammed up.

769. It was a misfortune that they had to enlarge the hospital?—Yes.

770. You do not blame the officers?—No, sir.

771. Who do you blame?—I suppose it is the ship. They should not have had so many men on board, and they should have had a larger hospital.

772. What about having to go on deck?—When they enlarged the hospital?

773. Yes?—We had no room below.

774. How many slept on deck?—There was a good few of us.

775. Did the hospital extend beyond the table at which you had your dinner?—They pulled the tables away altogether.

776. Was your table taken away?—No; it was left standing.

777. Was your hammock near the table?—It was over the table.

778. How were you crowded, then?—The other men used to come up and make a rush.

779. Were you obliged to give up your place?—No.

780. You were not compelled to leave your hammock—you had a prior claim to it?—I had.

781. Voluntarily you abandoned the place?—Yes; because it was too close. There was about 18 in. between our hooks.

782. And that was wrong?—Yes.

783. Do you know the transport regulations?—No.

784. Do you know what space is provided for soldiers?—No.

785. Do you think that you were entitled to more than the transport regulations provided?—Well, I do not know.

786. If the transport regulations say you should have 18 in., and you have 18 in., have you a right to complain?—No.

787. You were in the pay of the Imperial Government?—Yes.

788. You were paid as an Imperial soldier?—Yes.

789. Would you be liable to Imperial transport regulations?—We would be liable.

790. And if they give you 18 in. does not that put you in the position of complaining of receiving that to which you were entitled?—Yes.

791. If the transport regulations provide less room?—I hope they do not.

792. But supposing they do, what then? Might I tell you that the transport regulations only give you 16 in.?—That would be about the width, I suppose.

793. You say that the meat was all right, except that it was badly cooked?—Yes.
794. Do you think the quality of the meat, apart from the cooking, was good or bad?—It was good. Captain Young passed it.
795. Did he take an interest in it?—Yes, he did.
796. You have no fault to find with the way in which he supervised the matter?—No.
797. If he passed the meat it was good?—Yes.
798. You say you bought food from the engineers' mess?—Yes.
799. Not from the engineers' mess, but from the galley?—The engineers had a mess of their own. I bought it from the engineers' special table.
800. Do you know who else sold food?—The saloon galley. I got it from there too.
801. Did the crew sell it?—They did at first, but they stopped that.
802. Did the cooks in the main galley sell it?—I do not think anybody would buy it from there.
803. How many a day do you think would buy it—25, or 50, or 100, or 150?—Business was not very brisk at first because there was not much money, but when we got money it was brisk.
804. How many?—Well, about thirty a day a meal.
805. Do you know what food it was that was sold?—I believe it was chiefly from the officers' mess—the leavings.
806. Was it ship's stores?—I do not know whether the officers got the ship's stores.
807. Was there wholesale thieving of stores on board on the part of the stewards and crew?—I do not know. They sold a good quantity of food.
808. Is it reasonable to suppose it was the ship's stores?—Yes.
809. About the complaints to officers: did the officers pay attention to complaints, or were they indifferent?—The officers would come down and we would make our complaint, and it seemed to be noticed.
810. As the result of your complaint was there any improvement at all?—No, sir.
811. When you made a complaint nothing was done?—Only with the fish.
812. Tell us of another complaint made and not remedied?—There were several occasions that the food could have been better, and we did not get anything else.
813. Did you formally complain and there was no notice taken of it?—I could not say.
814. You do not remember any other particular case?—I do not remember another.
815. There is the case of the choking of the latrine aft: how often did that occur?—Three times in the first week, and it was more common afterwards.
816. Were the latrines kept clean?—They were cleaned for inspection, but they got dirty afterwards.
817. About what period of the day did they get choked?—Mostly in the evening, about tea-time.
818. What was the cause?—It would get choked, and the stuff would come out and float about.
819. How deep?—It came up to the door several times, and flooded in the alley-way.
820. How deep was the doorway?—About 18 in.
821. Did the men go into that and use the latrines?—No, sir; we had to do the best we could. We used to go forward, and it came out in orders that we were not to go forward, and there were only four latrines for over five hundred men.
822. Then, the latrines frequently had a great deal of slush in them?—Over a dozen times.
823. Was not this remedied when a complaint was made?—It was cleared out.
824. What choked the latrines? Did the closets work fairly well?—Yes; the flow of water was constant.
825. How were they choked?—The pipes seemed to be too small. There was something across the centre of the pipe which seemed to help to choke it.
826. You say that each particular closet worked properly?—I do not say that. The water was always running, and you had not to draw out a plug at all.
827. *Mr. McNab.*] With about 1,080 men on board, could you suggest anything that could have been done to make the accommodation more roomy for the men?—No; unless it was to put some canvas on the upper deck, and the weather was too rough to do that.
828. Would not that have very seriously restricted the deck-space and prevented the men getting an airing?—Yes, it would; but when we left Durban there was coal on one side which took up half the ship.
829. But that would be gradually removed?—Yes; it was removed in a few days.
830. I understood you to say that if the food was well cooked there would be fewer complaints?—Yes.
831. Then, the bulk of the complaint is rather on the cooks in the galley?—Yes; we used to get pork sometimes, and it was the best meat we got.
832. In the case of the rice and the maggots was complaint made to an officer?—Yes.
833. Did you get fresh rice?—There was no change made.
834. Did you remember the case of the men complaining about the rice?—Yes.
835. Who were the men who complained?—There was Corporal Britson, now Sergeant.
836. He complained about maggots being in the rice?—Yes.
837. Who was the officer to whom he complained?—I could not say.
838. What was done as the result of the complaints?—The officer said he could not help it, and he would look into it.
839. What was done with the rice?—It was thrown overboard.
840. Do you remember any other complaints about rice with maggots in it?—They complained about the apples having maggots in them.



841. Were those the only complaints you heard?—Yes.
842. *Mr. Millar.*] In your opinion, did the officers and non-commissioned officers pay sufficient attention to the men throughout the voyage?—Yes; I think the officers attended to us as much as they could. I do not think they could alter matters very well.
843. So far as the officers were concerned, you do not think they could do much more than they did?—No, sir.
844. You have nothing to say against their treatment at all?—No.
845. Did you ever see any signs of drunkenness in any part of the ship?—No, except when we came off from leave at Albany.
846. Outside that did you see any case of drunkenness?—No.
847. So that if the statement was made that drunkenness was rampant throughout the ship it would not be correct?—No.
848. *Colonel Davies.*] Are you certain that the enlargement of the hospital took place before we reached Melbourne?—Yes.
849. Suppose I told you as a positive fact that it took place after, what would you say?—That I was wrong.
850. As a matter of fact, it took place after twenty Australians who occupied the same deck in which the enlargement was made had landed: is not that the case?—Yes.
851. If they took away a table to make the enlargement of the hospital, would not the men have extra space through the twenty Australians leaving that deck? Is it not a fact that at Melbourne twenty Australians went out of that part of the ship?—Yes.
852. Therefore there were twenty less men in that part of the ship from Melbourne to here than there were before?—Yes; but they put up the enlargement of the hospital, and that took away the other two tables.
853. You admit that twenty men went away from that part of the ship?—Yes.
854. Therefore there was the space previously occupied by these twenty men who left that part of the ship occupied by the increased hospital accommodation?—Yes; but when the twenty Australians left us we did not get the space.
855. Not you personally, but some of the men on the deck did?—Perhaps so.
856. Did the twenty Australians go out of the same deck in which the increased hospital accommodation was made?—Yes.
857. *Mr. McNab.*] You stated in your evidence that they extended the hospital 20 ft. and jammed you into the balance?—Yes.
858. From what you said to Colonel Davies, you were really jammed in the balance, but there were twenty men less?—Yes, sir.

## Trooper PAUL THOMAS BRADLEY examined on oath. (No. 29.)

859. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your rank?—Trooper.
860. In what squadron?—H squadron of the Eighth Contingent.
861. You are anxious to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation generally on board the "Britannic." The Commission will be pleased to hear what you have to say, and perhaps may ask you some questions. Will you please state shortly what you wish to say?—The sleeping-accommodation was not sufficient for the number of men on board, and the food sometimes was not properly cooked.
862. When you say that the sleeping-accommodation was not sufficient, will you explain the disadvantages?—There were sixteen men at our table, and only nine pegs to hang the hammocks on, so that four or five men had to sleep on the floor or on the table.
863. When the nine men were in their hammocks they covered all over the table: did they extend into the passage?—Yes.
864. How many were there over the passage?—About two.
865. Then, there were seven over the table and two over the passage?—Yes.
866. How did the others do?—Some slept on the floor and some on the table.
867. Was there any room to put in fresh hooks if you had the hooks?—I do not think there was space. I do not think any more could be put in.
868. So that if you had made any complaint about it your own officers could not remedy it?—I do not think so.
869. Therefore you are not blaming your officers?—No, sir.
870. Do you remember how far apart the hooks were?—About 18 in. apart.
871. You say that at 18 in. apart there was not room right across the deck to hold more?—No.
872. Then, regarding the cooking of the food, was it often badly cooked?—Very often. Sometimes it looked cooked on the outside, but it was raw in the middle.
873. Was the meat wholesome meat?—Two or three times we could not eat it because it was bad.
874. Do you remember whether that was before you got to Albany or afterwards?—I think it was before we got there.
875. After you got to Albany do you recollect any case of the meat being bad?—I do not recollect any.
876. Were you in the upper 'tween decks or in the lower?—In the lower.
877. What was the condition of the ventilation there?—There was a windsail coming down.
878. Did it keep the atmosphere clear?—It was very hot at night.
879. I suppose you would find it close in the morning?—Yes.

880. During the afternoon do you remember if the men took every advantage of going up on deck, or did they hang about the 'tween decks?—A great many of them stayed down below when the decks were wet.

881. But on a fine day did they take advantage of it?—Most of them did.

882. Did you notice the men who preferred to hang about below?—I cannot remember them.

SATURDAY, 23RD AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper SIDNEY GARDINER sworn and examined.\* (No. 30.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name?—Sidney Gardiner.
2. Were you a member of a New Zealand contingent?—Yes, sir; the Eighth.
3. What squadron?—E squadron.
4. Did you return on the troopship "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
5. What was your occupation before you enlisted?—Bushman and miner.
6. You have volunteered to come and give evidence?—Yes, sir.
7. There have been certain allegations made as to the quality of the food and the general conveniences on board the steamer: do you wish to speak about that?—Yes, sir.
8. If you will please tell the Commission of what you yourself know by your own observation we shall be glad to hear it?—There was the hospital, for one thing, sir. I was in there, and I should say it was very bad. I left the hospital at Albany, of my own accord, and went ashore to buy a lot of things to eat coming over. We could not eat the food we were getting.
9. Where—in the hospital?—No, sir.
10. Have you done with the hospital?—There was a very bad smell there always.
11. About the food?—There were complaints made, but they never seemed to be taken any notice of. I was mess orderly, and I made complaints. There was a lot of stew which was simply meat put into water without being properly cooked. There was no taste in it. It seemed to be water with meat put in, and only about half-cooked. Very often the meat was tainted. As to the sleeping-accommodation, men had to sleep where they could. There did not seem to be enough room down below. At our table alone there were supposed to be twelve men, and there was only sleeping-accommodation for about seven. The blankets that we got were in a terrible state. I think that is about all.
12. You have nothing else you want to deal with?—I think that is all.
13. Were you satisfied with everything else, then?—I would not complain of anything else; those I have mentioned were the worst. The tea and coffee I never drank. I could not drink it. It was terrible stuff; we used to throw it away.
14. Do you remember when you were admitted to hospital?—I am not sure of the date—about five days before we got to Albany.
15. What was the matter with you?—I hurt my back.
16. And you say the food in the hospital was very bad?—The hospital food was all right, but the smell was terrible. I was only there a few days when I caught cold, so I left the hospital.
17. What do you mean by a bad smell?—It used to smell like a latrine.
18. Was there a latrine close to the hospital?—Yes, sir, I think there was one just on top.
19. On the other deck?—I think it was the hospital latrine. When I was up there it was in a very bad state.
20. Did the smell come from the latrine?—I do not know where the smell came from. The latrine was just above the hospital on the deck above. You went up some steps from the hospital to it.
21. Was it on the same deck as the hospital?—I would say it was above it.
22. On a different deck altogether?—You went up steps. It was part of the hospital, only you had to go up steps.
23. Was it on the deck above the hospital?—It was not exactly upon the other deck. You went up about nine or ten steps from the hospital. It was only connected with the hospital. As far as I could see, it was above the hospital.
24. On a different deck?—Well, I should say it was above the deck on which the hospital was.
25. What complaint have you to find with the hospital itself?—There was a smell, sir.
26. You said you were in the hospital and it was very bad?—Yes, the smell was. And at night the men were calling for things, and there did not seem to be enough attendants.
27. How many patients were in hospital with you?—I could not say. I did not go over one side.
28. How many attendants were there in the hospital?—I could not say, I am sure.
29. You have sworn the attendance was very bad?—At night, sir.
30. How many patients were there?—I have no idea, sir.
31. How many attendants?—About six or eight.
32. Not more than six or eight?—This is about as many as I could see.
33. We want to know how many attendants were there to prove your statement?—Well, I would not swear to how many were there.
34. You do not know?—I do not know how many patients there were; but at night they used to be calling for drinks, and all sorts—
35. Did the attendants neglect their duty?—No, sir. I should say there were not enough attendants.

\* This evidence was sent to witness to revise, but was not returned.

36. Did the attendants neglect their duty?—No, sir, not those who were there, unless they were supposed to be awake all night; I should say they did then, sir.

37. Did you have enough attendants?—I got up myself the last night to wake the orderly to give a patient a drink.

38. You had to leave the hospital at Albany to buy food?—I went out of the hospital when we got to Albany and bought food, and then went back to my quarters.

39. What was the matter with your back?—I ricked it. It is bad yet.

40. Then, why did you go out of the hospital if the food was good, to go back to your own quarters?—Well, because of the smell.

41. The hospital was worse than your own quarters?—I did not like the smell in the hospital, and I got a terrible bad cold when I was there.

42. Did you leave the hospital because there was neglect?—I left it because I did not like it.

43. Why did you not like it?—Because of the smell.

44. And on no account except that of the smell?—The smell and catching the cold. I caught it two days after going in. It was very draughty there.

45. You say you were mess orderly and you made complaints about the food?—Yes, sir.

46. When was this?—The first five or six days after leaving Durban.

47. And to whom did you complain?—To the officer who came round, sir.

48. What was the nature of the complaint?—About the tea.

49. Tell me the worst cases of complaint—the worst you can think of?—The men were always making complaint.

50. What did you complain of?—One day about the meat; that was the worst complaint.

51. What was that complaint?—That the meat was tainted and that it was not cooked.

52. To whom did you report that?—To the orderly officer, sir.

53. Who was the orderly officer?—I have no idea who it was. I just made a complaint and he went away again.

54. You made a complaint about tainted meat to somebody, but you do not remember to whom it was made?—I just made a complaint, and it was taken no notice of, so I just let it go.

55. Then, when you made complaints you got no redress?—No, sir, not then; we did towards the finish.

56. Well, I wish you could tell me who the officer was; try and remember?—I have no idea. I only know about two officers—those of our own squadron.

57. How did you make the complaint?—The officers asked if we had any complaint, and we said, "Yes, sir." And we showed it to him, and he said he would see what he could do. Those were the words he used.

58. And when the meat was bad you did not get any redress?—Not at first. Towards the end we did; we got tinned meat.

59. How many occasions did you fail to get redress?—I could not say, I am sure.

60. We want to get something specific. We want to find out whether the men were neglected, and unless you can give us something definite we cannot follow up a clue. We want the name of some officer and some occasion when no attention was paid to complaints made?—I do not know the officers, and I do not know the occasion. It was just before I went to the hospital.

61. Was that on one occasion or more?—That was on this occasion of the meat being tainted and badly cooked.

62. What was the next bad case?—The soup, sir. I made a complaint about that, and I made a complaint about the tea.

63. I want you to connect it with some officer on some occasion?—If I did not know the officer I could not tell you who it was.

64. How can we follow it if you cannot give us more precise information? Whom have we to go to? We want a definite statement. Could you identify an officer from his photograph?—No, sir; I do not think I could. We did not take any notice of them.

65. Did you officially complain, or simply grumble?—I should say it was an official complaint, sir.

66. Was any non-commissioned officer present?—I could not say, sir.

67. Was it customary for a non-commissioned officer to go round?—Yes, sir.

68. Did you know your non-commissioned officers?—I could not tell you. I used to take no notice of them.

69. No notice of the officers or the non-commissioned officers, and no notice of the dates?—No, sir.

70. How long did the meat remain tainted: was it tainted during the whole voyage?—Sometimes it was good.

71. After the first week out was the meat tainted?—Yes, sir.

72. After you left Albany was it tainted?—Yes, sir; about twice I noticed it.

73. After you left Albany?—Yes, sir; but I seldom touched it myself.

74. On how many occasions did you observe it?—I should say once or twice.

75. Did you never touch the meat?—Very seldom.

76. I suppose you went down to the meal?—I bought some food of my own at Albany, and, of course, I used to eat that.

77. What food did you buy at Albany?—Some fish and fruit.

78. About how much did you spend?—£1 4s.

79. And you lived on what you bought at Albany all the way to New Zealand?—We used to eat the bread, sir.

80. But nothing else?—Sometimes I used to eat different things—tinned meat for one.

81. Jams, butter?—The jam we used to get once or twice.

82. Not oftener?—I could not say how regular it was; it was about two or three times a week.

83. And the days you did not have jam did you have butter?—Yes, sir.

84. Were you ever obliged to eat bread without butter or jam?—There was once or twice, but it would be the men's own fault. They would be extravagant with it.

85. If they did not have either jam or butter every day it was the men's own fault?—Partly their own fault. There was an occasional day when they would go two meals without it.

86. You say in regard to the sleeping-accommodation that there was not room enough?—No, sir; not room enough for the men to hang their hammocks. They could not all stop in the hammocks after they got in. We all tried to sleep in hammocks when we first came on board.

87. Did they all hang their hammocks on the first night?—There are pegs provided for them, and we hung them; but it was too tight to be comfortable, so some went on the deck and some on the floor.

88. They did manage to hang the hammocks the first night?—They could not sleep, and they used to be tossed out.

89. Did they get all the hammocks up?—We could not get all ours up, not the first night.

90. Why not?—Because there was not room at our table.

91. Was there no room or not enough pegs?—No room.

92. Were there hooks or pegs?—There were pegs all along and across the wall, but we could not hang all the hammocks up.

93. There were hooks, you say, for the hammocks to hang up?—Yes, sir.

94. But they could not hang them up because they were too tight?—Yes, sir.

95. There was not room for the men to sleep after they were hung?—No, sir.

96. But there were enough hooks or pegs to hang all the hammocks?—Not enough at our table. The windsail coming down stopped two or three hammocks. There was no place to hang them.

97. Were there hooks there to hang them on?—Yes, sir.

98. There was a hook for every hammock?—I do not know whether there were quite enough for ours, sir.

99. You say that there were twelve men at your table and only room for seven hammocks?—Well, there were nine or ten hooks, but we could not hang the hammocks up.

100. But there were hooks?—Yes, sir.

101. The blankets, you say, were in a terrible condition?—Yes, sir.

102. Who served yours out?—They were served out with the rest. We had them sent down, and each had two issued out to him.

103. Did you make any complaint when they were issued?—No, sir.

104. Did they look dirty, or what?—Some of them seemed clean, and others seemed dirty.

105. To what extent were they dirty?—There seemed to be vermin in them.

106. Did you make any complaint?—No, sir.

107. When did you first notice the vermin?—The first few days out, sir.

108. You did not draw attention to the vermin when the blankets were first issued to you?—No, sir.

109. Did you look to see if there were vermin in them?—No, sir; we got into them without looking.

110. How many days after you left before you discovered vermin?—About three or four, sir.

111. Had you your own blankets with you at the time as well as those that were served out?—We left ours at Durban, sir.

112. *Colonel Davies.*] How long was it after we left Durban that you went into hospital?—About six or seven days, I should say.

113. It was about the 13th, or something about that date?—About five days before we got to Albany, sir.

114. How long were you with the regiment?—From the time it left Addington, sir.

115. You were with the regiment on the drive?—Yes, sir.

116. Do you not know the names of your officers in the regiment?—I do not know the regiment officers. I know the squadron officers. I only know Colonel Chaytor and Captain Rhodes.

117. Did you know Captain Colbeck?—No, sir.

118. Did you know your own adjutant?—I might have seen him, but I do not know him by sight.

119. Do you know Captain Fookes?—Yes, sir.

120. Do you know Mr. Roberts?—No, sir.

121. Do you know Mr. Street?—No, sir.

122. Do you not know the bandmaster of your regiment?—No, sir.

123. You do not know the officer who used to take so much interest in the band?—No, sir.

124. Do you know Mr. Martin?—No, sir.

125. Do you know Captain Sommerville?—No, sir.

126. Do you know Mr. McNab?—No, sir.

127. Do you know Captain Cameron?—No, sir.

128. Mr. Orbell?—No, sir.

129. Do you know Mr. O'Callaghan?—No, sir.

130. *Surgeon-Major Pearlless.*] Did you go ashore both days at Albany?—Only the second day, sir.

131. Were you able to walk about?—I walked round a little, sir.

132. Did you leave the hospital without the authority of the doctor?—Yes, sir.

133. You went out on your own accord?—Yes, sir. I got permission to go ashore. I never went back to the hospital, sir.

134. Who gave you permission?—Dr. Rogers.

135. Was there always a smell at the hospital?—Not for the first two days. I was pretty bad then. When I was getting better I noticed it.

136. Did you not notice there was a bad smell when the men had to use bed-pans?—I should say the hospital authorities could not help it, sir.

137. *Captain Lewin.*] Did you use the same blankets all the time on board the ship?—Yes, sir. I put a brand on them, and put a brand on my hammock.

138. *Mr. McNab.*] Do you remember if your own accommodation before you went into the hospital was fresher than the hospital? Were the surroundings pleasanter than in the hospital?—I rather liked where I was. It was close to a porthole, and near to a windsail, where there was plenty of air.

139. Were your quarters that you were in fresher and sweeter than the hospital?—I should say they were. There were occasional times when they had to shut the portholes, and it would be a bit stuffy.

140. So you went from your own fresh quarters into quarters that were not so fresh in the hospital, and after you had been two days in the hospital you began then to detect a smell?—Yes, sir.

141. Then, you did not detect it when you went from your own fresh quarters at first?—I was pretty bad. I was suffering with my back, and I was too ill to notice anything for the first two or three days when in hospital.

142. *Colonel Davies.*] You state that you caught cold in the hospital through the draught?—Yes, sir.

143. In the hospital?—Yes, sir; it was about the second day I was in. I was all right until then.

144. And then you say that you slept near a porthole and a windsail?—Yes; but the draught used to come over to my feet, not to my head. I was just inside the hospital-door, and the draught used to come in.

145. You think you caught the cold in the hospital?—I never had a cold until I went into the hospital. It was caught about three days after I went in.

146. *The Chairman.*] Do you know what was the matter with your back?—I ricked it. I fell and they carried me down to the hospital.

147. Were the doctors attentive?—Yes, sir.

148. You had no fault to find with their attention?—No, sir.

Sergeant GEORGE E. BARNES sworn and examined. (No. 31.)

149. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—George Ernest Barnes.

150. Your rank?—Sergeant.

151. What squadron?—H squadron.

152. You desired to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation and other things on board the "Britannic," did you not?—Yes, sir.

153. The Commission would be pleased if you would make a statement embodying the matters you wish to bring before them, and then perhaps we will ask you a few questions?—Regarding the food and accommodation, and promenading and troopers' exercise—

154. You may state your complaint about the food and accommodation first?—Well, I am prepared to answer any questions. I have no complaint to make.

155. What, then, is your opinion about the food and accommodation?—Well, there is no doubt that sometimes the meat was bad and the potatoes were bad; on two or three occasions they were not eatable. But that is on a few occasions; on other occasions it was right enough.

156. When the food was not eatable were complaints made to the officers?—Yes; complaints were made to the officers of the day.

157. Did you ever make any complaint?—No, sir. Of course, in the sergeants' mess we might have got a little better than the rest, although when they got bad meat we got bad meat too; it was the same meat.

158. Did your mess make any complaint at any time?—Not the sergeants' mess.

159. Were you present when any of the men made complaint?—I was orderly sergeant, and heard three complaints made.

160. Do you remember your orderly officer?—Well, no, I could not recall him to mind just at present.

161. Was it before you came to Albany?—Yes, it was, because I was not orderly sergeant afterwards.

162. What was the nature of these complaints?—One was about the tea, and another was about the meat, and another as to the shortness of fish. Fish and tea were issued in the mornings. There was no tea for dinner. I might say the tea was always bad—it was never good. It was always hardly drinkable.

163. These complaints regarding the three things: did the officer take any steps?—Yes.

164. What did he do?—He sent the table orderly up to get more fish in place of it.

165. Regarding the other matters, what did he do?—As for the meat and potatoes, I could not say. He put in a written order, I think, and it was supposed to be rectified; but not being orderly sergeant next day I could not say anything about it.

166. *The Chairman.*] Did he put in a written order for more food?—Yes; for more potatoes and for the meat being bad. He told me that he would put it in the order.

167. *Mr. McNab.*] You state the tea was always bad: what was wrong with it?—I think it was the fault of the cooks, because they used to stew it. It was never made properly. They used to have it made three or four hours before it was used, and whether they mixed the old tea with the fresh I could not say. There were many times I would not drink it. The coffee was always good. You could always get a good drink in the morning.

168. Was the bread good?—Yes, very good bread.

169. What about the biscuits?—There were barrels of biscuits—good biscuits. I think there were as many biscuits as they could possibly want.

170. And they were good?—Yes, good wholesome biscuits.

171. Is there anything in the statement that there was not enough sugar?—No; we always had sugar. Of course, on some of these questions I can only speak for the sergeants' mess.

172. You saw no shortage of sugar?—Not with us.

173. In regard to milk?—There was milk in the tea we got; none otherwise. There was always sufficient milk.

174. Did you hear complaints from the men regarding the sugar or the milk?—I could not say that I did.

175. Do you remember what the potatoes were like that were supplied to the men?—Yes; we had the same potatoes.

176. And were they wholesome?—No; as a rule, they were not. They were eatable most of the time, but there were a few times when they could not be eaten. They seemed to be frost-bitten, or had gone bad in the freezer.

177. Were they frozen potatoes?—They were kept down in the hold. I could not say that they were frozen.

178. Regarding the meat that was issued, was it ever badly cooked?—Oh, yes, often underdone terribly.

179. Was the meat itself at all tainted?—Yes; on two or three occasions it was very much tainted.

180. Do you remember whether that was before you got to Albany or afterwards?—Well, it was tainted before we got to Albany, and whether we got it afterwards I could not say.

181. You remember that Mr. Young, the veterinary surgeon, examined the meat?—No, but I heard about it.

182. You did not know of your own knowledge?—I did not. Things happen on a troopship that, of course, I would not know about.

183. Speaking for yourself about the accommodation, had you sufficient room to swing your hammocks?—Yes. I did not swing a hammock; I slept on a table. I did not sleep more than three times in a hammock.

184. Did you sleep for preference on a table?—Yes, for preference.

185. Do you think throughout the ship there were many men who would prefer the table to the hammock?—Yes; a lot of men used sooner to sleep on the floor in preference to a hammock.

186. Did you hear complaints from men about having to sleep on the floor?—Well, no. A man hears complaints on a troopship every day, because some people are always making complaint.

187. What vessel did you go out in?—In the "Cornwall."

188. Recalling the conditions on the "Cornwall," did you find throughout the voyage any large number of men who might be said to be always growling?—Well, there were always a few complaints; but, as I said before, they were complaints that a man would take no notice of. There was never much growling about food on the "Cornwall."

189. Were there more coming back in the "Britannic"?—Yes, certainly. But there is one thing I should like to say. We had horses to look after on the "Cornwall," and there was only half the number of men on board. When a man got up on deck he had horses to look after, and had not so much time to growl.

190. If a man could be given work to do throughout the day it would have the effect of reducing the number of growlers?—Yes, to a certain extent.

191. I suppose, then, where little work is done it generally causes men to complain of their surroundings?—Yes.

192. Do you think in the "Britannic" that any work could have been given to that large body of men to occupy their attention and their muscles, say, from midday onwards?—Not very well. There was no room. But a man could get a certain amount of exercise if he wanted it; but as for giving them work, there was absolutely no room.

193. You think that the idleness from midday onwards was unavoidable?—Yes, sir.

194. Were you ever in the hospital coming across?—I was down there on two or three occasions—not in the hospital myself, but just to see a friend.

195. Did he ever make any complaint to you about his treatment?—No; they seemed to get very well treated by the attendants. By the way they spoke, there were complaints about not being sufficient room in the hospital.

196. You have no cause to complain yourself about it?—I was not well coming over, but I was not bad enough to go to the hospital.

197. There was no man you knew of your own knowledge to be ill that was not in the hospital?—Well, no. I did hear of one case, but I could not mention his name.

198. Do you remember when the blankets were issued to you?—Yes.

199. Were the blankets that were issued to you clean?—They looked clean. They seemed to have been newly washed.

200. Were they not clean?—I could not swear as to mine. I had mine only one night. I lost them. I slept on my overcoat all the way over. There is no doubt that some of them were not clean, but whether they were clean when they got them, or whether they were made unclean afterwards, I could not say.

201. I suppose a number of men came on board lousy?—Oh, yes, certainly. Some men were lousy on the veldt, and they got no change, and I fail to see how they could come on board not lousy.

202. You say you lost your blankets and hammocks?—Yes.
203. That would imply that it would be quite possible for a man to get a blanket issued to him, then to contaminate it, and perhaps another man would get hold of the blanket and hammock and get contaminated too?—Yes, certainly.
204. So that it is quite possible that some men who were filthy would contaminate a large number of men on board?—Certainly, that is right; but at the same time my own opinion is that the ship was lousy before we got on board her.
205. Do you mean the ship or blankets?—I could not say which, but there are certain parts of a ship where lice can live. I went below myself and was lying about, and I got lousy.
206. Regarding the ventilation, were you ever much through the different decks when the men were asleep?—Yes; I was through the lot of them—that is, our own regiments in the bow of the ship.
207. Was it on the lowest deck?—We were on the top and second troop-decks.
208. Did you notice whether the ventilation was good or inferior?—The ventilation on the bottom deck was very stuffy at times. I heard complaints when men came up in the mornings saying how stuffy it was down below.
209. On the top deck the ventilation was fairly good?—Yes.
210. It was not so good down below?—Not by a long way. It was not at all what you would call good on a troopship even.
211. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you hear any complaints during the voyage about the officers not paying proper attention to the men?—Well, no; I have heard complaints, but complaints that I would not speak about.
212. You never had any formal complaints made to you?—No.
213. Do you think yourself that the officers took that interest in their men that they ought to have done?—Well, speaking for my squadron officers, they did; they took every interest in us. I was only on duty twice coming over. I was not well all the time. I was troubled with diarrhœa, and there were things that passed that I did not take any notice of. But I think H squadron had the best officers any men could wish for.
214. Do you think the ventilation could have been improved?—Well, they had windsails.
215. How many?—I think, one windsail, running right down to the lower deck.
216. Was there any room to put more?—Yes; if I am not mistaken, there were two put in each hold. I would not swear to it though.
217. Did you ever see much drunkenness on board?—No, not a great lot.
218. In neither end of the ship?—No. I used to go to both ends of the ship occasionally of an evening for a walk.
219. *The Chairman.*] Could a man buy liquor from the stewards, or cooks, or anybody?—Well, I never bought it myself, and I do not think it would be my place to say that other men bought it.
220. You must answer the question if you can?—Well, there may have been a certain amount of liquor on board. Any drunkenness was caused by the beer that they had at dinner. Some men got more than their share.
221. Was any liquor bought from the officials of the ship?—I could not say. I understood there was whisky in the fore-castle. I never bought it myself.
222. Did you ever see any whisky?—Yes.
223. When was that?—Before we got to Albany.
224. And where was it obtained?—Well, I could not swear to that.
225. Do you imagine it was from the stewards?—It is possible it might have been. But I did not get it myself, so I could not say where it was got.
226. You did see people with whisky that had been brought on board?—Yes, I have seen whisky on board, but not to any great extent.
227. Do you believe that it would have been ship's stores?—I could not say as to that.
228. It was before you arrived at Albany?—Yes.
229. When you had diarrhœa were you in the hospital?—No.
230. Did you go for medical advice?—No, sir, I did not.
231. You had nothing to do with the hospital?—Well, I was in the hospital visiting.
232. You were not there as a patient?—No.
233. *Mr. McNab.*] Although you say you saw some whisky, you did not see any drunkenness?—Not by the whisky. The drunkenness was caused through the beer.
234. The men who did not take the beer gave their allowance to the others?—Yes, sir.
235. *Colonel Davies.*] Did you see much drunkenness on board?—No, I did not.
236. About half a dozen cases during the voyage or not?—Well, perhaps of a dinner-time you would see a man a bit muddled—you could tell through his speech.
237. You never saw a man rolling about the decks?—No, certainly not.
238. You would have reported it at once if you had?—Yes, sir, if he had been one of my own troops.
239. You never came back in a troopship before?—No, sir.
240. You say that men are more contented going over when they have got horses to look after?—Yes.
241. You think that is quite natural?—Yes.
242. Do you think it would make them more contented if their officers went out of their way to make work for them?—No, it would not.
243. That is a different thing?—Yes.
244. They realised that they had to look after horses, and they were contented?—Yes, sir.
245. If they were paraded and put through work in a limited space for the sake of giving them work you do not think that would tend to make them contented?—I do not think I would like it myself. I would sooner have my own exercises.

246. Speaking for your own squadron, as far as you are acquainted with the officers, you have never known of any instances of their neglecting to look after proper complaints that were made?—No, I have not, speaking for my own officers. I am positive on that point.

247. Those officers you know best?—Yes. I think that is the general opinion of the squadron.

248. You have never heard of your own squadron officers or anybody else making a complaint to any of my staff officers that was not attended to?—I could not say that I have.

249. *Captain Lewin.*] Had you any opportunity of observing in what state the men were when they came on board as regards lice?—Well, yes. I was travelling with them on the veldt. There was a certain amount lousy, and others were clean. I think I myself was clean, but I might have had one or two on me. A man will get them in five minutes and never know it.

250. Do you think the majority were lousy, more or less?—I would not say the majority of the men were lousy, because we had a certain time at Klerksdorp and the men had a chance to get clean clothes. Some of the men did not change their clothes there. Some men would always be lousy.

251. There was an interchange of hammocks?—Oh, yes.

252. Men took any hammocks they chose?—Yes; you would have your own one night and afterwards perhaps somebody-else's.

253. There were no complaints for the first few days about lice in blankets?—I never heard any.

254. *Mr. McNab.*] You were an engine-driver?—Yes, sir.

Trooper FARROW sworn and examined. (No. 32.)

255. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your name?—Harry Farrow.

256. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

257. What squadron?—E.

258. What rank did you hold?—Trooper.

259. What were you before you joined the troop?—Shepherd.

260. We understand that you desire to make some statement as to the general treatment on board the "Britannic." Will you tell us, please, what you have to complain about?—The sleeping-accommodation was very bad. The blankets that were received at Durban were clean enough, but they had vermin in them. We had no place that we could use for a bath at all. We had no bath two days out from Durban till the time we reached New Zealand. The food was not very good. Frequent complaints were made, and they were not taken much notice of.

261. We want you to swear to what you yourself saw taking place?—Yes, sir.

262. Is there anything else?—No, sir.

263. You said complaints were frequently made: did you make any complaint?—Yes, sir.

264. To whom?—To the orderly officer.

265. What was the name of the orderly officer to whom you made complaint?—I could not mention any orderly officer.

266. You say you yourself complained: could you identify an orderly officer to whom you made this complaint if you were shown his photograph?—I doubt whether I could, sir. I did not take much notice of the officers, except those of E squadron, and it was not any of them.

267. What was the nature of your complaint?—It was the meat and the stew. We did not get a roast the whole time coming across. It was all boiled meat, and oftentimes it was not properly cooked.

268. Well, on this particular occasion when you yourself made a complaint, what was it about?—The meat not being cooked.

269. Was any attempt made to rectify it?—Yes; they went up to the cookhouse and they got another lot, just about the same, not cooked properly.

270. You consider this the fault of the cooks?—Yes, sir.

271. Was there anything wrong with the meat beyond its being uncooked?—No, sir.

272. As far as your own officers were concerned they endeavoured to rectify it by getting other stew in place of it?—Yes, sir.

273. Do you remember any other occasion when you yourself made a complaint?—I only made one complaint. Several complaints were made at the table coming across.

274. But not by yourself?—It was the mess orderly's duty to make complaints always.

275. And when you complained to the mess orderly he was supposed to take it further on?—Yes, sir.

276. Do you know of any case where a complaint was made to the mess orderly and he did not take it on to his superior officer?—No, I do not.

277. When food was unfit to be eaten, do you know of any case where no notice was taken and they did not get it remedied?—No, sir.

278. So far as you know, when complaint was made to the officers they endeavoured to get the ship's people to make it right?—Yes, sir.

279. Do you think your officers could have done any more for you—I mean your own troop officers?—Well, yes; the food, on a whole, coming across was not good.

280. Did your own officers try to improve it, or did they simply let it go along without making any attempt to better it?—I do not know. I could not say whether they tried to rectify it or not.

281. Do you know of any case where you were short of food and the matter was brought under the notice of the officers and you were never given any more food?—No, sir.

282. Do you know any case where bad meat was given out and you were not given other meat in lieu of that bad meat?—No, sir.

283. About the sleeping-accommodation, where there many men sleeping on deck or on the tables who could have slept in hammocks?—Yes, sir.



284. Was every hook, as far as you know, taken up?—Not every hook every night. At our particular table there was room for about seven or eight to hang their hammocks, but there were twelve at the table.

285. You do not think that, had every man desired to sleep in a hammock, there was room in the ship to swing them all?—No, sir.

286. Was it very stuffy down below?—Yes, sir, very.

287. What deck were you on?—The upper troop-deck.

288. And it was stuffy in the upper troop-deck?—Yes, of a night. We had to keep the port-holes closed.

289. How many windsails had you?—There was only one windsail, and that went down to the lower troop-deck.

290. You had none in your deck at all?—No, sir.

291. Was there sufficient room to put another windsail?—Yes, sir.

292. And there was only the one there, as far as you know, during the whole voyage?—Yes, during the whole voyage.

293. You said there was no bath accommodation—there was no chance of getting a bath during the whole voyage?—Yes, sir.

294. Was there any canvas bath?—For the first two days. After that there was no sign of it. The men started painting round the side of the ship which held the canvas bath and they took it away.

295. And you never saw it during the whole voyage after that?—No, sir.

296. Did you hear any one suggest that it should be allowed to remain there?—No, sir.

297. Do you think it would have been in daily use had it been left there?—Yes, sir.

298. And you had no other place or means of taking a bath or a wash?—We had wash-bowls for the ordinary morning wash.

299. But that was the only thing you had?—Yes, sir.

300. Did you find much difficulty in getting a wash in the mornings?—Yes, sir; every morning there was a big crowd there. You had to wait your turn for a quarter of an hour at least.

301. Do you think that every man could have got a wash had he wanted to during the hours the water was on?—Yes, sir.

302. If he got up at reveille he would have time to wash before 8 o'clock?—Yes, sir.

303. So that you do not think there was an insufficiency of water provided for washing?—No, sir.

304. You generally complain about the food?—Yes; the coffee was undrinkable at any time. I always drank water.

305. Do you think that it was owing to the coffee itself?—No; it was the way it was made. They must have used dirty water.

306. Now, the meat, taken as a whole: was it good, bad, or indifferent?—It was not good. I would not eat the meat, except the bully-beef, we got.

307. You never ate the other stuff?—No, sir.

308. How were the potatoes?—They were frostbitten sometimes.

309. And on those occasions you did not eat them?—No, sir.

310. Was anything else given in place of them?—No, sir.

311. You got nothing else?—No, sir.

312. Was the butter all right?—It was not.

313. It was not good?—No, sir.

314. What was bad about the butter?—It was always salt.

315. Was that your only fault with it? Was the quality all right?—The quality was not too good.

316. Was there sufficient of it issued?—Well, no; we used to run short of butter. We got butter one day, and then we would get jam for two days, and while having the jam we always ran out of butter, and jam also.

317. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean that they would not give you enough to eat butter and jam together?—Yes, sir.

318. *Mr. Millar.*] I suppose you mean that the butter they gave you would not last three days?—Yes, sir.

319. But they gave you jam during the other two days?—Yes, sir.

320. Did your officers neglect you in any way during the voyage?—No, sir.

321. Did you see any drunkenness on board the ship?—Well, I have seen one or two cases, but it was seldom.

322. Did you see what you would call any quantity of drunkenness on board?—No, sir.

323. Was there much gambling going on?—Yes, sir.

324. All through the ship?—Just the forward part of it—just the fore-castle.

325. *Mr. McNab.*] Do you remember how many men used the bath when it was on deck?—No, sir; there were a good many.

326. How many men would get into that bath in one day? Would a hundred or two hundred or what?—Oh, yes, a hundred or two.

327. Did you get any rough weather after leaving Albany?—No, sir.

328. Then, men could very easily have got up on deck at any time after leaving Albany?—Yes, sir.

329. Then, men should not complain about not being able to go up on deck on account of the decks being so wet after leaving Albany?—We did not get rough weather, but the wind would send the spray over the decks and make them wet.

330. Did the weather get worse after you left Albany?—It did not. I did not notice it. We always used to have a very cold wind.

331. When did you first of all notice that cold wind on the deck?—The whole way from Africa—as soon as we left Durban. Two days out we got a cold wind.
332. Did the men ever complain about going from the close hold down below out on to the deck?—They complained amongst themselves, never to any officers.
333. Do you think you would have liked to go in a big open bath on the deck after coming from the hold?—Yes if they had kept it up. I myself like cold water, and I would have bathed the whole way through.
334. Did you have a bath every day it was there?—Yes, sir.
335. When it was taken away you did not complain to any of the officers?—No, sir.
336. Did any man of your squadron by any means communicate through an officer, or through anybody, with Colonel Davies that he wanted the bath kept up on the deck?—No, I never heard of it, sir.
337. Was there gambling in your own squadron?—It was in all squadrons.
338. And your own had a share in it?—Yes; but it was a very small share that it had.
339. Was it extensive on the vessel?—It was extensive in the fore part of the ship. It was always done on deck. I did not take much notice who was gambling.
340. Do you suggest to the Commission that men would lose large sums of money by the gambling, or that it was simply a matter of a few shillings?—Only a matter of a few shillings.
341. There was no extensive gambling that would resolve itself into practically robbing the men of their earnings?—No, sir.
342. You knew that Colonel Davies had issued strict orders forbidding it. The order is as follows: “8th July.—Gambling in any form is forbidden, and steps must be taken by officers commanding units to see that this order is strictly enforced”?—Yes, sir.
343. You were all Canterbury men in the E squadron?—Yes, sir.
344. And all the officers that were put over you were Canterbury men?—Yes, sir.
345. There were no strangers brought in?—No, sir.
346. And you have no complaints to make against your officers?—No, sir.
347. *Colonel Davies.*] You say that there was a bath the first two days out from Durban?—Yes, sir.
348. And after that there was no bath?—Yes, sir.
349. Did you ever look for the bath?—Yes; for the first day or two.
350. You went and had a bath for two days?—Yes.
351. And then you went and looked?—I looked next day, and then I went up about a week afterwards.
352. Supposing I tell you that that bath was taken away on account of the rough weather after a couple of days and that it was put back again afterwards, would you believe it?—No, sir.
353. If I tell you that I have seen that bath there since full of water—that is, since the first week out from Durban?—I do not believe it. I would not disbelieve you, sir, but I did not see it full of water again on the voyage after two days out.
354. Well, I tell you now very positively that I have seen it after the first week out: do you think I am mistaken, or do you think I am telling a lie?—I must be mistaken.
355. Did you ever hear of a man applying for a bath and not getting it?—No, sir.
356. Did you ever hear of the arrangement that my staff officer had made with the chief officer of the ship that the men could get that bath whenever they liked by giving an hour's notice?—I did not.
357. That was the arrangement I made with the ship, and therefore if a man had applied for that bath he could have got it?—Yes, sir.
358. *Captain Lewin.*] Did that vessel roll much?—Yes, sir.
359. And where that bath was it was pretty cold and bleak?—Yes, sir, it was.
360. We wanted all the space we could for shelter for the men?—Yes, sir.
361. Do you think, now, if the bath had been put there that with the rolling of the vessel it would have been safe for a man to bathe in?—Yes, some days.
362. I mean in the bad weather?—No, not in the bad weather.
363. You are a shepherd, are you?—Yes, sir.
364. Have you ever been mustering?—Yes, sir.
365. Been with a mustering gang?—Yes, sir.
366. Did those musters ever sleep in a whare together?—No, sir.
367. They slept outside?—Yes, sir.
368. Have you ever slept in a room in which several people slept at the same time?—Yes, sir.
369. Did you find that room stuffy?—Yes, sir.
370. Do you think it would be possible to find any room you can think of in which you could put the same number of men in that were sleeping down on your deck and it would not be rather stuffy in the morning?—No, sir.
371. Well, taking into consideration the number of men down there, and the windsails and air-exhausts, do you not think that that deck might have been a great deal worse than it was?—It might have been worse. We had no windsail of any sort on our deck.
372. You were on the upper deck?—Yes.
373. The 'tween deck?—Yes.
374. Do you know that there were air-exhausts working down below so that the hot air should not rise up to your deck?—No, sir.
375. Do you know there was a windsail taken through your deck to the lower deck?—Yes, sir.
376. Do you not think that the very fact of that being brought down to that lower deck would improve the conditions of your deck?—It would only send the hot air up.
377. It would bring down cool air, would it not?—Yes, sir.

Sergeant JOHN GRIFFITHS sworn and examined. (No. 33.)

378. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name, please?—John Griffiths.
379. What contingent were you with?—The Eighth.
380. What was your rank?—Hospital sergeant, sir.
381. Were you on board the “Britannic”?—Yes, sir.
382. Did you come here to make complaints or to give evidence, or what is your position?—I came here to be examined.
383. *Mr. McNab.*] As hospital sergeant, what were your duties?—To look after the hospital, and to see that the orders of the medical officers were carried out.
384. Did you have that duty during the whole of the voyage?—Yes, sir.
385. Did your duties relate to the hospital only, and nothing else?—The hospital only, sir.
386. Had you charge of the orderlies in the hospital?—Yes, sir.
387. How many orderlies had you under you?—Fourteen.
388. Had you this fourteen all the way across, or did you increase the number?—We increased the number.
389. What did it commence with?—There were eight.
390. And then you rose to fourteen?—Yes, sir. I was not counting myself in the fourteen; I made fifteen.
391. Do you remember the time when the hospital had to be increased in size?—Yes, sir—the day after we left Melbourne.
392. Well, up to that date how many orderlies had you?—It was about Albany when we increased the number of orderlies.
393. At Albany how many orderlies had you—I would like to know particularly how many you had at Albany?—Ten, sir.
394. Do you remember how many patients you had?—We had about sixteen there.
395. You had one orderly to every one and a half patients?—Yes, sir.
396. Do you remember Trooper Gardiner being in the hospital?—No, sir, I do not. We had so many patients I do not remember their names.
397. By whose orders was it that the number of orderlies was to be increased at any time?—By my own request to the surgeon-major. I appealed to the surgeon-major for more orderlies, and got them.
398. Did you ever appeal to the surgeon-major and not get them?—No, sir.
399. You were perfectly satisfied yourself that there were plenty of orderlies?—There were not plenty. There were no more trained men. They used to get in each other’s road.
400. With the men that were available you would say that you took full advantage of the men that were available for hospital orderlies?—Yes, sir.
401. And, so far as the hospital orderlies were concerned, do I understand you to say that you do not think you could have increased the efficiency more than you did?—No, sir.
402. There was never any limitation put upon you in regard to making an appointment?—No, sir.
403. When you arrived at Wellington here you then had fourteen orderlies?—Yes, sir.
404. Were they able to cope with the work that was on hand then?—Some of the orderlies were detailed off for duties which had no reference to the hospital, such as bringing down food.
405. Were they able to cope with the work right up to the day when you had the maximum number in the hospital?—They coped with the work until the measles broke out.
406. What date was that when the measles broke out?—It was the date of our leaving Melbourne.
407. You do not think you could have increased the efficiency of the staff?—No, sir. Had we had more down there it would have been useless.
408. What was your previous experience in connection with superintending an hospital?—Bearer-company work in Nelson, sir. I had some experience, too, in the work with the Second Contingent.
409. Did any of the men in the hospital complain to you about the attendance?—No, sir, not until the measles broke out.
410. Then, what was the nature of their complaints?—They would complain if their wants were not immediately attended to.
411. Naturally, I suppose sick men are impatient?—Yes, sir, very much so.
412. You had a number of pneumonia patients?—Yes, sir.
413. I suppose these men were always crying out for something to drink?—Yes, sir. Pneumonia patients were always attended to first. They had nothing to complain of. They never complained to me at all.
414. You were satisfied that the best was done that could be done with the men in the hospital?—Yes, sir.
415. And that you were never restricted in your applications for orderlies?—No, sir.
416. In regard to the food sent down to the hospital, was it satisfactory?—Yes, sir, in every way. Our food was cooked in the saloon galley, and we got everything we wanted.
417. Did you ever hear any man in the hospital complain about some peculiar smell in the hospital?—No, sir.
418. You never heard that complaint before?—No, sir.
419. *Mr. Millar.*] Do you remember Trooper Brown being in the hospital?—No, sir; I can remember no Trooper Brown. We had a Bugler Brown in the hospital, but that might not be the one.
420. I mean Trooper Brown that was sent to Somes Island?—I do not remember.
421. Had you any very serious cases upon arrival in Wellington which were sent to hospital?—Yes, they were serious, but by no means dangerous. We did not consider them so then.

422. You do not know whether Trooper Brown was there or not?—I could not say.
423. Did you see those serious cases that were sent ashore?—No, sir.
424. Did they leave the hospital on board without your seeing them?—They left the hospital the morning after.
425. Without your seeing them?—Yes, sir.
426. Who was in charge of the hospital whilst you were away? When did you leave?—I left the hospital the night before.
427. Who was in charge of the hospital when you left?—The surgeon-major left Captain Eccles in charge, sir.
428. You cannot give me any information about this Trooper Brown?—No, sir.
429. Whose duty was it to see that a man was taken into the hospital who was marked for the hospital?—That was left to the surgeon-major or the Health Officer who marked him.
430. Supposing a man had been marked for admission to the hospital, whose duty was it to see that the man went into the hospital?—Mine, sir.
431. Do you know of cases where men were marked and not taken into the hospital at once?—Never, sir. They were taken into the hospital as soon as they were marked. They might have been allowed to get their kits.
432. If there is evidence given that two men were marked for the hospital both suffering from the measles and the rash plainly visible and that one remained the whole night with his corps, would that have been through neglect on your part?—No, sir, that would not.
433. We have evidence that two men were marked for the hospital and one was taken in, and the other, it was stated, was left all night: do you remember those cases?—No, sir; every man who reported himself to me was taken in.
434. Have you any knowledge at what date the hospital accommodation was fully occupied?—The hospital was never full until the night before we got to Wellington.
435. Does that mean the increased accommodation also?—Yes.
436. But prior to increasing the accommodation, have you any recollection of the hospital ever being full so that you would have to refuse to take a patient in?—No, sir.
437. Then, from Durban to Melbourne any one who was marked for hospital could have been taken in?—Yes, sir.
438. After leaving Melbourne the measles broke out and developed rapidly?—Yes, sir.
439. You then put up increased accommodation?—Yes, sir.
440. You say up to the day before you arrived in Wellington you would not have refused any patient who was marked for hospital?—Yes, sir.
441. Well, now, if this other sworn evidence has been given that this man after being marked for hospital was allowed to remain among the men all night to sleep, you say there was room in the hospital to have taken him in?—Yes, sir.
442. There would be no neglect on your part?—Most decidedly not, if the man did not report himself.
443. How were you made acquainted of the fact that a man was marked for the hospital?—Simply by his appearance at the hospital. Of course, if the man did not report himself to me I could not take him in.
444. If a doctor marked a man having an infectious disease that man could hang about as long as he liked unless he went to the hospital of his own free will?—Most decidedly not.
445. Whose duty was it to see that he went into the hospital?—That was the man's own duty to come down to the hospital.
446. If that man did not like to go into the hospital, although being marked as having an infectious disease, who would put him in the hospital?—It all depends on what time he was reported. If he was reported at the sick-parade he would be taken to the hospital at once; but at any other time should that man happen to go up and simply report himself privately to the doctor, the doctor would give him a slip to take him into the hospital. I could not take him in unless.
447. If a man were marked for the hospital on the morning of the day and did not appear at the hospital until the next day would you think it was dangerous?—Most decidedly not. A man would have been an ass if he did not report that he was marked for hospital.
448. If we have sworn evidence that two men were marked for the hospital both suffering from measles and that in one case the measles were so clearly developed that anybody could see it and that man slept with his messmates that night, do you think somebody neglected his duty?—No, sir, I do not; I cannot see it at all.
449. Then, you do not think it was any one's duty to see that a man went into the hospital until that man himself came to the hospital?—Of course, that is rather a mixed question.
450. We have had evidence that two men were marked to go to the hospital; one went in, and the other was permitted to remain all night, and in further cross-questioning it was stated that the reason he was not admitted to the hospital was because there was no room. You say there was room until the day before you arrived in Wellington?—Yes, sir.
451. If such took place it was not because there was no accommodation in the hospital?—No.
452. You say the quality of the food was good, sergeant?—Yes, sir.
453. You had no complaint at all?—No, sir, not in reference to the food.
454. And the only complaint you had about the want of attendance was simply that they were not attended to promptly enough in some instances?—Yes, sir, that was the only cause of complaint.
455. *The Chairman.*] What was the custom, sergeant, in the case of a man who was taken ill in the afternoon: did he go up to the doctor?—He could go up at any time to the doctor. He could go up at all times. The doctor raised no point about that.

456. Then, after he had been examined by the doctor and discovered to be a case for the hospital, what would be the next step?—He would just simply say, "Accept this man for the hospital."

457. Did he write that?—Yes, and handed it to the man.

458. But supposing the man kept that written document in his possession, and did not go to the hospital, how soon would his absence be missed? How often was the hospital visited by a doctor?—It was visited at regular hours during the day by the officers. His absence would never be missed unless he reported himself.

459. Do you think it is probable that a man who had received a written order from the doctor for the hospital could be three or four hours out of the hospital without that being discovered?—No, sir.

460. We have had complaints that there was a bad smell in the neighbourhood of the hospital from a latrine? Was there any latrine near the hospital?—There was a hospital latrine above, but it was perfectly clean.

461. Did it have an entirely different current of air pervading it?—It was a clean latrine, and well looked after.

462. Was it a hospital latrine?—Yes.

463. Was it part of your duty to see to that latrine?—Yes, sir.

464. You visited it?—Yes, sir.

465. More than once a day?—Yes, sir.

466. Did you ever see it foul?—No, sir; I took particular pains to see that it was kept clean.

467. Then, an assertion that it was foul would be incorrect?—Yes, sir.

468. Was there ever a bad smell about the hospital?—I never noticed it, and never heard of it. No complaint was ever made to me about the smell.

469. Were there any nurses on board the ship?—Yes, sir.

470. Were they employed in the hospital?—No, sir.

471. Were they on duty?—I could not say, sir.

472. They never were in the hospital?—One of the nurses visited the hospital between Albany and Melbourne.

473. That was in an unofficial capacity?—Yes, sir; just as a visitor.

474. Were their services ever asked for?—No, sir.

475. And they left the ship—where?—Melbourne.

476. Then, up to the time of their leaving the ship there was no urgent necessity for their services?—No, sir.

477. Have you studied hygiene at all?—I have not made a particular study of it.

478. You cannot give us any information as to the cause of the outbreak of pneumonia?—No, sir; I could give no professional evidence on that point.

479. Have you any idea how it could have been prevented?—No, sir, not under the circumstances.

480. Do you think it could have been prevented on board the steamer?—Well, I can only say no, it could not be prevented.

481. Do you think the ventilation on the deck the hospital was on was as good as it might be?—Yes, sir: it was better than any other part of the ship. It was well ventilated.

482. Do you think it could have been improved?—No, I do not.

483. Do you think it would have been advisable to improve it?—No, sir; I saw no improvement that could be made.

484. Were you through the troop-decks at all?—Yes, sir.

485. How was the ventilation there?—I never took particular notice of the ventilation, sir. It was not as good as the hospital. We had particularly good ventilation there.

486. Do you think there was any neglect of ordinary precautions about the ventilation on the "Britannic"?—I did not take particular notice.

487. Were you overworked yourself?—Not exactly, sir.

488. And you had as much as you could do?—Yes, sir, I was kept busy.

489. And on the arrival of the troops at Wellington was the hospital visited by the Health Officers, or by any one from the shore?—Yes, sir.

490. Did they make any remark about the appearance of the hospital?—No, sir.

491. No complaint was made by the health authorities as to the condition of the hospital?—No, sir.

492. Do you suppose they were satisfied with the condition?—I should suppose they were satisfied.

493. *Colonel Davies.*] You have seen me going into the hospital every morning?—Yes, sir.

494. And you heard me say that it was the best part of the ship and that it was remarkably well ventilated?—Yes, sir.

495. *Surgeon-Major Pearlless.*] When the measles broke out there was no necessity for more orderlies?—No, sir.

496. Do you think untrained orderlies would have been of any real use in nursing the sick men?—No, sir; they would be only a hindrance.

497. If a man during the day was sent to the hospital by the doctor he would take a check to you?—Yes, sir.

498. Would he not later on be seen by that doctor and his treatment written out?—Yes, sir.

499. If he was not there when the doctor came down they would find out?—The medical officer might forget.

500. I am talking about a man that would be sent during the day: would not that doctor go down soon after and write out his treatment?—Yes, sir.

501. There were two wards?—Yes, sir.

502. Until the measles broke out all the serious cases went in one ward?—Yes, sir.

503. Did I tell you before the anchor was put down that the Health Officers told me that they would take complete charge of the sick directly we came alongside the wharf and see to their transshipment?—Yes, sir.

504. You were sick in the hospital yourself the last two nights?—Yes, sir.

Pay-Sergeant OLIVER sworn and examined. (No. 34.)

505. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name?—William Arnot Hill Oliver.

506. What contingent were you in?—The Eighth.

507. What squadron?—I was attached to No. 2 regiment on the staff.

508. Were you on board the “*Britannic*”?—Yes, sir.

509. Are you here to volunteer your evidence, or have you been subpoenaed?—I was subpoenaed yesterday.

510. What can you speak about?—I would not care to make a statement. I would sooner that you questioned me.

511. Did you come here with a complaint or not?—Well, I do not think I have complaints altogether. The chief object of my coming here on this occasion was that men had been complaining, and I thought that they might be rather strong in their complaints, and I think I have something to say as well as they have.

512. If you have come here to make a complaint we should like you to do so, so that we will know what to ask you about. In regard to the food, what about that?—Well, the chief complaint was about the meat.

513. You might speak from your own knowledge, not from hearsay?—The complaints in regard to the cooking of it: well, I must say that on several occasions it was not properly cooked, but when that was the case bully-beef was served out immediately after. I think it was the Gear Company's of New Zealand. And there was any quantity of that; and, then, again, when the meat was not good, which was very seldom, there was any quantity of good bread-and-butter, and when there was not cheese there was always jam, and I think any ordinary man ought to have been able to make a good meal from it.

514. Then, speaking generally, do you think the meat supplied to the men was wholesome?—Yes, I do. Of course, there were a few exceptions when the meat was badly undercooked, and then there was another case about some fish being unwholesome, but I cannot speak about that myself, just from hearsay. I did not touch it myself, as I am not partial to fish.

515. Generally, your report as to the food is that it was not perfect, but was on the whole wholesome?—That is so, sir.

516. What about the supply of water?—The reveille was sounded every morning. I do not suppose the non-commissioned officers in the boat were so very particular about rousing the men immediately up to time. If they were late they lost their chance of washing; if they were up promptly they got their wash.

517. If you turned out shortly after reveille was there time for every man to get a wash?—Yes, there was.

518. And water for them to wash in?—You might have to put up with second water towards the last, but if you went up early you got fresh water.

519. The mornings you went up early how many men were waiting to get a wash—was there basin accommodation for everybody?—You might have to wait until one man washed. If you were pushing you could get in smartly, but you might wait five minutes.

520. But if he was early he could get a wash in five minutes?—Oh, yes. But the fact is that as the journey got on they seemed rather reluctant to wash—many of them.

521. Was a man given an opportunity of getting a bath?—No, we had not an opportunity of getting a bath after the first two or three days. The weather then was agreeable, but afterwards it got cold and wet, and I do not think any one would have cared to take that bath.

522. Could they have got the hose put on them?—Oh, yes; if a man wanted a bath he could have got it when the decks were being hosed.

523. And the drinking-water, how was that?—Oh, of course, there was no waste about that; but you could always get a drink.

524. Do you know anything about the latrines?—Yes. I went over in the “*Cornwall*,” and the latrines on the “*Britannic*” were a long way better than those on the “*Cornwall*.” In fact, no one could say anything about the latrines.

525. Were they kept clean or were they allowed to get dirty?—They were kept very clean, and washed out every morning. In fact, I never saw the latrines that any man need be at all frightened to go there.

526. Were your quarters forward or aft?—Forward.

527. And you do not know anything about the latrines aft?—There were orders out that each regiment was to use its own.

528. You can only speak of the latrines forward?—Yes.

529. Were they often awash with filth on the deck?—On account of the men throwing paper into the trough the receptacle for letting the water away would get blocked. I have often taken the paper out with a piece of wire to free it. When they were blocked the basins would fill. It was only a little water, and perhaps a little urine.

530. Were they constantly dirty of evenings?—No; it just depended if the sieve had been cleaned.

531. Was a man able to go in comfort of an evening, or was it generally filthy?—It was never filthy; there might be a little water on the floor.

532. How deep have you seen it on the floor?—Never more than half an inch.

533. Have you ever seen the gratings awash?—No; I do not think we had gratings there at all.

534. You never saw it an inch deep?—I have seen it that depth against the wall.

535. All over?—No.

536. Then, you say that the latrines were better on the "Britannic" than on the "Cornwall"?—Yes, very, very much better. I do not think I ever had to wait on the "Britannic."

537. Then, in regard to the accommodation of the men?—I did not sleep down in the hold. I often went down there for perhaps two hours.

538. Were you ever down after 8 in the evening?—Yes.

539. How was the atmosphere?—On account of the dampness of the atmosphere and the sea that was running the portholes had to be closed. I would not have minded sleeping down there myself; but I have slept in purer atmospheres.

540. Are you able to give an opinion as to whether the ventilation could be improved or not?—It could not. Taking the ship as it was, the ventilation could not have been better, because they had windsails there, and whenever the sea would permit the portholes were opened. I think every attempt was made to keep the holds as fresh as they could possibly be.

541. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—I was grain-salesman at the National Mortgage Company at Gore.

542. You were never with any other contingent but the Eighth?—I have had a little Volunteering experience before. I was never on a troopship.

543. Have you been on board ship much?—I have been to Australia, and I have been a good deal round the New Zealand coast, and I have done a good deal of yachting and boating.

544. *Mr. Millar.*] You consider that the ventilation could not have been improved?—I think not. As far as I know, it could not have been improved.

545. How many windsails were down that forehold?—There was always one.

546. Which went to the lower deck?—Yes, it went below the deck I was on.

547. You were in the upper troop-deck?—Yes, sir.

548. Was there room for more than one windsail?—No; because one side of the entrance to the hold was always closed, so that it would not permit of another being put down.

549. Was there sufficient room in your companion-way to put another windsail down had it been desired?—Well, I would not like to say yes or no, because I never took particular notice.

550. You only know there was only one windsail?—I know there was only one.

551. You would not contradict an officer who said there might have been twelve?—I would, because I know there would not have been room for twelve.

552. I mean throughout the ship?—I do not think there would be twelve.

553. Generally speaking, had you any fault to find with the way the officers looked after the treatment of the men?—None whatever.

554. Did you ever hear complaints by the troopers? Did you hear complaints from the men that their officers were neglecting them?—No. The men complained in regard to the food, but the officers tried to rectify anything that went wrong with it.

Trooper H. E. EAST sworn and examined. (No. 35.)

555. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your name, please?—Herbert Edward East.

556. What rank?—Trooper.

557. Which contingent?—The Eighth.

558. What squadron?—H squadron.

559. What were you before you went?—I was a mercantile clerk.

560. You have volunteered to give evidence regarding the troopship "Britannic": will you kindly make any statement you wish?—I will answer any questions you would like to put to me.

561. First of all, then, state what were the things on board the ship you objected to, and then we will question you about them?—I never said I objected to anything.

562. Then, you have no complaint to make?—I will answer any questions. I will give evidence.

563. Was there anything wrong with the food?—Well, there was plenty of it.

564. And was the quality all right?—It was soldiers' food; it was good enough, I reckon.

565. Were you satisfied with yours?—I was perfectly satisfied with it.

566. You were a sergeant, were you not?—No.

567. Then, you have no fault to find with the food?—No.

568. How about the water?—In my opinion, there was not quite sufficient water for washing purposes.

569. Did you have plenty of water to drink?—Oh, yes; plenty to drink.

570. Did you ever have any water to wash your clothes?—No, not to wash our clothes.

571. About the sleeping-accommodation: had you any fault to find with it?—She was overcrowded, as far as sleeping-accommodation was concerned.

572. Do you think that every man on board could have had a hammock swung if he had wanted to?—Well, he would have had a hard matter to do it, but she might have been able to carry them all.

573. Did you see many men sleeping on the deck and tables?—Not a great quantity; about a dozen slept on the deck after we had been out a few days.

574. I mean on your troop-deck: did you see many men sleeping on the floor or tables?—Most of the men slept on the floors because they would not swing their hammocks.

575. From choice?—Yes; they could have got hammocks.

576. And they could have got room to swing them?—Yes, I think so.

577. Was the ventilation good on the troop-decks?—On account of the rough weather the ventilation was bad; they could not open the ports.

578. If they had been able to open the ports on the upper troop-deck you think she would have been fairly comfortable?—Yes, I think so, as far as the upper deck was concerned.

579. Have you any complaint to make against the treatment of any of the men by the officers?—No complaint at all.

580. You think the officers did their duty by the men both from a military point of view and from the point of view of looking after their interests?—Yes, certainly I do.

581. Do you know anything about the hospital arrangements?—I was there a few times.

582. Were you in the hospital?—I was never ill. I think the hospital was big enough until the last couple of days, when the place had to be extended.

583. You had an epidemic, then?—Yes, sir.

584. Up to that time you consider the arrangements were all right?—I reckon they were good.

585. So that the whole of your objections seem to be that you believe she was overcrowded?—Yes, overcrowded.

586. Was the cooking of the food all right?—I do not think it was the best from what I know about cooking. If the food had been cooked a little more it would have been better.

587. It was the fault of the ship's cooks?—Yes.

588. Have you any other thing you desire to say?—There is nothing further for me to say, except that what we have read in the papers, I reckon, has exaggerated things a lot.

589. Statements appearing in the Press are exaggerated?—Yes.

590. You do not think the men were warranted in making the statements they have done?—No.

591. *Mr. McNab.*] If it had not been that an inquiry was sitting inquiring into the matter you would not have considered there was sufficient ground for complaint for any one to have asked for an inquiry into it at all?—No, I do not think there are sufficient grounds.

592. There being an inquiry, you just came to state what you knew about it?—Certainly.

593. Have you ever been on a vessel with a large number of passengers before?—Only going to South Africa in the "Cornwall."

594. How, on the whole, does it compare with your trip in the "Cornwall"?—It was not nearly as good.

595. You had not so many men?—No; there was not half the number of men.

596. When you set out you would not expect that you were going to get such a trip as you had in the "Cornwall"?—That did not strike me.

597. Coming to give evidence, you would not now expect that things would be as comfortable as on board the "Cornwall"?—I reckon they ought to be on a par with each other, both being troopships.

598. On the whole, how did the food on the "Britannic" compare with that on the "Cornwall"?—I reckon the food on the "Cornwall" was far superior.

599. Were you obliged to buy food on board the "Britannic"?—You were not obliged to—you could if you liked.

600. Did you yourself buy food?—I did a few times.

601. Did you see any drink sold on board?—There was an issue of beer.

602. Any whisky, any spirits of any kind?—No, I never saw anything of that kind.

603. *Colonel Davies.*] You said you bought food once or twice?—Yes, sir.

604. You did not mean you had to buy it because you were hungry?—It was bought at night-time—just as one would buy a bun for supper.

605. You did not buy it because you did not get enough to eat?—Oh, no, sir.

Sergeant-Major WALTER HENRY DENBY sworn and examined. (No. 36.)

606. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—Walter Henry Denby.

607. Your rank?—Sergeant-major.

608. What troop?—D squadron, 1st New Zealand Regiment.

609. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and transport accommodation on board the "Britannic." If you have any statement to make the Commission will be pleased to hear it?—I would sooner answer questions, sir.

610. Have you any complaints to make against the food and accommodation?—No, there were none.

611. Taking the food specifically, you say you had no complaints to make yourself?—No, sir, none whatever.

612. Did you ever see any tainted meat supplied from the cooks' galley to the men?—Yes, I did on one or two occasions; and when that meat was shown they could always go to the cook-house and get a fresh piece, or if they could not get fresh meat there was always bully-beef and preserves supplied.

613. Was it before you got to Albany, or after, that you saw tainted meat given out of the cook-house?—It was before we reached Albany.

614. When questionable meat was supplied to the men and complaint was made, was there something in the nature of bully-beef given out to take its place?—I heard Colonel Davies say that if there was any complaint amongst the men that the meat or anything like that was not good there was always bully-beef to be given.

615. You never heard of the ship refusing?—No, they never refused.

616. What was the nature of the tea?—The tea was very much like you would get on every ship—that is, it is not the best. The only thing that I think is that the men did not get enough work. If they had been out with the Fourth and Fifth, and had had fourteen or fifteen months' trekking and hardships, they would have been quite satisfied.



617. You think, as a whole, the men on the vessel were "soft" for soldiers—I mean that they did not have the hard work that the other contingents had, and therefore they were rather soft?—I think that is just it. If they had had more work they would not have grumbled.

618. Do you think that any work could have been given them on board?—Give them plenty of work on the veldt, sleeping out of a night-time wet and dry, and give them some real hardships, and they would have been only too pleased to have come back home in a transport.

619. Have you been out on the veldt before?—Yes, sir; fourteen or fifteen months, all told.

620. Did you find that the fourteen months on the veldt made you better for the return home?—I was rather disappointed when peace was proclaimed. I was perfectly satisfied on the boat. But we were all disappointed about peace. The Tommies, they cheered, but the colonials did not. They were very disappointed that it came along so soon.

621. Would you consider that, being so recently landed in South Africa, and having had so little trekking, and being in the main disappointed at the sudden completion of the war, these would all be elements that would tend to make the men more fastidious on the steamer?—Yes; they grumbled more. There was no trouble with returned men. But if at any time there was any complaint in regard to the food they could always get it changed. I have seen joints of meat underdone; some men like it underdone, and others may not. They could take it back to the cook and get another joint. I went over to my squadron and asked if there were any complaints over the meat, and I saw it was underdone. I said, "If that is too underdone take it back to the cook, and he will give you a fresh joint."

622. Now, in regard to the sleeping-accommodation, was there enough room to hang all the hammocks?—I slept down among the men. I counted thirty or forty hooks that were unoccupied, for the men said they would rather sleep on the floor.

623. Which hold was that in?—That was in the D and C.

624. Was it down on the bottom deck that the men were on: was it below the hospital?—Yes, sir.

625. And you counted as many as thirty hooks not occupied?—Yes, sir; thirty or forty.

626. Did any of the men prefer to lie on the tables and floor?—This was the reason of that, sir; I noticed it coming over before. Some of the men could not sleep in the hammocks; they could not get a good night's rest, so they would sleep on the floor. That is the reason why they slept there.

627. Would you think that if the men had been able to sleep in hammocks very many more would have had room?—They could have slept up in the hammocks, because there was plenty of room. Instead of hanging their hammocks straight along, many used to sling them crossways on the different hooks.

628. You say that sometimes, in place of hanging them to the proper hooks, they hung them across?—Yes. They missed one hook to give more room for swinging.

629. If several men were to do that, and not take advantage of the proper hooks, there might be men on board who could not find a place to hang their hammock, because the room was being used so awkwardly?—They would never complain about that. If you asked them, "Where are you going to pitch your hammock?" they would say, "We are going to sleep on the floor."

630. Then, speaking for your deck, did you ever hear of any complaints that the men could not get their hammocks?—Every man had his hammock placed in the sea-kit rack over the tables in C and D hold.

631. There were no complaints on your deck?—Not at all.

632. Can you tell us from your own knowledge whether there were fewer men in your deck than in the other decks?—No; that I could not say.

633. How many men would there be at each table?—I arranged to have eleven or twelve men at each table. They wanted to put fourteen men at one table, as they were mates, but I said I would not allow it. I had eleven, twelve, and thirteen, unless some went to the hospital.

634. Then, there was no necessity to put anything like sixteen at one table where you were?—No, sir; I would not allow it. There were the first few days, until we got settled down, and then I had them all altered.

635. Was it possible to do that in all cases? Might there not be some decks where they had to put sixteen to a table?—I hardly think so, sir. I do not think they had to crowd the men like that.

636. You think that if they had sixteen men at one table there must have been some tables that had less than that number?—Yes, certainly.

637. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you ever receive any complaints from your men in connection with their food?—Yes, sir, on one or two occasions I did.

638. Were they attended to?—Yes, sir. The orderly officer was present at the time.

639. What was the nature of the complaints?—That the meat was underdone.

640. And on that occasion when you received the complaint it was rectified by the issue of other meat?—Lieutenant Parker happened to be on duty that day, and he said, "Take that piece of meat up to the cook, and get a fresh joint." Some of them were too lazy to take it up, and said they had finished dinner.

641. On no occasion that you are aware of was any complaint made which was not attempted to be remedied?—No, sir, none whatever. If they could not get fresh meat they would get bully-beef and biscuits. There was also a barrel of biscuits standing in the hold.

642. Did you ever see to the issue of rations?—I never had to see to that, sir. That was Quartermaster-Sergeant Fraser's work.

643. How were the troop-decks kept so far as cleanliness is concerned: were they well attended to?—Yes, sir. I told off a sergeant to see that the decks were thoroughly scrubbed, and squeegeed, and dried up with a mop, and then they were sanded.

644. How often was that done in a week?—It was supposed to be done twice a week on my side of the ship.

645. Owing to the bad weather you had, it was not considered advisable to do it oftener?—No, it was not.

646. Would the timber be damp?—When it was properly squeegeed and dried with the mop there was very little dampness remaining. It takes a lot of water to soak through the hard old timber. The decks were dry when the men wanted to go to sleep at night.

647. I presume they were not washed oftener on account of the bad dampish weather?—No, they were not.

648. How did you find the ventilation down in your lower troop-deck?—We had one wind-sail, of course. It was a bit stuffy in one or two corners. I happened myself to be in one of the worst corners, but I came through it all right, and all the rest of the men at the table.

649. Would there have been room to put any more windsails down that hold?—No; I hardly think there was any more room to go down, because there was only one square cut out in the grating to allow the windsail to go down.

650. Were there any other openings which would have enabled a windsail to go down in the troop-deck?—You could have put it down, but you would have had to take the gratings off the hatchway, and I think they would have tied the bottom of it, because the draught would be too severe.

651. Did they tie the end of it?—Yes, at night.

652. Take the whole troop right through, sergeant-major, you do not think there was any cause of complaint?—Well, no. I think the only thing they wanted was some hard work.

653. Could you have done any parade work on the "Britannic"?—Well, she rolled a good deal.

654. Was there sufficient room on the deck?—I hardly think so. We could not get a great number to parade at one time.

655. Could you have taken a company at a time?—If you had divided them, sir.

656. I presume that while you were doing that the rest of the men would have had to stay below?—They could have gone along by the cooks' galley. It was always warm there.

657. Was there enough room for exercise?—They could walk up and down, but not for the number of men. The majority preferred to sit or lie down.

658. Where—down below?—No; up on deck.

659. Colonel Davies.] You came back in the "Tagus"?—Yes, sir.

660. Who commanded the troops on the "Tagus"?—You did, sir.

661. How did you find the discipline on the "Tagus" and the "Britannic"?—Very much the same.

662. Did you see any fault with it?—No, sir, I did not.

663. No fault with it anywhere?—No, sir.

664. Were these Australians down in your quarter?—They were in the next hold—with A and B.

665. You were not in the quarters where the Australians were?—No; I was in my own quarters.

666. Your decks were washed twice a week by Colonel Davies's order?—Yes, sir, they were.

667. In your opinion, was the "Britannic" kept as clean as the "Tagus"?—Every bit, sir.

668. Do you consider that she had good lavatory and latrine accommodation?—Well, the latrines got stopped up once or twice, but after that a party was told off to see that they were cleaned.

669. You mean in the afternoon they were in that state?—That was just before you came round on your inspection.

670. They were always clean at my inspection?—Yes, sir.

671. With regard to the ventilation, there was a part of the boat set aside for non-commissioned officers?—Yes, sir.

672. Do you remember that I used to talk to the non-commissioned officers about the ventilation?—Yes, sir.

673. Do you remember what I said at the time?—When you asked about the ventilation, yes. You asked whether they were stuffy down there, or whether they were comfortable.

674. And what did you say?—That there were no complaints, sir.

675. You think that the men who made these complaints about all sorts of things were making them without cause?—I honestly believe that those men who are making the complaints were never better treated in their lives. That is my firm opinion. The older soldiers never complained about it; they were perfectly satisfied.

MONDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper MURRAY sworn and examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Maurice Murray.

2. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

3. What squadron?—H.

4. What rank?—Trooper.

5. Were you on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

6. This Commission is sitting to inquire into any grievances which any of the men had against the food or accommodation, or the treatment by the officers or the medical staff, on board the

“Britannic.” You have volunteered to come up and give evidence, so will you tell us what you have to state?—The accommodation was not sufficient. The food was neither sufficient nor good. The bread that we got in the morning was only sufficient for one meal, and some days we had to live on biscuits. We were without biscuits sometimes for two or three days, and when we got them they were maggoty. The meat at dinner-time was never cooked. There were complaints going on at every meal, but they were never remedied.

7. We want you to state what you know yourself?—That I know personally. The food was very often shown to the orderly officer. I saw them on one occasion take it to the saloon galley, and throw it overboard. The officers seemed to take no notice, so they (the men) threw it overboard.

8. Who threw it over?—Mick Mulhern threw it over.

9. Where did he come from?—Lincoln, I think.

10. What squadron did he belong to?—E.

11. Is there anything further?—The apples were maggoty, and the ground rice was maggoty and musty. They were walking about; you needed weights on them to keep them down. We never could get sufficient water. If you wanted a wash you would have to use half a pint, and if you were a little late—after 8 o'clock—you could not get any.

12. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—Groom.

13. Were you in any other contingent?—No, sir.

14. You say the accommodation was insufficient: what do you mean by that?—If the hammocks were swung they were crushed together.

15. Were there hooks enough to hang all the hammocks?—No, I do not think so.

16. Why do you not think so?—Because most of the men slept on the deck.

17. Did you sleep in a hammock?—Yes; I slept in a hammock all the time.

18. Had you any difficulty in getting a hook?—Yes, I had, if I happened to go down late.

19. How many were there in your mess?—Fifteen.

20. How many of those men slept in hammocks?—I did not take particular notice. Some of them slept on deck and some down below.

21. Did they sleep on deck for choice, or because they could not get space for their hammocks?—They could not sleep down below owing to the foul air and the smell.

22. Why: was it because there were not enough hooks?—No; they did not like sleeping down below. The few good days we had only a few slept below; they all slept on deck.

23. Did you ever sleep on deck yourself?—Only on one occasion. I preferred sleeping down below.

24. Do you know how far apart the hooks for the hammocks were?—Between 4 in. and 5 in. between the hooks—not more than 6 in., if they were that.

25. And was there a hammock hung to every hook?—In cases there would be a hammock to every hook. The hammocks would be so closely packed together you could not turn in them. But they might not all sling their hammocks; they were often without hammocks.

26. Did you see any hooks without the hammocks hanging?—Yes, I did.

27. How many hooks would there be?—Every other hook sometimes. Some did not care to sleep in hammocks.

28. Under certain conditions there were hammocks hung to every hook?—Yes; there were supposed to be sixteen men sleeping over the table, but there were not sixteen hooks.

29. You say the quantity of bread was only sufficient for one meal?—Yes, sir.

30. How much bread did you get?—I do not know, sir. The men were always complaining about the bread.

31. What was the quality of the bread?—The quality of the bread was bad.

32. What do you mean by that?—It could be better. Sometimes the flour would not be properly mixed, and it would be lumpy.

33. Do you mean to say your bread was good, or bad, or what?—It was neither good nor bad.

34. And there was only enough for one meal?—That is all.

35. Did you ever see men eat bread at their dinner?—They used to try and save it up for their dinner, and sometimes they would have it.

36. Do you think there was a pound of bread a day for each man?—Well, I do not know really; I do not think so. There did not seem to be a pound in it.

37. How large a piece of bread was it?—It was just a bit of round loaf.

38. Each man got a loaf to himself?—Yes.

39. Were there any biscuits?—Yes, we got them; but they were never good.

40. They were always bad?—Yes, they were always bad.

41. How often did you get biscuits?—Sometimes we were three or four days without biscuits.

42. Without biscuits of any kind?—Yes, sir.

43. And you had nothing during those occasions but the piece of bread?—Yes, sir.

44. Did you say the biscuits were maggoty?—Yes, sir.

45. What size were the maggots?—They were a pretty fair size. We always had to open the biscuits to see if there were any maggots in them.

46. Did you make any complaint about the maggoty biscuits?—I did not personally myself. There was complaint made, all the same.

47. The meat you say was always uncooked?—Yes, always uncooked at dinner.

48. Were there any men who liked it uncooked?—No; it was in a raw state.

49. What do you mean by raw?—I mean the top of it might have been cooked, but it was never cooked in the centre. You could eat underdone meat, but you could not eat that.

50. Was this every day?—Yes, nearly every day. You might strike it good one day.
51. There were complaints, you say, at every meal, and they were never remedied?—Yes.
52. Did you know that of your own knowledge?—Yes; I never made complaints, but when the orderly officer came along there was a complaint made.
53. Did you ever make a complaint yourself?—No; I did not personally.
54. Will you give us the name of a man who made a complaint?—Yes; Mick Mulhern.
55. To whom did he make the complaint?—He went to the mess-galley, and then we went to the officers.
56. What was the name of the officer?—Captain Fookes.
57. Did he make a complaint to Captain Fookes?—Yes, he did, because I saw him go into the saloon.
58. Did you hear him?—Yes.
59. What part of the voyage was this?—I think it was before we got into Albany.
60. What was the complaint about?—About the meat not being cooked.
61. And you say the complaints were never remedied?—Yes, sir.
62. No notice was taken at all?—There was no notice taken. The officer said it was all right, and the man said, "If it is all right I will give it a wide berth."
63. Was any other food served out after complaint had been made about it being insufficient or of bad quality?—Sometimes. The day they complained about the fish they got bully beef. That was the only occasion.
64. How often were the apples maggoty?—Once; they were not supplied very often. They were only supplied once or twice.
65. How often did they have ground rice?—Pretty nearly every day.
66. And it was musty and maggoty?—Yes, always musty and maggoty. It was not always maggoty, but it was always musty.
67. How often was it maggoty?—Once.
68. Was that the occasion when it was mixed with the apples?—No, it was not when the apples were mixed with it.
69. Was complaint made about that?—There was complaint made to the orderly officer of the day.
70. Who was he?—I do not know.
71. Was he an officer of the North or South Island battalion?—Well, we used always to have an officer of the South Island.
72. Was he an officer of your own regiment?—No, he was not.
73. What regiment did he belong to?—I do not know. I did not take particular notice.
74. Was he or was he not an officer of your own regiment?—Yes, he was an officer of our own regiment.
75. Was he a captain or a subaltern?—He was a lieutenant.
76. Can you tell us who the lieutenant was?—I cannot.
77. Is it that you will not tell us, or cannot?—No, I did not take particular notice.
78. Are you certain that he took no notice of the complaint?—I am certain that no steps were taken.
79. Did he refuse to listen?—All the officers always listened to the complaints that were made, but they were never remedied, just the same.
80. You only saw the ground rice maggoty once, and the apples maggoty once: do you think there was a remonstrance made by the officer, and therefore that kind of food was not served out to you again?—Well, if that was so, we would not have got the musty rice we were getting.
81. Was it always ground rice?—We got tapioca sometimes, and it was bad too.
82. How often did you get it?—Twice or three times a week.
83. How often did you have ground rice?—Well, it was pretty nearly every day, and tapioca two or three times a week.
84. Did they ever give you any duffs for Sunday?—They used to give us duffs on Sunday, yes; but not every Sunday.
85. Was it as often as once a week?—No.
86. You are certain of it?—Yes.
87. Did you get some form of pudding every day?—Yes.
88. You stated you sometimes only got half a pint of water to wash in?—The taps were turned on and if you happened to be late you could not get in at all. The water was scarce.
89. Was it always turned off at 8 o'clock?—Yes, every morning regularly.
90. And you knew that if you were not there before 8 you would not get any?—Yes.
91. And was there an effort made to get there before?—Yes.
92. And you mean to say that sometimes you could not get half a pint of water?—Between a pint and half a pint of water. That was about as much as you could get.
93. You swore just now that you could only get half a pint: do you wish now to increase that amount to a pint?—No, I do not wish to increase the amount.
94. Half a pint was all you could get?—Yes, sir.
95. What time did you wash, as a rule?—We used to wash, as a rule, before breakfast. Breakfast was at 7 o'clock.
96. And you went before then?—Yes, sir.
97. How did you get that half-pint?—Out of the tap.
98. And the tap would run only a half-pint of water?—Yes, sir. The next man might come along then, and he might manage to get water.
99. Supposing you ran it dry one minute before?—Well, not always.
100. On the occasions that you could only get half a pint was there any left in the tank?—I know sometimes two or three men washed in the same dish.

101. And after these men had finished, having only half a pint of water between them, was any left for anybody else?—Not if they were late.

102. Not after 7 o'clock?—Not after 8 o'clock.

103. You generally washed before 7?—Yes, sir.

104. Was the water exhausted at 7 o'clock?—Not exactly.

105. Why did you not get more than half a pint?—I might not be able to get it at all.

106. Was the water-supply exhausted?—On that occasion it must have been.

107. What time did this happen that you did not get half a pint?—In the morning at 7 o'clock.

108. Then, you distinctly swear that sometimes at 7 o'clock in the morning the water-supply had run out?—Yes, as far as my opinion goes.

109. *Mr. Millar.*] You said that the hammock-hooks were 6 in. apart?—Yes, sir.

110. Was that in a line?—No; they were not exactly in a line.

111. How could any two men lie in that space?—Well, sir, they had to lie like sardines.

112. Did you ever see hammocks 6 in. apart on a man-of-war?—No, I was never on board a man-of-war.

113. Do you think there was less than 12 in. between the hooks?—No, sir.

114. Would you be surprised if we have sworn evidence that they were 12 in. apart?—Yes. They were only 6 in., in my opinion.

115. The minimum regulation ever allowed to any man was 16 in., even for Imperial men, packing them very closely: do you think that a transport officer when clearing that ship would deliberately allow her to go away when the law under which he works provides that a space of 16 in. must be given?—Well, in my opinion, there was not 16 in. between the hooks, because when all the hammocks were swung they were packed so closely together that you could not turn in them.

116. With 16 in. apart, that only gives a man 16 in. in the hammock?—It gives him about 12 in.

117. It gives him 8 in. on each side?—Yes, sir.

118. How could two men sleep in hammocks 6 in. apart—how could they possibly do it?—They had to manage it.

119. You still swear that the hooks were 6 in. apart for the swinging of the hammocks?—They might be more, for all I know; I never took particular notice of it.

120. You said that on some occasions three or four days elapsed when you got no biscuits?—Yes.

121. How many times did that happen?—Several times.

122. Was it twice, three, four, or six times, or what?—Three times.

123. You say, to your own knowledge, that there were three times you were three to four days without biscuits?—Yes, sir.

124. That would be for twelve days during the voyage there were no biscuits available for your squadron?—Yes; I am speaking for our own squadron.

125. You were twenty-six days from Durban to Wellington. Do you remember how many days you were in Albany?—Two days in Albany.

126. Did you get fresh bread in Albany?—Just the same pound of bread was issued.

127. Then, for about one-half the voyage you swear that all the men had to live on was a pound of bread a day?—Yes, sir.

128. Did you ever see a cask of biscuits down the hold?—Yes, sir.

129. Were they there all the time for the men to help themselves?—When a cask of biscuits came down they might last for two days, and then after that for three or four days we were without biscuits.

130. And if every other witness who comes before this Commission swears that during the voyage the biscuits were always there, that the men could help themselves, and that they were of good quality, you would say they were wrong?—They cannot say that, because the biscuits were not of first-class quality.

131. You are the first witness who has stated there was anything wrong with the biscuits?—Well, they could not have seen the biscuits very often. I know myself, personally, that I opened biscuits and got maggots in them.

132. Did you eat many of the biscuits?—No, not so very many.

133. Did you buy food for yourself?—Yes, I did.

134. Did you have to buy that food because you could not get sufficient to eat?—Yes, sir.

135. Have you any complaint to make against any officer, in any shape or form, for not looking after the men?—No, I have not.

136. The only case, you say, when a complaint was made, to your own knowledge, and not rectified, was this case of Trooper Mulhern's?—Yes, sir.

137. Are you certain that on that occasion bully beef was not issued?—I am certain of it.

138. Was another issue of beef made?—No; there was nothing.

139. That is the one occasion you are certain about?—Yes, I am certain of it.

140. The attention of the officers was drawn to the apples, and no further apples were issued?—No.

141. Do you think that your officers could have made the ship find you other food in place of the maggoty rice and tapioca?—I do not know about that. There might have been much better in the ship.

142. Your complaints are more against the food given you by the ship, and the cooking of the food, than against your own officers?—Yes, sir. Not so much against our own officers, although complaint was made every day; but it did not seem to make it any better.

143. The question of the meat being uncooked: how could the officers have altered that?—Issued bully beef instead.

144. If the ship had not bully beef to supply all the time?—Then do without.
145. You would have preferred to do that?—Yes.
146. Do you know whether the officers ever went to the galley and complained about the food not being properly cooked?—The only day I saw the officers at the galley was the day when Mulhern took meat up to them, and when the meat was issued an officer was standing there.
147. *Mr. McNab.*] Have you ever been in action in the field before this?—No.
148. Have you ever been in action at all?—No, we have not been in action.
149. *Colonel Davies.*] You say that Captain Fookes had food brought up to him by Mulhern?—Yes, sir.
150. Was that one joint of meat?—Yes, sir.
151. Captain Fookes said it was all right?—Yes, sir.
152. And after Captain Fookes said it was all right Mulhern threw it overboard?—Yes, sir.
153. That was one joint?—Yes.
154. Were you ever down in the quarters when I went through: were you ever mess orderly?—No.
155. You were Colonel Chaytor's groom?—Yes.
156. Did you ever complain to him?—No, I did not.
157. Why not?—Because I thought it of no use.
158. Do you not think, when a man is working directly for another, and is not well treated—do you not think that it is customary to go to his employer and represent the complaint to him?—It might be in that case; but, then, complaints were made not by me, but by everybody.
159. You never made a complaint to Colonel Chaytor yourself, although you were his groom?—No, sir.
160. *Captain Lewin.*] What was the number of your table?—31.
161. *Colonel Davies.*] Did this beef that was underdone come from your table?—No, it did not.

Sergeant-Major JESSEP sworn and examined. (No. 38.)

162. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your name?—James Jessep.
163. You were a member of the Eighth Contingent?—Yes, sir.
164. What squadron?—G.
165. What rank were you?—Sergeant-major.
166. What where you before you went to the front?—Accountant.
167. You volunteered to give evidence before this Commission in regard to the transport of troops on the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
168. Will you tell us what fault you had to find in connection with the trip—the food, accommodation, discipline, or anything else?—Well, as far as the accommodation is concerned, I consider there was not sufficient room for swinging the hammocks. Men had to sleep on the tables and floor.
169. Had you any fault to find with the food?—When we first went on board the quantity was not sufficient, and at times it was not very good. It was better later on.
170. In connection with the sleeping-accommodation?—The lower deck was generally damp, and the portholes could not be opened. This is a copy of the average-ration statement, G squadron.
171. Are those notes that you are reading what were made on board the ship?—Yes, sir. It gives the number of men at the tables, and is supposed to give the number of men who would eat at that table and sleep above it: No. 4 table, 16 men; No. 27 table, 14 men; No. 29 table, 14 men; No. 31 table, 14 men; No. 33 table, 13 men; No. 35 table, 12 men; No. 37 table, 12 men: total, 95 men. There were eight sergeants at separate tables—table 19, three, and table 15, five. They were along with sergeants of other squadrons. The average length of these tables was about 12 ft. to 13 ft. They were a little longer in the centre of the troop-deck—that is just taking a rough guess.
172. What end of the ship was that?—It was forward. It did not give sufficient room to swing the hammocks above the tables; it was impossible.
173. Was there considerable space between one table and another?—When the men were sitting back to back there was not room for the orderly to pass between them.
174. The tables ran athwart ship, did they not?—Yes, sir. In the centre there would be 4 ft. or 5 ft. In one part there was the open hatchway, and they could not swing hammocks, and at the other end there was the stairway.
175. How far was it betwixt the hatchway on the one end and the companion-way on the other end?—Very little room for hammocks. I think there was room to hang one in length.
176. Athwart ship?—Yes, sir.
177. You had only room for eight men to swing their hammocks over the tables?—Yes, sir. About seven or eight. The G squadron had one half of the troop-deck and H the other half. We had only up to the centre of the troop-deck.
178. This was on the lower troop-deck?—Yes. There was not enough room for them to swing their hammocks, and they had to sleep on the floor, and it was usually damp, as we could not open the portholes.
179. How much washing-accommodation had you on your deck?—The washing-accommodation was insufficient; it was all on the upper deck.
180. I mean for your squadron?—It was for all the troops on the forward troop-decks. Men were usually turned out early in the morning to get a wash. They had to wait a good long while because the wash-houses were too small for the number of men.
181. How many wash-houses were there for the forward end?—There were two large ones on either side, port and starboard, and there were two small ones in the centre. They would accom-

moderate about twenty-four at a time. There were twenty-four basins, but I am not positively certain.

182. For how many men?

*Colonel Davies* : About five hundred, approximately.

183. *Mr. Millar*.] How long, sergeant-major, do you think it would take a man to wash?—About two or three minutes.

184. That is twenty in an hour for one basin?—The water was only on for an hour; an hour was the limit.

185. When did reveille sound?—I am not quite certain.

186. Was it 6 o'clock?—Yes, 6 or 6.30.

187. Was not the water on till 8 o'clock?—It was never on at 6. It took a considerable time to get the water into the tanks, and the men started pumping at 6.

188. There was no water in the tanks when they started pumping at 6?—No.

189. Was there always plenty of water available after it had been pumped in the tank?—Yes, usually.

190. Up to the time it was stopped?—Yes, it was only when the place was crowded. Coming up from the lower deck in the early morning it was usually pretty cold on deck.

191. You think three minutes was a fair average to get a wash in?—You could get a wash in that time, I think.

192. If they only took three minutes, and there was twenty-four basins, as you say, that would allow 480 men to wash in the hour?—Yes, sir.

193. That would leave a little over twenty men who could not get a wash every morning if the water was only on for an hour?—Yes. Of course, I am only speaking approximately. One man might take only one minute and another four at the basin.

194. If the water was on for more than an hour, allowing three minutes to wash, there would be sufficient accommodation?—There was usually a good deal of grumbling among the men that they could not get a wash. The fact remains that there were always men waiting from the first until the last and could not get a wash. We did not expect much comfort on a troopship, but it might have been better.

195. Had you much room on deck for exercise?—No; I was just going to speak of that. I do not think there was sufficient room to move about. The men had to stand about on deck, and it was usually damp, and pretty cold going so far south from Durban. That is how a great many of them took colds, coming out from a warm climate and standing about in the damp on the hurricane deck or the fore-castle deck.

196. You think if there had been fewer men on the vessel, so as to have given increased deck accommodation, there would have been less sickness?—Yes, quite certain of it.

197. What steps were taken to dry the lower deck that you say was always damp: was there any systematic effort made to keep the lower troop-deck dry?—No. We kept it as clean as we could. We did not wash it more often than was absolutely necessary.

198. What caused the dampness?—Well, the sprays would sometimes come down the hatchway. Sometimes at night we were obliged to get the chief officer to put the hatchway down altogether, and then, of course, it was very hot down on the decks. On a few occasions I went to the chief officer and asked him to screw down the hatchways above, and then we had simply the companion-way to get up and down.

199. There was not much ventilation coming through the companion-way?—There was not much ventilation from that, but there was a windsail.

200. Was the mouth of the windsail ever tied up in your hold?—Not that I am aware of.

201. You did not find there was too much cold air coming down the windsail?—I do not think it was ever tied up. I never saw it.

202. What period of the voyage did the improvement in the food take place?—The second day aboard we spoke to the orderly officer, and there was an improvement made.

203. And did that improvement maintain for the whole voyage?—Whenever there was a complaint made there was extra food given.

204. Did you ever notice any incidents where complaint was made and the officers did not attempt to rectify them?—No.

205. I think you said you were in G squadron?—Yes, sir.

206. Did G and H camp on the same troop-deck?—Yes, and part of the Tenth—there were fifty or sixty in the Tenth.

207. Did you ever hear any complaint on your troop-deck of a shortness of biscuits?—No; there usually seemed to me to be an ample supply.

208. Did you ever know of a day to pass without a cask of biscuits being on your troop-deck available for the men?—Not that I am aware of.

209. You would have noticed it?—Yes; I was on the troop-deck most of the time.

210. If we have been told that for three or four days there was not a biscuit available would you say that was not correct?—So far as G squadron is concerned, I should say it is incorrect.

211. Would G squadron be in any different position from H squadron?—I cannot say for certain if they used the same biscuits. The quartermaster attended to that.

212. Did you ever hear any complaint as to the quality of the biscuits?—No; they were average biscuits.

213. Did you hear any of your troopers say they were maggoty?—No.

214. Do you think it is likely that if the biscuits had been maggoty you would have heard about it?—I would certainly have heard about it.

215. And you never heard about it?—No.

216. The principal complaint about the food was the cooking?—Yes; but some of the meat was tainted. When we complained about it we got tinned meat; we would always get something in its place.

217. Then, on the whole, do you think that your own officers looked after the comfort of the men?—Yes; whenever complaints were made to our officers they were attended to.

218. Did they give a fair opportunity to men to make complaints?—Yes; the orderly officer was always on the troop-deck at meal-hours, and the men had their non-commissioned officers to complain to. On one or two occasions the men said they did not have sufficient, and I went up with them to the galley and they drew a little extra for that particular meal. It would have taken too long to have gone through the usual formula.

219. About the discipline on the ship: how many contingents have you been away with?—This is the only one, sir.

220. What vessel did you go out with?—The “Cornwall.”

221. How did the discipline on the “Britannic” compare with that on the “Cornwall”?—It was about the same.

222. You think fair discipline was maintained on the troopship bringing returned troops?—Yes, sir, I do.

223. Did you see much drunkenness on your troop-deck?—Not much; but there was a little.

224. Not what you would call real drunkenness, such as to be apparent on board the ship?—No; there were a few individual cases.

225. Did you see any on any other part of the ship—that is, either among the officers or men?—No.

226. *The Chairman.*] Do you know how far apart the hammock-hooks were put into the beams?—I do not know exactly; I should say about 8ft.

227. I mean not lengthways, but apart?—I should say about 18 in.

228. You say there was insufficient room to hang the hammocks: was it uncomfortable, or because there were not enough hooks to hang them all?—It was uncomfortable. There were a few hooks sometimes vacant.

229. Do you think, if a man had desired to hang his hammock, that he could have done it?—I do not think so, sir.

230. What number out of your squadron would have been unable to swing their hammocks?—I could not say exactly how many there would be.

231. Were you squadron sergeant-major or regimental sergeant-major?—Squadron sergeant-major.

232. What were your duties?—To exercise a general supervision over the non-commissioned officers and report to the squadron-leader. All the orders for the squadron from the squadron-leader are sent first to the sergeant-major.

233. Did the troop-deck sergeant report that there was not room for the hammocks?—I do not know that they ever reported, because it was quite apparent; the men were sleeping everywhere on mess-tables.

234. Could you have got space for your hammock?—Yes, if I had chosen.

235. Did you prefer to sleep elsewhere?—No, it was not a matter of preference, but for the first day or two I slept on deck because the weather was fine. If I had taken one of the hammocks one of the men would have had to sleep somewhere else.

236. Could you not have taken one of the hooks that were vacant?—There was not room for a man to sleep in any sort of comfort.

237. There were hooks on many occasions where you could have hung a hammock if you had chosen?—Well, I should not say on many occasions. I suppose there were a few.

238. You did not choose to avail yourself of that?—No, I should not like to have slept in a hammock. I do not think it would have been at all comfortable.

239. Then, it was a question of comfort rather than possibility that prevented men from using hammocks, was it?—Well, to a certain extent. There may have been a few that could possibly have hung their hammocks.

240. Was it not the duty of some non-commissioned officer to see that the hammocks were properly hung?—Yes, there was a troop-deck sergeant.

241. Did any troop-deck sergeant ever report officially to you on the subject?—No.

242. Did you ever remind the troop-deck sergeants of their duty to see to the hammocks being hung?—If men preferred to do so they were allowed to sleep on the decks, as every available space where a man could sleep in a hammock was utilised.

243. The men were allowed to do what they chose by their non-commissioned officers?—No, they were not.

244. Have you ever seen the King's Regulations in reference to a transport?—Yes, sir.

245. Did you see to the matter of the hanging of the hammocks, and see that they were properly hung?—No, sir, I did not.

246. You know, do you, that there is a King's Regulation?—I believe there is; I have not read it.

247. At any rate, we may take it that there was no effort on your part to see that the men did swing their hammocks properly, and you never reported to your superior officers that there was not room?—I frequently spoke to the officers about the overcrowding of the sleeping-accommodation. They visited the troop-decks each day.

248. Did you ever report officially that there was not room to hang the hammocks?—I do not know about sending in an official report; I spoke to a squadron officer.

249. Was that an official complaint?—I suppose so, sir.

250. Who was that officer?—Lieutenant Street.



251. You made an official complaint to Lieutenant Street that there was not sufficient room to hang the hammocks?—I do not know that on any particular occasion I made a special complaint to Lieutenant Street. We were talking over the thing together, and we agreed that there was not room then, nor was there any means of getting more room.

252. What did Lieutenant Street say on that occasion?—I never sent any written complaint, nor made a special complaint of it.

253. Did you make an official complaint which you meant to be attended to?—No, sir. The officers did their best for us.

254. Did you yourself pursue the question to see how the men were to be properly housed?—In company with a lieutenant we used to visit the troop-deck, and we made use of whatever space was available to sleep in, and made the best use of it. We tried to keep them down below in cold weather. The troop-decks got very warm at night, and some of the men preferred to sleep on deck, and we allowed them.

255. Was the troop-deck washed with salt or fresh water?—I could not say as to that, sir. The lower troop-deck we did not wash very often, but it was always well swept.

256. At what hour did they commence to pump water in the morning?—6 o'clock.

257. How soon after the commencement of the pumping would there have been enough water for a man to wash?—I should say from fifteen to twenty-five minutes.

258. During the first fifteen minutes there would have been no water available at all?—No; the water had to rise a certain height in the tank. Of course, the tanks were in another part of the ship, and the water had to rise a certain height before the water would flow to the wash-houses.

259. There would be water available for washing about a quarter-past 6?—Yes, between that and half-past 6.

260. And would continue to flow until what hour?—Well, it was pretty irregular. I think it was owing to water being used in other parts of the ship. Sometimes we had a better supply of water than on other mornings.

261. Would it flow till 7, or 8, or half-past?—Usually until a little after 7.

262. And at 7 it stopped?—Yes; there was no more fresh water. Sometimes it was on until a little later. Sometimes it went on until twenty-five minutes past 7.

263. How long was the fatigue party on the pump?—I have not the exact hours; I think it was half an hour or twenty minutes.

264. You think it was very rare that the water was on till 8 o'clock in the morning?—Yes.

265. You say there were occasional cases of drunkenness?—Yes, sir.

266. How many do you think you saw?—About half a dozen.

267. How many did you report?—There was only one case reported to me.

268. You say you saw half a dozen: how many did you report?—One.

269. If you saw a man drunk: as a non-commissioned officer did you take notice of him?—If their own non-commissioned officers were there we took no notice of it unless it was some flagrant case.

270. *Colonel Davies.*] How long were you sergeant-major?—Since we left Addington.

271. Captain Montgomery commanded your squadron?—Yes, sir.

272. When you saw half a dozen men drunk, do you mean rolling about the decks?—No, sir.

273. What do you call "drunk"—you mean rather the worse for liquor?—Yes, sir.

274. They could walk straight?—I do not know about that.

275. If I had been walking on the promenade deck and saw these men, do you think I would have noticed they were drunk?—I should say so; but they remained below and did not come up on deck.

276. What do you think they got drunk on?—Too much beer.

277. They got somebody-else's beer?—Yes, sir.

278. What did you think of the quality of the beer?—It was right enough, sir; but it was stirred up a good deal by the motion of the boat.

279. *Captain Lewin.*] Are you aware that there was a corporal in charge of that pump?—Yes, sir.

280. Do you know who it was?—Corporal Dunford was in charge for a time; after that it was Corporal Bennett.

281. Did you know what instructions he had from me to start pumping?—No, sir.

282. Were you ever up at half-past 5?—No, never up at half-past 5.

283. You were not in a position to see whether Corporal Dunford was pumping at half-past 5?—No.

284. Were you ever out at 6 o'clock?—Yes, always.

285. Was not the water coming at all then?—No.

286. On no occasion?—Not that I can remember.

287. What time did you say the water was closed off?—A little after 7.

288. Are you sure it was not 8?—That was after breakfast; no, there was no water then.

TUESDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1902.

Sergeant HANS LARSEN sworn and examined. (No. 39.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—Hans Larsen.

2. What contingent were you in?—I was in the Second and Eighth.

3. What rank did you hold in the Eighth?—Sergeant, sir.

4. Did you return on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

5. I understand you have volunteered to give evidence before the Commission?—Yes, sir.
6. What do you wish to speak about?—Well, everything in the hospital was very nice. I was in the hospital more than half the way, and I was treated first rate: could not be treated better. The doctors were there regularly twice or three times a day, and the officer commanding came round and inspected every morning—Colonel Davies and Major Polson. The food in the hospital was very good. I was put on a ration, and was getting chickens, custard, &c.; so I could not complain of that.
7. What were you suffering from?—Pneumonia.
8. How soon did you develop pneumonia after leaving Durban?—About two days before I came to Albany.
9. Had you had measles?—No, sir.
10. What do you think caused the pneumonia?—Coming from a dry country into a damp climate I caught a very severe cold.
11. What deck did you sleep on?—No. 5 on the 'tween deck.
12. What squadron?—A squadron.
13. What was the ventilation like?—As far as I know, there was plenty of ventilation there.
14. Did you hear complaints about the hospital?—No, sir. I heard no complaints when I was in the troop. I was acting sergeant-major when I was with the troop. I took Sergeant-Major Pender's place when he was sick.
15. It was about two days before you got to Albany when you were taken ill?—Yes, sir; I was put in the hospital.
16. *Mr. McNab.*] There was nothing, then, that you had to complain of?—No, sir. I would as soon come back in the "Britannic" as in any boat I have been in.
17. What boat did you come back with when the Second came?—The "Tongariro."
18. I suppose you would not have so many on board?—We had more, sir; we had all the Australian Bushmen.
19. Did you find that the men were fairly amenable to discipline on board?—Yes; when I was acting sergeant-major I felt there was no difference from that on the veldt. That is the A and B squadron I am speaking about.
20. Apart from yourself, did you know of any extensive dissatisfaction in A and B squadron regarding the food and accommodation?—No. The only thing I heard when I was in hospital was that the men were getting very bad meat.
21. Only on one day?—Only one day, sir.
22. *Colonel Davies.*] You have seen me go round the hospital?—Yes, sir.
23. You have seen me go round practically every day?—Yes, sir.
24. And you have heard me ask whether any of the men had any complaints?—Yes, sir; I have heard you ask both in the hospital and quarters.
25. Have you heard me say, "Now, if you have got anything to say, don't be afraid to say it"?—Yes, sir; I have heard you say that often.
26. And you considered the discipline on the ship was good?—Yes, sir: could not wish for better. I had no trouble whatever to get a fatigue party to do whatever I wanted when I was acting sergeant-major.
27. Have you ever heard me come over to the non-commissioned officers' part of the deck and ask after the ventilation down below?—Yes, sir, I believe you did.
28. After the first few days I asked if they felt it stuffy down below?—Yes, sir; and they said that there was plenty of ventilation in their quarters now, sir.
29. Did you ever see any man who wanted a wash not able to get it?—No, I did not.
30. You think every man could have washed if he had wanted to in the morning?—Yes, sir. The second day we were out we had to open another place. There was also a salt-water bath, so that any man could have had a bath.
31. You never heard a man ask for water to wash in, either salt or fresh, and not able to get it?—No.
32. Did you ever hear of any reasonable complaint being made to any one in a proper manner that was not attended to at once?—No, sir; it was always attended to, so far as I know.
33. *Surgeon-Major Pearlless.*] Was there constantly a bad smell in the hospital?—No, sir; I have never smelt any.
34. It was well ventilated?—Yes, sir.
35. And were the doctors and orderlies attentive to their duties?—Yes, sir, they were.
36. And you were quite satisfied?—Yes, sir.
37. *The Chairman.*] How many were there in hospital when you got to Albany: do you remember at all?—I could not say, sir.
38. Was the hospital full?—I think there were a few spare beds.
39. When did you leave the hospital?—I left Wellington Hospital yesterday.
40. Yes, but on the boat: not until you arrived in Wellington?—No, sir.
41. Then, during the last part of the voyage from Melbourne to Wellington were you incommoded by the number of men in the hospital?—I could not say exactly how many were there.
42. Was it crowded so that you did not get ordinary comfort?—I had every comfort right throughout.
43. Do you think the medical officers declined to exercise care when the hospital was full?—They attended regularly.
44. Notwithstanding the fact that the hospital became crowded they still stuck to their duty?—Yes, sir, they still stuck to their duty.
45. How did the orderlies behave?—Very well, sir.
46. You have no complaints against the orderlies?—No, sir. The ship's dispenser also looked after us very well.

Sergeant CHRISTOPHER GEORGE CHALLIS sworn and examined. (No. 40.)

47. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—Christopher George Challis.

48. Were you a member of either of the contingents?—Yes, sir; I came home in the “*Britannic*.”

49. Which contingent did you belong to?—I went away with the Tenth, and was attached to the Eighth coming out.

50. What rank were you?—Sergeant, sir.

51. What squadron did you belong to?—B squadron, Tenth Contingent. I came home with the Eighth.

52. What were you before you joined the contingent?—Bushman.

53. You have volunteered to give evidence before the Commission. The Commission’s business is to inquire into complaints as to food, or accommodation, or discomfort of men on board the “*Britannic*”; what evidence do you wish to give?—Well, in regard to the food, it was not fit for humanity. In regard to the medical staff, I carried one young fellow—a trooper by the name of Sid. Ashdown—to the hospital, and the doctor told me that he was suffering from lumbago, and to take him back and put him in his hammock. We took him back, but he would not go in his hammock, so we laid him on the floor on the ’tween deck. He could not get into the hammock; he was suffering with pain. I took him up next day, and the doctor told us the same, to take him back again. We did so, and half an hour afterwards Lieutenant Duignan came to me and said, “Sergeant, fetch him to the hospital.” I fetched him into the hospital and placed him in bed myself. In regard to the food, I was brigade orderly sergeant, and on three different occasions when Lieutenant Vallance was on duty the meat was only just warm on the outside, and it was not done inside at all, and we complained to the colonel here through Lieutenant Vallance. A lot of troopers threw it overboard, and others returned it to the cook’s galley to be recooked. There was another case in regard to the fish. The fish was lying on deck, and there were two or three dogs on board and they were using the food. The fish was dished up the next day, and instead of taking fish the orderlies went up and demanded potatoes. We went up the same day and lined along the promenade deck to Colonel Davies here, with the fish. Well, he sent down for the fish to be sent up. Some of them got an issue of beef, and some did not. There was another thing which I wish to mention: I was bad one evening, and I went up to the promenade deck and I told the doctor I wished to see him because I was bad. It was Major Pearlless, and he referred me to the hospital surgeon. I went up and told him (Surgeon-Major Pearlless) I was bad, but he would not give me a hearing. I went down to the hospital. I fell on the deck with sickness in front of the saloon, and I walked up the steps to walk along the promenade deck and I met this gentleman, Major Pearlless, and he referred me to the doctor down below, Captain Eccles. He said, “I will be going round the beds directly, and I will see you then.”

54. Anything about the water?—In regard to the water for washing purposes, there were three washing-basins aft and twenty-odd forward, and the ones up on the top deck used to be shut off. The water was shut off, and if you were not up at a certain time you could not get a wash, and some of the men did not have a wash for three or four days. The water was never on. We used to take our pannikins out and get some water to wash ourselves in.

55. What time was the water shut off?—The water was never on, never in those quarters—above the H squadron hatchway—where we were sleeping.

56. What about the pannikinful of water?—There was a man on the pump all day. We went to him and we used to take a pannikin and tell him we wanted a pannikinful to drink, and instead of that we used to wash with it. Another young fellow outside can corroborate the statement I am making now; his name is Sergeant Cameron.

57. Is there anything else?—No, sir.

58. You say the food was not fit for humanity?—Yes, sir.

59. How was the bread?—The bread was very good.

60. How much bread did you get?—We got a small loaf. I do not know how much it weighed.

61. Was it a pound, do you think?—No, I do not think it would go that.

62. Did you get any biscuits?—Yes, there were biscuits there, sir.

63. How often did you get biscuits?—Well, there were biscuits in a cask; you could help yourself.

64. Every day and all day?—Yes, sir.

65. What sort of quality were the biscuits?—Hard biscuits.

66. Were they sweet?—No, just the same as those given to sailors on deep-water vessels.

67. Do you think that was wrong?—No, sir, I do not.

68. You do not complain of that?—No, not in regard to that; I complain in regard to the vegetables and meat, sir.

69. How often was this meat badly cooked?—Every day, sir.

70. Did any of the men eat it?—We had to eat it to keep us in existence.

71. Was it that some men liked underdone meat and some liked it well done?—Well, I never saw a man yet that liked underdone mutton. I have seen some who liked underdone beef.

72. Can you tell us of some particular occasion when complaint was made about this uncooked mutton?—Yes, sir; to Lieutenant Vallance.

73. Was any remedy effected or anything done?—No, sir, not among us. We were what they termed details of the Tenth Contingent. There was no remedy effected for us.

74. The fact of your complaining to the officers did not lead to any result at all?—No, sir.

75. Were you ever given pressed beef or bully beef when you complained of the mutton?—Yes, on one or two occasions we did get some, sir.

76. Then, sometimes complaints were remedied?—Yes, sir. I was driving the winch on board the boat. I was the only one who could use it, and I used to hoist the food up out of the hold for the fatigue party, and the meat I got up was not fit to eat.

77. When did you first go on to the winch?—We left on Sunday, and I went on the winch on the Monday.

78. And throughout the whole voyage the meat was never good?—Yes, sir.

79. Always, without exception?—Yes, sir.

80. Do you know whether the meat was ever examined by a surgeon, veterinary surgeon, or quartermaster?—I do not think so, otherwise they would have condemned it.

81. When the meat came up out of the hold what was it in?—It used to be in these canvas bags.

82. And you could see through the canvas bags?—No, sir, it was not canvas; it was this slight hessian.

83. How often did you get fish?—We got it once a week if we liked to take it, but we did not take it.

84. Was it always bad?—I could not say whether it was always bad; but on this one occasion, when we went to Colonel Davies, it was very bad. You could smell it before you got to the cooks' galley.

85. On this occasion, when you went to Colonel Davies, what happened?—He said he did not want the whole crowd of us to go up there; one or two should come up and report the case to him. Shortly after Regimental Sergeant-Major Rogers came down to us below, and said, "Any complaints you have to make, make them to me, and I will forward them on to the colonel."

86. On this one particular occasion were you served out anything in the place of the fish?—We were not, sir; those in the other squadrons were.

87. Could you get nothing at all?—Nothing at all, sir.

88. None in your squadron?—There was not a squadron of us; there were eighty-two men and two officers—Captain Heckler and Lieutenant Duigan.

89. Do you think if you did not get beef that it was your own fault alone for not looking after your own interests?—No, sir; it was the special neglect of our officers.

90. Your portion of the squadron was specially neglected, then?—Yes, sir. There is also another statement to be made in regard to the coffee. The coffee used to be boiled in the same pot as the meat was cooked in, and an Australian trooper told the colonel that there were 3 in. of fat on the coffee on the same day we complained about the fish.

91. Do you think it was true that there were 3 in. of fat on the coffee?—I would not say there was that much, but there was a lot of fat.

92. Did you see it yourself?—Yes, sir, I saw it myself, and I asked the officer of the day to taste the coffee we had to drink.

93. Did you ever see 3 in. of fat on it?—No, sir.

94. Did you see 2 in.?—No, sir.

95. Did you see 1 in.?—No, sir.

96. Did you ever see  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.?—No, sir, I would not say that.

97. Do you wish to convey to the Commission that there were 3 in. of fat on the coffee?—I meant to say, in regard to the coffee, that there was a lot of fat on it.

98. You swore just now that an Australian said there were 3 in. of fat on the coffee?—He told Colonel Davies.

99. Did you not mean to convey to the Commission that there were 3 in. of fat?—No, sir; I meant to say there was a lot of fat on it.

100. You do not mean 3 in.?—No, sir, I did not say it; an Australian said it to Colonel Davies.

101. Was it  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.?—I would not say  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., or otherwise.

102. How much was there?—A good bit.

103. Yes, but how much?—A great quantity; more than what there should be.

104. And you think it is a grievance that the tea should be cooked in the same copper as the meat was boiled in?—Most decidedly.

105. Are you aware that every sailor who sails under the white ensign gets his tea and coffee cooked in the same vessel as the meat?—No, sir. I belonged to the navy too.

106. On what boat?—I was on the "Warspite."

107. You know it is customary to boil the tea and the coffee and the cocoa in the same utensil as the meat is boiled in?—Yes, sir, it is the case.

108. Did you ever know of a case where it was not so?—No; I could not say.

109. Well, now, you say on one occasion you carried a young fellow—Sid. Ashdown—into the hospital?—Yes, sir.

110. And the doctors ordered him to be put into his hammock?—Yes, sir.

111. What was he suffering from?—Lumbago.

112. When was this?—I cannot tell you the date; it was before we reached Albany.

113. Do you not think that the surgeons ought to have the saying as to whom should be put in the hospital and who should not?—Well, this man suffered from lumbago and could not walk. We carried him down, and I said in front of all the officers—I sang out, "This is a nice case, sending a man down like this." An officer did come out, and also this other doctor, not Captain Eccles—I do not know his name—and he told me to take him down below. I took him down, and half an hour afterwards Lieutenant Duigan came to me and said, "Fetch Ashdown to the hospital." We carried him to the hospital again, and I put him into the bed myself.

114. Was that the same day?—Yes, sir; but that was the second day. We took him down the first day and put him back in his hammock, and the second day he was admitted to the hospital. We had to fetch him back—that was the second time, and on the second day.

115. And the day you were so ill yourself?—It was in the night-time, sir.
116. Were you taken into the hospital?—No, sir.
117. Do you know what was the matter with you?—I do not, sir.
118. Did you report yourself to the medical officer on duty?—I went and reported myself to the major here.
119. Did you report yourself to the doctor at the hospital?—Yes, sir, after I had seen the major.
120. What did he do?—He gave me some tablets.
121. Did he take you into the hospital?—No.
122. He did not think you were ill enough?—No, sir. I have just come out of the hospital here.
123. What has been the matter with you?—Pneumonia.
124. Do you not think it is your duty to report yourself to the medical officer on duty?—It was late in the evening, and the medical officer was only on duty once a day. The orderly officers had to march them down to the hospital.
125. Is it customary to report to the officer on duty rather than to anybody else?—That is what I say—it is only reported once a day, in the morning.
126. Supposing a man is taken ill, it would be the doctor who is on duty to whom it would be reported?—He would have to get a non-commissioned officer to go with him.
127. Why did you not go to the officer on duty?—I did not know who was on duty, so I went to the major.
128. About the water: you say in some instances the water was not turned on?—Yes, sir.
129. And there were only three basins for the men to wash in?—Yes, forward.
130. Then, you mean to say that five hundred men of the North Island squadron had to wash in three basins?—No; they used to go aft.
131. All the arrangements made for the washing of the North Island battalion were three basins?—That is all, sir.
132. You are quite sure of that?—Yes, sir.
133. And the water, you say, was never turned on?—Not in a certain part of the boat.
134. You say there were only three basins in each of these wash-houses: was there only one in each?—The three were in the one place.
135. And none in the other?—No, sir.
136. And then you say you could not get water to wash in?—Only a pannikin of water, and that we used to sneak from the sailors.
137. How long were you on the "Warspite"?—Eighteen months.
138. Were you in any other boat?—No, sir.
139. How did you come to leave the service?—I ran away, sir.
140. *Mr. Millar.*] Were you on the same troop-deck as the G and H squadrons?—There were two squadrons.
141. Was the H squadron on the same deck?—Yes, I think so.
142. Was G too?—Yes, sir.
143. You say you always saw plenty of biscuits?—Yes, sir; there was a cask of biscuits.
144. Did you upon any occasion see no biscuits on that troop-deck?—Well, it was not my place to look for them. I could not say, sir.
145. Do you think it was possible for three or four days to elapse without the biscuits being there and your not knowing it?—Yes, they could be.
146. Would any complaints be made to you?—No, sir. I used to buy my tucker.
147. To whom would the men complain if they were short of biscuits?—They would have to complain to the orderly officer.
148. Who would he complain to?—He would complain to the colonel.
149. Does he not go to the sergeant-major?—No, sir.
150. You say there were only three wash-basins?—That is all, sir.
151. Was Sergeant-Major Jessep in charge of that troop-deck?—No, sir; Sergeant-Major Cowell was in charge of our men.
152. If we have sworn evidence, not alone as to the number of tables, and the number of men at each table, and the number of basins, will you still maintain there were only three basins?—Yes, sir.
153. Were there three basins?—Yes, forward.
154. Were there not twenty-four basins in these four wash-houses?—There might have been.
155. So you will not say now there were only three?—I am talking about aft.
156. I am talking about your own deck: there were separate basins for the North Island squadron and the South Island squadron?—Yes, and the North Island men used to go and wash with the South Island men.
157. If we have sworn evidence that there were twenty-four wash-basins for the North Island squadron in four wash-houses on the forward deck will you still maintain there were only three?—I am on my oath now, but I will swear there was not enough water, all the same.
158. Were you in the fore part of the ship, or were you in the after part?—I was forward.
159. Now, in what part of the ship were you supposed to wash, according to the orders issued?—Forward.
160. How many wash-basins were there forward?—There were four wash-houses, and there were two wash-houses with no water in them.
161. And you cannot say how many basins there were?—I do not know.
162. Was it possible that the reason for the water not being on sometimes was owing to the rolling of the ship?—I do not think so at all.

163. Whose fault would it be if there was no water for washing in the basins?—I should think it was the engineers' or the commander of the boat.

164. Was there not a fatigue party sent out to pump at half-past 5 every morning?—They were pumping for the officers, not for the troopers.

165. Not for the troopers?—No, sir; the officers.

166. Where did the water come from for the troopers?—They had salt water, or water from the condenser.

167. You say, then, that the only water that was available for the troopers for washing on the forward deck was salt, or out of the condenser?—Yes, sir.

168. And was supplied by the engineers?—Well, I do not say supplied by the engineers; I think so.

169. You think it came direct from the engineers?—Yes, sir.

170. Did you yourself ever have to go without a wash?—Well, yes, I have once or twice. I used to go out and get this pannikin-of-water business.

171. Did you ever make a complaint that you could not get a wash?—No. It was no use making a complaint; it was never listened to.

172. You never complained yourself, did you?—No, sir; because it was useless. It was referred to the officers by the other men.

173. You yourself did not make a complaint?—No, sir.

174. Did you often have mutton on board the ship?—Yes, sir, to our sorrow, very often.

175. I think you said it was never cooked?—No, sir, never.

176. Do you think there was sufficient room in the galley to do the cooking for the number of men?—No, sir; there were only three coppers in it.

177. Did the cooks themselves take an interest in the work?—No, not at all. They used to take an interest in selling the stuff.

178. Did you buy food yourself?—Yes, sir.

179. All the voyage?—No, sir; when I was hungry.

180. Where did you buy it from?—From the saloon galley; also from the men's galley, and from the sailors.

181. You say that the meat came out of the hold: I suppose it came out of the freezing-chamber and you winched it up?—Yes, sir.

182. Was that the only place it would come up?—All that I know of.

183. That was the only entrance?—All I know of.

184. That was all bad meat?—It was not all bad.

185. Do you think bad meat was sent into the saloon for the officers?—No, I do not think so; not according to the menu.

186. Do you think the meat was picked over?—Most decidedly.

187. The officers got all the best of it?—Yes, sir.

188. Can you swear that you saw the meat green through the covers?—Certainly.

189. Do you know whether it was put into consumption?—I am speaking of the meat that came to our table.

190. Did you ever get the green meat at your table?—Yes, sir.

191. And Lieutenant Vallance saw it?—Yes, sir.

192. Was that before you got to Albany or afterwards?—It was before we got to Albany.

193. Long before?—I could not say.

194. Would it be two or three days?—Just a few days out from Durban.

195. Did you ever see any of that meat green within three days of arrival in New Zealand?—I never came to New Zealand with her; I ran away in Melbourne, otherwise I would have been under the clay with my comrades.

196. How was the discipline on board the ship?—The discipline was all right to a certain extent.

197. What do you call "all right": was it a free-and-easy, go-as-you-please sort of discipline, or was there regular military discipline?—Well, about half-and-half. When we used to meet the officers we used to salute them—what they were entitled to.

198. Had the officers any difficulty in carrying out the orders they gave?—No, sir.

199. As a non-commissioned officer, did you have any trouble with your men in carrying out any orders?—No, sir, I had none. They were only too willing to do what I told them.

200. Did you see much drunkenness on board?—No, sir. There was beer issued to us, and they used to throw it over the side.

201. You say there was one occasion when a complaint was made and it was not rectified?—Yes, sir.

202. Outside of that, do you know of complaints made to officers where no attempts were made to rectify them?—We made complaints day after day, and they were not rectified.

203. Did you make complaint yourself?—I used to stand up and complain about the vegetables and soup, or the meat, or the spuds, or anything like that, on behalf of the men at the same table.

204. Do you remember the officer whom you made the complaint to?—Yes; to Lieutenant Duigan.

205. He was your own officer?—Yes, sir; and to Lieutenant Vallance.

206. And neither of these two officers got your grievances rectified?—No, sir.

207. *The Chairman.*] When do you say you went to the winch?—On the Monday out from Durban.

208. Directly you got on board?—We got on board on the Saturday and did not sail until Sunday.

209. Where did you learn to use a winch?—In Melbourne.

210. Were you in one of the coastal steamers?—I have been on the coast; I was in the "Coogee."

211. When did you leave the "Warspite"?—In 1887.

212. You deserted from her?—Yes, sir; I have got a free pardon since.

213. Did you desert from the "Britannic" at Melbourne?—Yes, sir.

214. You have a knack of deserting, then?—I deserted because I was not getting well treated.

215. You think the proper thing to do is for a man to desert first of all from the navy and then from the colonial forces?—I went up to General Babington, and they held an inquiry with me.

216. You have deserted twice in the course of your experience?—Yes, sir.

217. *Mr. McNab.*] Have you your discharge from the Tenth?—No, sir, I have nothing from them. I have a letter from General Babington to give me my money, as he said I had enough punishment by having to pay the passage from Melbourne to Wellington.

218. You have not got your discharge?—No.

219. Were you one of Captain Heckler's men?—Yes, sir.

220. Did you see him on duty several times on the way across?—Yes, sir.

221. Did you ever complain to him?—No, sir. He only used to come down in the morning before the inspection.

222. You never complained to him when he was officer of the day?—No, sir. I do not remember him being the officer of the day.

223. Did you ever complain to him when he was on duty at all?—No, not when he was on duty; when he was off duty.

224. What complaint did you make to him?—In regard to the tucker.

225. Do you remember when you made the complaint?—No, sir.

226. What was the complaint?—Not getting enough food.

227. What did he do?—He never did anything; it was never rectified. There was no difference next day.

228. And if Captain Heckler swears that he only had one complaint on one day and that complaint was in regard to the bad cooking you will say that is not true?—Certainly.

229. When you were explaining about Ashdown I did not exactly understand what you said: was it a complaint as to his treatment?—I took him down to the hospital, and they told me to take him down below, and put him in his hammock. The man was too bad to go in the hammock. We took him next day, Bugler Walsh and I, and they sent us back with him again the second day, and told us to take him down. I went up to the saloon, and I put him in front of the saloon and I said, "This is nice, to treat a man like this."

230. What did the hospital people say?—They told me to take him down again.

231. He was taken into the hospital, was he?—Half an hour after.

232. What, then, is your complaint—did Ashdown die?—No; to the best of my knowledge he is alive yet.

233. Previous to your running away was he still in the hospital?—I would not swear that he was, but I think so.

234. Do you know how long he was in the hospital after that?—No, I could not say.

235. You suggest that he should have been put in the hospital the first time he was reported?—Yes, sir, most decidedly. It was the opinion of the doctor.

236. What makes you say it was the opinion of the doctor, when the doctor sent him back to the hammock; you only surmise it was?—Well, if a man cannot stand, where is the fit and proper place for him?

237. You surmise it was the opinion of the doctor?—Yes.

238. Then, in regard to your own complaint when you fell on the deck, I did not exactly understand what it was you complained about: do you complain regarding the surgeon-major or do you complain about the surgeon-captain that you had to report yourself to?—I went up to him and complained to the major, and he referred me to the captain that was supposed to be on duty down below. And I said I was very bad, and he said, "Oh, see Captain Eccles, who is on duty down below." Well, I went down below, and I waited there for a quarter of an hour, and he gave me tablets.

239. You suggest, then, that you should not have been ordered down to the captain on duty?—I think it was the major's place to come and treat me.

240. When you were on the man-of-war, supposing you had gone and reported yourself to the senior medical officer in command of the man-of-war, and he had been up on the deck at the time, would he have treated you there, or would he have sent you down to the hospital to the surgeon on duty?—He might have sent me down to the hospital, and come down afterwards to treat me.

241. Would he not have certainly sent you down to the doctor on duty?—I do not know whether he would or not.

242. You say you hoisted the food out of the hold?—Yes; I used to drive the winch.

243. And it was not fit "almost without exception"?—It was not fit for human consumption.

244. You said, "almost without exception"?—Yes.

245. You do not know of any other hold where meat was taken out for the officers?—No, I do not, sir.

246. You are pretty certain yourself that all the meat was hoisted up by you?—Yes; and I am pretty certain they got the best of it.

247. And almost without exception it was not fit for human consumption?—Yes.

248. Did you know Captain Young on board?—Yes. I did not know him personally; I knew him by sight.

249. You knew he was on duty?—I do not know whether he inspected it at all, otherwise he would not have passed it.

250. Where are you staying now?—I am staying at the Masonic Hotel.

251. *Colonel Davies.*] You said you were brigade orderly sergeant?—Yes, sir.

252. Do you know there was no such thing?—Well, it came out in orders.

253. In what orders?—In regimental orders.

254. You mean you were regimental orderly sergeant?—No; brigade orderly sergeant.

255. I told you there was no such thing; do you still say you were?—Yes, sir; I saw it come out in orders.

256. Did you go over the whole ship?—No.

257. If you had been brigade orderly sergeant you would have gone all over the ship?—If I was regimental sergeant I would have.

258. Do you know the difference between a regimental sergeant and brigade sergeant?—No, sir.

259. You left the ship at Melbourne?—Yes, sir.

260. You say you copied all the orders for your squadron?—No. I did no such thing; I used to read them myself.

261. Did you read this order to your squadron, or an extract from it: "O.C. units will impress upon their officers, N.C.O.s, and men the fact that if any one is left behind at Albany on the departure of the ship his pay will cease from that date; he will pay his own passage to New Zealand, and will forfeit his month's furlough and pay on arrival there"?—I read a part of it.

262. Did you read that order?—I read an extract from that.

263. You were aware that you had to pay your own passage?—Yes; I did so.

264. You forfeited your pay when you left the ship?—Yes, sir.

265. And you forfeited your month's furlough and pay on arrival?—Yes, sir.

266. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] What doctor saw Ashdown the first day?—Captain Eccles.

267. And the second day?—The same gentleman.

268. He was admitted later on?—Yes; the same day Captain Eccles admitted him he was in the wards when I took him in.

269. Are you aware that there was a surgeon on duty day and night?—No, I was not aware of that.

270. You were not aware that it was your place to report to him when you were ill?—No; I came up on the promenade deck, and you were the first one I met.

271. Did the surgeon on duty see to you?—Yes, after waiting.

272. How long did you wait?—I waited a quarter of an hour.

273. He gave you some medicine and sent you off?—Yes; some tablets.

274. *The Chairman.*] What age are you now?—Twenty-seven.

275. When were you made a non-commissioned officer?—Going over on the boat "Drayton Grange," by Colonel Messenger.

276. What age were you when you entered the navy?—Seventeen.

277. What were you then—a first-class boy, or what?—Yes; a first-class boy.

278. You were not a stoker?—No, sir.

279. *Mr. McNab.*] You say you are twenty-seven?—Yes.

280. And you entered the navy at seventeen?—Yes.

281. And you said in 1887?—Yes.

282. Well, that would make you thirty-two?—I said I ran away from the service in 1887.

283. When did you enter?—When I was seventeen.

284. What year did you enter the service?—I got a free pardon in 1887—Jubilee year. I could not state what year I entered.

\*  
Sergeant HENRY CAMERON examined on oath. (No. 41.)

285. *Mr. McNab.*] To what contingent did you belong?—The Tenth Contingent.

286. What squadron?—D squadron.

287. Where are you resident?—Auckland.

288. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the accommodation and other matters on board the troopship "Britannic." The members of the Commission will be pleased to hear what you have to say, and probably afterwards will ask you some questions?—I will speak first about the food question. I reckoned it was not too good. At times it was not half-cooked. I have seen a leg of mutton carried up to an officer in the saloon, and I will give you his name if you choose. It was not half-cooked. It was for Captain Heckler. It was very seldom that we ever had enough to eat. There was not enough to be got without buying it. About the hospital: I may say there was a trooper—Trooper Ashdown—who was carried to the hospital one day for admission, and he was sent back because there was no room in the hospital for him. He was carried up again the next day, and sent back again. The sergeant went to see the orderly officer—Mr. McNab was his name—and he went to see about getting admission to the hospital for the man. He was sent there twice and could not get admission. Then, there was Corporal Tasker. He lay ill for three days down below before he could go into the hospital. He was very bad. Then, there was Trooper Williams, who lay in the hold for some time before he could be taken into the hospital. He is in the Auckland Hospital now.

289. Did you complain to your captain?—I did not complain myself, but I saw the men taken up, and the corporal made a complaint.

290. Did you make a complaint yourself?—No, I did not make a complaint myself, but saw the men taken up and brought back again; but I did not make a complaint myself about the matter.



291. Did you make a complaint about any other matter?—Yes.

292. What was it?—I went to complain to Colonel Davies about the food.

293. What was the result?—Colonel Davies spoke to Captain Heckler, and asked him if his men had everything they required, if they had enough to eat; and Captain Heckler said Yes, they had. Colonel Davies asked him if his men had any complaint about the food, to which he said No; he did not think so. When Colonel Davies was going away I spoke to him, and told him that there were a lot of complaints about the food; that we had not enough to eat; that it was very short. He then turned round to the purser and asked him how it was, and he said he understood there was an unlimited supply of food within reason for the men.

294. Did you hear Captain Heckler say to Colonel Davies that there were no complaints?—Yes.

295. But you did complain?—Yes.

296. What was done?—There was a barrel of biscuits put down in the hold, and the men could help themselves.

297. Were you present when the trooper was being carried to the hospital?—I was down in the hold when they started with him, but I saw him when he was brought back.

298. And the reason for not admitting him was that there was no room?—Yes.

299. And the next day was he sent back to the hospital?—Yes.

300. Was the same answer given?—I could not say about any reason being given, but Sergeant Challis spoke about it, and then Ashdown was admitted.

301. What is the Commission to understand as regards Trooper Ashdown not being admitted? Do you complain that he was wrongly not admitted on the first day?—I think he should have been admitted the first day.

302. A man from amongst the troops is returned by the doctor with the statement that there was no room in the hospital for him. Then, your complaint is that the doctor told a falsehood?—I do not know about a falsehood. I will not say anything about the doctor telling a falsehood; but I think the man should have been admitted to the hospital. He was lying down in the hold when he was suffering from illness.

303. You think he should have been admitted to the hospital whether there was room or not?—Yes.

304. What was Corporal Tasker's disease?—Pneumonia. I was sleeping immediately above Tasker's berth, and I saw that he was very ill.

305. Did you report that Tasker was ill of pneumonia?—Yes; I reported it to Colonel Davies, and he sent a doctor down.

306. Which doctor came?—I do not know which doctor came.

307. What was done when the doctor, whose name you do not know, came down?—I do not know what he did to him. I was down in the hold then.

308. When you found that Tasker was suffering from pneumonia you sent for the doctor, and do not know what took place subsequently?—I do not know.

309. What was the matter with Trooper Williams?—I believe it was some kind of pneumonia or measles.

310. Did you report Williams's case to the doctor?—I sent him up to the hospital.

311. What was done then?—He was not admitted, but had to lie on our deck. I left him here in Wellington.

312. When do you say Trooper Williams was sent to the hospital?—Three days after leaving Albany.

313. Did Williams come back from the hospital?—Yes.

314. And he remained with you until when?—Till we reached Wellington, and he was admitted to the Hospital.

315. Were there parades of the sick held?—Yes.

316. Did Williams attend when these parades were held?—Sometimes he went up, and other times he lay on the deck.

317. Did you ever see a medical man looking at him?—I did not see it myself; but, according to what Williams said, I believe that a doctor did see him, although I never saw a doctor with him.

318. Did you notice whether he was undergoing any treatment?—No.

319. When you came to Wellington was Williams passed by the Health authorities: how did he get away from the "Britannic"?—He never came away from the ship.

320. How many were sent to Auckland from Wellington?—I do not know. On last Sunday week I went to see him at Auckland, but I was not admitted.

321. *Mr. Millar.*] You say, with regard to the quality of the food which was supplied to you, that it was only half-cooked: was what you got good?—Sometimes it was good and sometimes it was not.

322. Was the bread good?—Yes.

323. And the butter?—Yes.

324. How was the jam?—I never touched it, and I cannot speak of it.

325. Were the biscuits good?—We had brown biscuits down there, and they were good.

326. Did you ever see maggots in the biscuits?—No.

327. Did you hear others complain of them?—Yes, I think so; but I cannot say for certain.

328. Did any of the men under your control complain about the want of biscuits?—No; we had any amount of biscuits, but they complained about the other food.

329. Do you think that the galley not being sufficiently large had anything to do with the cooking?—I think it had a lot to do with it.

330. And the cooks themselves: would you consider they were sufficiently qualified to do the work?—Yes, as far as they could. They did the best they could with the appliances they had.

331. How was the discipline on board?—As far as I know, it was very good. There were only eighty-four of us in the Tenth, and the discipline with them was very good.

332. I do not suppose the discipline would be exceptional in regard to your men, or that you had orders other than those issued to the other troopers?—No.

333. You never, as a non-commissioned officer, found any difficulty in carrying out orders?—No.

334. Or heard of others complaining about the carrying-out of orders?—No.

335. Do you think the officers did all they could in looking after the comfort and food of the men?—The officers used to come round regularly and ask if there were any complaints.

336. Were there any complaints they could have recognised and did not?—No.

337. Have you any specific complaint against any officer, so that we could follow it out?—No.

338. The fact is that when complaints came from the men attention was paid to them?—Yes.

339. You are not aware of any complaints being taken to an officer which were not attempted to be remedied?—No.

340. Was any attempt made to get more food for the men?—Yes, it was tried; and when we had not enough we were sent to the galley, and we got more if there was any there.

341. Did they give you bully beef instead of other food?—Yes, on several occasions.

342. Then, there was an attempt on the part of the officers to get you better food than that which was supplied to you?—Yes.

343. *The Chairman.*] Were you on the same deck as Sergeant Challis?—Yes.

344. *Colonel Davies.*] You spoke of Corporal Tasker?—Yes.

345. He was then in the Tenth?—Yes.

346. Was he ever in the Sixth?—Not as far as I know.

347. *Surgeon-Major Pearlless.*] In what part of the voyage was Corporal Tasker ill?—Between Albany and here.

348. Was he down in the hold before he was seen by a doctor?—Yes, he was there, and the doctor was informed of his illness. I do not know whether the doctor came to see him.

349. You do not know what doctor it was?—No.

350. How did Trooper Williams manage to pass the Health Officer here?—I do not know.

351. You say he had measles?—Well, he lay on the deck all the time from Albany here; but I did not see much of him.

352. And yet he passed the Health Officer?—I do not know.

353. *The Chairman.*] You do not know anything about doctoring?—No.

354. Or had any experience in nursing?—No.

355. You do not know yourself what was the matter with this man?—No.

Trooper C. C. WALLACE examined on oath. (No. 42.)

356. *Mr. Millar.*] To which contingent did you belong?—The Eighth.

357. What was your rank?—Trooper.

358. What squadron?—E squadron.

359. You volunteered to give evidence before this Commission as regards the treatment of the men on board the "Britannic": would you state to the Commission in your own way what complaint you have to make against the treatment of the men on board the "Britannic"? We shall probably ask you questions afterwards. Would you kindly confine your remarks to what you know yourself?—I may say the meat was never cooked; it was always raw; and when it was brought up from the hold it was sometimes green. One side of beef was thrown overboard, and the troopers would not carry it to be cooked. The tea was always greasy, and came out of the same boiler as the meat was cooked in. You could never get any water to wash in when you wanted it. The only way you could get any was by going to the pump and asking for a drink of water, and then washing yourself out of the pannikin that you took up. There were only three basins to get a wash in, and there were two wash-houses where they were in. There were twenty-four basins in all for over a thousand troops who were on board, and some of them would not work. The water was only turned on for about an hour or an hour and a half in the morning, and after that you would have to go to the pump and ask for a drink. I do not know about the sleeping-accommodation, because I slept on the upper deck all through the voyage, because there was no accommodation down below. The tucker was not good, and the meat so bad that I used to go and pay for other meals, and it cost me 1s. a meal. We were not allowed to pay for food, but we had to do it, as we could not get it for nothing. There was fish which we had once, but the dogs had the best part of it, and they used to make a bed for themselves on it. That was salt fish.

360. *The Chairman.*] Was there any fresh fish on board?—We had fresh fish once or twice.

361. *Mr. Millar.*] You refer to the occasion when the salt fish was taken to Colonel Davies?—Yes; we got potatoes that morning.

362. No bully beef?—I could not say. I had my own meal, and I do not know whether the others got bully beef. I think that is all I have to say.

363. You say the meat was always raw?—Yes.

364. Did you yourself ever make a complaint about it?—With the others I did.

365. Did you make a personal complaint to the officer of the day?—It was the mess orderlies who had to make complaints.

366. Were you ever a mess orderly?—No.

367. With regard to the quality of the meat, was that due to its being badly cooked and raw?—I cannot say. My trade is a butcher, and once or twice, when the beef was thrown overboard, it was bad. It was wrapped up in scrim, but you could see through the scrim and you could see the bones, and they were green.

368. Was that meat inspected?—I cannot say whether it was inspected.

369. Was any bad meat sent to the butcher's shop to be inspected there?—All the meat was sent there to be inspected.
370. You had Captain Young on board?—Yes.
371. Was he not a qualified man to inspect the meat?—He was.
372. If he swears that he inspected every bit of meat from Albany to here, and that he passed none that was bad, would that be an incorrect statement?—It would be incorrect. The beef that was thrown overboard was not good.
373. But that meat was thrown overboard?—Yes.
374. It was never cooked?—No.
375. If Captain Young says he inspected every piece of meat in the butcher's shop, and no unsound meat ever passed him, would that be correct?—No. What I say is that the meat was raw when it was given to us.
376. As to the quality of the meat?—Some was green. I was never in the butcher's shop, so I did not see it inspected.
377. You say you are a butcher?—I know something about butchering.
378. Do you think that meat which was green would be passed under any circumstances or be made fit in the cooking for consumption?—No.
379. Your principal complaint is that the meat was raw?—Yes.
380. Was that the only part of the food you objected to?—That is the only part.
381. The rest was good—the biscuits, the bread, and the butter?—They were good.
382. Were there plenty of biscuits?—No; we once had to go for three days without biscuits. But as soon as we made a complaint there were plenty, but you could not get enough butter to eat with them, and you had to make your meal out of bread-and-butter if the meat was bad.
383. Have you any idea of the Imperial regulations as to the dietary scale?—No; I had my own idea.
384. But you were an Imperial soldier?—Yes.
385. Then, the Imperial dietary scale would regulate it?—Yes; but I paid for my own.
386. Was there sufficient accommodation in the galley to cook?—No.
387. That might be partly the cause of the meat being raw?—Yes; I think there were three men in the galley.
388. And there were others outside doing the necessary work in preparing vegetables, and so on?—I think there were five cooks in the officers' galley and three in the troopers' galley. They were men who worked in the galley, and you would call them cooks.
389. How many wash-hand basins do you say there were in the whole ship?—There were twenty-four in the whole ship. There were only four down aft.
390. What squadrons were down aft?—I do not know for certain.
391. *Colonel Davies*: There were A, B, C, and D squadrons, and the Australians.
392. *Mr. Millar* (to witness).] You say there were only four basins aft?—Only four.
393. All in one wash-house?—There was one wash-house near the staircase going to the hospital.
394. Was that the whole washing-accommodation for five hundred men?—As far as I know, that was all.
395. Then, it would be absolutely impossible for all the men to wash while the water was on?—It was impossible.
396. Did you ever try to get more water?—I used to get some from the cook, but he knew too much, and he would only give it to those who paid for meals.
397. You say you slept on the upper deck all the voyage?—Yes.
398. When did you get up?—At 6 o'clock, because then they began to wash the decks, and you like to keep your blankets dry.
399. Did you get the first chance of asking for water?—I was on the pumping fatigue party for the whole of the voyage, and we began pumping at 6 o'clock in the morning, and pumped three times a day.
400. What wash-house did the pump you worked supply with water?—I think it was water for the cooks' galley.
401. Where did the water come from for the wash-houses?—I do not know. The water we pumped went into a small tank on deck, because the sergeant used to go and see how it was filling.
402. What water did the tank contain?—It was used for making the tea for the troops, and so on. I know it had nothing to do with the washing.
403. And that was the only fatigue party for pumping?—Yes; there were five of us there, and we used to pump three times a day.
404. On the occasion when the men got bad fish did they get bully beef instead?—I do not know.
405. There were five pumping: how did you work?—We worked two and two; there were six of us.
406. You say that on the occasion of the bad fish you got potatoes?—I know that; but I did not go down to see whether they got bully beef.
407. *Mr. McNab*.] What was your occupation before you went into a contingent?—I was a groom, but I gave that up and went into butchering.
408. What is your age?—Twenty-two.
409. Did you do any fighting in South Africa?—No.
410. You had a trip to South Africa and back again, and had a very good time of it on the veldt?—Yes.
411. And your pay was running all the time, and you got thirty-one days' extra pay after you came back?—Yes; but we had to put up with some hardships over there.

412. Do you think you did badly?—No. I nearly got panned out through a railway accident, and was very glad to escape as I did.
413. It was a good trip on the whole?—It was a very good trip, and I should not mind if there was another.
414. Am I to understand that the meat you refer to was the meat as it came from the hold, and not the meat as it came out of the butcher's shop?—No.
415. Not the meat as it went from the butcher's shop to the galley?—I could not say that.
416. How many wash-basins were there which would not work?—I could not tell you how many.
417. Would there be half a dozen basins which would not work?—There would.
418. Would there be a dozen?—It would be about that.
419. When did you notice that they did not work?—When I went to have a wash.
420. On what day?—I do not remember the day.
421. Was it at the beginning of the voyage or afterwards?—It was all through the voyage.
422. Did you make any complaint to an officer about it?—No, I did not. I believe a complaint was made.
423. By whom?—I forget the man's name, but he was one of the troopers.
424. You cannot give his name?—No; but I know that a complaint was made. We had the pump going about four days before we landed, so that we could have a wash.
425. So that the voyage was nearly over before a complaint was made?—I do not say that. There were complaints made before.
426. Do you say on oath that complaints were made before that?—The only complaint I know of was when the officer of the day had the plug taken off the pump and let the men have the water.
427. Do you not know about another complaint of the absence of water?—No.
428. *Colonel Davies.*] Where were the basins that did not work?—Going into the hospital at the top of the stairs.
429. You were in the South Island contingent forward?—That is right.
430. And you washed forward?—Yes.
431. How do you know that the basins aft would not work?—Because I used sometimes to go down there to have a wash. You could get water from the cook.
432. Were there not four wash-houses forward and two aft?—Yes.
433. And about twelve basins in each of the ones forward?—I expect there would be.
434. And between six and ten in each of the ones aft?—I do not think so.
435. Supposing a non-commissioned officer in No. 1 regiment gave evidence that both these lavatories were available for those who applied?—I would say they were not.
436. How often did you go aft?—When I could not get a wash forward.
437. You knew there was an order against men washing in the wrong part of the ship?—Yes.
438. And although you say there were twenty-four basins aft, and there were five hundred men in each part of the ship, you thought you would get a wash by going aft to have it?—Yes, because they mostly went forward to get a wash.
439. *Captain Lewin.*] Do you know where the condensed water was stored?—No.
440. Do you know whether pipes led from that?—I do not know.
441. Where was the fresh water?—It was alongside the cook's place.
442. Do you know the pipes laid down from there?—Yes; just on the hospital-floor.
443. Do you know what that tank you used to fill was for?—For the troops' galley.
444. Was that all?—As far as I know.
445. Are you sure the water was not pumped into that for washing purposes?—I do not know, but the water we pumped was for the galley.
446. All that water was for the galley only?—Yes.
447. Where did the men get their washing-water from?—I do not know.
448. In fact, you do not know anything about it?—I only know of the water we pumped, and that was for the troops' galley.
449. You say the basins were in a bad state of repair: do you know who was in charge of them? Was it Sergeant Henderson?—Yes.
450. Do you know it was his duty to keep them in proper order?—Yes.
451. And it is universally conceded that he did good work all through the voyage?—Yes. I only know what I said about the water.
452. *The Chairman.*] You say there were orders for a fatigue party to pump water, and you were one of that party?—Yes.
453. And all the water you pumped was simply going into the troops' galley?—Yes.
454. Where did the water come from that the men washed in?—I do not know.
455. *Mr. McNab.*] There were no men told off to pump for the officers?—No.
456. And if a member of the contingent states that the men told off for pumping were pumping for the officers and not for the men he is stating what was not the case?—No. We never pumped at all for the officers. I know that for a positive fact.
457. Do you know Sergeant Challis?—Yes.
458. And if he states that the pumping was for the officers his statement is wrong?—It is wrong. Corporal Dunford was in charge of the pumping fatigue party until three days before we reached Wellington.
- Trooper FRANK FREE examined on oath. (No. 43.)
459. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of a contingent?—Yes.
460. Which one?—The Eighth.
461. What rank?—Trooper.

462. On board the "Britannic"?—Yes.

463. What was your occupation before you went?—I was a labourer.

464. You have volunteered to give evidence as to the quality of the food and the accommodation on board the "Britannic": will you state to the Commission what you know yourself about these matters?—The meat that we got was not fit to eat. It was badly cooked. The vegetables, I did not think very much of. As for the sleeping-room, there were only about ten hammocks, when there should have been about fourteen. The rest slept on the floor. I slept on the floor all the way over. There was some meat thrown overboard one day that came up out of the hold. The tea was always greasy, and, as for the coffee, there was as much grounds as there was coffee nearly. It was boiled in the same boiler as the meat and soup were boiled in. As for the washing-accommodation, there was not enough. The water was only turned on for about an hour, and it was next to impossible to get a wash.

465. What do you mean by the meat being badly cooked?—It was brown on the outside and raw all through.

466. How often did you get roast meat?—About in turn with the boiled.

467. Was the roast meat beef or mutton?—Beef mostly.

468. And that used to be very underdone?—Yes.

469. And the boiled meat, how often?—Not so often as the roast meat. It was better than the roast meat.

470. You mean better cooked?—Yes.

471. In what squadron were you?—E squadron.

472. You have no fault to find with the boiled meat?—It was better than the roast meat.

473. Was it generally bad or generally good?—You could not complain about it. It was just about fair like. You could not say it was good and you could not say it was bad.

474. Was it eatable?—It was; but the roast meat was not.

475. Tell me some occasion when you complained about the roast meat?—I know that one day they went up to complain.

476. Were you mess orderly?—I was orderly for the sergeants at one time.

477. Coming back to the troops, can you give me one occasion when the men complained that they could not eat the meat?—Yes.

478. To whom?—I think it was reported to Lieutenant Harper.

479. What was done?—I do not think anything.

480. What was the nature of the complaint?—That the meat was underdone.

481. Did Lieutenant Harper say anything?—He said he would see to it.

482. Were you there?—I was.

483. Do you believe that he took steps to remedy it?—Yes, as far as I know.

484. How often were there official complaints made of the meat being uneatable?—There were complaints almost every day.

485. When these complaints were made were the men ever given any food in exchange?—One day they were given tinned meat.

486. Was that in lieu of beef or mutton?—It was in lieu of fish.

487. What vegetables?—Potatoes, and very little other vegetables.

488. Did you get plenty of potatoes?—Not more than one potato each.

489. What did you have for breakfast?—Sometimes a little bacon, but generally stew.

490. What was the stew made of?—Nothing but mutton. It looked almost like boiled water. There were potatoes with it.

491. And you only got one potato a day?—That was at dinner.

492. None for breakfast?—There were a lot of potatoes then.

493. How much did you get?—About half a potato each.

494. Were they good potatoes?—Yes; they were about the ordinary size.

495. You say you had bacon for breakfast sometimes: anything else?—Yes; we had sausages sometimes.

496. How often in the week did you have bacon?—About once or twice a week.

497. And for supper?—Generally tinned meat.

498. Then, you got meat three times a day?—Yes.

499. Do you think meat three times a day is enough to keep a man in health?—There was too much meat.

500. Did you get enough?—We got enough, but we could not eat it.

501. If the meat was good the quantity was sufficient?—Yes; but the vegetables were not.

502. There is apt to be a difficulty about vegetables on board ship?—I do not know; there was plenty of room to stow vegetables.

503. Do you know the ration of an Imperial soldier?—No.

504. About the bread: how was that?—We had a small loaf of bread each day.

505. What was the quality?—Very good.

506. Any biscuits?—As many as we wanted.

507. Butter?—Twice a week we got butter.

508. Jam?—Twice a week.

509. Were there days when you had neither jam nor butter?—No. Sometimes they ate it all at one meal.

510. You tell us there was only room for ten hammocks out of fourteen?—Yes.

511. Did you sleep in a hammock or on the floor?—On the floor.

512. Why?—There were not enough hooks, and you must sleep on the floor.

513. How far apart were the hooks?—About 18 in.

514. You are sure there were four out of every fourteen who could not get hooks?—Yes. I know there were fourteen at our table and only ten hooks.

515. What time used you to turn out in the morning?—About half-past 6. Some of them never got up till 7.
516. And you yourself?—About a quarter to 7.
517. If you got up a little earlier you could always get a wash?—No; the water was not turned on.
518. Until when?—Until about 7 o'clock.
519. Do you know anything about pumping the water?—No.
520. Or about the fatigue party?—I do not.
521. When did they begin to pump?—Very early, but the water was not turned on.
522. Until about how long after reveille?—About half an hour.
523. To what hour was it allowed to run?—It ran for about an hour.
524. Up to 7 or half-past 7 or 8 o'clock?—Between 7 and 8 o'clock.
525. Not before 7?—No.
526. Was it available till 8 o'clock?—I think so; but there were only three or four basins aft to wash in. They all had to come forward to wash.
527. You say the meat was thrown overboard?—Yes.
528. Do you know anything about the inspection of the meat?—I believe it was inspected every day, but I do not know.
529. How often was the meat of that nature that it had to be thrown overboard?—Almost every day; they just cut the edge off because it was cooked and the rest of the meat was not.
530. Did you not see the meat before it was cooked?—No; it was wrapped up in scrim, and I could not see it.
531. You have no fault to find with the meat, but with the cooking?—The beef did not taste too well.
532. How do you mean?—It was that raw that it had no taste.
533. *Mr. McNab.*] Do you know Trooper Farrow?—Yes.
534. Was he in your squadron?—Yes.
535. If he said the meat was always boiled he would be mistaken?—Yes; we had roast meat at times.
536. I suppose if some of the men who complained of the water-supply said it was turned on at 6 o'clock and off at 8 o'clock they would be wrong?—It was not turned on for two hours; it was not turned on for an hour.
537. Were you in the habit of looking at the time?—No.
538. Then, you do not know the time it was turned on?—No.
539. Do you not think that as you cannot tell the hour of reveille you might be mistaken about the time the water was on?—It was turned on about half an hour after reveille, but it may have been from half-past 6 to half-past 7 o'clock, but it was not on for more than an hour.
540. It was never on after half-past 7 o'clock?—No; you could not get a wash after that.
541. And if men told us it was on till 8 o'clock they were mistaken?—I should say so.
542. *The Chairman.*] If you got up at a quarter to 7 and the reveille went at 6 o'clock you lost your wash?—Yes.
543. *Colonel Davies.*] Do you remember one or more occasions on which, as you say, the meat was reported?—Yes; two or three times.
544. Do you know whether there was meat given instead?—Yes; one day. I do not know whether it was the stew or at dinner-time.
545. Do you remember if there was one night when the stew was complained of?—Yes.
546. Then, there were two occasions?—Yes.
547. You said just now there was only one?—Yes; that was wrong.
548. What was the matter with that stew?—I do not know.
549. Do you know that a great many men were satisfied with that stew, and that it was because there were pickles mixed with it that the others objected?—I do not know.
550. You say you had butter twice a week?—Yes.
551. And how often jam?—About twice a week.
552. Are you not sure you had jam five times a week, and butter twice?—I do not know. Our table never had jam.
553. I know that what the ship's people guaranteed to me was that it would be supplied five times a week?—It may have been supplied, but it never came to our table.
554. You say there were three basins aft when you lived forward?—Yes.
555. How do you know?—I went through the wash-house one day.
556. But there might have been more without your knowing?—Yes.
557. Have you been talking to anybody about the matter?—No.
558. *Mr. McNab.*] At the place where you say there were three basins, was that the sum total of the basins there?—Yes. There may have been another wash-house, but I did not see it.
559. Did you ever notice the number of basins where the water was not working?—Sometimes in the middle forward the basins were not working and sometimes they were.
560. Did you ever hear of any basins that for several weeks were not working continuously?—I never noticed them. There were some that did not go for the whole time continuously, but I did not notice any particular one that did not run the whole time.
561. Did you ever hear the men complain that there were half a dozen or a dozen basins that would not work at all?—No, I never heard anything about it.
562. At the place where there were three basins were there a lot more basins alongside that would not work?—No.
563. *Colonel Davies.*] What do you mean by "the basins in the middle forward"?—There were two wash-houses on each side and another in the middle.
564. Are you sure it was not aft?—No; I am speaking of E squadron, just as you go down to the hold.

WEDNESDAY, 27TH AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper MICHAEL JAMES MULHERN, sworn and examined. (No. 44.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your Christian name and surname?—Michael James Mulhern.
2. What contingent were you a member of?—The Eighth Contingent, sir.
3. What squadron?—E.
4. Were you a trooper on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
5. With the rank of trooper?—Yes, sir.
6. Did you volunteer to give evidence, or were you subpoenaed?—I have been specially summoned.
7. Can you speak as to the food or accommodation?—Well, I would sooner answer questions than make a statement.
8. How did you find the food on board the ship?—Well, it was not too good.
9. In what way did it prove itself to be not good?—Well, in the first place, the stew we had was simply spuds and water. You could hardly find the meat in it; it was very scarce.
10. How many potatoes did you get as a rule for breakfast?—That is very hard to say how many we got; it averaged about one a man. It was very small at that.
11. How much meat?—There were thirteen men at our table, and there was not enough meat for three men in the stew.
12. You mean ten men had to go without meat and three got it?—No; thirteen men had it hashed up amongst them.
13. Would there only be three mutton chops for the ten men?—Well, there would not be any more.
14. How often did this happen?—Well, very nearly every morning.
15. Did you make any complaint about it?—I made complaints every time.
16. When did you report any insufficiency of meat for breakfast?—I never reported breakfast. At times I reported to the men's orderlies.
17. When did you report this?—I never reported it.
18. Were you mess orderly?—Only once for six days; the first six days of the trip.
19. How often did you report an insufficiency of food?—I reported every day to our sergeant, sir.
20. Who was he?—Sergeant Henderson.
21. What was the nature of your report?—The food was not sufficient; we had not enough of it.
22. Did you tell him there were only three mutton chops to ten men?—I did not tell him that. I told him we had not enough.
23. You have sworn that you had about that quantity—three mutton chops to ten men?—That is in the stews. I never reported that.
24. Did you ever report to him that there was only one potato per man and not enough meat to go round?—No, sir.
25. You never reported particulars of any complaint?—That is so, sir.
26. Did the men get anything else besides that for breakfast?—No, sir, never that I know of; they had to take that or go without.
27. Did they get any bread?—Yes, sir; the bread was sufficient.
28. Any butter?—Yes; butter and jam always sufficient.
29. There was one potato per man for breakfast?—Yes; that is all in the stew.
30. What size was the potato?—A very small one.
31. And there were only about three mutton chops to thirteen men?—Yes, sir; I would not swear though as to that.
32. Would it be an exaggeration for one to say there were five chops to thirteen men?—I would not say there would be five chops; at the outside there would be four.
33. Now, about biscuits. Were there any biscuits served out to the men?—There were sufficient biscuits. There was always a barrel of biscuits so that we could help ourselves, but they were not the best.
34. What was wrong with them?—They had no taste, and were hard. There was one barrel blue-mouldy.
35. Upon all other occasions what sort of biscuits were they then?—The biscuits were all right, but there was no taste. They tasted just like flour and water, and they were hard.
36. You say they were made of flour and water?—Yes, sir, I suppose so.
37. What are they generally made of?—I do not know; but they were not as good as the biscuits we got on the veldt.
38. Were you in any other contingent before you went with the Eighth?—No, sir.
39. And the biscuits were in abundance?—Yes, plenty of them.
40. Had you anything to do with some fish that was bad?—Yes, sir.
41. What happened upon that occasion?—I paraded in front of Colonel Davies.
42. Were you orderly on that day?—No, sir. I was not orderly at all, but the mess orderlies would not take it. It had been lying on the decks for two or three days, and I saw dogs making water on it. The same fish was served out to us that the dogs made water on.
43. What were the fish in on the deck?—It was just lying on the deck bare.
44. Not in sacks or anything?—No.
45. How much fish was there on the deck?—I could not say as to the amount. I dare say it had to do the ship for the day. I would not say as to the amount.

46. Can you give us some idea as to the size of the heap?—I could not say as to the amount. I should say there was enough for the one meal.

47. And it lay there how many days?—Two days to my knowledge.

48. And was it all taken away?—I could not say. I never saw any more of it after it was cooked for us.

49. Was that pile of fish taken away and cooked for the one meal?—Yes, the whole of it was taken away at once.

50. And then was there more brought up on deck?—I never saw any more on the deck, sir.

51. It did not lie there the whole voyage?—No, sir; only the once.

52. And you are sure it was there for two days?—Yes, sir.

53. Then, you imagine that the food had been polluted?—Yes.

54. And what did you do with it?—I paraded in front of Colonel Davies here on the saloon deck. I went to the orderly officer first, and he said he could do nothing.

55. Who was the orderly officer?—Lieutenant Martin, South Island regiment.

56. He said he could do nothing about the fish?—Yes; he said he reckoned it was all right.

57. And then what happened?—A mob of us paraded on the saloon deck to see Colonel Davies. He looked at the fish, and I think he was told by an Australian trooper what was wrong with it, and he gave us an issue of bully beef.

58. He ordered an issue of bully beef?—Yes, sir.

59. Straight away?—Yes; but the troop I belonged to never saw any of it—E squadron. They sent down a 7 lb. tin to divide among a hundred and twenty men.

60. Your troop saw nothing of it?—No, sir.

61. And there were only 7 lb. sent?—That is what I heard.

62. Did you see the tin?—No, I never saw it. We had to go without; we got none at all.

63. How many men were in the squadron?—Over a hundred.

64. You do not know that of your own knowledge?—No; I never saw the tin at all. There was none of it in our troop.

65. Did you believe that 7 lb. was issued to a hundred men?—Yes; I heard so.

66. Do you think it is likely?—Yes; I heard it from a sergeant.

67. Tell us his name?—Sergeant Henderson told me so.

68. Have you any other complaints about dinner?—We had stinking meat for dinner one day, and I paraded before Captain Fookes; he was orderly for the day, and he got me a fresh lot of meat.

69. Did he get fresh meat?—He got me more; not fresh; it was absolutely worse than the first lot. I paraded again, and he took it to the doctor, who inspected all the meat in the morning, and he said the meat was all right and we would have to do with that; so I threw it overboard, as it was not fit for human consumption. Captain Fookes said, "The captain said it was all right," and that it was all he could do. We got no more, and I threw it over the side.

70. What part of the voyage was this?—Between Albany and Melbourne, I think. I could not say for certain.

71. Was it before you arrived at Albany?—No; I think it was between Albany and Melbourne. The meat was green, and it was not fit for a pig to eat.

72. How often did you get bad meat?—Well, every day, sir. We did not get good meat from the day we left Durban. The best meat we got was bully beef, and there were only three or four occasions when we got that.

73. You said your squadron did not get any when it was issued?—That was on the day about the fish.

74. This day you reported the green meat, did they not give you bully beef then?—No.

75. Tell us some other occasion when you got bully beef—what was wrong then?—The other fresh meat we got was absolutely rotten.

76. When, every day?—Yes, pretty well; if it was good it was not cooked.

77. But about the condition of the meat, how often was it tainted or rotten?—Six days out of seven it was tainted.

78. When it was tainted do you mean that it smelt?—Yes, it did smell.

79. You mean it had a putrid smell?—Yes; it was not a proper kind of smell.

80. How did it smell?—Well, it smelt like meat that had gone bad.

81. Rotten meat?—Yes, sir.

82. Was the mutton and the beef the same?—Yes, the whole lot. I never saw much difference with the whole lot of it. The mutton, if anything, was better than the beef.

83. About the cooking of the meat?—The majority of the time the meat was raw; when we got it it was not half cooked.

84. Did you make complaint about the rawness?—Yes; I believe there were complaints made by the mess orderlies.

85. By yourself?—No, I did not. I made complaints once or twice about meat being insufficiently cooked when I was mess orderly.

86. To whom?—To Lieutenant Harper and Lieutenant Manson.

87. When you complained the meat was raw?—Yes; we had an issue of bully beef both times.

88. Did you have any potatoes for dinner?—Yes, sir.

89. How many did you have?—Well, they generally ran about one a man if it was a big one, or two small ones.

90. What was the size of the small ones?—The big ones were about 3 in. in diameter; the small ones, quarter the size.

91. Did you ever get any puddings?—Yes, we had puddings. Boiled mealies more times than anything else.



92. Boiled mealies?—Yes; we had that very often; we had plum-pudding now and again, and rice and prunes.

93. By mealies do you mean Indian-corn flour?—Yes; we had that on more occasions than anything else.

94. How was that served?—Just boiled with water and served out as a pudding.

95. Was there no sugar, custard, or anything in it?—No custard.

96. Just plain flour and water boiled together?—Yes, sir.

97. And that used to be served out to you more often than anything else?—Yes, sir; some days we got none.

98. What did you have for supper?—It was about the best meal of the day.

99. What did you have for that?—Tea and cold meat.

100. And used the cold meat to be eaten?—It was better than the boiled stuff; you could not smell it so much.

101. Was it fresh meat or salt meat, or what?—It was generally bully beef.

102. You sometimes got fresh beef and mutton?—Yes.

103. And was that eatable?—You could eat it, and that is about all.

104. How many days in the week did you find it eatable?—Well, you had to eat it any day you could do so.

105. You have sworn that six days out of the seven the meat was putrid and you were able to eat it at supper-time?—Well, the meat was not what you would call good at any time.

106. Was this meat you used to eat at supper-time tainted?—Yes, it was tainted.

107. And you used to eat this for supper?—Yes; we had to eat it, because there was nothing else.

108. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—Miner.

109. *Colonel Davies.*] You said you had boiled mealies?—Yes, sir.

110. Do you know what you mean? You mean ground rice, do you not?—No, sir.

111. Do you mean to tell me that you had ground mealies on that boat?—Yes, sir.

112. Who said it was mealies?—All the troopers I have known.

113. Have you ever seen mealie-meal in Africa?—Yes, sir.

114. Where have you eaten it?—In Africa.

115. Where did you get it?—Bought it at a store in Klerksdorp.

116. You bought mealie-meal from a store at Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.

117. What store?—In the main street.

118. Which do you call the main street: the street that runs through the square?—Yes, sir. There was only one main street in the town.

119. Where was the store situated?—On the left-hand side coming from the camp.

120. The store was on the left-hand side?—Yes; at the far end of the town.

121. In the square?—No; you passed the square to get into the main street.

122. And you bought mealie from the store?—Yes, sir.

123. What for?—To eat; we called it a luxury.

124. You were better fed on the veldt and yet you bought mealie-meal as a luxury?—Well, I reckon we were better fed on the veldt than on the boat.

125. And you bought mealie-meal on the veldt as a luxury?—Yes, sir.

126. And yet you complained about having it on the boat?—Yes; they called it a pudding.

127. And when you were better fed you bought it as a luxury?—Well, we bought it for breakfast.

128. Is this correct, then: that when you were better fed you bought as a luxury what you complain of having on the boat?—I do not mean what you mean by better food.

129. Were you better fed on the boat or on the veldt?—We were better fed on the veldt.

130. You bought mealie-meal as a luxury on the veldt?—Yes, sir, as a sort of extra.

131. You said a luxury?—Yes, sir.

132. You said when you took the fish to Mr. Martin he said the fish was all right?—Yes, sir.

133. And you corrected yourself by saying that he could not do anything?—He said the fish was all right; he could do nothing.

*Witness (to Chairman):* On arrival at Albany I broke ship on Sunday night. I went ashore to get flea-powder to kill the lice, and to get a good meal that I had not had since I left Durban. When I came back I got ten days, and was fined £2. I came back by myself; I was not fetched by a picket, and they put me down for deserting. I would like to know who gets this £2.

134. *Mr. McNab.*] Do you suggest that the Commission should inquire about the £2?—Yes. I went in front of Colonel Chaytor and was fined.

Sergeant HENDERSON sworn and examined. (No. 45.)

135. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your Christian name and surname?—James Henderson.

136. What contingent were you in?—The Eighth.

137. Which squadron?—E.

138. You were a sergeant, were you?—Yes, sir.

139. What were you before you went to the front?—I was acting-corporal when I left here.

140. But what was your occupation before you joined the troop?—Labourer.

141. Were you away with any other contingent?—Yes, sir; the Third.

142. You volunteered, sergeant, to give us some evidence in regard to the transport of troops on the "Britannic": have you any complaints to make?—No, sir.

143. Were you subpoenaed?—Yes, sir.

144. Have you yourself any complaints to make against your treatment on the troopship so far as the food and accommodation are concerned?—No, sir, I have not.

145. Have you any complaint to make against any officer?—No, sir, none.
146. You were sergeant in charge of the latrines?—Yes, sir, I was.
147. What were your duties in connection with the latrines?—To see that they were kept clean.
148. How often did you clean them?—Once a day.
149. And they were always thoroughly cleaned out once a day?—Yes, sir.
160. What time was that?—They were started at 9 and finished at 10 o'clock.
161. Did you at any time ever know those latrines to be in such a state that a man could not get into them without going over his boot-tops in water?—Yes, sir.
162. Did it happen often?—Twice during the voyage—once in the North Island and once in the South Island deck. There were two parts of the boat—North Island, stern; and the South Island, forward. The latrines were awash in both places.
163. Was that caused by the blocking of a pipe?—Yes, sir. The sergeant-major reported it to the chief engineer, and it was altered about two hours after.
164. So that with the exception of that one occasion the water was running constantly through the latrines?—Yes.
165. And no exceptionally offensive smell arose from the latrines except on this occasion?—No, sir.
166. And you had no complaints made to you?—No, sir.
167. Was it a difficult job to clear the pipes and let the stuff run away?—In the South Island quarters it would run away itself; on the North Island part it had to be pulled out.
168. That was caused by the pipe being blocked?—Yes, sir.
169. And only on one occasion it was blocked?—Yes, sir.
170. If evidence has been given that this happened several times, you say that that evidence is incorrect?—I should say so, sir.
171. I suppose you had no other duties but this?—No, sir.
172. You had no duties down on the 'tween decks?—No, sir.
173. No complaints would be brought to you except about the latrines?—No, sir.
174. *Mr. McNab.*] On these occasions when the water overflowed, did it ever get so high as to flow over the top of the place you stepped over to go to the latrine?—Well, at the South Island end it never did, sir, and it was never reported to me, but it may have done so.
175. There was never a complaint to you from any man that it poured over this place and went on to the deck?—No, sir.
176. And you were always available for a man to come to at once if he saw anything wrong?—Yes, sir; I was there for that purpose.
177. *The Chairman.*] How often during the course of the day was it your duty to see to the latrines?—I was not there all day myself; there was a sergeant there to inform me if there was anything wrong with the latrines.
178. How often do you think they were seen by some responsible person?—I should say, every five minutes of the day. It never overflowed in the daytime at all. It could not happen in the daytime, because some one would have seen it and reported at once.
179. When it did overflow do you think it was due to the neglect of anybody, or was it one of those accidents that happen on board ship?—I think it was caused by using too much paper. The paper would stop the flow of the water and it would have to run somewhere.
180. You are not conscious that the water overflowed on to the deck?—No, sir, not that I am aware of. It may have done so, but I am not aware of it.
181. Where were the South Island latrines?—On the forward part of the ship.
182. Do you know where the fish stood on the deck?—In the middle of the ship, a bit aft.
183. Was it close to the latrines?—Alongside one of them, I believe.
184. That would be the North Island latrine?—Yes, sir.
185. It has been stated that this overflowed on to some fish?—I did not see it myself.
186. Do you believe it?—No.
187. You do not believe it?—No, not from the latrines.
188. If there had often been cause of complaint do you think you would have heard of it?—I should think so.
189. There has been an assertion that the latrines were constantly filthy: is that true or untrue?—It is untrue, sir.
190. *Mr. Millar.*] Do you think there was sufficient latrine accommodation for the men on board the ship?—Yes, sir, I do.
191. You think there was ample?—Yes. Between 9 and 10 o'clock I used to shut them up, so that we could get them cleaned. There was quite enough accommodation for them between the other times.
192. How did the latrine accommodation compare with that on the boat you went to South Africa in?—Every bit as good, sir.
193. What boat did you go over in?—I went over in the "Knight Templar," and came back in the "Tongariro."
194. Was the latrine accommodation as good on the "Britannic" as on these boats?—Yes, it was every bit as good.
195. How was the sleeping-accommodation?—There was not nearly so much room—not half so much.
196. Do you think she was too crowded?—We were very much crowded.
197. Was it the same on deck?—Yes; there was no room to exercise yourself on deck.
198. As far as the sleeping-accommodation and the space for exercise on the main deck are concerned, in your opinion, the ship was too crowded?—I do certainly think so, sir.

199. Were you yourself satisfied with the food?—I was not satisfied with the meat. Some of was of a pretty high flavour.
200. Did you ever make complaint about it?—I did not myself, but there was complaint made about it.
201. Were you at the sergeants' mess?—Yes.
202. And did you ever have it rectified: when you got bad meat were you given anything in place of it?—I think the quartermasters brought some tinned meats with them from Durban, and we used to eat that.
203. That you provided yourselves?—Yes.
204. The ship did not give you an issue?—No; we did not apply for it.
205. As far as the sergeants' mess at which you sat was concerned, if the meat was bad you had to eat it or go without?—Yes, that is right.
206. Is there anything else in connection with the food you would like to say?—No, sir, nothing else.
207. It was just the meat?—Yes; it was not always cooked, especially if it happened to be roast beef.
208. Was it often tainted?—Yes, sir.
209. And, as far as you know, no issue of other meat was given in lieu of that tainted meat?—No, sir.
210. *Mr. McNab.*] Did you ever ask for another issue?—I never, sir. I do not think any of the rest did. The troopers did, I know.
211. You stated that you had to take it or go without?—We did not ask for it.
212. You do not want the Commission to understand that you felt you had to take that meat or you would get nothing else?—No; we did not ask for any other.
213. They did that because they had food of their own?—Yes.
214. Had you charge of the wash-basins?—Yes, I had charge of them too.
215. How many wash-basins were there on the vessel—how many lavatories?—I could not say how many there were, I am sure.
216. How many do you remember?—I am not sure about it.
217. Would there be more than three?—Oh, yes; there would be over twenty. I am quite safe in saying that.
218. How many aft would there be?—I could not say for certain.
219. Were there sixteen?—There may have been. I could not say.
220. There was no place forward where there were so few as three or five?—No.
221. Was there any place forward or aft where a large number of basins would not work at all?—I know that on some occasions some of the basins were not in use because there was an insufficiency of water to run in. Sometimes there were only two or three basins that had water, and I know I reported twice that there was no water in them at all.
222. How often would there not be water in them?—Not very often: two or three times perhaps.
223. If a man says that after going on board for the first two weeks that there were as many as half a dozen basins that they could not wash in for want of water, would that be correct?—There would be more than that you could not wash in.
224. Then, you say that for a whole fortnight there were more than half a dozen basins standing absolutely idle that the water was never in?—I would not say that. I thought you meant any time more than half a dozen basins. I have seen the whole of the basins without water in them. I have seen it twice on the voyage for two days—not running.
225. How many did you see?—The whole lot of them.
226. How long was the water turned on for?—I do not know what time in the morning it was turned on.
227. What time was it turned off?—I know it was about 9 o'clock. If it was not turned off at that time I used to stop it to get the place cleaned up. There were always men there in the morning, and I used to stop it to have it cleaned up.
228. If any man wanted to have a wash was it possible for him to get a wash always?—He must have it before 9 o'clock, sir.
229. Was it possible for any man who really wanted a wash to get it before 9 o'clock?—I should think so. I managed to get a wash myself. I could always get a wash.
230. Were there some who did not get up early enough?—They all had to get up before that time.
231. But they did not bustle round?—If they did not bustle round they would not get a wash.
232. *Mr. Millar.*] You say you have seen the men washing just before 9 o'clock?—Yes, before 9.
233. Have you ever had to turn men out at 9 o'clock?—Yes, many times.
234. They have been washing then?—Yes, sir.
235. If we have had evidence that no water was available after 7 you would say that is not correct?—Yes, sir, leaving out the two occasions when there was no water.
236. If any one says that water was not available after half-past 7 you say that it is not correct?—Yes, sir.
237. You yourself have turned them out at 9 o'clock?—Yes. I used to go and turn them outside myself. It used to take an hour to clean them out, and I had to have them cleaned by 10 o'clock.
238. On those occasions when you turned the men out it was 9 o'clock?—Yes, sir.
239. On more than one occasion you have known men frequently washing themselves at 9 o'clock in the morning?—Yes, sir.

240. If reveille sounded at 6 o'clock and the fatigue party for pumping the water started at 6 o'clock we may assume, then, that the water was on from half-past 6 till 9 a.m. for washing purposes?—Yes, sir; but not after 9 o'clock.

241. It was no rare occurrence to turn them out at 9 o'clock?—No, sir.

242. *Colonel Davies.*] You have frequently seen me going through the latrines and wash-houses?—Yes, sir; in the morning, on inspection.

243. Every morning?—Yes, sir.

244. And you have never heard me complain of the state they were in?—No, sir; none of the officers did.

245. You heard me say that they were very good latrines and kept clean?—Yes, sir, I have. I never had a complaint from an officer all the time I was there.

246. You have heard me say that I thought they were kept very clean?—Yes, sir.

247. You told us that on two occasions the water was not available for the basins?—Yes, on two occasions.

248. Was there something wrong with the pump?—Yes, sir. I think the first time there was no water in the forward part of the ship, or that they were changing the tanks.

249. On those occasions did they have to go without water to wash?—Yes; they could not get any. On the first occasion we did, just before landing in Albany. On the second occasion, just before our arrival in Wellington, we had to carry the water.

250. That is, on one occasion you got it, and on the other you did not?—Yes, on one occasion we got it. I do not think that a quarter of the men had a wash that morning. We had not time to pump the water before 9 o'clock, and I would not allow them to wash afterwards.

Quartermaster-Sergeant HORNE sworn and examined. (No. 46.)

251. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—William John Stephen Horne.

252. You are a quartermaster-sergeant?—Yes, sir.

253. What contingent?—The Eighth.

254. What squadron?—B.

255. What was your occupation previous to joining?—Brick labourer.

256. Were you in any other contingent?—Yes; I was in the Fifth Contingent, and served full time under Colonel Newall.

257. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation and transport matters on board the "Britannic." The Commission will be very pleased to hear what you have to say. Will you state shortly the subjects you want to refer to?—Well, I will start on the sleeping-accommodation first. We went on to the "Britannic" at Durban on the 5th July, and at 6 o'clock we were served out with blankets for the men. The quartermaster had to draw them and issue them to the men. The blankets they were given were not clean, and two of the men came to me and asked if they could not get the blankets changed. I went to see if there were any cleaner blankets, and they told me that was all the blankets on board the ship. The blankets were lousy. As to the sleeping-accommodation, there was no room down below for our men to sleep in. The men were sleeping on tables and on the floor, and some had to go up and sleep on the deck. The food for the first two or three days on the boat was very good. We had really good mutton; we could not get better. It was New Zealand mutton. After that the tucker got very bad. We had stews for breakfast. There were a few potatoes and a little bit of meat, and the rest was water. For dinner we would sometimes have roast beef, which was half-cooked and tainted. Most of it was tainted; five times in the week it would be tainted.

258. *The Chairman.*] Was it the beef or all the meat that was tainted?—The beef, sir. The mutton was really good; it was Nelson Bros., of Tomoana. One day there was some fish brought on the scene for dinner. I saw this fish with my own eyes lying out on the deck for three days, and I saw the latrines run over one night. They filled up, and in the morning they were cleaned; but during that time when the boat would roll I would see the water roll on to these fish, and I saw a little white dog make water on these fish. The men, too, used to loll on the top of them and sit on them. Then, the fish came on for dinner. We had some Australians on board, and they said, "Quartermaster, are you going to allow this fish to be eaten?" I said, "What fish are those?" and they said, "Those fish that were lying out on the deck." I said, "They were not to be cooked; they were to be thrown overboard." I went round, and Captain Haselden was orderly officer, and I explained to him about the fish being the way they were. He said, "Well, I have tasted the fish, and I think they are all right." He said, "There is no smell with the fish, and therefore I do not wish to have any complaint made about the fish at all." I think there was only one table that took the fish. A squadron took none at all, D squadron took none at all, and I am not sure which table took the fish; but they went up on deck to see the Colonel about it, and there was some tinned meat given out in place of the fish. There was another day when some apples were served out to the men and they were maggoty. I think that is all I can say about the food.

259. *Mr. McNab.*] Are there any other matters?—About the promenade for the men. The men had no promenade at all on which to stretch themselves. They were all down below, and they had no top deck. On the "Tagus" we had one side of the deck to ourselves, but on the "Britannic" there was no accommodation for the troopers at all so far as promenade went for them to walk about. The officers had the whole promenade deck, and gave no chance to the men to stretch themselves. They had to sit on the wet decks down below.

260. Is there any other matter?—No, sir.

261. Who was the quartermaster that issued the blankets to you?—There was Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell, Quartermaster-Sergeant Connell, and the quartermaster of the boat.

262. Who is the senior quartermaster-sergeant?—Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell.

263. When you found the blankets were not clean did you report to Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell?—Yes, sir. I said, "Mac, these blankets are very dirty," and he said, "It cannot be helped; that is all on board the ship." I said, "It is a wonder they never washed them," and he said, "The Yeomanry have just gone out, and I believe we have got the blankets straight from them."

264. How many men were there that you could say complained to you about their blankets being lousy?—I could mention a few names if you like: Sergeant-Major Blackstone, Sergeant-Major Pender, Sergeants Baker and Rountree, and there was myself.

265. You are mentioning the names of men who complained to you?—Yes; these all complained, and they told me that they were not lousy before they went on the boat.

266. Were there any men lousy on board the boat?—Yes, there were some, sir. Trooper Cunningham came to me and said, "This is the first time I have been lousy in my life."

267. How many of your squadron do you think would be lousy when they came on board?—I do not suppose there would be more than a dozen out of the squadron, but there might be more.

268. Did you always have the same blankets right through the voyage?—Well, no, some did not. They were put down in the hammock-racks down below. Each mess had its hammock-rack, and they used to take one another's blankets.

269. I suppose if some men came on board lousy, even with clean blankets some men would have got contaminated during the voyage?—I should think so, as they took one another's blankets.

270. Do you remember if they always slept in the same hammock?—No, I could not say that.

271. Do you not know for a fact that the hammocks were changed about?—My hammock was never changed.

272. Do you not know for a fact that the hammocks were changed?—Yes, I know for a fact that some were changed.

273. And would not the changing of the hammocks have a tendency to distribute lice throughout the squadron?—Yes, sir, that would happen.

274. You spoke of the meat being tainted: was that before you came to Albany or after you left Albany?—Yes, before we came to Albany, and after we left.

275. Was it part of your duty to get your squadron's meat from the galley?—As quartermaster-sergeant I used to go up and see the rations served out, and I often saw the meat cut up at the butchers' shop at night time.

276. After leaving Albany?—Yes, sir, and before we got to Albany.

277. You know for a fact that that meat was inspected by Veterinary Captain Young?—Well, I could not say for a positive fact as to that, sir.

278. Did you ever hear it stated that he was inspecting the meat?—Yes, I heard that he was inspecting it.

279. Did you ever see the veterinary surgeon inspecting it?—I saw him once, sir.

280. And if the veterinary surgeon says in his evidence that after he went on—which was a day or two before reaching Albany—there was never any tainted meat sent from the butchers' shop to be cooked for the men would you contradict it?—Yes, I would, sir.

281. Have you had any experience with meat?—I have had a good deal of experience with meat one way and another.

282. In what way?—I have killed a few sheep and bullocks.

283. And you would put your opinion against Veterinary Surgeon Young's?—Yes, as far as the meat being tainted, I will.

284. Did you ever yourself complain about the meat?—I complained to the orderly officer when he came round. I told him that I had been round the tables and saw that the meat was bad. He tasted it himself.

285. What officer do you refer to?—Mr. Shera.

286. And did Mr. Shera examine the meat himself?—Yes; he smelt it, and he said that the meat was not fit to eat, and he said, "I will try and get a change." He got some bully beef in place of it.

287. Was that before you got to Albany?—Yes, sir.

288. Did Mr. Shera get some bully beef for you?—Yes, sir.

289. On that occasion the complaint was remedied?—Yes, sir.

290. Referring to the fish, was any tinned meat issued after the complaint about the fish?—Yes, sir, but it was very late. It was long after the men had dinner—about 2 o'clock.

291. But the meat was issued?—Yes, sir.

292. Do you remember reporting tainted meat to an officer after you left Albany?—Yes, it was reported.

293. To what officer?—I could not say; there was a change of officers every day.

294. And you cannot name an orderly officer to whom it was reported that there was tainted meat issued after leaving Albany?—Yes; Mr. Parker was one who was told about it.

295. Did he see the meat himself?—Yes, sir.

296. What did he say about it, do you remember?—He said, "I go to one table, and I go to another table, and they say the meat is bad." He said, "The last time I came the meat was good. Part of it will be eatable, won't it, men? I will see you don't get it again."

297. Was that all that took place?—Yes, sir.

298. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you have any complaints made to you about the scarcity of biscuits?—Yes, sir; once there was not enough biscuits, and I got another barrel.

299. When you made complaint another barrel was put down?—Yes, sir, another barrel was put down.

300. Do you think that it was possible on your deck for no biscuits to be available for three or four days?—No, I do not, because we used to draw the biscuits straight up from the hold.

301. So that if a man stated there were no biscuits on his troop-deck for three or four days you would say that is not correct?—Yes, sir. On my deck I saw that as soon as the barrel was emptied it was filled again.

302. You could get as many biscuits as you liked?—Yes, within reason. When the barrel was emptied it was filled again.

303. So that there was always a barrel of biscuits there for a man to help himself when he wanted any?—Yes, sir.

304. Did you ever hear of any complaints as the quality of the biscuits?—Yes, sir; on one occasion I heard a man complain to Colonel Davies about the biscuits.

305. What was the fault with them?—They were mouldy.

306. Did you ever know of them being maggoty?—No, I never saw any maggoty biscuits. I heard them talking about it in D squadron. A sergeant said to me, "Did you get any maggoty biscuits to-day?" and I said, "No." That is all I know about it.

307. Do you think that if that sergeant had maggoty biscuits that he could have got another cask?—Yes, sir, he could have.

308. There was no necessity for the men to eat those maggoty biscuits?—No, sir, I do not think so. Anything the men wanted I would try to get for them.

309. With the one or two exceptions of complaints made to officers, do you think that they looked after their men as far as lay in their power?—Yes, sir, I think they did. I reckon that they could have got more promenade deck for the men, though.

310. How much accommodation was there on that promenade deck altogether?—I should say it was over 60 ft. long on each side.

311. Was there a house running down the centre?—Yes, sir.

312. And the skylight over the engine-room?—Yes, sir.

313. Would there be 60 ft. long by 12 ft. wide?—Yes, sir, about 12 ft.

314. You say that in the "Tagus" better accommodation was given to the men?—Yes; we had the whole of one side, and the second-class accommodation deck.

315. And you think it would have been of advantage to the health of the men if they had been able to get exercise?—Yes, I think so, sir.

316. How many men could have got up on that deck at a time?—I should say two hundred men could have walked about there.

317. There was very little room on the main deck I presume?—Yes, sir; it was always crowded.

318. Now, you said the sleeping-accommodation was very bad?—Yes, sir.

319. Have you any idea how many hammock-hooks there were?—There used to be twelve sitting at table, and eight men could sleep above in hammocks.

320. How much accommodation would there be to sling hammocks between the tables?—Well, I should say, about three.

321. So that out of a table of fourteen three would have to lie on the table or deck?—Yes, sir.

322. Were the hooks 18 in. apart?—Some of them were not. In parts they were more than that.

323. I presume you know 18 in. is what is allowed by the transport regulations?—I do not know what the regulations allow.

324. You were an Imperial soldier, were you not? You were under the Imperial Government?—Yes, sir.

325. Therefore if you were given Imperial regulations on your trip home you were getting what you were entitled to?—We always understood we were under Yeomanry regulations.

326. You were under Yeomanry regulations as far as dietary was concerned?—I could not say, sir, not knowing what the dietary was.

327. Do you think any more could have been done to look after the health of the men than was done on board the ship?—No, sir, except if they had had more deck they would have been able to walk about a bit more and had some games to themselves.

328. They had no opportunity of having any exercise down below on the main deck?—No, sir.

329. How many times were sports held on the promenade deck during the voyage, as far as you remember?—Well, there were sports on one occasion, racing and one thing and another. There was a tug of war a couple of times, and twice, I think, there was a concert.

330. About twice during the twenty-six days you were on the voyage you know of sports having been held on the promenade deck?—Yes, sir.

331. Was the weather fit to have sports oftener than that?—Yes, on several occasions there were days suitable for sports.

332. Was anything done?—No, nothing was done towards getting sports ready.

333. *The Chairman.*] Did the officers use both sides of the promenade deck?—Yes, sir, they used both sides.

334. And were the non-commissioned officers not allowed up?—They were allowed on the hurricane deck, and about 20 ft. of the promenade deck.

335. Were the blankets folded up when they were given to you?—Yes; they were folded up in bundles of ten.

336. Did they present the appearance of having been fumigated or cleaned since the time they were used before?—No; there was no smell or anything, and they had no appearance of having been fumigated.

337. What makes you think they had been in the possession of Yeomanry?—Some of the ship's crew said that the Yeomanry had come out in them.

338. Then, the "Britannic" had come straight from Home with Yeomanry on board?—Well, I could not say where she came from. I believe she brought Yeomanry up from Cape Town to Durban.

339. Did you say the mutton was first-rate all through?—Yes; the mutton was as good as we had on the boat. It was as good as what we had going from New Zealand, sir.

340. What did the beef look like in the matter of condition: was it well-grown?—It was well-grown meat, sir.

341. We have had evidence which leads us in the direction of believing that it was inspected after the first week out after leaving Durban by a veterinary officer specially appointed?—I think it came out in orders that one of the veterinary surgeons would inspect the meat. I was there on several occasions, and I saw transport Sergeant-Major Calvert seeing to the meat coming out.

342. Was this when it came up from the refrigerating-chamber?—Yes, I saw them drawing the meat up. I have seen the meat coming out of the refrigerating-chamber and at the butcher's shop.

343. How long did the fish lie on the deck?—I saw it there three days, for a positive fact.

344. Was it lying loose?—It was in open boxes, like cages.

345. Batten boxes?—Yes.

346. After this occasion when the dog made water on it was it served out again or not?—It was served out to the men on the second day. It was on the first day I saw this little white dog make water on it.

347. Did any other dog do that?—I did not see any, sir.

348. After this time when the fish was thrown overboard was there any more issued?—The fish was not thrown overboard then. It was taken down and cooked for the men.

349. Was it not taken up to Colonel Davies?—Yes, sir, it was taken up by the men.

350. There was never any more fish served out after this?—No, sir.

351. That fish occasion was the only one on the voyage?—Yes, sir.

352. And meat was subsequently given to replace that?—Yes; tinned meat.

353. On this occasion when they took the fish up, and there was a row about it, and tinned meat was served out, did the whole squadron get it?—Yes, sir, the whole of my squadron got it.

354. Have you any idea how much?—Yes, sir; they issued me six tins.

355. What weight were the tins?—Six pounds.

356. What quality was this preserved meat?—It was the best. It was "Armour's" brand of meat.

357. Do you think the cooks on board the ship intentionally neglected their work?—Yes, sir, I do.

358. Why should they neglect their work?—I think there were too many men to cook for, and not enough men to do it.

359. Were any orderlies told off to help the cooks?—Yes, sir, men were told off.

360. When, every day?—Yes, sir. Some of the men were helping from the start.

361. What did they call the orderlies?—They were called "helps in the galley."

362. What were their duties?—Washing the potatoes.

363. Did they clean out boilers?—Yes, sir, cleaning out everything.

364. The cooks just did the cooking?—I will not say the orderlies did all the cleaning. I have seen the cooks helping them.

365. The duty of the orderly was, in the first place, to help the cooks clean the boilers, the potatoes, and the galley?—Yes, sir.

366. Were they told off every day to do this as a duty, or did they go voluntarily?—They went voluntarily for a time, and then they were detailed.

367. Then, supposing the tea and coffee to have been greasy because the coppers were not clean, who would you blame?—I would blame the head cook for not seeing that things were clean.

368. Because he did not make the orderlies do their duty?—Yes, sir.

369. Do you exempt your own men from blame in the matter?—Yes, sir, I do.

370. And you think the head cook was responsible for it?—Yes, I do, sir.

371. *Colonel Davies.*] You said, "We had no deck": do you mean the non-commissioned officers?—I mean, taking the whole of the troopers and the non-commissioned officers together.

372. You know the non-commissioned officers had a portion of the promenade deck set apart for them?—Yes, sir.

373. You said that after leaving Albany there was a complaint made to Mr. Parker about the meat?—He came round the tables, and a report was made to him that the meat was tainted.

374. Do you remember my going round next morning with Mr. Parker and his reporting the same thing to me in his quarters?—No, sir, I do not.

375. That complaint was about the stew, was it not?—Yes, sir, it was about the stew.

376. It was not boiled or roast meat; it was about the stew?—They complained in the morning about the stew, and they complained at dinner-time about the meat twice.

377. The complaint that Mr. Parker made to me was about the stew. Did you not hear that the meat tasted sour because the stew had been made with pickles?—I tasted the meat myself, and I know it was bad.

378. You say the complaint that was made about the biscuits was rectified?—Yes, sir.

379. You say that you saw a dog make water on the fish?—Yes, sir; I saw a little white dog make water on the fish.

380. Did anybody else see it?—I would not be certain if anybody else saw it, but I saw it with my own eyes.

381. You do not know that anybody else saw it?—I do not know, sir.

382. You were put under arrest and paraded before me, were you not?—No, sir, I was never put under arrest.

383. You were charged with having incited the men to complain instead of making your complaints in the proper manner: is that not so?—Yes, sir.
384. And I was satisfied on the evidence of two or three of the non-commissioned officers that this was so?—Yes, sir.
385. I reprimanded you, and told you that you should have known the proper manner to make your complaints?—Yes, sir.
386. And that you might go?—Yes.
387. Do you know you were charged with having stirred up the whole of this story about the dogs making water on the fish?—I did not know that.
388. You say you are not sure whether anybody else saw it?—Yes, sir.
389. Did you see any lice on the blankets when they were issued?—No, sir. They were shown to me next morning by Trooper Cunningham.
390. Was he lousy when he came on board?—No, sir, he was not lousy. He was very particular in his dress, and in every way.
391. Were all those blankets dirty?—I do not know if they were all dirty.
392. Were there any new ones among them?—Yes, sir.
393. Were there any new white ones?—Not in my squadron.
394. *Captain Lewin.*] Was there any other deck accommodation on which the men could move about, excepting the main deck?—No, sir.
395. Not forward of the officers' promenade deck?—There was a bit there. The water always used to wash over, and the men always kept away.
396. The fore-castle deck?—The men had about a half-dozen yards to move about. There was no room for them.
397. If you remember, these decks stretched from one side of the ship to the other: what was there to stop the men walking all over them?—There were the railings to stop them. It was not wide enough.
398. *The Chairman.*] If the railings had not been there the men would have gone overboard?—Yes, sir.
399. That is what they call a "turtle" deck?—Yes, sir.
400. *Mr. McNab.*] It was given in evidence to us that men who were fair in complexion were more apt to be troubled with lice on the veldt than dark men: did you ever notice that?—I have, sir; but I think it fell to the dark men. I think the dark men at our table had them the worst.
401. And was it a fair man or a dark man who complained to you about the blankets?—They were complained about by all.

Corporal JAMES MOORE examined on oath.\* (No. 47.)

402. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of any of the contingents?—Yes; of the Eighth.
403. What squadron?—D squadron.
404. You returned in the "Britannic"?—Yes.
405. Do you come here to volunteer evidence, or were you asked to come?—I volunteered to come.
406. What occupation were you in before you left?—A baker.
407. You will be listened to as to any complaints you have to make. Will you make any statement you choose?—I embarked on the "Britannic" at Durban. The food was bad. I was in charge of the fatigue party that drew the rations from the hold every day. I was put in charge four days after we left Durban. I saw all the rations that came out of the hold. I had occasion to report the condition of the meat to Sergeant-Major Rogers, and he put a sentry over it, and said that it was not to go into the butcher's shop. The men refused to carry it into the butcher's shop, it was so bad.
408. Was this continual?—No; this was on one occasion. I stopped the men from working, and told them not to allow any one to take the meat away before I came back. I went on deck and saw Sergeant-Major Rogers, and he sent Sergeant Black down and told him to place a sentry on the meat, and not allow it to go into the butcher's shop. There were two carcasses, and the hind-quarters were eaten away by rats, and in other parts the meat was green. Sergeant-Major Rogers said I was quite right in complaining, and that it was a proper thing to do. He called the chief steward, and had it thrown overboard. In other cases the meat was green, but it was not eaten by rats. Often there was meat that was soft and putrid which went into the butcher's shop, and it was supposed that it was cut up by the butcher and put into our food. I do not know of any day that there was not a complaint about the food.
409. Do you mean the meat or the food generally?—The food.
410. The cooked food?—Yes. I do not know of any day that there was not a complaint. It got so bad that the lieutenants and captains who came down to hear the complaints refused to taste the food, and took a sniff at it and took our word for it.
411. Did they agree that it was bad?—Yes; it was too bad for them to taste. That is what I mean. We had dried apples that were supposed to be sweets. They came up in a tin dish, and the maggots were floating on top of them. The men jumped up in a body on one occasion and went up on deck, and called out that the food was bad. They barricaded the deck across with a rope, and sentries were put on to stop them. Colonel Davies came out and addressed us, and we got satisfaction for that meal.
412. You mean in regard to the apples?—Yes; but the same day there was fish—ling—which was brought out of the freezer, and it was thrown on the deck aft near the butcher's shop. There were several dogs on board, and any one knocking about could see the dogs coming along and cocking their legs and pumping-ship on it. That fish was cooked next day and given to us for

\* This evidence was sent to witness to revise, but was not returned.



breakfast. That was the day we kicked the apples about the deck because they were so full of maggots. You could not touch the fish, and the officers were simply disgusted with it when they came round and smelt it. That afternoon we were to have bully beef, and we fetched five cases out of the stores, and the men turned round and rushed the five cases and smashed them up down in the hold, and they had the meat from those cases for breakfast. When the meat was first hoisted up it was found to be so bad that the men took the case into their own hands, and took these five cases of bully beef and threw them down in the hold and smashed them right down, and there was nothing to be seen two minutes afterwards. The officers came down and found no remains of it. That meat was not to be compared with the meat which was served to us on the veldt. Then, there was ground rice. I do not know what they did with that, but it was never eaten at the table I was at. It came in the form of sweets also, like a pudding, but no man could eat it.

413. Why not?—It had such a horrible taste. I do not know what it was, but it turned a man's stomach to eat it. Another thing was this: that the first thing in the morning in the early part of the voyage, after we left Durban, there were firemen, and stewards, and cooks, and sailors, standing out in our gangway with billies of coffee, selling it to us for 3d. a cup. We found out afterwards that it was our own coffee, and the consequence was that we could only get half a cup of coffee of our own. I believe an order came from Colonel Davies that we were to take it from these men, and we did so; and we put a stop to that practice. Another thing was that the sailors and firemen—and, in fact, nearly the whole crew—came round selling sandwiches to us, and after the saloon dinner was over they sold what was left of it. We had every reason to believe that most of these things were our own food, and that it was our own coffee. We got a hint as to how to put a stop to it. No man likes to be an informer, but we got a hint to rush this food and take it from those who were selling it, and we did so.

414. Then they left off selling food?—Yes; we rushed them and took it from them, and then we got more to eat on our troop-deck after that. I never met a meaner crowd in my life than there was on that boat. It is the fourth troopship I have been on, and the "Britannic" is the worst of the lot. Every night after the dinner was over in the saloon the cooks in the saloon galley would sell to three or four hundred men a meal at 1s. That is how half of us lived, by buying food at the saloon galley; we could not eat the other food. It was the cooks who did that. I may say that we came on board at Durban quite clean and without any vermin. We had had a good time of it on the veldt, and when we got into the blankets that were served out to us at Durban they were swarming with vermin; and then they turned round and blamed our men, and said that we refused to wash our clothes. We never did so, and it was a deliberate falsehood on the part of the officer who made the statement. The blankets which were given to us were covered with vermin when issued. I speak of my own, and others said the same. I had no vermin on me on my way down from Newcastle. Another thing is this: that when I got on board I had no room to hang a hammock in No. 3. Every hook was occupied, and men had to sleep on the floor and on the tables, and even on the landing half-way down. You had to light a match to find your way about the deck at night if you had to get up. I slept on deck myself, and used to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to let the men wash the deck; but I preferred that to sleeping down below with all the others, who were so crowded there. I very seldom went down till dinner-time, the stench was so bad. I never went down at breakfast-time, and it was very seldom that I went down at dinner-time. I bought my own food, and I paid for it all the way across. Another thing is this: that when we arrived at Wellington I went on shore with others, and went back again next morning to the ship, which was lying at the wharf here. I went back to say good-bye to one of the men of my squadron. His name was A. E. Brown, and he is since dead. I went down into the hospital, and everything was slung about and dirty, and left in a disorderly manner. Doctor Eccles was the only medical man connected with the hospital who was present. There was a trooper there, and Doctor Eccles asked me if I would volunteer to help carrying the sick on shore. He said that he had been up all night, and that, as the hospital orderlies had all cleared out, he would be glad if I would help. What he said to me was this when I went on board: "For God's sake, get somebody to help me; I have been up all night and I am worn out." We were all discharged before we came on shore, and he asked me whether I would be good enough to assist him in getting the invalids on shore. All the men were away, so I got a couple of Permanent Artillerymen—Joyce was one of them—and they came down and helped me to carry this man on to the tug.

415. What are you complaining of?—The treatment in the hospital when we arrived in Wellington.

416. We have nothing to do with the treatment on Somes Island?—This was the treatment on board the ship when she was lying at the wharf. Doctor Eccles said he had been up all night looking after the men, and there was no one to help him, and that half of the men had to be taken on to the tug-boat.

417. What you are saying to me is really not evidence. I want to know what you yourself know?—Well, I thought that if these men were neglected you would wish to hear about it.

418. No doubt; but I want to hear what you yourself know, not what others said to you. When did you go on shore on the previous day?—At about 4 o'clock.

419. Then, how do you know about what took place in the night?—When I went on board in the morning there was no one there to carry the men off the ship, and there were no stretchers to carry them in.

420. Who do you blame for there being no stretchers?—I leave that to you.

421. We want to know something specific?—Well, it was whoever was in charge.

422. We want to find out how you know of what took place between the time you went on shore and the time when you went back again to the ship. We do not want to hear what other people

said, but what you know yourself. We can call them if necessary, but we want to know what you know?—When I went back to the wharf with Trooper Kobler I got two of the Permanent Artillery to help us carry the man out. There were no stretchers there, and in carrying him up the steps in our arms we could not help hurting him. We carried him into the tug-boat, and there was no one there to attend to him except Dr. Eccles. The tug-boat was not fit to take men over. It was a cold day, and the men were placed on the deck of the "Janie Seddon," and when I left she was still at the wharf, and that was half an hour. I do not know long afterwards it was before she left.

423. When did you leave?—About half an hour after.

424. But at what time of the day?—Well, I went down at about 9 o'clock, and it was about 10 or a quarter to 10 in the morning when I left. I am not certain. I do not know anything else.

425. Can you say how many of the men were on the "Janie Seddon" at that time?—They were pretty well packed with patients, and their teeth were chattering with the cold.

426. How many men were there?—I could not say. I only went down the side where we placed our own man.

427. I understood you to say you were corporal in charge of the fatigue party who took charge of the meat?—Yes.

428. How often did you complain?—I did not complain. We used to complain at the table.

429. When did you complain to an officer again?—I did not bother after that.

430. Was it not your duty, being in charge, to complain?—I simply reported once.

431. And that meat was not issued?—No.

432. Then, when you did report, the matter you complained of was rectified?—Yes; Sergeant-Major Rogers put a sentry on the meat, and would not allow it to go to the butcher's shop.

433. Then, that was really dealt with by the sergeant-major?—Yes.

434. He approved of what you did?—Yes.

435. How soon after you left Durban did this take place?—About seven or eight days.

436. That was the first occasion on which you complained of the food?—If you understand, we complained at the table.

437. About the uncooked meat?—Yes.

438. Do you happen to know if Veterinary Surgeon Young was put on to inspect the meat?—I do not know.

439. What was the process of getting the meat?—The chief steward would detail off three or four men, and go into the freezer and pick the meat, and get out fish and other stores, and, in fact, everything else. These troopers would carry the meat to the butcher's shop, and it was put in the cool-chamber. It was kept there for three or four days, but frequently it was thrown on the deck.

440. Which was the worst—the beef or the mutton?—The mutton. We never got a hind-quarter; it all went to the saloon.

441. How often did you get beef?—Generally at dinner-time.

442. And the beef was better than the mutton?—Sometimes they both were not so bad, although very often the meat was raw in the centre. The quality of the meat was generally good, but sometimes it was so bad that the officers would not even taste it.

443. What makes you think that putrid meat was taken into the cooks' shop and cut up and served out to you?—Because the meat was so bad we could not eat it.

444. Were there any men detailed for duty in the cooks' galley?—Not that I know of. There was the cook, and the mess orderly got the food from him. I know the men in the galley were in a filthy state, and so was the galley almost always.

445. Now, about the sandwiches which were sold to you by the crew: you say they were made with meat stolen from you?—We reckoned it was.

446. Did they make good sandwiches?—No; but they kept the best part of the meat back to make the sandwiches. We got a hint, and we rushed them and took the sandwiches from them.

447. Then it ceased?—Yes.

448. Did you get meals from the saloon galley?—Yes; three or four hundred men got meals there every night.

449. Was that from the troops' food?—No.

450. I suppose it was not the personal property of the cooks?—No.

451. Do you imagine this food sold to the three or four hundred men at night was stolen from the ship's stores?—I could not say that. The chief steward sent up so-much to the troops' galley and so-much to the officers' galley.

452. Was this honest on the part of the cooks?—I think if they had not sold it to us they would have thrown it overboard.

453. How many were in the saloon?—I do not know.

454. And there was enough food left to sell to three or four hundred men which would have been thrown overboard?—Yes.

455. You said the dried apples were covered with maggots?—Yes.

456. How often?—On several occasions.

457. It was pretty frequent?—It was pretty often, and the men kicked those apples about the deck.

458. Was it seven or eight times?—More than that.

459. Ten or twelve times?—You may put that down with safety.

460. And maggoty each time?—Yes.

461. If you are the only witness who swears to that, you are the only one who knows about it?—I do not care what others say. I speak the truth.

462. You say that one day the fish was thrown on the deck?—Yes.

463. How long was it lying there?—For some time.

464. It was not packed up in sacks?—No.
465. On the occasion when you say they barricaded the deck, what do you mean?—They put a rope across it.
466. Who put the rope across?—I do not know; but it was put across to stop the men, and a sentry was put on there.
467. On the occasion when the fish was thrown away you say that there were five or six cases of tinned meat brought up?—Yes.
468. What does a case contain?—There would be about twelve tins in a case.
469. That would be about sixty tins brought up?—Yes.
470. If a man swore that only one tin was brought up he was wrong?—He was wrong.
471. How often did you eat the ground rice?—I never made a meal of it.
472. What was the matter with it?—It seemed to be rotten. I could not tell you, but the taste of it was bad.
473. Was it sour, or what?—There was a musty taste about it, and it was a dirty colour. In fact, the orderly officer refused to take it.
474. You say that after you rushed the firemen and others, and took the food from them, you got better food?—No, not better, but more of it.
475. How soon after leaving Durban did you rush these people?—About two or three days after.
476. Then, it was only for two or three days that they sold it wholesale?—Yes; but the coffee and the dinners were sold the whole time.
477. Did you buy it?—Yes.
478. Did you make a contract for it?—No; there were so many men waiting to get it that I preferred to pay for my meals as I got them.
479. When did you find that the blankets were lousy?—The day after we left.
480. Did you complain?—It was no use complaining.
481. Did you go to an officer about it?—The men talked about it; but there were no more blankets in the ship.
482. Did you bring your blankets down from Newcastle?—I left mine behind on the wharf.
483. Did any of the men take their blankets on board?—I do not think so.
484. It was said that some of the blankets brought on board were lousy: was that the case?—No.
485. Were any of the men lousy on the trip down to Durban?—No; we were never short of water this time. We had plenty of it on our march down.
486. You believe no men went on board lousy?—No; it was the cleanest crowd I have knocked about with.
487. You say it was 9 o'clock in the morning when you went on board on the day after arrival in Wellington, when you found things dirty and thrown about?—Yes.
488. Was that not in contrast to what the hospital was previously?—Well, I would not say it was dirty. There was a fatigue party who went down and swept and washed it, but not properly. I have heard the hospital sergeant tell them to stop throwing the water about, as it was not right to keep the place wet all day.
489. Then, generally you think the hospital was badly conducted?—I do not say that. I am not an authority on that matter.
490. When were you in the hospital before your arrival?—I saw the orderly taking the men there.
491. What fault have you to find with the attendants there?—One thing was this: that when Trooper Brown went down there sick he was not taken in. He fainted at the door of the hospital going there, but he came back to the mess, and we rigged up a hammock for him over the table, and he lay in it, and we would give him a drink of water or what we could when he asked for it.
492. What was his complaint?—I said it was measles. The rash broke out on his face, and we took a glass to him and we could see it. He was also suffering from pneumonia.
493. He had measles and pneumonia?—Yes.
494. You say he fainted at the door of the hospital?—The men told me about it.
495. You do not know yourself?—No.
496. Did you see him in the faint?—No.
497. Did you see him when the doctors refused him admission?—I never heard of the doctors refusing him, but he came back to the mess and said they did.
498. When you went on board and found Dr. Eccles in charge, was not one medical officer on duty enough?—It is unusual for a medical man to be on duty all night nursing.
499. Do you mean to say he ought not to be up all night?—I do not say so.
500. How do you know the orderlies were not there?—There were none there when I went.
501. How do you know that during the night there was nobody there?—I simply had Dr. Eccles's word for it, because he asked me to get some help to carry the man on shore.
502. Were you ever in the hospital yourself?—I was never sick in my life.
503. *Mr. McNab.*] How long would it be after the vessel had cast anchor in the harbour that you went on board again and found Dr. Eccles there?—I think it was the first thing in the morning when we cast anchor, but we did not come to the wharf until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I left the ship when she came alongside the wharf about 4 o'clock, and I went on board again next morning.
504. So that it would be about thirty hours afterwards?—Yes.
505. It would be at least twenty hours after the examination by the public official?—Yes, it would be fully that.
506. It was even after your discharges had been handed to you that you went back and saw the hospital when Dr. Eccles was in it?—Yes.

507. And, however it was, or whatever department it was, that had charge of the sick men at that time, you want the Commission to understand you charge them with not looking after the patients?—That is the only conclusion.

508. Whoever it was who had charge of the sick men?—Yes.

509. You say you saw the sick men that were put on board the “Janie Seddon”?—Yes.

510. Were they lying down on the deck side by side?—Some were lying down and some sitting up.

511. None down below?—No; all on deck.

512. What sort of a day was it?—It was a very cold morning.

513. Like the day you arrived?—Yes; it was a very raw day.

514. Did you notice whether any of the men were left in the hospital at the time you left the vessel?—Yes, there were. When I carried Brown out there were others there.

515. Can you give us an idea from your own recollection how many men were on the deck of the “Janie Seddon” when you last saw her?—I think there were about twenty men.

516. With regard to those who were quite helpless from sickness, were their faces covered up and anything done to keep them from the cold?—No. H. O. Regan was the worst case there. They had to carry him there, and he had no place to lie down, and had to sit up. I asked him to move to make room for Brown, and he said he could not.

517. You say you had your discharge then?—Yes.

518. And from that date to thirty-one days afterwards you had full pay?—We had thirty-one days' furlough.

519. I want you to be sure of what you saw on the deck of the “Janie Seddon”?—Yes; everything I have said is correct.

520. You saw it with your own eyes?—Yes.

521. And there was no sign of the “Janie Seddon” leaving when you left?—No.

522. You saw the “Janie Seddon” loaded with patients lying there for, at any rate, half an hour?—Yes.

523. *Mr. Millar.*] I think you said you carried out Trooper Brown?—Yes.

524. Was that when the vessel was in the harbour?—No; she was lying alongside the wharf.

525. What were your instructions when told to carry down Trooper Brown?—In the first place, Dr. Eccles told me to get some one to carry him to the tug. I then went down to dress him, and he had no clothes. I told Dr. Eccles his clothes had been taken on shore, and he said, “Wrap him up in blankets”; he also said, “Put him on a stretcher.” I said there was no stretcher, and then he said, “Carry him in your arms.” We got a hammock and I got a couple of Permanent Artillerymen to come, and we carried him in that way. We took him down on the “Janie Seddon” in a place near the engine-room which was warm.

526. Were you told at any time to put your arms round him and carry him as a sack of wheat?—No.

527. If that has been said, it is wrong?—As far as I am concerned, I say it is a lie.

528. And you were there the whole time he was being carried?—Yes; we carried him the same as I would carry my own brother. If any one says that, it is a deliberate falsehood.

529. *Colonel Davies.*] You live in Auckland?—Yes.

530. Did you ever look at the date of your discharge?—No.

531. You were discharged on the 13th August?—I do not know.

532. You were not discharged when you came on shore here from the boat?—No.

533. You had your discharge, but it was dated the 13th August?—I do not know. It was handed to me, and Colonel Reid said I was discharged.

534. Your discharge is dated the 13th August; you were not discharged in Wellington?—Yes, sir, I was discharged before I left the ship.

535. You were paraded by the commanding officer, and he told you that all the Auckland men must go by the “Britannic”?—Yes.

536. And if he said, “If you don't go in the ‘Britannic’ you will have to pay your own fare”—if he declares that he said that to the men he was telling a lie?—No, sir; I never heard him.

537. Did you attend the meeting of some of the Auckland men before you asked for passages?—No.

538. You distinctly deny that you, with other Auckland members of the contingent in Wellington, said you would go to some Minister or member of Parliament and get a passage?—I deny that.

539. You were a sergeant in Trentham camp before the contingent left?—Yes.

540. You were reduced from sergeant to private for taking a horse out of camp, getting drunk, and losing that horse?—I was reduced, and I do not know what for.

541. You were arrested at Klerksdorp for stealing a sheep?—I say I was not.

542. You say you were not arrested?—No.

543. You were never charged with it?—No, sir, I was not. I deny that.

544. Was any one in your tent accused of stealing a sheep?—Not a sheep; it was a hind-quarter.

545. You say you were not charged?—I say distinctly I was never charged with stealing anything.

546. Do you deny you were ever brought up before your commanding officer in connection with that?—I do not deny it. I was brought up as evidence when Ladbrook was in possession of it. It was said it might be me because I had it when it was taken. Another man was charged with it, and he was punished. I was trying to shelter him, and that was why he was wanting to get at us.

547. Were you brought up before Major Bartlett for trying to shelter him?—Yes; and he said he would make it very hot for us if we did not tell. Another man named Stewart and I tried to shelter him.

548. Was the man named Stewart in your tent?—No.

549. You were brought up before your commanding officer two days before you arrived in New Zealand?—Yes.

550. Charged with stealing a pair of riding-breeches from an officer?—Yes.

551. You were given ten minutes to decide whether you would be court-martialled or whether you would return the money to the man to whom you sold the breeches, and return the breeches to the officer to whom they belonged, and you chose to pay for the breeches and to return them to the officer: is that correct?—I did not choose that—

552. Did you pay the man to whom you sold these breeches, and were these breeches returned to the officer?—I never returned them. I did not take them. They were not returned to him. He took my breeches, and not these. They were Mr. Shera's breeches, and I can prove it to them any time they like.

553. Captain Polson gave you a certain time to decide whether you would be court-martialled or whether you would pay the man to whom you sold the breeches: is that true?—He gave me the option of letting the thing drop or taking a court-martial.

554. Did he give you the option of paying the man to whom you sold these breeches or being court-martialled?—No; he gave me the option of being court-martialled.

555. Did you pay the man to whom you sold these breeches?—Yes.

556. Do you distinctly deny that Captain Polson gave you the option of taking your trial by court-martial or paying the man to whom you sold these breeches?—It was this way: He said, "You will have to be court-martialled or the man must be paid for the breeches."

557. I want "Yes" or "No"?—Those are the words I remember Captain Polson saying. He said, "You are to give these pants back, and I will allow the thing to drop, or you will be court-martialled."

558. Then, Captain Polson gave you the option of seeing these pants were returned to the officer or being court-martialled?—Well, he said that they must be returned and let it drop, or be court-martialled. It was his opinion against mine. That is what he said. There was no evidence. It was his opinion against mine.

559. *The Chairman.*] Then, you preferred to return the breeches to standing a court-martial?—They had them, and I could not take them back to the officer. I told him I was cornered.

560. You did not like to stand a court-martial?—No. I said, "If I take a court-martial there is no evidence against me; but we are here in our own country, and I would suffer as much through that being published as if I was guilty."

561. You paid the man to whom you sold them?—I returned the money that he paid for them, and Mr. Shera got my pants.

562. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You have sworn that Dr. Eccles was the only medical officer in the troopship that day?—No, sir.

563. You swore that he was the only medical officer?—I was speaking of when I went into the hospital.

564. You did not see me on board?—I did not.

565. You could not swear I was not there?—No.

566. Did you see Dr. Purdy or Dr. Pollen there?—No, sir. I do not know them. There might be forty doctors in the ship and I not know.

567. Was there any doctor on the "Janie Seddon"?—There was a sister there, but not a doctor that I know of.

568. There may have been?—There may have been.

569. Did you get Brown on board the tug one of the first?—No; there were several men down there: Regan and others whom I did not know.

570. If I swear that I was there all the time in the hospital is it a lie?—You were not there when I went in.

571. You would not swear that I was not in the ship?—No.

572. *Captain Lewin.*] Do you remember where the armour was?—Yes.

573. Do you remember being down there with Sergeant-Major Denby, Quartermaster-Sergeant Fraser, Sergeant W. Hegly, and Troopers Pascal and Peterson?—I have been down there often enough.

574. Do you remember on that occasion you stole Sergeant Hegly's tunic, and were detected by Sergeant-Major Denby?—No.

575. You are prepared to face the evidence of a witness who saw you?—I lost my tunic, and I was fossicking round for it.

576. *The Chairman.*] You deny there was any attempt on your part to take a tunic which did not belong to you?—I want to explain: I had a tunic, and we put our clothes in there. My one was missing, and when we were getting our clothes and going through them I found a tunic, and Sergeant Hegly said it was his.

577. Did he charge you with stealing it?—No; he simply said it was his.

578. He did not make any charge against you?—It was simply this: that I was going to have a tunic, and I took it.

579. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] Will you swear that none of the men were taken off on stretchers?—I do not know.

580. And you swear there were no stretchers?—I do not.

THURSDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper AVENELL sworn and examined. (No. 48.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your full name?—Henry Avenell.
2. Were you a member of one of the New Zealand contingents?—Yes, sir; I was drafted out from the Tenth Contingent into C squadron of the Eighth.
3. What was your occupation before you went?—Butcher.
4. Were you on board the “Britannic”?—Yes, sir.
5. You have expressed a desire to give evidence before the Commission to inquire into the lack of conveniences, or as to insufficient food or indifferent quality of the food: will you make any statement you wish?—Well, sir, in the first place, when we were put on board the “Britannic,” which was overcrowded, we had blankets issued to us in a very dirty state. The food that we got was not fit for a dog to eat. I have seen plenty better meat condemned for the London market.
6. What do you mean by that?—I have seen better meat that has been put up to go Home for the London market, and they would not have it—it was not good enough. Then, as regards the water, if we did not get up very early in the morning we could not get a wash. Two days before we got to New Zealand we were told we could have water to wash our clothes in; that was the only time we got it. You could buy real good meals if you wanted them at the galley. Between Durban and Albany I took very bad, and went to see a doctor. I had an abscess in the ear, and I got a No. 9 pill for it. Two days after that I was extra bad, and I was not strong enough to walk up to the hospital. I had had nothing to eat for three days. I had two men to help me up the steps to the hospital, and I caught hold of the beds to help myself along. This was at 12 o'clock at night. The doctor took my temperature, and he told me “not to come here and play the b—y fool any more.” He then gave me several pills, and told me to go back to my quarters. I think that is all I have to complain about.
7. What doctor was this?—Dr. Eccles.
8. You say you took very bad between Durban and Albany?—Yes, sir.
9. What was the matter?—I had an abscess in the ear, and I had a very bad cold. I could hardly speak.
10. And you object to the method of treatment the doctor pursued?—I did, sir.
11. You think he ought not to have given you a pill?—No, sir.
12. And you think the doctor had insufficient experience, or what?—No, sir. I would not say that.
13. When you complain of the treatment given by the doctor I do not quite understand what you mean: the pill might have been right or it might have been wrong?—Well, sir, it is not the usual thing to get a pill for an abscess in the ear.
14. What part of the ear was the abscess in?—It was just inside the ear.
15. And did the doctor look at your ear?—He just looked at it, and he said, “All right,” and took no notice of it.
16. Did he suggest any other treatment, or did he give you one pill and tell you to go away?—He gave me several pills on different mornings running.
17. On this occasion, when you were taken so bad and went to the doctor, did he do anything else besides giving you one pill?—No, sir.
18. He did not recommend any course of treatment to the ear?—He just told me to go away and keep myself warm.
19. And what else?—That was all he told me.
20. Was the abscess in the ear discharging?—Not at the time, sir. It broke next morning about 7 o'clock.
21. And then what—did that give you relief?—Yes, sir.
22. Two days after you were too ill to walk to the hospital?—I was, sir.
23. What was the matter?—I think it was influenza. I do not know what it was.
24. You mean to say that it took two men to help you to the hospital?—Yes; to help me up the steps.
25. Who were these two men?—Dean and Silcock.
26. Was this at midnight?—Yes, sir.
27. And you sent for the doctor: did he come?—Yes.
28. What doctor was it?—Dr. Eccles.
29. Had he gone to bed, or what?—Yes, sir.
30. He did not refuse to come?—No, sir; he came along.
31. What did he tell you?—He took my temperature, and said, “Don't come here playing the b—y fool.”
32. Did he give you any treatment?—He gave me a pill, that is all.
33. How were you the next day?—I was very bad about the chest.
34. How did you get away from the hospital?—I helped myself along by hanging on to the wall, and the bunks in the hospital, and two young fellows helped me down the steps again.
35. You were so ill that you practically could not stand?—Quite so, sir.
36. And the doctor refused to treat you?—That was the treatment he gave me.
37. He simply gave you some pills and told you not to play the b—y fool?—That is just what he said.
38. Did he take your temperature?—Yes, sir.
39. Did he look at the thermometer when he took it out of your mouth?—Yes, sir.
40. Then, you are satisfied that Dr. Eccles did not know anything of his business, and that he intentionally neglected you?—Yes, sir.

41. Now, you say that unless you got up early you could not get a wash?—Quite so, sir.
42. What time did you generally get up?—The first thing in the morning; as soon as reveille went.
43. What time did reveille go?—Six o'clock.
44. And you used to get up then, and still you could not get a wash?—Unless you had a great deal of push you never got a wash.
45. As a rule, when you got up at 6 o'clock you were unable to get a wash?—Twice on the voyage.
46. Why could you not get a wash?—There was such a crowd there, and as soon as 7 o'clock came they used to turn the water off.
47. They turned the water off at 7?—Yes, about 7.
48. You say you got up when reveille went, and that you could not get a wash unless you were pushing?—Yes, sir.
49. During the time the water was turned on and off did you wait to get your turn?—Yes, sir.
50. And you sometimes had to wait two hours and could not get a wash?—Yes, sir.
51. Do you know what time the water was turned off?—I could not exactly state the time.
52. On these occasions when you could not get a wash you were there at 6?—Yes, sir.
53. And you waited until the water was turned off and could not get a wash?—Yes, sir.
54. You say the food was not fit for a dog?—Yes; I mean the meat.
55. Have you complained of any other portion of the food excepting the meat?—Yes; the tea, sir.
56. No other portion of the food besides the meat and the tea?—No, sir, I think that is about all.
57. Was the bread good or bad?—The bread was not bad at all.
58. The biscuits?—Sometimes they were good and sometimes they were not very good.
59. Did you get enough bread and biscuits?—Yes; plenty of biscuits, and we got an allowance of bread.
60. Did you get butter, and jam, and such things?—Yes; we got rations. I was quite satisfied with that.
61. You have just to complain of the meat and the tea?—Yes, sir.
62. What have you to complain of about the meat?—Well, sir, it was green when it was brought out of the freezing-chamber.
63. Did you inspect it then yourself?—Yes, sir, I often used to go and have a look at it.
64. Were you employed as a butcher on board?—No, sir.
65. Were you employed in the cooks' galley?—No, sir.
66. You were simply an ordinary trooper on board?—Yes, sir.
67. When was this meat green?—It was green as soon as it came out of the hold.
68. What part of the voyage?—All through the voyage.
69. Do you imagine that the meat was ever inspected by any responsible person before it was handed to the cooks?—Yes, sir; but I could not state the doctor's name. I saw them there.
70. Do you believe it was inspected by responsible officers?—Yes, sir.
71. And you mean to charge them with having neglected their duty, and passed bad meat unfit for human consumption?—Yes, sir.
72. Do you know Veterinary Surgeon Young by sight?—No; I might know him if I saw him. I would not know him otherwise.
73. If he has come before this Commission and sworn that after a few days out from Durban he was ordered by Colonel Davies to attend the butcher's shop, and that he examined every joint of meat that was passed, and that no bad meat was passed, you will say that he was deliberately saying what was not the truth?—Yes, I do, sir.
74. Was this beef or mutton that was green?—It was only the beef that I saw green.
75. Did you see the mutton?—I did not see the mutton. It was all covered up in proper bags, and you could not see through them.
76. You could not see through the bags?—No, sir.
77. Are you quite sure?—Yes, sir.
78. And you could not see through the cover whatever it was?—Not to state the condition of the meat.
79. Have you ever been in a freezing-works?—I have been for the last eight years and a half.
80. What freezing-works have you been in?—R. and W. Hellaby's works in Auckland.
81. What was the condition of the meat—was it well grown?—Yes, sir, very good grown beef.
82. And did you ever yourself make complaint about the quality of the beef?—I have at the table, sir.
83. I mean to any responsible officer—did you make complaints to him?—Well to the orderly officer; I used to tell him.
84. How often did you make complaint?—Several times.
85. Give us one case in point where you complained, and where no notice was taken of it?—I could not exactly state the officer's name. I dare say I could think of it. I remember telling him that the meat was bad and not fit to eat; and that was all the satisfaction we got.
86. Tell us who it was?—If I remember aright it was Lieutenant Manson.
87. When was this?—Just before we got to Albany—some little time before.
88. What complaint did you make to him?—I told him the meat was bad, and it could not be eaten.
89. What did he say?—He just said "All right," and walked on and took no notice.

90. And were you obliged to eat that meat?—Yes, sir.
91. Did you eat it?—No, sir, I did not eat it.
92. Was the meat eaten?—I saw some of them eat it.
93. Was it boiled or roasted?—Boiled.
94. Was it mutton or beef?—Beef, sir.
95. What sort of beef?—It was fresh beef.
96. After leaving Albany, how was the quality of the meat then?—Just the same.
97. Throughout the voyage it was always bad?—Yes, sir, just the same.
98. You say you saw plenty of better meat condemned for the London market. What does that mean?—It means that they would not have it on the London market. It was not good enough for it.
99. Was the meat too poor, or what?—It was too bad; it was not in a fit state.
100. You mean that it had gone bad?—Yes, sir, to a certain extent.
101. Can you state in distinct language what was wrong with it?—Well, sir, there was some disease about it—tuberculosis as a rule.
102. And how do you know this meat had tuberculosis?—I do not say this meat on board had it, but the meat for the London market had tuberculosis.
103. Do you mean to say that this meat which was served out on board had tuberculosis?—I did not say so, sir.
104. What did you say about it?—I say it was green. It was really worse than the meat condemned for the London market.
105. I want you to tell us about the particular meat that was bad on the boat: what was the matter with it?—It was green.
106. Do you mean by the word “green” that it had begun to get putrid, or what?—Yes, sir.
107. Was that always the case?—That was always the case with the beef.
108. You mean every piece of beef was unfit for human consumption?—Yes, sir.
109. Then, if the other men stated that the beef was very good they were no judges of beef?—No, sir, they were no judges.
110. Now, when you say you were overcrowded, have you any idea what space is allowed to troopers by the transport regulations?—No, sir, I have not.
111. Then, do you mean by being overcrowded that you were not as comfortable as you should have been, or that the regulations laid down for the guidance of transport officers were exceeded?—I could not say exactly; I know we were overcrowded.
112. What do you mean by “overcrowded”?—There were too many men on board.
113. Was the number in excess of the regulations?—I could not say, sir.
114. Then, in what way were you overcrowded?—There were too many men in the hold, sir. There was not enough room for us to sleep at night-time in the hold.
115. What hold were you in?—No. 4, sir.
116. How many men were there in your mess?—Sixteen.
117. Where did you sleep yourself?—I used to sleep down below.
118. How many men of your mess slept on the upper deck?—About six, I think, sir.
119. Right on the upper deck?—Yes, sir.
120. And how many slept on the table?—One on the table.
121. How many men on the deck down below?—I could not say how many slept on the floor.
122. Have you any idea?—No, sir.
123. Would there be three?—There would be more than that.
124. Four or five?—About four; the rest were sleeping in hammocks.
125. Was there only room for five hammocks?—No; there was room for more than five.
126. More could have slung their hammocks if they had liked to?—Some used to come from the other tables and sleep.
127. Out of the sixteen men only five of your men hung their hammocks?—I think there were only about five, sir.
128. And was there room for more than five?—Well, the men used to come from the other tables.
129. I want to know about the room for your own men?—Well, there was not room for more than five.
130. You are quite sure of that?—Some of the other men took up the hooks.
131. We want to know about the space for your men. You say there was no room for the men at your table to hang their hammocks?—There was room.
132. And your men did not hang their hammocks there?—They would have, had they had the chance.
133. Then, you think that your mess was less able to take care of itself than any other messes on board the ship?—No, sir.
134. You had the prior claim to the space, did you not?—Yes, sir; but they did not claim it, just to save having a row, so we did not shift them out of it.
135. Who is to blame for this. Was it the fault of the transport officers, your officers, or yourselves?—I suppose it was our own fault.
136. Did you take your blankets on board?—No, sir.
137. Where did you leave them?—In the trucks on the train.
138. Who served out your blankets to you?—The ship’s quartermaster.
139. Did you complain about them when he handed them to you?—No, sir.
140. When did you make the complaint about the blankets?—I never complained about them.
141. Were your blankets lousy?—Yes; the first night I got them.



142. And you made no complaint?—No, sir; they were all the same.
143. Not to your officers, non-commissioned officers, or anybody?—No, sir.
144. Do you think it could have been remedied by your officers?—It could not have been made any better.
145. You think no efforts could be made to clean them?—Yes, sir.
146. What efforts did you make to clean them?—I used to air them every day by taking them up on deck. If I could not take them up I used to get somebody else to do it for me. There was no other way of cleaning them.
147. Did you ever have lice on the veldt?—No, sir.
148. Did many men have it?—Yes, sir.
149. A good few?—Yes, sir; the biggest part of them.
150. Do you not think it is possible they brought the lice down with them?—They were on the blankets that we got on the boat.
151. Do you not think it possible that the major portion of the men brought lice on the ship?—I think they may have.
152. You think it is as likely for them to have infected the blankets as the blankets to have infected them?—Yes, sir.
153. Did every man get the same blankets every night?—No, sir.
154. Then, there was a general change every night, and everybody was liable to get a lousy blanket?—Yes, sir.
155. In that case do you not think it is possible that the blankets were clean, and that the lice were put into the blankets?—When they were handed out I heard one man say that he would not say they were not lousy.
156. What was his name?—I had never seen him before.
157. Did he say this in the presence of the quartermaster?—Yes, sir.
158. Was Captain Lewin present?—No, sir.
159. Who was the quartermaster in charge?—Quartermaster-Sergeant Johnston.
160. He was told that the blankets were lousy?—The man that handed them out said he would not say they were not lousy.
161. Was that told to Quartermaster-Sergeant Johnston?—Yes, sir.
162. Did he hear it?—Yes, sir.
163. What did he say?—He never said anything.
164. What did the blankets look like?—They looked right enough.
165. Did they look clean?—Yes, sir, they looked clean.
166. Could you see the lice easily?—No, not very well.
167. Then, you looked for the lice directly you got them?—Yes, sir, I looked several times.
168. Directly you got them the first night?—Yes, sir.
169. And found them?—Yes, sir.
170. Many?—Yes, sir.
171. *Mr. McNab.*] You complain against Dr. Eccles giving you a pill when you were suffering from an abscess of the ear?—Yes, sir.
172. Do you complain against the doctor coming to the conclusion that it was your stomach that was the seat of the trouble when you had an abscess?—Yes, sir, I objected to that.
173. The following morning, I understood you to say, the abscess broke, and you got relief?—Yes, sir.
174. We now come to the second time. How long were you ailing?—About ten days, as far as I remember.
175. During that time how often did the doctor see you or treat you?—About four times I saw him.
176. During that fourteen days did you have occasion to send for him, or did he come to you and treat you voluntarily?—I had occasionally to send for him.
177. Will you explain to us how you came to see him on these four occasions?—I went up to him with the sick-parade in the morning.
178. Did you see him on every occasion that you went up on the sick-parade?—Yes, sir, after waiting a little while I saw him.
179. Were you on the sick-list when the steamer reached Wellington here?—No, sir.
180. What age are you?—Twenty-three, sir, close on twenty-four.
181. And you have been eight years with Hellaby's?—Yes, eight years and a half.
182. That is in Auckland?—Yes, sir.
183. What branch of the business were you in?—I have been right through. I have served my time there.
184. You have served right through?—Yes, I went through and learnt the trade.
185. Where was it that you got the experience of the London market you referred to?—We used to ship meat to London—we do it now.
186. Then, your experience of the London market that you referred to in your examination in chief was the experience you got in New Zealand?—Yes, I got it all in New Zealand.
187. Do you not think it was possible to see green meat when it had those covers on?—Not as a rule, sir.
188. Then, there are some cases when you can see through the bags?—Very, very seldom, sir.
189. If a man told you, when looking at the meat when the bags were on it, that he could tell what was green and what was not, would you believe it?—No, sir.
190. In fact, is it not the case that if the cover was on the meat you could not see the green through it?—I suppose so.

191. Do you know Sergeant Challis?—Yes, sir, I do.
192. And if he said he could see the green through the cover, he would be romancing, would he not?—He might see it through a stray cover—it might be torn.
193. And if Sergeant Challis swears that he saw the meat green through the covers, it would be when the covers were torn?—Some might be torn; I would not say. You could not see through all the covers, but some were very thin.
194. And you will now correct your previous answer and say that some of the covers were so thin that you could see through them?—I would not say all—I would say some of them.
195. What proportion of the covers would be like that?—Well, sir, they are not a first-class cover if he could see through them.
196. Was there any meat supplied on board the ship that was New Zealand meat?—I do not know, sir. I never saw the brand.
197. Did you notice if any of the preserved meat was New Zealand meat?—It was all Australian meat, in tins.
198. You do not think any New Zealand meat was supplied?—I never saw the brand on it.
199. *The Chairman.*] You say this meat was as good quality as that you have seen condemned for the London market at Auckland?—Yes, sir.
200. You say the beef that was served out to you was not as good in quality as that?—No, sir, it was not as good.
201. What became of that meat: did it go into the local consumption?—No; it was put into the digester and boiled up.
202. *Mr. McNab.*] Was that at Hellaby's?—Yes, sir.
203. Who was the condemning officer?—I could not say, sir. When I went into the slaughterhouse I had not been there very long when the Government Veterinary Surgeon condemned thirty-six cows with tuberculosis. That was the first time I saw diseased meat.
204. Who was the officer who condemned this meat that went into the digester?—I do not know what his name was.
205. Was he a Government officer?—Yes, sir.
206. In Auckland?—Yes, sir.
207. In what year was it?—Over three years ago.
208. It was the Government officer in Auckland a little over three years ago?—Yes, sir.
209. Was the officer in the abattoirs when it was being killed?—No, sir. They did not kill in abattoirs. They have a private slaughterhouse.
210. What would be the difference between abattoirs and a private slaughterhouse?—Abattoirs is a place that belongs to the City Council. A private slaughterhouse is owned by a private firm.
211. And it cannot be an abattoir unless it is owned by the Council?—It is called an "abattoir" when the Council owns it.
212. If I called a place "abattoirs" where a private man kills his meat, was the meat killed in the abattoirs when the officer was there, or was it before he came there?—It was killed while he was there.
213. And what was it put into the digester for?—Because it was not fit to be eaten.
214. Was it diseased?—Yes, sir.
215. And it was a little over three years ago?—Yes, sir.
216. And it was by the Government officer in Auckland?—Yes, sir.
217. *Colonel Davies.*] When did you go over to Africa?—I went over in the "Drayton Grange."
218. And landed about the middle of May?—Yes, sir.
219. When did you go up to Auckland?—I went up to Auckland about three weeks ago.
220. Did you go on the "Britannic"?—No, sir.
221. You left the "Britannic" in Wellington?—I did, sir.
222. You were one of the men who left the "Britannic" in Wellington contrary to orders, and then obtained a passage up in some other way?—Not contrary to orders, sir. We were told we could go ashore, if we liked. We were told that if we stayed here we would miss our passage.
223. You were told by the commanding officer that all men for Auckland had either to go in the "Britannic" or pay their own passages?—Yes, sir.
224. And you preferred to go on shore on those terms?—Yes, sir, I did.
225. Did you pay your own passage?—From New Plymouth to Auckland I did.
226. Did you pay your own passage from Wellington to New Plymouth?—No, sir.
227. How did you get the passage?—I got a pass to go, sir.
228. How did you get it?—From one of the officers on the boat.
229. Officer of what boat?—On the "Britannic." I asked him if I could get a pass, and he gave it to me.
230. You do not know his name?—No, sir. I had to ask him three or four times before I could get it. I had a lot of trouble. I would not know him again if I saw him.
231. Would you know his name if you heard it?—No, sir, I would not.
232. What regiment did he belong to?—North Island, I think.
233. You were in the depot, Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.
234. You were never on trek, were you?—No, sir.
235. Do you remember, after the "Britannic" had gone, some of the men meeting in Wellington and deciding that they would go and ask for passes?—Yes, sir.
236. Were you there?—Yes, sir.
237. Can you tell me who else was there?—Most of the Auckland men were there—nearly all of them.
238. Can you tell me two or three?—Corporal Castles, Silcock, Corporal Moore.

239. Were there any more?—Yes, there were a lot more.
240. You are perfectly certain of this?—Yes, sir.
241. Where did you meet?—I think we met here, sir, at the House.
242. What part of the House?—Outside, on the verandah.
243. What date did you meet?—I do not remember.
244. What day did you leave for Auckland?—On the Thursday.
245. And the “Britannic” got in on the Friday morning?—Yes, sir.
246. She left on Saturday?—I do not know when she left.
247. Was it the following Thursday you had this meeting?—No; the following Thursday we left here for Auckland.
248. It was before the following Thursday?—Yes, sir.
249. Was it the day before?—Two or three days before.
250. What did you do at this meeting?—Saw one or two of the members, and they said we did quite right.
251. What did you tell them?—We told them the state of the ship, and the food we were getting on the boat. They told us we did quite right.
252. To leave the ship?—Yes, sir.
253. And the reason you gave for asking for a passage up by train was because the ship was overcrowded and the food was not good?—I told them the food was not good. I never said anything about the overcrowding.
254. You had this meeting so that you could go and represent yourselves in a body to the members?—We did not have a meeting. We just came up here and told them.
255. You all met on the verandah?—Yes, sir.
256. You met so that you would not all be higgledy-piggledy, and that you would all agree on what you were going to say?—No, sir. We said we were going to ask for a pass.
257. You said you were going to ask for a pass, and you were all together to see how you were going to ask for a pass, because you were not properly treated on the “Britannic”?—Yes, sir.
258. *Captain Lewin.*] You were in the Tenth Contingent?—I went over with the Tenth. I joined the Eighth when I got to Africa.
259. What squadron were you transferred to?—C.
260. And you were transferred to C?—Yes, sir, as one of the details.
261. Who was this Quartermaster-Sergeant Johnston: what squadron did he belong to?—C squadron.
262. *Colonel Davies.*] Do you know a man named Brewin in Auckland?—Yes, sir.
263. He went up with you, did he not?—He did not go up in the steamer with me.
264. Was he at the meeting?—I do not know; he might have been.

Corporal GEORGE CASTLES sworn and examined. (No. 49.)

265. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—George Castles.
266. What is your rank?—Corporal.
267. In which contingent?—The Eighth.
268. What squadron did you belong to?—C squadron.
269. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—Labourer.
270. You expressed a desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation on board the “Britannic” during her recent trip to New Zealand: will you please shortly state your complaints. The Commission will be pleased to hear you, and we will then ask you questions?—Well, there were complaints all the way from Durban to Wellington. I think they were mostly in the tucker line. The meat was terribly bad. It was tainted, also the fish I do not think was the best in the world. It was ling-fish I think. The bread was fairly good, but there was not enough of it. The coffee that was given to us you did not know whether it was tea, coffee, chocolate, or what it was. It was never drunk; it was terrible bad stuff. I would prefer water to it at any time. I think complaints were made about the water for washing. There was not enough of it. It was only turned on for an hour in the morning, mostly between 7 and 8. There were only three basins, and there were only two workable. That was between C and D squadron.
271. *The Chairman.*] Was that between five hundred men?—There were six between the five hundred men; there were three more forward. There were just three between the C and D squadron. You often had to go round and get one of the men to turn the water on, because if you were not there in time you had no chance of getting a wash until the next morning. It was turned off after 9 o'clock, sometimes before. About our baggage;—when we were on board at Durban it was all chucked down the hold. Before we got to Albany a lot of us wanted some clean stuff, and it was brought up on deck, and it was sopping wet. There were 3 ft. or 4 ft. of water in the hold. I heard that a fresh-water tank had bursted, and the things we depended on for having a change were sopping wet, except a few bags that were so high up that the water could not get at. There was no room at all for the men to exercise themselves. We were jammed up in every shape and form; we had to squeeze in the best way we could.
272. *Mr. McNab.*] Is that the deck-room?—Yes; down below and the top deck.
273. What do you mean by the meat being tainted: was it diseased meat, or was it thin lean meat?—Well, in my opinion, it seemed that the freezer had gone wrong. There was really no taste in it. You could smell it from one end of the ship to the other. It was perfectly green. When the orderly came along every morning it was as green as grass.
274. Did you ever see it coming out of the hold?—I was never along the hold when it came out. I saw it when it was being carried from the hold to the galley.

275. Did it go to the butcher's shop or to the galley?—Well, it might have gone to the butcher's shop to get weighed out.

276. When you say that the smell was very bad, was it between the hold and the butcher's shop, or between the butcher's shop and the galley?—Between the butcher's shop and the galley.

277. Was this before you reached Albany or afterwards?—Just before we reached Albany.

278. After you reached Albany did you ever see any meat that was green and smelling on account of being tainted carried from the butcher's shop to the galley?—I never took notice after that. I never relied on that for my tucker. I used to get it off the cooks.

279. You mean to say that after you left Albany, on to New Zealand, you never saw meat that was tainted and smelling carried from the butcher's shop to the galley?—No, I cannot say, sir.

280. Did you know that there was a veterinary surgeon on board the ship inspecting the meat?—No, I did not know that.

281. Did you ever make any complaint yourself about the meat smelling?—I made complaints to the officer when he came round to ask for complaints.

282. You made one?—Yes; I spoke up for the table.

283. What officer was it you spoke to?—Well, several different officers; they are too numerous to mention.

284. Mention a few of them?—Well, Lieutenant Parker was one.

285. Did you say to him that the meat was tainted?—Yes, sir.

286. What did he say?—He said he would have to see into it. There were several complaints, and he said he would have to see into it.

287. Did you complain to any other officer?—Yes; there was some other officer, but I really forget the name now.

288. Was he a South Island or North Island officer?—I think he was a North Island officer.

289. Was it between Durban and Albany?—Yes, sir.

290. Do you remember what this officer said when you complained about the tainted meat?—It was somewhat similar to what Mr. Parker said—that he would have to see about it, or something to that affect.

291. In regard to the fish, was that the occasion you refer to—the case where the men saw Colonel Davies on the deck and the fish was thrown overboard?—Yes; that was on the same occasion.

292. Is it not a fact that it was absolutely the same occasion?—Yes, I think it was.

293. And bully beef was issued to the men?—Yes, sir.

294. In regard to the washing, you said that the water was on from 7 to 8, and that it was turned off after 9 o'clock as a rule; subsequently you said it was turned off before 9 o'clock?—Yes, sir.

295. What were the conditions between 8 and 9?—If you happened to get a wash between 7 and 8 it was just a miracle. If you went between 8 and 9 you could get a wash if you tried.

296. The men were washing themselves between 8 and 9?—Yes; they were trying to get a wash.

297. Some were washing between 8 and 9?—Yes, sir.

298. It was about 9 o'clock when they came up to clean the latrines, was it not?—Yes, I believe so.

299. Sometimes men would be having a wash when the fatigue party came, and they would be cleared out?—Yes, they would.

300. So that the washing went on generally up to 9 o'clock?—Yes, up to 9 o'clock.

301. You said there were three basins, and only two were workable: how many men were there who had to depend on these three basins for washing?—There was C and D squadrons. I suppose there were a hundred-odd men in each squadron—about two hundred and fifty men, more or less.

302. Now, were there any other basins there but the three?—If you liked to go away forward there were basins up there, but the South Island men were there. Not only that, if you went up there there was water in some basins, and some had none at all. I have gone up myself and have tried the taps, and no water came through.

303. In regard to the one that was unworkable, how long was it unworkable?—Pretty well ever since we left Durban.

304. Is the Commission to understand that there were only two workable from the time you left Durban till you landed in New Zealand?—That is right.

305. What was wrong with it?—It would not work at all.

306. Was it simply out of gear?—Yes, sir. The other two alongside of it were all right.

307. Did you ever complain about the one out of gear?—No, I never complained myself.

308. Now, in regard to the baggage that got wet in the hold, you said something about a tank bursting: what was the explanation?—I was given to understand that it was one of the fresh-water tanks down below that had burst, and flooded the baggage.

309. You are not complaining against your officers in connection with that?—No; I think it was the ship's fault, not the officers at all.

310. In regard to the deck accommodation and the sleeping-accommodation, that is a complaint you have made against the ship?—Yes. We reckoned the blankets were in a filthy state before we got on the ship at all. I think the majority of the men were clean. Two or three days after we left Durban we noticed that the blankets were simply crawling.

311. Did you complain to the quartermaster-sergeant about the blankets being dirty?—There were sufficient complaints. I never complained personally, sir.

312. Then, the complaints about the blankets and the accommodation: you have no complaint to make against your officers in connection with these—it is against the transport department of the ship?—Yes; I believe it would be, as far as the baggage was concerned.

313. And would it not be the same about the ship's space: you do not suggest that it was the officers who were responsible for sending so many men on the ship?—The men were all pretty clean; they were all free from lice.

314. Yes; but coming back to my question: The complaints about the deck-space and the accommodation for the men—those are complaints against the Transport Department and against the vessel, and not against your officers?—Yes, sir, I dare say they would be.

315. And you do not blame the officers about this unworkable basin?—There were several complaints; I did not complain myself.

316. You cannot give us the name of any man who complained to Colonel Davies, or so that it would reach Colonel Davies, about this basin being unworkable?—No, sir.

317. *The Chairman.*] Did you notice how the blankets looked when they were served out to you?—Yes; those that I got were very fair.

318. Were they lousy?—Yes; I found that mine were after I had used them. I had to change them.

319. How soon after you left Durban did you find them lousy?—The next day.

320. And you did not report them?—There was a considerable amount of growling between ourselves.

321. What hour did you go to sea from Durban?—I think it was evening.

322. And when were the blankets served out?—A bit late in the evening, about 7 o'clock—that is, in our part of the ship.

323. If I have a cable from the Transport Department at the Cape saying that all the blankets and hammocks that were served out were fairly clean and dry, would that fairly represent the truth, or is that an incorrect statement?—I should say that it is incorrect. The vermin was on them.

324. The last witness we had swore that the majority of the men were infected with lice: would that be a mistake?—Well, I do not know whether it was in the North Island, or South Island men, or what. The men in our squadron were pretty clean. They all believed in plenty of washing, if they could get the water.

325. How many men in a hundred would have been lousy on the veldt?—It is very hard to say.

326. Do you think half the men?—I do not think so, sir.

327. A quarter of the men?—Well, if there was a quarter, it is as much as there would be. You get a better chance of getting rid of them on the veldt, as you could always get more water.

328. You do not think that a quarter of the men were lousy when you were in camp?—Well, if there was the men kept it pretty close. In our squadron there might have been an odd one here and there, but, taking them all round, they were all pretty clean.

329. You say the water used to be turned off about 9 o'clock?—Yes; as a rule, a lot of men used to be dodging about. They could not all get there in one hour, and they used to make a rush between 8 and 9 to see if there was any chance for them.

330. You are quite sure that the water ran as late as 9?—It was as much as it did; that is putting it at the furthest.

331. But the ordinary practice was to run up till about 9?—Yes, up to about 9, sir.

332. *Colonel Davies.*] What boat did you go to South Africa in?—In the "Surrey."

333. Had you ever been there before?—I never was there before.

334. When were you made a corporal?—Some time after I left—when we were in camp at Newcastle.

335. After we left Newcastle the last time do you mean?—After we left the first time.

336. After we left Newcastle to go to Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.

337. You said you complained to Lieutenant Parker about the meat being tainted?—Yes, sir.

338. That was meat in the stew?—Yes, in the stew.

339. It was, was it not?—Yes, sir.

340. Were you down in the quarters when I came round to inspect the morning after, when I asked Mr. Parker about that particular meat, in the quarters?—I may have been there, but I do not remember it. I may have been up on deck.

341. The principal complaint about the meat in the stew was that it tasted sour?—Yes, sir; it had a terrible bad taste.

342. More sour than anything else?—I think it seemed to be anyhow; it was horrible. There was no taste attached to it at all.

343. And yet it was terrible?—A man had no time to taste it; he had to bolt it or leave it alone, or else it would almost turn him up.

344. Did not a good many of the men object to the cooks putting pickles in the stew when they made it?—I never heard that there were pickles put in the stew.

345. You went over on the "Surrey"?—Yes, sir.

346. You were hard up for water to wash in, were you not?—Yes, sir, on several occasions, but not always.

347. Very often?—Yes, sir.

348. You had no fresh water to wash in at all?—Yes, we used to get fresh water.

349. But not every day?—I used to get it.

350. There was a complaint about having to wash in salt water?—Yes, sir, there was.

351. Did you go up to Auckland in the "Britannic"?—No, sir.

352. Of course, you understood the orders that if you came ashore and did not go back on the boat, you were liable to pay your own passage?—Yes, sir.

353. You heard that Major Polson mustered all your regiment and told you that?—Yes, sir, I heard something to that effect.

354. At any rate, you have no doubt of it yourself?—No; I never heard him. I was told by several of the men on board.

355. You were informed that if you did not choose to go back in the “Britannic” you would have to pay your own fare up: that is what you understood?—Yes, sir.

356. When did you go back to Auckland?—I think, about three or four days after the “Britannic” had left.

357. The “Britannic” left on Saturday: do you remember whether it was Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday that you went up to Auckland?—I fancy it was Thursday.

358. Was it the day before that you met outside the Parliament Buildings—the Auckland men?—I think it was two days before we went up—the day after we left the “Britannic” alongside the wharf.

359. Was it on Sunday, then, do you think? You left the “Britannic” finally on Saturday?—It would be the Monday, I think.

360. You think it was the Monday that you all met on the verandah of the Parliament Buildings?—I fancy it was.

361. And how many do you suppose were present?—I suppose there would be twenty or thirty, more or less.

362. They were all men who wanted to get to Auckland?—Yes, sir.

363. Do you remember the names of any of them?—Yes, I can tell you the names of three or four. There was Macrae, and Silcock, and Avenell.

364. Was Corporal Moore there?—He was not with us.

365. Not that day?—No.

366. How did you get up to Auckland?—We went to interview Mr. Hall-Jones, and he told us to see Colonel Newall to get passes.

367. It has been stated by the last witness that a member of Parliament told you that you did quite right to leave the “Britannic” as you had done, and to go and apply for passes: do you remember that?—I do not remember hearing that pass myself.

368. When you met you thought you had not been properly fed and housed on the “Britannic,” and you thought you would go practically in a body and ask for passages instead of paying for them out of your own pockets?—Well, we were all given to understand that we were to be delivered to our homes. We did not care to go in the “Britannic,” as there was a certain amount of sickness on board, and we did not want to get quarantined. I stopped behind to get a suit of clothes made—to get something fresh on my back.

369. You met here so that the twenty or thirty could go and ask for these passages instead of having to pay for them—that was what you wanted to do?—I suppose it was better to go in a body to get them.

370. You were more likely to get them by going in a body of from twenty to thirty men?—Yes, I suppose so. There is a lot in that. I suppose a body would get more than one man at a time.

371. And therefore you agreed you would all go up and make the same statement that you were not well treated, and ask to be sent to your homes, instead of having to pay for it out of your own pockets?—A lot came up on their own. There was no intention to meet anywhere—we only happened to meet. They would have gone to see the Minister of Defence—Mr. Hall-Jones—or Colonel Newall, even if they had not met in a body.

372. And when you all met in a body you did go?—Yes, sir.

373. *Captain Lewin.*] Those kits were in my charge, were they not?—Yes, sir.

374. The North Island kits were on one side, and the South on the other—in the shaft alley-way?—Yes, sir.

375. Did you ever hear that a leak had been sprung in that shaft alley-way which was the cause of the flooding of those kits?—I heard some of them remark that she was a leaky old craft. Some of the men belonging to the ship told me it was a fresh-water tank that had bursted.

376. As soon as those kits were flooded did I not take steps at once to have that hold pumped out?—Yes, I believe you did.

377. And as soon as I could possibly get those kits up they were immediately issued to the men, so that they could dry them?—Yes, sir, that is right.

378. You will acknowledge that this was altogether an accident, this flooding of the kits?—I do not suppose it was done intentionally. It was an accident, I suppose, sir.

379. And no one was to blame for this accident occurring, and all steps were taken to preserve the men’s property?—Yes, sir; I believe that.

380. *Mr. McNab.*] How was it first discovered about the flooding of the kits?—As soon as the hatches were taken off, between Durban and Albany. You could see the water, it was coming through in bucketfuls.

381. It was a short time before you reached Albany?—Yes, sir.

382. And was it discovered owing to the hatches being opened up in order to get the kits out for use in Albany?—That was the first the troopers got to know of it. They had to go down and get their gear out, and they found they were all sopping wet with water.

383. Was this meeting you referred to of Auckland men introduced to a Minister by a member of Parliament?—I could not say, sir.

384. Did the lot of you interview a member of Parliament?—I never interviewed an Auckland member of Parliament myself, and I do not think most of the other men did either; not until later on.

385. As a body, you did not interview a member and get him to introduce you to a Minister—you went straight to the Minister?—Yes, sir; we went straight to the Minister.

386. Do you know any other Auckland men who are coming to give evidence that are not down yet?—No, sir, I do not.

## Trooper STEED sworn and examined. (No. 50.)

387. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your Christian name and surname?—James Steed.

388. Were you a member of either of the contingents?—I was a member of the Eighth.

389. What squadron?—C squadron.

390. And you were on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

391. What occupation did you follow before you went with the contingent?—I was in the Colonial Sugar-refining Works.

392. You volunteered to give evidence as to the condition of the accommodation and food on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

393. Will you just state what you have to tell us?—As regards the food, we used to get bread issued—a small loaf of bread—which we used to eat pretty well all at breakfast-time. I was mess orderly for two weeks, and I used to serve out the food. Some mornings they used to give us coffee, and we did not get enough. We complained to the orderly officers. We used to go back for more and we could get no more, and we complained again and could get no more. We had that and a little bit of stew per man—about two spoonfuls for each man—with a spud in it, and you were lucky to get a little bit of meat in it. You had to be very careful serving it out, so that each man would get the same amount. That was for the breakfast. Then, there was dinner. You got meat boiled or roasted, or some sort of meat. Sometimes it would only be half-cooked, and sometimes you could not eat it. It was putrid or bad. You would get one or two small potatoes a man, and some were rotten. Those that were not rotten were boiled with the others, and gave them a bad taste. The soup was fair at times, and the prunes and rice and some sort of pudding. Sometimes we had plum duff. It would just go a dessertspoonful of rice and two prunes per man. That is what went round our table. The duff you could get your teeth in, but you could not get them out. There was only a little piece per man. Well, at tea we would get sometimes cold corned beef or something cold, generally tinned beef. There was a case of biscuits open at any time. We had butter every third day; you would have butter one day, jam the next day, and marmalade the next.

394. Every day you got something?—Yes, sir, either jam or butter. Once we had cheese on board. We got pickles about twice a week, and we used to get bacon instead of stew.

395. And sausages?—No, sir, we never had any sausages. We used to get tea in the evening—it was water. There was very seldom enough tea. In regard to the accommodation, each man was served out with a hammock and two blankets, and there was a certain amount of room to hang the hammocks—I should say about 15 in. between each hook where the hammocks used to be swung. It was that close you could not lie, and you could not sleep. We were too close to one another. The chaps also used to sleep on the floor below and at the foot of the companion-way. Most of them slept on the floors or tables. There was no ventilation in our quarters. When there was any sea the portholes had to be closed. There was a windsail going down, but there was very little wind or air coming down from that. It was only a small windsail. Every morning we used to have inspection, and we used to clean up, and it was all right for a few minutes while we went on deck; but after, when we all came down below on a cold day, it would get as bad as ever.

396. What do you mean by that?—The dirt would come off their boots, things would be knocked about, the hammocks that were put up used to be fetched down, some would swing their hammocks, and some would lie on the floor and read.

397. What complaint do you wish to make about that?—The complaint is that it could not be kept clean. After inspection the place was just as dirty as ever; it could not be kept clean. That is all about the accommodation on our own particular deck. About the kits: When we got aboard our kits were put down in the hold two days after we left, and we could not get them out. They were fetched up twice during the voyage, and when we had them fetched up they were wet. There was water in the hold, and we chucked our clothes overboard because we could not get any means of drying them. We put them in the hold again, and they got wet a second time. About the hospital: I paraded sick on two occasions in front of Surgeon-Captain Eccles. He said I had quinsy, or something wrong with my throat. My throat was all swollen, and I could hardly swallow anything, and the dispenser gave me some sort of stuff which I think was aniseed. He gave me a spoonful in a bottle, and I filled it up with water, and you could hardly taste any difference between water and the medicine. He said, "Take a spoonful three times a day." He told me to take three or four spoonfuls daily every four hours, and I took this, and it did not do me any good. I paraded sick again, and they gave me the same stuff, so I did not parade any more. When I came into Wellington about 10 o'clock I went into the hospital and asked if I could see my mates. I saw a couple of my mates out of my squadron there. Their eyes were all swollen up and their lips cracked, and they asked me to get them some water. They said they had not had a wash for two or three days. They asked me to get them some water. This was the day we got to Wellington; we were out in the stream. There was a chap in the hospital during the voyage, and he used to come down at dinner-time to get something to eat. He said he could get nothing in the hospital.

398. Who was he?—Farrier Smith.

399. Have you any idea what was the matter with him?—I could not tell you what was the matter with him.

400. He came down to get a feed?—Yes, sir.

401. How often did he do that?—A couple or three days, to my knowledge.

402. At breakfast, dinner, or tea?—I just noticed him at dinner. Washing is the next thing. The water used to be put on for an hour or perhaps an hour and a half of a morning, and, of course, there was such a rush. If you were not very quick you could not get a wash at all. If you went

up to the pump you could get enough to drink, or you could take a mugful away. I could not get any drinking-water to take down below. I went up with a jug to get water for the mess-table, and they would not give it to me. I asked Mr. Bullock to get water for our table, and he saw Major Polson, and I got a jugful for the dinner.

403. When you complained you got some?—Yes. Major Polson ordered us to get some.

404. You could always get sufficient drinking-water if you went for it?—Yes, sir.

405. What complaint have you to make about that?—I had to parade in front of Mr. Bullock first to get the water. The sentry would not give me any.

406. Do you think that is a serious complaint?—No, not about that, I do not.

407. You said unless you were quick you could not get a wash?—Yes, sir.

408. What time did you get up?—Six o'clock.

409. At half-past 6 could you get a wash?—Yes, if you got in front of the crowd.

410. Supposing you did not get in front of the crowd?—You had to wait until the wash-house was empty.

411. If you persevered and tried, and was early there to get a wash—if you were there when the reveille went—how soon could you get a wash?—You could wash by 7.

412. And every morning?—Yes; I did.

413. If a man took the trouble to get up early for a wash he could get one?—Yes, sir.

414. What is your complaint?—There was no room for a man to get a wash when he went there.

415. How old are you?—Twenty-two.

416. You say that in the hospital the day you came into Wellington, and when you were lying in the stream, your mates could not get a drink?—Yes, my mates asked me for a drink.

417. Were there orderlies in the hospital?—Yes, they were supposed to be there.

418. Were they neglecting their patients?—Yes, I think so. There was a lot of chaps lying down on the floor with measles out on them.

419. Do you think the orderlies were refusing to give these men a drink?—I could not say, sir.

420. The fact of a man asking for a drink of water, what does that prove?—My idea was that they could not get it from the orderlies.

421. You think that if any man who asks for a drink of water is proof that no one will give it to him?—Yes, that is what I think.

422. You say that Farrier Smith came down from the hospital to get a feed at your table?—Yes.

423. Was he hungry?—Yes, sir.

424. Did he eat the food?—He did.

425. Did he enjoy his dinner?—Yes, sir, he did.

426. Then, you think the food he got with you was better than what he got in the hospital?—Yes; I suppose he could get more.

427. You think that the man preferred to be at his own mess than to have his food at the hospital?—He said he could get it at his own mess. He could not get it at the hospital.

428. Have you any idea what was the matter with him?—No, sir.

429. You do not know whether the doctor had put him on a light diet?—I do not know, sir.

430. You simply know that he came down for a good feed, and ate what he could get at the table?—Yes, sir.

431. Did he find fault with the dinner he was getting?—I could not say.

432. At any rate, he apparently left the hospital to go and get his mess dinner?—He sneaked away, as he called it.

433. What clothes did you throw overboard?—A cotton shirt, a pair of trousers, and a pair of socks; that is all, I think.

434. Were they in good repair?—They were clean when I put them in. There was some sand in the bottom of the kit, and it made them all muddy.

435. You preferred to throw them overboard than to getting them dried—Yes, sir, to getting them washed and dried.

436. What pay were you getting in Africa?—Five shillings a day.

437. And you could still afford to throw away shirts, socks, and trousers. Were they wet with salt or fresh water?—I could not say.

438. They got wet down the hold, at any rate?—Yes, sir.

439. Did you apply for leave to dry them?—No, sir.

440. You were not refused leave to dry them?—No, sir.

441. Was it not possible to dry them?—You could have got them dry down below if you could have washed them and hung them out; but directly your back would be turned your mates would have "boned" them. It is not very nice standing "sentry go" up in the cold.

442. Do you mean to blame Captain Lewin for your kit getting wet? Who was to blame for it?—Not at all. We could have kept our kits above our hammocks, but that was not allowed. Our troop-sergeant told us that it was in orders that we had to put our kits down below.

443. I suppose you were in the position of being a soldier, were you not?—Yes, sir.

444. And consequently you were subject to army discipline?—Yes, sir.

445. And if the order is that they are to be put in a certain place you cannot blame your officers for enforcing that rule?—No, sir. But if that had not come out in orders to put them down there we could have kept our kits dry above our hammocks.

446. You think it was an improper order to have to put them down there?—Yes, sir, to get wet.

447. Do you think it was a wrongful misuse of authority to order them to be stowed down below?—I do not know about that.



448. *The Chairman.*] You say there was a windsail in the 'tween decks?—I was in No. 5 troop-deck, and we had one windsail down.

449. What size was the windsail: do you know at all?—I should think it would be about 18 in. through.

450. Now, you say that most of the men of your squadron slept on the floor?—Yes, sir.

451. How many?—I could not say how many. You had to walk over them at night, and they would be howling out at you.

452. How many were in your mess?—Fourteen.

453. How many slept on the floor?—About seven.

454. Did any sleep on the upper deck?—Yes; there was one chap slept there all the way over, and to my knowledge one slept on the table all the way over.

455. There were seven on the floor, one on the table, and one on the deck?—Yes, sir.

456. Then, there was only room for five hammocks?—Yes, for five hammocks; then, the sergeant-major used to sleep there.

457. Was there room for more than five hammocks?—Yes, sir. There was a sergeant-major and a troop-sergeant; they used to dine at different tables, and they used to sleep over our tables.

458. Were there any hooks over your table on which no hammocks were hung?—There may have been three or four.

459. You say there was not enough tea served out to you?—Yes, sir.

460. Would you yourself have drunk more if it had been served out to you?—Yes, sir.

461. And would the other men have drunk more?—Yes, sir.

462. Are you quite sure?—Yes, sir.

463. Did they want more?—Yes, every meal; nine meals out of ten there were complaints about there not being enough tea.

464. Supposing we were told that the men would not drink the tea because it was so bad: is that true?—It is not true, sir.

465. You say they generally drank the tea and wanted more?—Yes; I do not say all would. Some of us would complain about it.

466. You say you would have drunk more tea if it had been given to you?—Yes, sir.

467. You say you could not get your teeth out of the duff?—Yes, sir.

468. What does that mean?—It was that claggy it would stick to the roof of your mouth. It was just like flour not half-cooked.

469. Used the men to eat it?—Some would eat it and some would leave it.

470. There was not enough of that?—Yes, sir.

471. And they used to eat it and want more?—There was never enough to go round the table.

472. They would have eaten more if they could have got it?—Yes.

473. And the prunes and rice: could they have eaten more of them?—Yes, sir. The prunes were right enough, but the rice was mouldy. There was no sugar or milk with them. It was just rice by itself.

474. Were the prunes not sweetened at all?—No, sir; just prunes boiled by themselves—no sugar or milk, or anything.

475. How often did you have boiled meat and roast meat?—About twice a week roast meat, and the rest boiled meat.

476. Which was the worst—the beef or the mutton?—The mutton was the worst.

477. Was the mutton of bad quality, or badly cooked?—Tainted.

478. It was nearly always tainted?—Yes, sir.

479. Through all the voyage was it tainted?—Sometimes you would get a good piece of meat, and sometimes it would be that bad you could not eat it.

480. And the beef, how was that?—It was much the same.

481. Did you notice that during the whole voyage, or was there one part of the voyage that the meat was better than the other?—When we started it was just about the same as when we finished.

482. Was it better or worse at the finish?—About the same, sir.

483. You say you did not get enough coffee?—Yes, sir.

484. The men used to drink it and want for more?—Yes, sir.

485. Then, the information that the men always threw it overboard is not true?—I could not say, sir, what they did at the other tables.

486. At your table they drank the coffee?—Yes, sir; there was only a mouthful.

487. You say that in the stew they got for breakfast perhaps they got a potato?—Yes, sir.

488. That means that they did not always get a potato?—Yes, sir.

489. And they were lucky if they got a bit of meat?—Yes, sir; it was just water. There was sometimes three or four pieces in the stew. Sometimes the potatoes would be boiled to a mash, and I used to give a little piece of meat about 2 in. long to each man.

490. So that several men had to go without meat, then?—Yes, sir.

491. You served out the stew in equal portions as well as you could, and there were some plates with nothing but water on them?—Yes, sir.

492. Did you ever make complaint about that?—We made complaints until we were tired.

493. Did you ever show a plate to an officer which had no meat and no potato in it?—Yes, sir.

494. To whom?—I could not tell you who it was.

495. You mean to deliberately swear that a man had this so-called stew which consisted of no meat, no potato, and nothing but water?—It was a mix up like a little stew.

496. You say that perhaps they go a potato, which means that some did not get one?—Yes, sir.

497. It was lucky if they got a bit of meat, which means they had to go without sometimes. Was there any occasion at breakfast when there was no potato and no meat on a man's plate?—Yes, sir.

498. The potatoes were half-rotten, you say?—Yes, sir.

499. Who were they served out to?—They were served out at our table.

500. But when they came out from the store?—They were served out to the potato peelers and washers.

501. Who were they?—So-many men from each squadron.

502. Was it not their duty to pick out the bad ones, or to report to the quartermaster or to some other officer?—I could not say, sir.

503. If the bad potatoes were put in the stews, they had gone through the hands of your own men, and they allowed them to be put in the stew?—They had the peeling of the potatoes.

504. If the rotten potatoes got into the stew it was because the men did not sort them out?—Yes, sir; but the cooks were to blame for cooking them.

505. If the potato-cleaner was one of your own men, was it not his business to see that the rotten potatoes were not put in?—Well, if I was a potato-peeler I would not have put them in.

506. You think your own men were to blame for not seeing that the bad ones were picked out?—They were in a way, sir.

507. *Mr. McNab.*] I suppose the ventilation was not of the best?—No, sir, it was not by a long way.

508. Do you think Colonel Davies would have improved the ventilation if he had ordered all your kits to be hung above your hammocks?—There was no ventilation coming in there.

509. Do you not think it would have tended to make the ventilation worse still if your kits had been there all day lying above your hammocks?—The kits would have been right up against the sides, so I do not see that it could have made any difference to the ventilation.

510. You think the kits could have been stored there, and that it would not have affected the ventilation in the slightest?—Yes, sir.

511. What was in the kits, as a rule?—There was just a change of underclothing, a "British warm," and an overcoat. That was all in my kit.

512. Were these things that you had been wearing up till the time you got on board?—The underclothing was all clean. Mine were washed before we left Newcastle.

513. Had all the men's kits been washed previous to coming on board?—I could not tell you that, sir.

514. Do you not think it would be a risky thing bringing all these men's kits on board and putting them above the bunks?—Well, it could not have made it any worse than it was.

515. It would not have sweetened the atmosphere?—No.

516. You were complaining about your mates in the hospital?—Yes, sir.

517. Did you ever visit men in hospital on land when they were suffering with pneumonia?—No, sir.

518. Did you ever have pneumonia yourself?—No.

519. You do not know whether it is characteristic of pneumonia that the patient is always feeling thirsty and wants a drink?—No, I did not know, sir; but it was measles that my mates had.

520. They had measles at the time you saw them?—Yes, sir.

521. *Colonel Davies.*] When did you go to Africa?—With the Eighth Contingent, on the "Surrey."

522. Do you live in Auckland?—Yes, sir; Parnell.

523. Do you remember the first three or four days out from Durban I constantly impressed on the men the necessity for stowing away everything they possibly could out of their quarters?—Yes, sir.

524. So that there should be as much air-space and as few corners as possible, and so that the place would be sweeter and cleaner?—Yes, sir.

525. Did you go up to Auckland by the "Britannic"?—No, sir. I was a long way from being well and I stayed behind, and paid my own passage. I asked the Defence Department if they would refund it, as I was not in a fit state to travel.

526. And you paid your own passage from Wellington to Auckland?—Yes, sir. It cost me two guineas and sixpence. I left Wellington Monday morning at half-past 7, and stayed in Palmerston, and caught the train for New Plymouth next morning.

527. If you left Wellington on Monday morning you were not at the meeting of the Auckland men?—No, sir; I left before. I did not know whether there was a meeting at all.

528. Did they ask you if you were going to the meeting?—They asked me if I was going to the meeting, but I said I was in a hurry to go.

Trooper CROOK sworn and examined. (No. 51.)

529. *Mr. McNab.*] What contingent did you belong to?—I was a Tenth detail with the Eighth.

530. What squadron were you associated with coming back?—H.

531. What was your occupation before you enlisted?—Farming.

532. What is your age?—Twenty.

533. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food, and accommodation, and other things on board the "Britannic": will you just state what matters you wish to bring before our notice?—Well, I reckon the food was not fit for us to eat. The bread was pretty good, but there was not enough of it. There was only enough for about a meal.

534. How much bread do you think was given to each man?—There was a pound, I think.
535. It was good bread?—Yes, sir; the bread was all right.
536. Was the coffee bad?—I only tasted it once, and it made me sick straight away.
537. Do you care for coffee, as a rule?—Yes, I always liked coffee.
538. You only tasted it the once, and it was bad?—Yes, sir.
539. What other complaints did you make about the food—mention the things you complained of?—The stew was not as good as it should have been. The meat was bad, and the potatoes were only half-cooked.
540. Do you mean it was lean or tainted?—It was tainted.
541. What else was wrong with the stew besides the meat?—The potatoes were not cooked.
542. Did you notice if any of the meat was tainted after you reached Albany?—I never tasted it. I never went below to have it. I used to buy my tucker.
543. You did not take any of the stew, then?—No.
544. What was the last time you tasted it?—The first three days out on the boat I went below for my meals, and I could not eat them.
545. And you never saw any after that?—No, sir.
546. Your complaints only relate to the first three days?—Yes, sir.
547. And then you bought the food yourself?—Yes, sir.
548. What is your complaint about the accommodation?—I reckoned there was not sufficient room for us. I had to sleep under the table on the floor down below.
549. How many men slept in hammocks at your table?—I could not say.
550. How many men were at the table?—Fourteen.
551. Can you give us any idea how many slept in hammocks?—I do not know.
552. Would ten sleep in them?—I do not know, sir.
553. Well, how many slept on the table?—Two slept on the table, and three would sleep under the table.
554. Where did the others sleep?—I do not know where they slept; some of them slept on deck.
555. If you complain about the accommodation, can you give us any further information about how many slept in hammocks?—No, sir.
556. Was there any room to put further hooks up?—I do not think so.
557. Are you complaining that too many men were put on board the ship?—Yes, sir.
558. You are complaining that the Transport Department put too many men on board the ship?—Yes, sir.
559. Then, the complaints that you have given about the food and the complaint about the accommodation are all your complaints?—Yes, sir.
560. *The Chairman.*] Did you make a contract with the cooks, or how did you arrange for the payment of the food?—I paid £2 10s. for the voyage. My mate had no money, and I paid for his too.
561. How soon after you left?—The third day out.
562. You contracted for all through?—Yes, sir.
563. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—I was farming, and I was at butchering before that.
564. *Colonel Davies.*] You came down to the Commission to say that you paid £5 for food on the voyage?—Yes, sir.
565. You did not pay all that for yourself—half was for some one else?—Yes, sir, he had no money.
566. You paid £2 10s. for yours?—Yes, sir.
567. Where do you live?—Pukekohe.
568. Were you born there?—I was born in Ponsonby.
569. You went over with the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes, sir.
570. And you landed about the middle of May?—Yes, sir.
571. And you then went to the depot clerk's office?—Yes, sir.
572. You were never with the regiment on trek?—I joined the regiment when we were going through from Elandsfontein.
573. Have you ever been out of New Zealand before that?—No.
574. Were you sea-sick?—I was sea-sick for three days.
575. Were you sea-sick coming back?—No, not at all.
576. When did you go up to Auckland—did you go by the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

Trooper GEORGE EDWARD DROWER examined on oath. (No. 52.)

577. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of one of the contingents?—Yes.
578. Which one?—I went over with the Tenth, and came back with the Eighth.
579. With which boat did you go over?—With the "Drayton Grange."
580. What was your occupation before you joined?—A warehouseman.
581. You volunteered to give evidence before this Commission?—Yes.
582. The Commission will inquire into any complaints as to the quality of the food and the quantity of it, the accommodation, or anything else in regard to which you desire to give evidence. Will you kindly state anything you wish to complain of, and we shall be happy to hear you? I will first ask your age?—I am twenty-one.
583. Will you now state what you complain of?—In the first place, I think there were far too many men on board the ship, considering the accommodation, and I think there was not sufficient room in the hospital. I think the hospital accommodation was very inadequate for the number of troops on board. With regard to the food: the meat was really not fit to eat, and we used to get some

kind of puddings which were more like flour and water than anything else. I think it was ground rice, but it was too musty to eat. And then there was the vermin. The blankets that were served out had been used before, and were unfit to give to men. We brought vermin on to the ship, but the blankets were covered with them. That is my opinion. The food and the overcrowding are the principal things I have to complain about.

584. You are making rather a general statement; would you give us some details about the meat?—Well, we had stews for breakfast, but as soon as the stew came on the table you could smell it everywhere. The potatoes were very good; but the soup was simply water, and the meat very poor. Of course, we had bully beef sometimes, and it was first-rate. We had that for tea. The meat was not well cooked generally, but the meat itself was good as far as that goes. About seven times out of ten the men at our table threw it overboard. The bread was very good; and the potatoes were small certainly, but they were good in quality. The coffee was very poor, and the tea was the same. The coffee was thick and black-looking stuff, and had not a very nice taste. In fact, it was nasty. I drank it once or twice, but I could not drink it afterwards; and I generally drank water. The tea was about the same, and it often came down with grease on top of it. That is all I have to say about that.

585. Anything else?—As to how things were in the hospital, I do not know anything about it except that on the day we left Wellington I and other fellows had to clean it up. All the patients had been removed. But I do not know anything about the treatment in the hospital. I think that is all I have to complain about.

586. About the coffee being thick and black, was it too strong?—I do not know what it was, but it had a nasty strong taste.

587. Did you get enough?—Yes; we could always get enough tea and coffee at our table.

588. About the grease that was on the coffee: to what extent was it greasy?—Well, it was a little greasy—greasy bubbles floating over the top.

589. Do you think that could have been caused by condensed milk?—I do not know.

590. Do you know whether condensed milk when put into hot water would give out bubbles?—I do not know. It seemed as if the coffee and tea had been boiled in boilers that soup or meat had been boiled in.

591. Who cleaned out the coppers?—I suppose it was the cooks. There was a fatigue party told off every day to peel the potatoes.

592. Did they help in the galley?—I think there was one man in the galley all the way across.

593. Might it have been his duty to clean the boilers?—It might have been.

594. Were any steps ever taken to complain that the cooks would not clean out the coppers, or that this man would not clean them?—Not that I know.

595. You say that seven times out of ten the men threw the meat overboard?—Yes.

596. When was this?—It was the stews for breakfast.

597. You say the potatoes were good?—Yes, but they were very small, and always cooked in the skins, and we had to eat them skins and all.

598. Could you not have skinned them?—No, they were too small to skin. There might be larger ones there, but the majority were small.

599. Do I understand you to mean that the men preferred to eat the potatoes with the skins on rather than skin them?—I believe some did.

600. Did you prefer eating them with the skin on or without?—I am not particular.

601. Could you not skin a potato without losing part of it?—Yes.

602. You say that on seven days out of ten the men threw the meat overboard?—Yes.

603. It was in the stew?—Some threw it all overboard; some took out the potatoes, but most of them threw the whole lot over.

604. What was the quality of the bread?—It was good.

605. The butter?—Good.

606. The jam?—It was not too good. There seemed as if there was a lot of vegetable in it.

607. What jams were there?—I think rhubarb, apple jam, and marmalade. The marmalade was very good.

608. The apple-jam?—That was fair, but the rhubarb had some other mixture with it and was very poor.

609. What did you have for dinner?—First of all, soup. The soup was very fair—it was passable. Then we had a joint of some kind. Sometimes it was cooked properly, but seldom cooked nicely, and the meat smelt very strong.

610. How was the soup made?—I believe in a big boiler.

611. Was the meat cooked in the same boiler?—I do not think so; I think it was cooked in a separate boiler.

612. Was it not usual to use up the indifferent meat in making soup, and give you the good meat to eat?—I think so.

613. Do you think they took the best meat to make the soup and gave you the bad to eat?—I do not know. Sometimes we struck a nice piece.

614. Which was the best, the beef or the mutton?—The mutton, I think.

615. What was wrong with the mutton?—It smelt strong like the beef. Both were about the same.

616. By smelling strong, do you mean that it had begun to go bad?—Yes.

617. How often?—About six or seven times out of ten.

618. Then, you rarely got any meat that did not smell bad?—Very seldom.

619. Were you ever mess orderly?—Yes.

620. Had you to do with the uncooked rations?—Yes.

621. When you got your uncooked rations, was it before they were taken to the galley?—What do you mean?

622. Were you not served out with raw meat?—No; they had butchers on board, and they supplied the cooks, and then the sergeant and the orderly went up and got the meat and the soup and took it down to the mess-tables where the orderlies served it out.

623. On what occasion did you report to anybody that the meat was so bad it could not be eaten?—Who, myself?

624. Yes, you, as orderly of the mess?—When the orderly officer of the day came down, except, I believe, on two occasions, when the fellows rushed up on deck and kicked up a row about the meat being bad, and we got bully beef.

625. How often did you officially complain to the orderly officer?—About once in three days.

626. Who was the orderly officer to whom you complained?—One of them was Lieutenant Parker.

627. What did you complain to him about?—That the meat was bad and the potatoes very small.

628. What did he do?—He said he would see about it.

629. Did anything result?—I think we got bully beef, but I do not remember exactly.

630. Why were you getting bully beef?—Because the fellows were complaining about all the meat that was bad, and they must have a change of some sort.

631. Was the bully beef issued for breakfast or dinner or what?—For tea.

632. You seem to speak of a special issue of bully beef?—Yes; we got that for tea.

633. You said just now that you always got bully beef for tea?—Yes, sir.

634. And you got it on this special occasion?—Yes.

635. Can you give us a case on which the complaint was not attended to?—I think it was soon after we left Durban.

636. How soon?—About three or four days.

637. What was the complaint?—That the meat was bad, and that we must have a change.

638. Who was the officer to whom you complained?—I do not recollect.

639. Was the meat bad all the way from Durban to New Zealand?—It was just about the same all the way through.

640. Supposing we have evidence that there was a veterinary officer appointed to examine the meat, and he stated that he always inspected it and the quality of the meat was good, is that a mistake?—I think so.

641. You say the blankets were full of vermin?—Yes.

642. What did the blankets look like when first served out?—As if they had been used before.

643. Not cleaned since previously used?—Yes; they were just as if they had been thrown about anywhere.

644. Were they thrown down in a lump, or were they rolled up?—Thrown down in a lump; they had not been rolled up.

645. When did you get your blankets?—On the night we left Durban.

646. You are sure they were in a lump and not rolled up?—Yes.

647. Were you at the issue?—No, sir. There was a fatigue party told off to bring them down into the hold.

648. Then, it was not at issue-time, but when they were brought down?—Yes.

649. You did not see them issued?—No.

650. What time of the day were they issued?—About 8 o'clock at night.

651. Did you examine them for lice then?—No; next day.

652. How many men brought lice on board?—In my opinion all brought them on board.

653. Then, would it not be likely that the lice were put on the blankets by the men, and not on the men by the blankets?—I think so.

654. Under these circumstances, could it be expected otherwise than that the blankets would get lousy? For instance, if a man is lousy and gets clean blankets and goes to bed in them, they would be lousy next morning?—Yes.

655. Are you fully convinced that three-fourths of the men had lice?—I think about that.

656. You said nearly all, but I do not want to pin you to that?—I think it would be three-fourths.

657. Was it not likely the men brought the lice, and not the blankets?—It might be. I had blankets that were clean, but they were lousy next day.

658. You say the hospital accommodation was inadequate?—I think it would have been sufficient for about eight hundred men.

659. How do you come to that conclusion?—We had a number of Australians on board. Some left the ship at Albany and some at Melbourne. The place occupied by the Australians in the hold was made into a hospital. The hospital being full, they had to do something.

660. You were never a patient?—No; I went in there once with a cold.

661. Were you taken in?—I went in myself.

662. Did you sleep in the hospital?—No. I went in the morning and told the doctor I had a cold, and asked him for something.

663. Whereabouts in the voyage was that?—About half-way across.

664. From where?—From Durban to Wellington. Just before we got to Albany.

665. You say the hospital accommodation was insufficient?—Yes.

666. Were all the bunks full?—Yes, as far as I could see. Of course, I could not have a good look round.

667. Do you know how much accommodation there was in the hospital?—No, sir.

668. Or the number of patients in the hospital?—No, sir.

669. You say there were too many troops for the size of the ship: How do you arrive at that?—Well, there was hardly room to turn round. Had the weather been fine it would have been different; but we had to keep down below, and there was hardly room to turn.

670. You were in the pay of the English Government?—Yes.

671. Subject to the army discipline?—Yes.

672. Under the Imperial regulations?—Yes.

673. You do not know the regulations?—No.

674. And you do not know the space the regulations require?—I do not know. There was hardly room to move about, and everything seemed so crowded.

675. Supposing the transport regulations say there was room on board for 1,084 men, and if the number of men on board was 1,005, would you say there was not sufficient accommodation?—I certainly think it would be very crowded.

676. You are complaining about somebody. Supposing the transport regulations say there would be room for 1,084, and there were only 1,005, would that be proper?—I should think so.

677. If I tell you that is the case, does not that seem as if the Commission had not much to go on, in the way of crowding?—Yes, it does seem so.

678. *Mr. McNab.*] You have no complaint to make against your officers?—Well, I do not know whether the officers could have done anything in the way of better meat for us.

679. If the meat was so universally tainted as you say, it looks as if there was no storehouse from which they could draw?—I do not know whether the officers' meat was the same as ours.

680. We have had the veterinary surgeon before us, and he swore that he inspected the meat, and every bit was examined from the time he went on duty, and it was good, and that no meat unfit for human food went from the butcher's shop into the galley: what would you say to that?—I do not think that the man could have understood his work, because when the meat came down to our hold it was horrible.

681. What experience of yours would you put alongside that statement to show that you are able to criticize a veterinary surgeon like Captain Young?—I do not know. Every one knows good meat.

682. And if some of your troopers come before us and say they could not recall a case of bad meat from Albany to New Zealand, although they could name cases before that, would you say they also were stating what is not correct?—I would not like to say that, but at our table it was different.

683. You do not suggest that Colonel Davies or any of your officers could have done anything in connection with what you call overcrowding, or would suggest that there is any blame to be attached to them?—No. I think the blame is with the Imperial officers. I do not know whether the commanding officer had power to put fewer men on the ship.

684. To what commanding officer do you refer?—Colonel Davies.

685. You are a trooper?—Yes.

686. And you do not know who is the authority who put the men on board the ship?—I believe it was the Imperial authorities.

687. And Colonel Davies was put on board with yourself, just as you were?—Yes.

688. He would be ordered on board the same as you were?—Yes; I suppose he had his orders.

689. I want to follow up and deal with the matters you complain of. With regard to the hospital accommodation, was there a fixed hospital when you went on board the ship?—Yes.

690. So that if the hospital was not big enough it was the fault of those who had it fixed up, and not with the medical officer of the 8th regiment?—Certainly not with the medical officer. I think it lies with the man who had it fixed up. Of course, the medical officer could not help the men being sick.

691. Do you know of your own knowledge that it was ever full on one single occasion before you got to Albany?—No, sir; I do not remember. It might have been a day or two before we reached Albany.

692. How do you know it was full then?—Well, I was in there about a week or so before that, and, as far as I could see, it was about full.

693. Full?—That I could not say; but about full.

694. Do you suggest to the Commission that the hospital should have held a good number more beds than there were patients in it? You have mentioned that it was about full; and if you complain, do you suggest that the hospital should have had more room?—No. The hospital was large enough for the number of beds, but it should have been larger, and there should have been more beds.

695. It would have been trenching on the room of the men if they made the hospital larger?—Yes.

696. You think there should be a larger hospital with a number of empty beds, and your men crowded?—If men went into the hospital they would not take up space in other parts of the ship.

697. You tell us that at Albany it was not full, and that if there was more room in it it would be at the cost of the other men?—Yes, at Albany, or a couple of days before.

698. If any man comes here and states that when the troops went on board they were perfectly clean he is not stating what is accurate?—There may have been one or two who were clean, but they were very scarce.

699. You said there were vegetables in the jam; which jam?—The rhubarb. From the taste there was a mixture of vegetables in it.

700. *Colonel Davies.*] When did you go to Africa?—With the Tenth.

701. Were you ever with the regiment on the trek?—No.

702. You said you went to Auckland in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

703. *Surgeon-Major Pearlless.*] What number of beds do you think would be sufficient in the hospital for ordinary purposes for the number of troops?—I could not say that. I do not know how many men were sick.

704. You say there were not a sufficient number of beds for the number of troops: what number would be sufficient?—I said the hospital was not large enough.

705. The whole way?—No, sir.

706. You say you saw the hospital full: were you on both sides of it? You know there were two wards, and one might have been empty without you knowing it?—I do not know anything about the other ward.

Trooper WILLIAM POWELL examined on oath. (No. 53.)

707. *Mr. McNab.*] To which contingent did you belong?—The Tenth.

708. What squadron?—A.

709. What is your age?—Twenty-two.

710. And your occupation before you joined the contingent?—A grocer.

711. You wish to give evidence about the "Britannic": will you state to the Commission any matter you desire to bring before it?—Well, the food was not very good. Some of it seemed to be peculiar about the taste. The meat was always raw. For the first two or three days I could not eat it.

712. Was it a raw class of meat?—I do not know what class of meat it was, but I could not eat it.

713. Was it of a disagreeable taste?—Yes.

714. To what do you attribute it?—I cannot say what it was.

715. Did you ever see it before it was cooked?—No.

716. What about the bread: was it good?—Yes.

717. What else did you have for breakfast?—After that first week I bought all my meals.

718. So that you can only speak of the taste during the first week?—Yes, except that sometimes I used to go down and get a piece of bread and a pickle.

719. Were you suffering from sea-sickness?—No; I was suffering from headache and tooth-ache.

720. What caused that?—The noise and the knocking about on board.

721. I suppose you were feeling disagreeable, naturally?—I could not say that.

722. What more complaints have you to make about the food?—The rice and stews used not to be very good, and then there was a scarcity. You could not get proper food.

723. Did you ever complain?—I did to the orderlies.

724. Who were the orderlies?—We used to pay two boys to act as our orderlies.

725. Who was your non-commissioned officer?—We had none.

726. Had you no one told off to take complaints to the orderly officer?—No; the orderly officer came round, and then the orderlies would tell him what complaints there were.

727. Did you yourself ever make a complaint to the orderly officer?—Only through the orderlies.

728. What was the name of one of your orderlies?—Stewart.

729. Can you give us one specific complaint that you made through him?—He complained that the meat was bad.

730. Where were you when this complaint was made?—It was about the first week after we started.

731. It was before you stopped going down for your meals?—Yes.

732. To whom did Stewart complain?—I could not say. It was to one of the officers.

733. Can you give the name?—No.

734. Can you not give the name of any officer to whom the orderly from your table, acting on behalf of the men, made a complaint?—Well, I did not know the Eighth Contingent officers.

735. Can you not give us any clue by which we could ascertain the name of an officer to whom your orderly, acting on behalf of the other men, made a complaint?—I could not. I think the officer that day was a fair chap. I do not suppose I should know him again.

736. You can give us no hint by which we could find out?—No.

737. You cannot even give us the date?—No. To tell you the truth, there were so many complaints that I could not remember the date of any particular one.

738. We want a specific complaint?—I could not say.

739. Outside the food was there any complaint?—Well, there used to be some difficulty in having a wash.

740. Did you ever find any difficulty?—Yes, sometimes; but I generally got a wash during the day if I did not get one in the morning. I washed in salt water if I could not get the other.

741. Give us a particular day on which you could not get a wash, and explain the reason?—I could not exactly state the day. I think it was the morning that I was on a fatigue party in the hospital for about an hour after half-past 8.

742. Then, that would be from half-past 8 to half-past 9?—Yes.

743. And you did not get a wash?—No.

744. What were you doing that morning before half-past 8?—This was the first morning that I had to go on the fatigue party. We were called for at 8, and we were not taken on until half-past 8, and we had breakfast a little late—about half-past 7.

745. But before half-past 8, what were you doing?—I think I was waiting for a wash.

746. Will you say emphatically that you were waiting for a wash and could not get it?—Yes.

747. You swear to that?—Yes; and other mornings, too.

748. What was it you were doing that caused you to miss a wash?—Well, we were waiting a long time, and when we got to the basins there was no water.

749. What time was that? Did you wait a long time?—From about breakfast-time until about half-past 9 or so.

750. What time was breakfast over?—About 8 o'clock, I think.

751. Then, you waited from 8 o'clock till half-past 9, and then there was no water?—That is right.

752. What were you doing before that, from when reveille went?—I do not think I bothered about a wash until 8 o'clock.

753. Was the water turned off at 8 o'clock?—No, I do not think so; not until about 9 o'clock.

754. Then, the men who came here and swore that the water was on from 6 to 8, and was then turned off, swore to what was not correct?—Many a time I did get a wash after 8.

755. You know they could not be correct if they said the water was turned off at 8 o'clock always?—They might have gone at certain times when it was turned off.

756. But those who said it was always turned off at 8 o'clock were wrong?—Yes.

757. You go so far as to say there were men washing at half-past 9?—I think it was between 8 and 9, or about that.

758. The time you were waiting until half-past 9 to get your turn for a wash, and got it, the water must have been going for the man in front of you?—Yes, it must have been.

759. You were at the basins waiting for a wash?—I was outside the door.

760. Did you not go in?—It was so crowded I could not get in.

761. There was a man who had just gone into the wash-house, and you waited for your chance of a vacancy at the basins?—That is right.

762. Do you remember what time the sergeant paraded the men to clean the latrines?—Yes.

763. What time?—I was in the party myself once or twice.

764. Did the sergeant stop the men from washing when he paraded them to clean the latrines?—Yes.

765. He would not allow any washing after that?—No.

766. Then, if he paraded the men at 9 o'clock to clean the latrines he must have stopped all washing then?—I am not sure whether it was 9 or half-past 9.

767. On thinking over it again you would not assert that you waited till half-past 9?—I waited from breakfast-time till 9 or half-past 9. I could not say which.

768. And you also said the sergeant in charge of the party to clean the latrines shut it off at 9 o'clock?—Yes. If it was 9 o'clock when the men were paraded to clean the latrines the water must have been shut off then, but I cannot swear to the time.

769. Any other subjects of complaint?—Well, if we did not get down by about 6 o'clock we could not get a bed.

770. Why not?—You would have to sleep upstairs on the deck.

771. Why?—It used to be so crowded, and every space was taken up. So they went to bed early.

772. How many men slept on deck?—It would not be many. It was not exactly on the deck, but on the 'tween decks, and we used to get up at 4 o'clock so that they could wash the decks.

773. How many men were there down below?—A good crowd.

774. At your table how many could be accommodated in the hammocks?—The full quantity could not be accommodated.

775. How many men at the table?—I think, seventeen. Sergeant Osborne was supposed to be there, but he was not.

776. Was he one of the seventeen?—Yes.

777. That made sixteen?—Yes.

778. For how many were there hammocks?—About eight.

779. How many could be accommodated on the table?—We could not sleep on the table, the hammocks were so low.

780. Other witnesses stated they slept on a table: that was not correct?—They might do so on other tables, but not on ours. Some keep their hammocks up higher than others.

781. Where did the others sleep?—About four slept right away in a corner, and the others were scattered about.

782. Did you not say eight slept in the hammocks?—No, not in that particular corner. There were about six there, but at the next table there were eight.

783. Was the next table a shorter one than yours?—No; but there was a bit of a wall coming into our place, and it took up some room.

784. Your complaint is against the ship that there were more men on board than there was hammock accommodation for?—That is it. If you wanted to get up at night you had to walk over the men.

785. Do you know if there was any other space available for putting in extra hooks?—No, I think all the space was utilised.

786. Did any of your men prefer sleeping on the decks to sleeping in hammocks?—I could not say. I would prefer to sleep on the floor if I could not get a place.

787. And were there others like that?—Yes.

788. Then, with regard to your officers, have you any complaint at all to make against your officers in connection with that matter?—No.



789. Against them generally?—Well, no. I just came down to give my opinion. That is all.
790. You think you men were obedient to orders, and maintained discipline, and there was no disorder?—Yes.
- 790A. Any drunkenness?—No, not generally.
- 790B. Any gambling?—There was a certain amount.
- 790C. Was it a common practice, or were there only one or two who went in for it?—Generally on pay-day there would be a good deal of gambling going on.
- 790D. In your opinion, was there any room on the vessel where any exercise could be carried on, so as to keep the men occupied?—I do not think so.
- 790E. *Colonel Davies.*] You got over there about the middle of May?—Yes.
- 790F. Where do you live in New Zealand?—In Auckland.
- 790G. Did you go up in the “*Britannic*”?—Not from Wellington.
- 790H. You left the “*Britannic*” here?—Yes.
- 790I. When did you go to Auckland?—I stayed here about four days.
- 790J. You knew that if you did not go in the “*Britannic*” you were liable to pay your own passage?—Yes.
791. Did you pay your own passage?—No.
792. You had a passage given to you?—Yes.
793. Did you attend the meeting with the rest of the Auckland men in front of these Buildings?—No, I did not attend there. One of the men who was going did not turn up, so I took his place.
794. Who was that?—I could not say. I saw Osborne when going to the meeting, but I was late.
795. You intended to go to the meeting?—Yes.
796. Who asked you to go to the meeting?—Well, Sergeant Osborne asked me to go to the meeting. I was talking to him about it, and he said, “You had better go round that way;” but I did not get in time.
797. You did not attend the meeting?—No.
798. Was Osborne with the Tenth?—Yes.
799. Where does he live?—Somewhere in Auckland.
800. Did he get tickets for the men?—Yes.
801. How many tickets did he get?—I think, about thirty.
802. You heard them talking about the meeting going up in the train?—Yes.
803. Who else was in the train with you going up?—Lieutenant Duigan was there.
804. He belongs to Wanganui: I mean Auckland men?—They were nearly all strangers to me. One of the men was here to-day.
805. I suppose you gathered from their remarks that they had held this meeting and agreed to what was done?—They had not settled it. When they left the boat they had an idea of having a meeting and to try to get a pass, but I was not at the meeting.
806. Then, although you know they had a meeting, you do not know much about it?—No, sir.
- Trooper FREDERICK WILLIAM LUCAS examined on oath.\* (No. 54.).
807. *Mr. McNab.*] To what contingent did you belong?—Tenth.
808. You returned in the “*Britannic*”?—Yes.
809. What is your age?—Twenty-one.
810. What was your occupation before leaving?—A farmer.
811. You were anxious to give evidence to the Commission about things on board the “*Britannic*”?—Yes; the questions of food and accommodation.
812. Will you tell us what you have to say?—Well, we could never eat the meat. The bread was good, and the soup was good, and that is about all.
813. What was wrong with the meat?—I do not know, but I know it was not good. I have tasted better meat than that for a long time.
814. Was it the meat with the stew in the morning?—Yes, and also the meat at dinner-time.
815. Was there enough?—Sometimes there would be enough and sometimes not. There was very seldom enough.
816. Were there any days when it was fit for eating?—Sometimes it was not so bad, and sometimes it was bad.
817. How often do you call it unfit to eat?—A good many times more than it was good.
818. Six times out of ten it would be unfit to eat?—Yes.
819. Was it because it was raw, or because there was something wrong with the meat?—The meat was not good.
820. Was it fairly well cooked?—Sometimes it was, and sometimes it was raw; but the meat was not good.
821. Was it lean meat?—It was fairly lean.
822. What was wrong with it?—It had a bad taste, and looked as if it was a bit green. I am not much of a judge, but I thought it was not good.
823. Was it decayed meat?—Oh, no; you could not call it decayed meat, but it had a bad taste.
824. Did you yourself ever make a complaint about the meat?—No; it was the water I generally complained about. We paid a man at our table, and he made the complaints.
825. Was the last witness at the same table?—No.
826. At your table you employed some one to do this?—Yes, all the trip across.

\*This evidence was sent to witness to revise, but was not returned.

827. Was he a trooper?—Yes.  
 828. Did he belong to your own party?—Yes.  
 829. What was his name?—Davison, I think.  
 830. What did you pay him?—Each one paid him 1s. a week.  
 831. Did he always clean up for Colonel Davies's inspection?—Yes.  
 832. Did you authorise him to make complaints?—Yes; he made them.  
 833. Do you remember seeing or hearing him making a complaint?—Yes.  
 834. I want you to recall to your memory some particular day on which he made the complaint, and what was the nature of the complaint?—I could not say about the day.  
 835. Just recall an incident on any particular day?—He just said the meat was not good.  
 836. Did he say that to Colonel Davies?—No; it was to some officer. I did not know any of the officers.  
 837. You cannot give the name of the officer?—No; I do not know the name of any of the officers.  
 838. Can you give us any information so that we can hunt the matter up?—No.  
 839. Was it this complaint about the meat on that occasion?—Yes.  
 840. It was not a complaint that the meat was rotten?—Oh, no; we could not say it was rotten.  
 841. Or tainted?—It was not good.  
 842. You do not know why?—I do not.  
 843. Did you ever get bully beef?—Yes.  
 844. Ever get bully beef in place of bad meat?—I think one night we got bully beef on account of the meat being bad.  
 845. Did you make a complaint?—Yes; it was the night they all went up on deck to complain.  
 846. Have you ever complained about the food?—No.  
 847. Any other subject you complain of?—The accommodation.  
 848. What about that?—There were too many there. If you did not go down between 6 and 7 o'clock you must sleep on the table, or on the floor, or all about the place, you could not get a hammock.  
 849. Do you know Trooper Powell?—Yes.  
 850. You discussed with him about sleeping under the table and on the floor?—No; all I am saying is my own.  
 851. Then, it is only an accident that what you say is almost precisely the same as he said?—Yes.  
 852. At what time was tea?—About 5 o'clock.  
 853. And you went down to go to bed at 6?—Between 6 and 7.  
 854. It was after 6?—Yes.  
 855. How many hammocks could be hung above your table?—I never slept in a hammock all the way over.  
 856. Where did you sleep?—First up on deck, and then when it got cold we slept below.  
 857. I suppose a good many went up on deck because it was warm?—Yes, they did at first.  
 858. How many men were there at your table?—Fifteen, I think.  
 859. And you could not tell me how many hammocks could be hung above the table?—No. I did not notice the number of hammocks.  
 860. Do you remember how many slept on the table?—One, generally.  
 861. Underneath the table?—Two or three.  
 862. And the others slept in the passage?—Yes.  
 863. Any other subject?—No, that is all.  
 864. Then, your complaint is of the meat supplied by the ship, and that in your opinion it was not good meat—that you could not eat it; and then you complain that there were more men on board the vessel than could get sleeping-accommodation?—Yes; we were crowded down below.  
 865. You are not making a complaint against your own officers?—No; I do not know whose fault it was.  
 866. *Colonel Davies.*] Where do you live?—In Auckland.  
 867. You went to South Africa in the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes.  
 868. And got there about the 17th May?—Yes; I do not know the date exactly.  
 869. Did you go up from Wellington to Auckland in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

Lance-Corporal EDMUND PYCROFT ROWLATT examined on oath. (No. 55.)

870. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of either of the contingents?—Yes; of the Eighth.  
 871. What squadron?—C squadron.  
 872. Did you return in the "Britannic"?—Yes.  
 873. What was your occupation before you joined?—A rabbitskin-classer.  
 874. You have volunteered to come and give evidence as to the food and accommodation, and generally as to complaints about the "Britannic": will you state what you know yourself, and not what you may have heard from others?—I will start with the sleeping-accommodation. Hammocks were issued to us, and there were hooks about 7 ft. apart fore-and-aft, and about 18 in. athwartships, to fix the hammocks on. After all the hammocks were slung we were sleeping on the tables and on the floor, and every available place was taken up on the deck. You can see from that that there were not sufficient hooks to hang the hammocks on. If we could have slept on the deck, especially when it was not cold, it would have been all right; but about 12 o'clock at night they began to wash decks, and, of course, we were turned out. We could not get on the upper decks, as they were occupied. There was only the after part of the boat, which was occupied by

the North Island regiment. As to the blankets I saw on the second night, there was vermin on them. There might possibly have been vermin on us when we came on board. At the same time there were a lot of vermin on these blankets, and we could not have given them all. Then, with regard to the food, some, especially the meat, was tainted. I do not mean all of it, but some of it. The soup was very good, except about twice, when it was too salt—made with sea-water. Then, there were about three occasions we had fish. To my certain knowledge, that fish on one occasion was on deck lying in the scuppers for two days and nights. That was only once, but the fact of it being in the scuppers was sufficient cause for complaint. There were five or six dogs on board, and there was no guard placed over this fish, and the dogs were prowling about at night-time and went on the fish. Then, there was one time when stewed apples were issued to us for the Sunday dinner, and they were rotten. I have seen the maggots on them myself. That is about all.

875. You had fish on three occasions, and on one of those occasions it was lying in the scuppers, and the dogs had been pump-shipping on it: what happened?—The men refused to eat the fish, if I remember aright. There was some trouble about it, and we got bully beef instead.

876. Nobody was obliged to eat the fish?—No; they got bully beef.

877. On the two other occasions was the fish clean?—Yes; I ate it.

878. What sort of quality of fish was it?—It was pretty good, but not such fish as you get in New Zealand.

879. What sort of soup was it?—Taking it all round, it was very good, bar these two occasions when there was not enough fresh water and it was made with salt water.

880. Why do you think they put salt water in it? Might it not have been an accident that happens to us all of putting in too much salt?—No; it tasted as if it was made with sea-water.

881. Did anybody see the salt water put in?—Not to my knowledge.

882. Now, about the washing?—Of course, the troops in the forward part of the ship were not supposed to go aft to wash. They had basins of their own—about seven on the port side and seven on the starboard side, and about six in the middle; but there was never any water in these last. We could not get enough water. If you happened to be a bit late you could not get a wash. I never remember the water to wash to be on for more than an hour—that is, as far as I recollect. If you were not there at the first you would not have a chance of getting a wash.

883. At what time was this water turned on?—Between half-past 6 and a quarter to 7.

884. What time was reveille?—It went at a quarter past 6, as far as I can remember.

885. Was a fatigue party put on to pump the water?—Yes.

886. When did they go on?—Well, the second steward attended to that. He called up the fatigue party whenever he wanted them.

887. Did they pump every morning?—Yes.

888. Did they begin directly after reveille?—I could not say.

889. You say it was only turned on for an hour?—Yes.

890. When did you cease to get water?—Never up to 8 o'clock.

891. Was it shut off after that?—Yes.

892. How often did you have to go without a wash yourself?—I did not go without a wash. If I did not get it there I put a bucket over the side and got salt water.

893. How long would it take a man to wash?—It depends upon the man. Some take longer than others.

894. But an ordinary man?—From the time he got the water till he had had his wash and struggled out of the wash-house it would take five or ten minutes, not more.

895. If the men made a struggle for it they could mostly get a wash?—No; hardly that.

896. What time did the lazy men turn out?—Of course, all the hammocks had to be put away aft before breakfast. I should think everybody was up an hour after reveille.

897. Then, if reveille went at 6 o'clock there would be some that would not be up till 7?—Yes.

898. Then, if they did not get a wash it was their own fault?—Yes.

899. Now, you say some of the meat was tainted, but not all?—Yes.

900. Mutton or beef?—Both at times.

901. Was it worse or better as the voyage went on?—It was about the same.

902. Was it ever inspected by any officer on board the ship before it went to the cooks' galley?—Not to my knowledge, though it might be without my knowing it.

903. We have had evidence from Veterinary Captain Young that he was detailed off a week out from Durban to go and inspect all the meat issued. He has sworn also that no meat which was bad was issued after he went there: would that change your opinion?—No, not the slightest; because I have eaten the meat.

904. How often was it bad?—I could not tell, but most of it was bad.

905. Badly cooked or tainted?—Both at times. Of course, we used to report it to the orderly officer, and on a lot of occasions we got bully beef substituted.

906. You think when proper reports were made to the orderly officer you got proper food?—Not always, but on most occasions we did.

907. What about the bread and the biscuits?—They were very good.

908. The tea and the coffee?—The tea was a little off, and so was the coffee at times.

909. Did the men drink it generally or not?—Some did and some did not.

910. When you say "a little off," in what way was it a little off?—In the taste. It appeared to me as if a stew or something of that kind was boiled in the can, and the tea boiled in the same can without it being washed out.

911. Were there not cook's mates?—Only one as far as my contingent was concerned.

912. What was his name?—Dodd, who was in our contingent.

913. Did they take steps to see if the boilers were properly cleaned?—I could not say.

914. About the blankets: did they look clean when issued?—They looked clean as far as I remember.

915. Were many of the men lousy? I think you said many of them were?—I only spoke for myself. It is possible they had vermin on them.

916. What number out of a hundred? Would it be seventy-five out of a hundred on the day you embarked?—That I could not speak about. Men kept these things private.

917. What do you mean when you say there was possibly vermin on them when they embarked?—I was speaking about myself and two of my intimate friends. We were all lousy.

918. Do you think it was possible that the men gave the lice to the blankets, and not the blankets to the men?—Quite possible; but still if you slept in your clothes as we did they would not leave you to go on the blankets.

919. Then, you think the fact of the men going on the ship lousy would not account for the lice in the blankets?—Not for the number of them.

920. I may mention that I have had a telegram from the Transport Officer saying that they were all washed and cleaned when put on board?—Quite likely, but still they were lousy.

921. How many men were there in your mess?—Fourteen.

922. How many slept in the hammocks?—Seven.

923. And the remainder of them slept on the deck?—Yes.

924. Are you sure there were not hooks which could be got for the part of the deck set aside for your mess, and which were not used?—There were hooks outside the table, but they were all occupied.

925. You are quite certain there were not hooks anywhere for the men to hang their hammocks?—I am quite certain.

926. You think there were not many hooks on which the men might have hung their hammocks, and which they did not use?—I do not think there were.

927. Every hook was full?—Yes; the men looked out for hooks dozens of times.

928. *Colonel Davies.*] Which ship did you go out in?—In the "Cornwall."

929. Where do you live?—In Dunedin.

930. Were you in any other contingent?—No.

931. You say that, generally speaking, when the men made a complaint about the meat being bad they got bully beef?—Yes.

932. Did they not sometimes throw the meat overboard and complain afterwards?—Yes; some men did, but not all.

933. Have you ever heard an orderly officer tell them that they must not make a complaint after they threw the meat away, but they must show the bad meat?—I never saw that, but there was always some of the meat there to show what it was like.

Trooper SYDNEY SEPTIMUS IVIMEY examined on oath. (No. 56.)

934. *Mr. McNab.*] To what contingent did you belong?—Eighth.

935. What squadron?—H squadron.

936. What was your occupation before you joined the Eighth?—Carter.

937. What is your age?—Twenty-one.

938. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and accommodation generally on board the "Britannic": will you tell us what complaints you have to make?—The food was bad on different occasions.

939. Which part of the food?—Different parts of the food. The meat, for instance, was tainted.

940. Did you get enough in quantity?—I never touched it. The only thing I touched was the bully beef. There was enough of that.

941. Did you take any other meat at the beginning of the voyage?—Yes.

942. How long was it until you stopped taking it?—I just tried it, and that was all.

943. Did you go down to the meals at the mess-table?—Yes; but I never tasted the meat except on one occasion.

944. What was the reason that you did not eat it on that occasion?—It was tainted.

945. Do you mean the meat was decaying?—Yes.

946. Was it mutton or beef?—Beef.

947. Did they ever serve you out any mutton?—Yes.

948. Was it tainted too?—I never touched it.

949. From what you saw on the table, was there enough beef in quantity served out?—Sometimes there was and sometimes there was not.

950. Did you complain on the occasion when the meat was tainted?—Yes.

951. To whom?—To the orderly officer of the day.

952. What was his name?—I could not tell you.

953. Could you not give us any hint whereby we could find out what his name was?—No.

954. Was your captain, Captain Haselden, never orderly officer?—Not to my knowledge.

955. Was there not your lieutenants to complain to?—Yes.

956. Did you never complain to them?—Yes.

957. What was the complaint you made to them?—Well, about the meat, the potatoes, and the soup.

958. What was the complaint about the meat?—It was not fit to eat.

959. Who was the officer to whom you complained?—The mess orderly made the complaints.

960. You did not complain yourself?—No. Of course, the mess orderly at the end of the table made the complaint. You made the complaint to him, and when the orderly officer came round he stood up and made the complaint.

961. You were present when he complained?—I was.
962. Who was the officer he complained to?—Lieutenant McNab.
963. What did the lieutenant say?—Well, he tasted it, and said it was not very good.
964. Did he report it?—Not to my knowledge.
965. Was there anything done after that?—No.
966. You did not get any bully beef?—No. Sometimes we got bully beef for tea.
967. What were the occasions on which you got bully beef for tea?—I suppose, when there was no other meat for us to have. On two or three occasions we got it when something went wrong, but we had bully beef more times than that.
968. On these two or three occasions when it was issued out of its ordinary course had the men made any complaint?—Yes.
969. And it was on account of these complaints we understood it was given?—I understood so.
970. What other complaints do you desire to make about the food?—We used to get stew in the morning.
971. Every morning?—Pretty well every morning.
972. What complaint had you to make about the stew?—There was not much of it.
973. Any other complaint?—It used to have the tainted meat in it.
974. Are you quite sure the stew had tainted meat in it?—Quite sure.
975. You would not agree with another trooper who says the stew was very good and enjoyable?—No, I could not.
976. Anything else wrong with the stew?—Only that; and it is quite enough too.
977. Were there other things in the stew?—Yes; potatoes.
978. Any complaint about them?—They can pass.
979. Was there anything wrong with them?—Certainly there was something.
980. What was wrong with them?—They seemed to have a flavour of water in them. The reason was that when they were peeled they were left in water and sacks so that they had the flavour of tainted water in them.
981. Who was it that peeled the potatoes?—Different fatigue parties every day.
982. The men for the fatigue parties were taken from among the troopers themselves?—Yes.
983. Any other complaint about the food?—The soup on a few occasions was made of salt water.
984. Do you mean salt water from the sea?—Yes. Of course, you could make salt water by putting salt in it, but I think it was because the men were too lazy to go and get water.
985. Did you see them put the salt water in?—No.
986. Then, you do not know of your own knowledge that it was salt water from the sea?—No.
987. Did you hear some one suggest that that was the way it was done?—No, it was my own opinion.
988. I suppose you are speaking about the dinner meal?—Yes.
989. Are there any other complaints about the dinner meal you have to make?—We used to get ground rice, and it used to have the same taste, and on one occasion I saw maggots about an inch long in it.
990. Did you report that?—No; the orderly officer of the day went round that day before we had our meat. We had our soup, and he was round before we had our meat and potatoes.
991. Any other complaint?—On another occasion we had stewed apples, and Lieutenant Joyce was the orderly officer, and I showed him the apples, and he said he would report the matter at once.
992. What was wrong with the apples?—They had small maggots on them.
993. Any other complaint?—The tea. We all know tea is very bad on board ship, but still they could have kept the coffee out of the tea.
994. Were the coffee and the tea mixed together?—They seemed to be. It seemed if the things were not clean.
995. It looked as if the coffee was made in the same vessel as the tea?—Yes.
996. How often did that happen?—Pretty well the whole way over.
997. Did you get both coffee and tea at the one meal?—No; if made of groats it seemed as if it would be so.
998. Would that be confined to the breakfast meal?—Yes.
999. Would this mixture be at breakfast or at dinner time?—It would be at tea-time.
1000. Any other matters?—No, I think that is all. The bread was always good, and the bully beef was good too.
1001. What about the butter?—Good.
1002. And the jam?—All the fellows had a hatred of it on account of having had so much over there. The jam was not so bad.
1003. They took a scunner on the jam on the veldt?—Yes. Of course, we got too much of it.
1004. *The Chairman.*] How often did you have the bully beef served out?—I could not tell you.
1005. Two or three days a week, or oftener?—I could not tell you.
1006. You had stew every morning: how often did you have bacon?—Once a week.
1007. Not oftener?—No.
1008. Did you ever have sausages?—I never had sausages.
1009. Do you know whether they were given out?—I do not know.
1010. How often was the soup too salt?—I think, about half a dozen times.
1011. How was it on the other days?—It was pretty fair.
1012. No fault to find with it?—No.
1013. Was that made of tainted meat or not?—I could not say. It tasted all right.

1014. Is it not a reasonable presumption that they would not make the soup of the best meat and give you the worst to eat?—I do not think so.

1015. It shows there was some good meat on board the ship if the soup could be turned out good?—Yes.

1016. *Mr. McNab.*] What was your regimental number?—9817.

1017. Did you join H squadron before leaving Africa?—No.

1018. Where did you join?—In South Africa.

1019. *Colonel Davies.*] You went in the “Drayton Grange”?—Yes.

1020. And landed about the middle of May?—Yes.

1021. You were with the depot at Klerksdorp?—Yes.

1022. You never were with the regiment on trek?—No.

1023. *Captain Lewin.*] There were a large number of stowaways on board the “Drayton Grange”?—Yes.

1024. Forty-six were sent to Klerksdorp as reinforcements for the 8th regiment?—Yes.

1025. Were you one of those stowaways?—I was.

Trooper FREDERICK WILLIAM JAMES, Jun., examined on oath. (No. 57.)

1026. *The Chairman.*] Were you a member of one of the contingents?—Yes; the Eighth.

1027. What squadron?—G squadron.

1028. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—A blacksmith.

1029. What is your age?—Twenty to-day.

1030. You have volunteered to give evidence before this Commission with regard to matters on board the “Britannic.” You will have an opportunity of speaking as to your discomforts or as to the quality of the food and its sufficiency, and the accommodation or other matters of which you complain; what have you to tell us?—As regards the meat, I think some of it was very tainted.

1031. How often?—It might have been right about twice, and tainted the other days.

1032. To what extent was it tainted: was it eatable?—You could not eat it.

1033. You say it was good twice and on the other days it was not eatable?—We had to eat something, and I had to pay for my own food out of the officers’ galley; there used to be a lot went up there. In fact, some made arrangements for the whole voyage.

1034. Did you make such an arrangement?—No.

1035. Was the food bad through all the voyage, or did it get better or worse towards the end?—It was about the same all the way through.

1036. Did you make a formal complaint about it?—We used to make complaints to the orderly officer every day.

1037. When did you make a complaint about the quantity?—Every day nearly.

1038. Tell us the name of one of the officers to whom you complained?—Lieutenant Orbell.

1039. What did you tell him?—That it was not fit to eat.

1040. What did he say?—He said he would see what he could do for us.

1041. Did you get an issue of meat in place of it on this occasion?—I could not remember that, but we got bully beef two or three times in place of the meat.

1042. When was bully beef served out to you, apart from the times when it was given in place of tainted meat?—We used to get it pretty often for tea.

1043. Three or four or two days a week?—Two or three days a week.

1044. What was for tea on the other nights?—We used to have stews for tea.

1045. Witnesses have told us it was cold meat at tea and stew for breakfast; are they right?—We got stew for tea. I do not remember, but we used to have bread-and-jam.

1046. Was the bread good?—Yes.

1047. And the biscuits?—I only ate about two on the way over.

1048. Could you get enough of them?—Yes, there were plenty of biscuits.

1049. On this fish occasion did you get anything substituted for the fish?—I think we got bully beef.

1050. How often did you complain about the fish?—I think it was only once.

1051. What is the next thing?—The accommodation. Our troop was very crushed. There were chaps sleeping anywhere, and the air was absolutely foul in the morning.

1052. On which deck were you?—No. 1; it was up at the top.

1053. Had you any windsails in it?—There were none on our deck.

1054. Were there not portholes?—Yes; we could open them when the weather was fine.

1055. Did you complain to anybody that you wanted more ventilation?—Not that I recollect.

1056. Did you sleep in a hammock?—Yes.

1057. Did you find any difficulty in getting a place?—I had a hook on the first night and I kept to that.

1058. Were all the hooks occupied?—Yes.

1059. How many men were there in the mess?—Fourteen or sixteen.

1060. How many slept on the upper decks?—I should say two of them.

1061. Where did the others sleep?—Most in the hammocks, and one under the table and two on the table.

1062. Were any spread about on the deck?—Yes; but they would not tell where they were sleeping for fear they might lose their place.

1063. How many were sleeping in hammocks?—I could not tell you. They would hang out their hammocks wherever they could get a hook.

1064. How many were round you?—There were about eight or nine in that row above our table.

1065. Your own men?—I think they were.

1066. You have accounted for a good many more than fourteen men in your account. You do not recollect whether there were any hooks left unoccupied?—There were none.

1067. Do you think four got hooks outside your mess?—More than that.
1068. Six?—Over eight or nine. I could not say exactly.
1069. You never complained about there not being enough windsails into your deck?—It used to be pretty airy in our deck in the daytime, but at night it was close.
1070. Was anything left undone that might have been done to make the ventilation better?—Windsails would have made the ventilation better.
1071. What is the next complaint?—Well, about the wash-house. There were not enough howls in the wash-house, and the water was only on for about an hour or three-quarters of an hour in the morning, and you had to rush for a wash.
1072. What hour was it on?—From 7 to 8 o'clock.
1073. What hour did you turn out?—About half-past 6 or 7.
1074. If you went straight to the wash-house could you not get a wash?—Those on deck would get the wash first, because they were turned out in order to wash the deck.
1075. You are sure the water was not on at 8?—I could not be sure.
1076. We want to get at when they ceased to allow you to have a wash?—I do not remember.
1077. How do you know it was only running for three-quarters of an hour or an hour?—I guessed that.
1078. How do you know when it was turned on and when turned off, when you say it was on for an hour, and you only guessed that?—I think it was turned on before breakfast or just afterwards.
1079. Do you know at what hour they turned it on?—No.
1080. Do you know at what hour they turned it off?—No.
1081. Are you quite sure it never ran till 9 o'clock?—I do not know. When you had your wash you went away.
1082. As to the water, have you any complaint?—There was not accommodation for the number of troops. There were only about fourteen or sixteen bowls forward for five hundred men.
1083. How many aft?—I could not say. I never went down aft.
1084. Do you know the transport regulations?—I do not know them.
1085. Any other complaint?—The blankets were lousy.
1086. Who served out your blankets?—The quartermaster-sergeant.
1087. When you got them did they look clean or dirty?—Pretty clean.
1088. At what part of the day were they served out?—I think there was a fatigue party told off, and they went on deck and brought them down.
1089. Was it at night or in the daytime?—I do not know.
1090. Did you inspect the blankets there and then?—I did not inspect mine.
1091. Were there many lousy on the veldt?—There were one or two, but not many.
1092. You disagree with those who say there were many lousy?—There were only three or four in our troop.
1093. When did you first discover lice on your blankets?—After we left Durban.
1094. Had you been out a week?—No; only three or four days.
1095. Did you always get the same blankets?—Yes.
1096. Had you lice in yours?—Yes.
1097. Many?—Pretty thick.
1098. Did they increase as you went along or did they decrease?—We tried to get rid of them, but I think they were just as bad at the end of the voyage as they were at the beginning. We could not take them up on deck to air them, because we had to put them down below.

---

FRIDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1902.

Sergeant-Major COWELL sworn and examined (No. 58.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You were a member of which contingent?—I was one of the Tenth details.
2. What was your rank?—Sergeant-major.
3. Did you belong to any squadron?—No, sir; I joined the Eighth.
4. What occupation did you pursue before you went into the contingent?—Farmer, sir.
5. What is your age?—Twenty-five.
6. Were you in any other contingent before this?—Yes, sir; the Fifth.
7. You appear before the Commission at your own request?—Yes, sir.
8. You know that the Commission is appointed to inquire into the discipline, the accommodation, and the quality of the food, and such subjects: will you make a statement as to what you wish to tell the Commission?—I first want to state about the hospital orderlies. I was there with the measles, and my temperature was 101, and I asked for something to drink, and they gave me icy-cold water. I refused to take in until I saw the doctor, and they gave me milk in water—you could just see the colour of it. I went to Dr. Rogers, I think, the fourth day before we landed in Wellington. All the men at the table told me that I had the measles. The measles were all over me at that time. I could just walk down to the hospital, and I saw the doctor, and he asked me if my teeth were out of order, and I told him "No." He then asked me if my bowels were out of order, and I said "No." He never felt my pulse, and never even hardly looked at me. He said, "I will give you a pill." He told me to wait there, and I waited about an hour and a half in the cold. I never even got the pill. I went back again to my hammock on the top deck, and they sent for Dr. Eccles next day, and he sent me straight to the hospital. He told me that I ought to have gone before. There was another case, that of Sergeant Tasker.
9. Do you know about Tasker yourself?—Yes; he was in my squadron.

10. What about him?—I think he was three days in his hammock, and was helped by two men up the stairs. He was not taken into the hospital; the doctor refused to take him in.

11. Were you present when the doctor refused to take him in?—No. I saw them take him away; they would not take him into the hospital. And then I saw Lieutenant Street on the subject, and got a note from him. I would not be certain, but I think it was Lieutenant Street. One of the men went up and saw him.

12. We want to know what you know yourself?—I know they went up; I was there at the time. Lieutenant Street came down with a note and told me to get him away to the hospital. I sent him down with one of the men. All the orderlies were drunk the second night before we got to Wellington. They were singing songs there and making a fearful row.

13. About what hour?—I really could not say what hour, sir.

14. Was it 12 or 1 o'clock?—I did not take much notice of the time; I was very ill all day, and I did not notice it.

15. They were singing until 11 p.m., at any rate?—I should think so. Some of the other orderlies asked them to stop, and they would not. I heard the fellows ask for the bed-pan, and they would have to wait half an hour before they would bring it. I asked for the pan myself, and they brought a bucket. I think that is all in that connection.

16. Is there any other subject you wish to complain about?—About the food. I have been on four boats, and I never saw anything like it was on this last one. Several times there were maggots in the food. Of course, we could have gone to the sergeants' mess, but I preferred to have my tucker with the men; and if I came down a little late I had to go without, as there was not enough. As to the tea, several of them would not drink it. They would rather go without. In regard to the sleeping-accommodation for the men, if the men had put up their hammocks on the place on the wall there would be thirty at least in my lot there would not be room for, and they had either to sleep on the floor or on top. I know that personally I slept up on top; I never went down the whole way over. I often slept on top, even when it was raining, rather than go down below. And the men complained to me several times about the fellows on the top having colds and spitting down on top of them. The cooks would sell a plate of food for 1s., and for an hour of an evening you could not get near the cook-house at all, with the men pushing in to get plates of tucker—meat and potatoes.

17. How do you mean you could not get near?—There was always some one waiting to get something to eat.

18. You mean that the crowd was so great there that you had sometimes to wait an hour for your turn to buy food?—Yes, sir. Going on to Somes Island from the boat we were ordered to go on board the ferry-boat. When we got there we had to walk up the hill right up to the top, to the Quarantine House. Several men were carried on board the ferry-boat; they could not move, and they were put on seats, and they had blankets round them. I think that is all I have to say, sir.

19. You say you were ordered to go on a ferry-boat to go to Somes Island. Who ordered you?—A doctor came round and told us to get ready to go over to the island.

20. Was it Dr. Pearlless?—I could not say, sir. The order came from the orderlies to me. He said all the men had to get ready to go on the island.

21. Was it the officers of the ship, or the Health Department, do you know?—I do not know, sir.

22. What were you suffering from?—Measles.

23. How long had you been ill?—I have been ill with a heavy cold ever since I left.

24. Yes; but with the measles?—They were coming on for about six days. I was in the hospital two days.

25. Before you arrived in Wellington?—Yes, sir, two days before we came to Wellington.

26. You say the men were put on board the ferry-boat with blankets round them?—Yes, sir, carried on board.

27. Was fair attention paid to them?—Yes, they were all looked after on the island.

28. And in putting them on board the tug?—Yes, the nurses looked after them.

29. Do you think there was ill-treatment in putting them on board the tug—were they treated properly?—Oh, yes; they were very well looked after.

30. You spoke of this as though it were a complaint—were they ill-treated or not?—They were left out in the cold, with the measles. I nearly fainted going over myself.

31. Were you wrapped up in blankets?—No, I just had an overcoat on.

32. How many men had to walk up the hill on Somes Island?—The majority of them, except about four who went up in stretchers.

33. How far had they to walk?—About 300 yards.

34. Do you think it could have been avoided by any means?—I think that the ones that were ill should have been carried in an ambulance.

35. To which hospital?—The one on shore.

36. Are you complaining of your medical officers on board the ship or of the medical officers in charge of the Health Department, or generally of the hardness of the case?—I think the case is hard, but I do not see who is to blame for it. I do not think it is right putting cases of measles out in the cold air right out of their beds. I think if we were taken up properly and put down below on the ferry-boat, instead of keeping us on deck, it would have been better.

37. And you stated you were given cold water to drink when your temperature was 101°: how long was this before you got to Wellington?—I am not certain of it. I know I got the water. I fancy it was in Wellington.

38. It was when you were ill in the hospital?—Yes; I know that my temperature was taken, and one of the orderlies told me what it was.

39. Who told you?—One of the orderlies.



40. Was the water taken out of an ice-chest, or what?—It was ordinary cold water.
41. Was it injurious to you do you know?—I should think so, as I had the measles.
42. Have you had any experience with medicine?—We have had measles at home, and the doctor never allowed the children who had the measles to have cold water.
43. And you refused to drink that water?—Yes, sir.
44. And, instead, you got some water with a little milk in it?—Yes, sir.
45. You say you saw Dr. Rogers? Did Dr. Rogers refuse to examine you?—He just looked at me for a minute, and he said, "Are your teeth out of order?" and then, "Are your bowels out of order?" I said, "No." He then said, "I will give you a pill."
46. Was there a rash out on you at the time?—Yes, sir.
47. Did you draw his attention to it?—No, sir.
48. He did not think you were a case for the hospital?—No, sir.
49. Did Dr. Rogers generally attend to his duties?—That was the first time I had to do with him.
50. Did you have anything to do with him afterwards?—He came to me twice afterwards and took my temperature.
51. And was he attentive or inattentive?—I only saw him when he came to take my temperature, that is all.
52. Then, do you wish us to understand that Dr. Rogers did not understand your case, or, understanding it, that he was deliberately careless whether you were treated or not?—If he had understood my case he should have sent me to the hospital with the measles.
53. You are quite certain there was a rash out?—The men told me there was.
54. Was there a rash out?—Yes, sir; on my arms.
55. Did you show him that?—No, sir.
56. Did he look at your tongue?—No, sir; he never looked at me at all.
57. And you waited an hour and a half?—I waited for the medicine.
58. The following day you again paraded with the sick?—No, sir; Captain Eccles came up.
59. And inspected you, and sent you to the hospital?—Yes, sir.
60. Then have you any fault to find with Dr. Eccles? He attended to you properly?—Yes, sir.
61. And Dr. Rogers did not?—I do not think he attended me properly, unless he did not understand the case. It was not the following day; it was the day after I saw Dr. Eccles.
62. Do you not think, if Dr. Eccles saw you the second day after, that it was quite possible the measles may have shown themselves between the time Dr. Rogers seeing you and Dr. Eccles seeing you?—I used to knock about the deck, and go down to my meals, and I did not see any difference.
63. Do you not think you would have been wise if you had shown the eruption to Dr. Rogers and drawn his attention to it?—I thought if he could not see it himself I would chance it in the hammock.
64. Did you draw his attention to your symptoms?—Not until I saw Dr. Eccles. I felt heated and faint when I got up. I thought he would not examine me, so I left it.
65. Then you, yourself, were somewhat to blame?—I do not think so. I did not understand about the measles myself. The men said I had got them, but I did not know whether it was prickly heat or not.
66. Was the rash out on your face?—No, sir; on the arm.
67. Why did you not show this rash to the doctor; did you tell him of a rash?—No, sir, I did not tell him.
68. You simply stated that you felt heated, that was all?—He simply stated, "Are your bowels out of order?" and "Are your teeth out of order?" and he said, "I will give you a pill."
69. You, yourself, got cross a little with him?—I did not like the way he spoke at all.
70. Do you not in private life tell a doctor of your symptoms?—Well, when Dr. Eccles came up he just looked at me, and he saw that I had got measles.
71. This was two days later?—Yes, sir.
72. And I suppose the measles developed greatly in the two days?—I did not notice it myself.
73. Now, you say you know of Sergeant Tasker being three days in his hammock?—Yes, sir.
74. Had he reported himself sick?—He was sent down to the hospital.
75. And after that he came back to his hammock?—Yes, for three days.
76. What was the matter with him?—He had pneumonia or something like that.
77. Do you mean to tell us that Sergeant Tasker had pneumonia and was examined by a doctor?—He was on sick-parade.
78. And was sent back to his hammock for three days?—Yes, sir. He used to have a tin to spit in.
79. You are sure he went to the hospital; you are sure he was suffering from pneumonia, and that he was refused admission to the hospital?—I know he was very ill; he could not stand up.
80. Was he taken to the hospital and refused admission?—Yes, sir.
81. How do you know that?—Because he went down and came back, and told me that they refused to take him in. A little while after Lieutenant Street came down, and he went away and came back again with a note that he was to be taken to the hospital.
82. Was this three days after he had been first inspected by the doctor?—I would not say it was three days after.
83. What about the three days then?—That was after he went to the doctor. He was three days in his hammock.
84. After he had been to the doctor?—No, before he had been to the doctor. He was in his hammock for three days, and he went to the doctor during those three days.

85. Take a supposititious case : On Sunday morning, say, he was hanging in his hammock?—Yes, sir.

86. What happened?—I am not certain about the dates.

87. What happened on the Monday?—On the Monday he was sick in his hammock ; on the Tuesday he went down to the doctor, and the third day he was in his hammock.

88. Were these three days he lay in his hammock before he reported himself?—I do not know how long he was in his hammock before he reported himself. He was in his hammock about a day and a half before he reported himself, and then he was in his hammock another day and a half.

89. He was not taken into the hospital when he reported himself?—No.

90. Was he there day and night?—Oh yes, he was.

91. Then, his hammock was hanging for three days and nights?—Yes, sir.

92. You are making serious charges against the doctors ; we want you to be absolutely careful in your statement : For three days and three nights the man was neglected?—I should say it was three days and three nights ; I used to see him every day when I came down.

93. Were you on the sick-list yourself?—Yes, sir ; but I had not gone to the doctor.

94. Were you sergeant-major in charge of these details?—In charge of the Tenth details.

95. Were you in charge of Sergeant Tasker's men?—Yes, sir.

96. Did you report the fact that his hammock was hanging there for three nights and three days?—No, sir.

97. Was it your duty to see that the hammocks were properly stowed?—I do not consider it my duty.

98. You did not report to the doctors or to the officer of the day or anybody that there was a man that was ill?—Well, no, not after he was down, sir.

99. Should you not have done so?—No, I do not think so.

100. You think that was not part of your duty?—No ; I do not think it was my duty.

101. His hammock was there for three days and three nights. Do you not think you neglected your duty in not reporting this?—I do not think so.

102. Whose duty was it to go and find him there?—Well, he went to the doctor once, sir.

103. Whose duty was it then?—It was my duty.

104. And you neglected your duty?—No ; I do not see that.

105. Did you do your duty?—I did all I could do in the matter.

106. After he had been there twenty-four hours did you report it to anybody?—No, sir.

107. After two days did you report?—Yes, to Lieutenant Street.

108. You said three days?—I said a day and a half the first time, and then he came back to his hammock and lay there for a day and a half.

109. Did you report to anybody that this man was being neglected?—No, sir.

110. Do you not think you ought to have done so?—No ; I used to ask him how he was getting on.

111. I am speaking of your position as sergeant-major, which is a very responsible position. Do you not think it was your duty to assist the surgeons and the officers in carrying out the duties in these things?—It was my duty, yes, sir.

112. You were as much to blame as anybody else for the leaving of Tasker in his hammock?—No, sir, I do not see that.

113. What were your duties on board the ship?—What do you mean, sir.

114. What were they in connection with the hammocks?—To see that everything was carried out properly down in the troop-deck.

115. Do you think it is carrying out your duty to allow a hammock to hang for three days?—Yes, sir ; in a case where a man is ill I should be sorry to see him up on deck.

116. Was it your duty to report it?—I thought I did all I could for him.

117. I want an answer straight out. Was it your duty to report it?—No, I do not think so, sir. He was seen there by my superior officers.

118. Now, you told us that the doctor refused to take Sergeant Tasker in. What doctor refused?—I did not go down with him.

119. How do you know he was refused?—Because he came down again and told me.

120. You know nothing about his being refused admission except by hearsay?—No, sir.

121. You do not know but that he preferred to go into his hammock than to go into the hospital?—Well, the man told me that he was refused.

122. Then you do not know anything about it, except what some one else told you?—Yes, except what Sergeant Tasker told me himself.

123. Of your own knowledge you do not know anything?—No, I was not there myself.

124. When did Lieutenant Street tell you to go and take the man to the hospital?—I do not know when.

125. You did take him straight away afterwards?—Yes, sir.

126. Did he remain in the hospital then?—Yes, sir, the whole time.

127. Did you not state that Lieutenant Street came to you after he had been in his hammock a day and a half?—Yes, sir, but I do not know what the date was.

128. After he had been hanging there a day and a half?—Yes, sir.

129. Was he taken into the hospital?—Yes, sir.

130. You said Lieutenant Street came to you after a day and a half?—After he came back from the doctor, a day and a half afterwards.

131. And you took him to the hospital?—Yes, sir.

132. And was he retained in the hospital?—Yes, sir, the whole time.

133. Was that three days, or four days and a half—for I cannot really make out how long he lay in his hammock?—I should say three days, sir.

134. Then, being so ill that he had to be helped up the stairs, the doctor sent him back to his hammock, and did not admit him to the hospital?—Yes, sir; he was sent back.

135. You say the second night before you got to Wellington the orderlies were drunk?—Yes, sir; not all of them, all except two.

136. You said at first that all the orderlies were drunk. You withdraw the assertion that they were all drunk?—Yes, sir.

137. Do you know the names of any of them who were drunk?—I did not know any of the names of the men who were drinking.

138. Who was not drinking?—I know one, Dorizac, was not drunk; he was ill at the time himself.

139. How many orderlies were there there?—I should say about two corporals, one sergeant, and two or three orderlies. There may have been more.

140. Were there six in all, or would you like to add to that number?—It would be very hard to tell; there were a lot of men knocking about.

141. You know for certain that there were two corporals, one sergeant, and three orderlies?—I know there were as many as that.

142. And two or three of them were sober?—Two of them were sober.

143. Try and be explicit. You first of all said they were all drunk?—It is very hard to say, sir.

144. This is a serious charge. You say two or three were sober; do you mean two, or three?—I saw one or two drunk, and they were all singing. That is all I know about it.

145. Now, were there one or two drunk?—Well, I saw a little fair fellow who was drunk.

146. What is his name?—I do not know.

147. Any other men drunk?—Well, I know they were drinking. I do not know whether they were drunk.

148. You know there was one drunk, and the others you are not certain about?—I know they were drinking, sir.

149. I want to know whether they were drunk or sober: Were they so much under the influence of drink as to be improper in their conduct and irresponsible for their actions?—I did not see if they were staggering about. I know they were drinking and making a fearful row.

150. They had liquor there?—Yes, sir.

151. How many of them had liquor?—It is impossible to say.

152. What liquor had they?—I could not say. I know they had a bottle of whisky.

153. Were any of them sober?—Yes, sir.

154. How many?—One or two of them were sober.

155. And what about the third man: You are not certain about the third?—I do not know about the third.

156. You originally swore that all the orderlies were drunk?—I said all but two or three.

157. You are certain one was drunk?—Yes, sir. I would not say he was falling over, but he was intoxicated.

158. That is only one: You will swear he was drunk?—Yes, sir, he was drunk. The fact is that they were keeping all the men awake in the hospital.

159. They were about six in number altogether?—Yes, sir.

160. Then half the men were not drunk?—I think two of them were, sir.

161. And the third?—I said two or three.

162. You said two of them were sober?—I said two or three.

163. You only know of one who was really drunk?—Yes; I know one. The others were with him.

164. Well, now, I suppose there were a great many more orderlies than six on the ship?—I did not take any notice of how many orderlies were there.

165. You do not know how many orderlies there were, but you took sufficient notice to know they were drinking?—There were only two or three in the ward at the time. All the rest were singing.

166. You see you have made a very serious charge, and we want to find out and follow up this charge?—It is impossible for me to give proper details. I know they kicked up a row, and kept all the men awake.

167. You came here and were prepared to swear that all the orderlies were drunk. We want to know how many were there. You say you are not sure, but that it was not much more than six at any rate?—No, I do not think there were more than six.

168. And that only one was really drunk?—Yes, sir, I saw him.

169. Is a man who sings necessarily drunk?—I should think so, seeing that it was in a hospital where men were sick.

170. How about the food?—I never saw anything like it.

171. Several times there were maggots in the food?—Yes, sir.

172. Was that in the meat?—In the stew we used to have.

173. In the meat stew?—Yes, sir.

174. How often do you think that happened?—I know maggots were in the meat stew twice.

175. To whom did you complain about this?—I did not report at all, sir.

176. Can you tell us some other man who found maggots in the stew?—It was reported, sir.

177. By whom?—I do not know who reported it.

178. You are sure it was reported?—Yes, sir.

179. Do you know to whom it was reported?—It was reported to the orderly officer. I do not know who the orderly officer of the day was.

180. Why did you not attend at the non-commissioned officers' mess?—Because I would rather go down with the men. None of the non-commissioned officers of the Tenth dined with the sergeants' mess.

181. Was the food in the non-commissioned officers' mess as good as that supplied to the men?—Yes, better.

182. In what way did it differ?—Well, I have often heard the men say it was better.

183. In what way did it differ from the men's?—I never went near it, not at meal-times.

184. You never went there during the non-commissioned officers' mess?—Only the first two or three days before I was attached to the Tenth.

185. And you say all the non-commissioned officers of the E squadron dined with their men?—All the Tenth men, sir.

186. All the non-commissioned officers of the Tenth Contingent messed with their men?—Yes, sir.

187. Never in the non-commissioned officers' mess?—No, sir, none of them.

188. Used you to buy food yourself?—Yes, sir.

189. Did you know that the officer commanding the troops had expressed a strong desire and issued an order that that should not be done?—No, sir.

190. You never heard anything about it?—No, sir.

191. Do you not think that it was your duty as a senior non-commissioned officer to prevent the ship's stores being stolen by the cook?—It was impossible to do a thing like that.

192. Did you take any steps as senior non-commissioned officer to report this?—No, sir, I did not take any steps.

193. Do you think it was your duty to allow that sort of thing to go on without endeavouring to stop it?—None of the others seemed to think it was their duty to stop it.

194. What about your own duty?—I do not think it was my duty.

195. You think that a man in the responsible position of sergeant-major should allow stealing to go on under his eyes without taking any notice of it?—I did not think it was my duty to report a thing like that.

196. It was part of your duty to take food which you had good reason to believe was stolen from the ship's stores?—I did not look at it in that light. I did not know the food was stolen, but I knew the cooks were selling it.

197. *Mr. Millar.*] What day did you fix that these orderlies were drunk?—The second night before we got to Wellington.

198. At what hour of the night was this?—It was impossible to say; I would say about 11.

199. You maintain that the orderlies were singing in the hospital till 11 o'clock at night upon the second night before you arrived in Wellington?—Yes, sir, I should say about 11.

200. How was the discipline on board the ship?—Very good, I call it, sir.

201. Did you have your men in hand thoroughly?—Oh yes, sir, I had no difficulty with them at all.

202. Did they do all you told them?—Yes, all excepting one man.

203. Was any of your squadron mixed up with the rush in which five casks of bully beef were smashed up?—No, sir.

204. Did you see that done?—No, I did not.

205. Would you consider that there was much discipline among your men if they did that in front of you?—Well, no, I do not think that the men were in the habit of doing that.

206. How did you find the discipline on the "Britannic" compare with the discipline on the other boats you were in?—It was just as good, only there were more men in the "Britannic," and there was bound to be a few bad ones.

207. The discipline on the whole was just as good as the other?—Yes, sir, just as good.

208. Was there much drunkenness?—No, not much, except at dinner-times; but the majority would not drink the beer.

209. You never saw what you might call drunkenness?—No, sir.

210. Individual cases you might see?—Yes, sir; there were always two or three drunks.

211. In your own experience you never saw much drunkenness?—No, sir.

212. Have you any charge to make against any of the officers of the squadrons that they did not look after the comfort and welfare of the men as far as they could?—No, sir; I have nothing to say against the officers.

213. Do you believe that, as far as the officers were concerned, they did their duty?—As far as I know, sir.

214. Judging from the evidence I have heard, you do not consider the medical staff did their duty?—No; I do not consider Dr. Rogers did, and one of the orderlies.

215. Outside Dr. Rogers and this orderly, do you think the medical staff performed their duties?—As far as I know, sir. Dr. Eccles was up the whole of the last night.

216. And Dr. Rogers was neglectful, in your opinion?—I am speaking about my own case. He either did not understand it, or he did not want to.

217. *Mr. McNab.*] Did you ever hear anybody else complain about Dr. Rogers being neglectful at all?—No, sir, I do not think I did.

218. Was he a popular medical man on the vessel?—I was with the Tenth, and they did not know anything about Dr. Rogers.

219. You were associated with the South Island, were you not?—I was attached to the South Island of the Eighth. I did not join them until we got to Elandsfontein for a day or two, and then I went on to Newcastle.

220. Dr. Rogers was associated with the South Island all the way through?—I was only with the Eighth a little while.

221. You never heard anybody else make complaints about Dr. Rogers?—No; no one else.
222. *Colonel Davies.*] You went over in the "Drayton Grange," did you not?—Yes, sir.
223. You arrived in Africa about the 17th May?—Yes, sir.
224. And then you went to the depot at Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.
225. And you were never in the field with the Eighth Contingent?—No, sir.
226. Where do you live?—In Tasmania, sir.
227. Do you remember when I inspected the draft at Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.
228. And do you remember that I said on that occasion that I understood about half of them were stowaways, but that they might make none the worse soldiers for all that?—Yes, sir.
229. And that they might experience some inconvenience over it by not getting some clothes quite so quickly?—Yes, sir.
230. You remember, then, I asked them if they wanted anything, and they said they had no tobacco?—No, sir; I do not remember that.
231. Do you remember my getting 100 lb. of tobacco for them?—Yes, sir; I remember something about that.
232. They got 1 lb. per man?—Yes, sir; about that.
233. What squadron were you drafted to?—E squadron of the South Island.
234. Where were you made acting-sergeant-major?—In the camp at Trentham.
235. And your case, whether it was acting or substantive, came up before me at Klerksdorp?—I do not remember exactly, but it came out in orders on the boat that I had been appointed.
236. Do you remember that I cabled to the Commandant to know whether those appointments were acting or substantive?—Yes; Captain Harrowell mentioned that.
237. And the reply I got was that they were acting: did you know that?—I did not know they were acting. I knew you had sent a cable.
238. Did you know that the reply I got from the Commandant of New Zealand was that they were acting appointments?—I know you sent to New Zealand.
239. Do you know about the reply?—Yes, sir; that they were acting.
240. You say you were in charge of the Tenth draft coming back?—Yes, sir.
241. What do you mean by the Tenth draft: do you mean the eighty-two men of the Tenth Contingent that were sent to fill up the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
242. You were posted to the South Island regiment of the Eighth?—Yes, sir.
243. You joined at Elandsfontein, and about two days afterwards you left and went to the Tenth Contingent?—No, I went to Krugersdorp for kits.
244. And when you came back to Newcastle you joined the Tenth?—I joined the Eighth.
245. When did you join the Tenth?—I did not join until I got on the boat.
246. Then, you were only with the Eighth with E squadron for about a week or ten days?—Yes, sir.
247. By whose orders did you go with the Tenth on board the boat?—It came out in orders from Colonel Chaytor.
248. Had they no sergeant-major in the Tenth?—No, sir.
249. What other non-commissioned officers did they have with the Tenth on board?—Sergeants Cameron, Hickman, Tasker, Osborne, and Challis; that is about all the sergeants there were.
250. And you say that these five preferred to dine with the men instead of with the non-commissioned officers of the Eighth?—Yes, sir.
251. Do you know why?—Well, my reason was that if we had had a separate place altogether away from the men we would have gone. I did not care for the men to see me having different tucker from what they had.
252. They were screened off from the men?—Yes, sir, it was screened off.
253. *Major Pearless.*] Is it unusual to give a cold drink to a man when he is feverish?—I should think so.
254. The rash was out in your arms at first?—It was all over my body when I got the water.
255. Yes, but when you saw Dr. Rogers?—It was on my arms.
256. There was no rash on your face or chest?—I did not look at my chest. I know it was on my arms.
257. How long was the rash out on you altogether, from the first to the last?—I should say about seven days, but I would not be certain.
258. There were two wards in the ship—it was divided in the centre?—Yes, sir.
259. Which ward were you in, port or starboard?—I was in the one near the dispensary, on the starboard side.
260. Do you know the name of the fair-haired man you say was drunk?—No; he was a very little fellow.
261. According to you, a man, if he sings, must be drunk?—Yes, in a hospital.
262. You said you had to wait half an hour for a bed-pan: Was this always the case, or only once?—Two or three times.
263. Might not the bed-pan have been in use just then?—Well, I should not think they would take half an hour.
264. You think there ought to be about sixty bed-pans on board?—I do not think there ought to have been sixty.
265. And you said that men ought to have been taken to the hospital here in ambulances?—I think they should have been taken in something warm.
266. And they should have gone to the hospital?—Yes, sir.
267. Do you know that the hospital was full, and that they would not take infectious cases there?—Well, they should have gone down below on the boat. If they could not get taken in at the hospital they could not go.

268. Was the doctor with you on the "Janie Seddon" when you went over to the island?—I am not certain: I think Dr. Purdy was there.

269. Do you remember if Tasker had been in Africa before?—No; he was not in Africa before.

270. *Captain Lewin.*] You say the men were spitting about the decks. Do you not think they did rightly in complaining to you about this nuisance?—Well, yes, I think so, sir, when they were sleeping down beneath them.

271. Did you take any steps to prevent it?—No, sir.

272. Was it your duty to report the matter to me, or to the chief staff officer, or to the officers of the ship?—I do not see how it could be avoided. The men had no room to sleep in their hammocks, so they had to sleep on deck.

273. You took no steps to abate this nuisance?—No, sir.

274. Were you enrolled with the Tenth at Trentham camp?—No, I was enrolled with the details.

275. Where, at Albany?—At Trentham.

276. How was it you were sent up to Klerksdorp?—I joined the Eighth, sir.

277. Do you know the names of those men that came up as reinforcements to join the Eighth?—Yes, I know the majority of them.

278. Can you tell me whether Cope, Avenell, Crook, Drower, and Ivimey were with you?—Yes, sir, they were.

279. Were they all stowaways when they were enrolled?—Oh, no; Cope joined here in Wellington.

280. And Avenell?—I fancy Avenell was a stowaway.

281. Crook?—No, Crook joined here too.

282. Drower?—Drower joined here too.

283. Ivimey?—He stowed away.

284. Did these men have any training, any drill, or discipline on board the "Drayton Grange"?—Yes, sir, they had the same drills as the others had.

285. When were they sworn in?—They were sworn in at Sydney.

286. Did they pass any riding tests?—No, they did not pass any riding test to my knowledge.

287. *Colonel Davies.*] What contingent were you in before?—Fifth, sir.

288. What rank?—Trooper.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHAYTOR SWORN and examined. (No. 59.)

289. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name?—Edward Walter Clervaux Chaytor.

290. What contingents were you in?—The Third and Eighth.

291. What rank did you hold?—Lieutenant-colonel.

292. You were in command of what regiment?—The 2nd regiment.

293. On board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

294. We want to ask you some questions about the discipline and conduct of the ship. We have had statements made that the food was continually bad and the cooking was persistently bad. As colonel of the regiment, was that ever brought under your notice?—There were complaints from time to time, and always remedied. There was nothing seriously the matter with the food; the galley was just up to the work. It was not equal to the modern galleys that are put on board the cargo-boats; and if the cooks were at all slack there were complaints. But all complaints brought forward were remedied at once. If the cooks got at all slack complaints followed immediately.

295. How do you know that complaints which were made were attended to?—I asked the men every day myself when I went round. The complaint was made to the orderly officer, and if he could not get it remedied he came to me, and if I could not do it I went to Colonel Davies.

296. Did you ever visit the men's quarters during the dinner-hour?—Once only.

297. Do you think that your captain of the day, and your orderly officers, attended to their duties in connection with the men?—I do.

298. You do not think it was a mere perfunctory inquiry?—I am sure it was not.

299. You believe that they were interested in the welfare of the men, and attended to their wants?—Yes.

300. The ship's stewards, or whoever they may have been who issued the provisions, were they willing to meet any requirements you made upon them?—Yes; if any complaint was taken to the purser he did his best for us. The food was issued in bulk to the cooks, and then issued by them to the different messes. Each day complaints came in at first, and after that, besides the ordinary officer on duty, each squadron had an officer detailed to look after their men. We considered that probably the men would complain better to their own officers.

301. Do you imagine there was any difference made in the issuing of meat for the officers' mess and the troopers' mess?—It was the same meat.

302. You say the same meat: do you know that, or do you think that?—It was all kept together, and brought up and thawed in the one place, and after the first week the veterinary officer inspected it.

303. Was it ever part of your duty to inspect the meat?—No.

304. Did you ever inspect the meat?—I have seen it often.

305. Taking the meat that was put before you at the officers' mess, of what quality was it?—As a rule, good.

306. When it was not good what was the matter with it?—It was tasteless sometimes.

307. Was it ever tainted?—Well, the fish has been once.

308. But the meat?—Never, that I noticed.

309. Now, taking the mutton by itself, was it decently grown meat?—It was very good meat.

310. Then, the mutton that was put before the officers at their mess, you had no complaint to make about it?—None at all.

311. Was the beef well grown?—It was very good.

312. Did it present the appearance of having been properly killed?—Yes; the only fault about the beef was that it had been chilled and not frozen, and that caused a bone-taint, and a good deal of it was thrown overboard. That is why we had such a particular inspection. It was all inspected when it was brought up.

313. You think it had bone-taint?—Yes, sir. The meat that came before us was all good. I never saw any that was bad. I have been told that a good deal was thrown overboard.

314. Have you any idea what proportion of the carcase would have had bone-taint?—I am not able to give you any information about that, except that every day I saw the meat hanging up, and I never saw any bad meat and never noticed any taint.

315. Now, about the cooking of the men's meat, it was never part of your duty to inspect the men's galley?—Yes, sir; practically every day.

316. Your own duty?—I went round and inspected my portion of the ship, and I went round to the galley.

317. Did the galley present the appearance of dirt or cleanliness?—It was kept clean, but it was small. It was very small compared with the galleys on the boats going over—the cargo-boats.

318. Did you happen to know what the transport regulations require in the way of a galley?—Not from memory, but they had sufficient.

319. Are you in a position to give us evidence as to whether there was a sufficiency of cooking-accommodation according to the transport regulations?—The cooks could do the work. That is all I can speak of. I had not the transport regulations coming back. I had them going over. I have read them.

320. You cannot state of your own knowledge whether or not there was sufficient galley accommodation as required by the transport regulations?—It had been passed for a larger number than we had.

321. The bread?—It was very good.

322. Do you imagine that the men got a proper ration of bread?—Yes.

323. Do you think they got a pound of soft bread?—Yes.

324. Do you think so, or do you know it?—Well, we tested it. We had it weighed from time to time.

325. And when the test was taken did it come up to the ration?—Yes. I only once had a complaint about the bread, and then it was on account of not being sufficiently cooked—it was too moist.

326. You believe the quality of the bread to have been good as supplied to the troopers?—Yes.

327. And the quantity according to ration?—Yes.

328. Do you know anything about the biscuits supplied to the men?—They were very good, and they had an unlimited supply. There was always a cask on deck for them to help themselves.

329. Did you taste them yourself?—Yes.

330. And you know them to have been good?—Yes.

331. Up to the average standard of ship-biscuits?—Yes.

332. And there was abundance?—There was a cask always open for the men.

333. And were these biscuits in addition to the pound of baker's bread?—There was no limit to the supply of biscuits.

334. We have had evidence on the subject of fish: do you remember an episode on board the ship when some fish was brought up to Colonel Davies?—Quite well. That day I was in my cabin writing, and my regimental orderly officer came and reported that the men said the fish was bad. I went down to the galley, and asked the men what was the complaint. They said the fish was bad. I went in and got a sample and tasted it. It was quite good, but very salt. I told them that I considered it was good, and I went back on deck and found a good many of the men were then lined up. About one-half of the side of the deck was occupied by the men. I spoke to a sergeant, and he said he was orderly sergeant who had come up to keep order. I asked what they wanted.

335. Could you give us his name?—No, sir, he had nothing to do with it. An Australian came up and said the fish was bad. I asked for a sample. He went away and brought back some scraps. The first complaint was that the fish was bad, then that it was dirty. There was no doubt about the fish being good. It was quite good. The men said it was dirty, that it had been put for three days on a grating under the turtle deck aft where all the meat was thawed; and they said that a man had been sick on it, and a dog had pumped-ship on it. But no complaint had been made about that until the fish was cooked. The day this came out Colonel Davies went into the complaint, and arranged for a full issue of bully beef for the men, which they got. They got that full issue of bully beef. A great many of the men had eaten the fish down below, and had not complained about it. The whole complaint was that it had been dirtied, but no complaint was made until after the fish was cooked. The place where the fish was lying was away aft where the frozen meat was put to thaw for the officers as well as for the men, except that some of the beef was hung up in a little enclosed space close by. The men said that it had got dirty, and water from the latrines had run over it, but that was an impossibility. When Colonel Davies heard the complaint about the fish having been dirty he got a full issue of bully beef for the men for that day.

336. Do you know how soon the bully beef was issued?—Some was issued while the men were lined up on deck. Before I came on deck I saw some of it going down into the No. 1 regiment quarters.

337. How often was the fish issued to the men?—I believe the fish used to be issued twice a week, but after this it was not issued at all, and the purser gave them something in exchange. The fish was very good, but it was very salt, and the men did not care for it.

338. Do you of your own knowledge know anything of the washing-accommodation?—Yes; I consider there was ample.

339. Do you know what hour the reveille went?—At 6, and the water was turned on till 8 o'clock. For the last three days it was on all day. After leaving Albany they had it at irregular times during the day; it was turned on as they could spare the water from time to time.

340. Was there any means of ascertaining what amount of water a man got per diem?—The ship could measure the amount in bulk, but the men had it in basins.

341. There is a certain ration of water allowed by the transport regulations: do you imagine the men got as much as that?—A man could help himself to as much as he wanted while the water was turned on.

342. How soon after reveille was the water actually in the tank?—Within five minutes.

343. Do you know anything about that?—There were never any complaints. I knew of my own knowledge that the men were on duty at the time.

344. And you believe that the pumping-party started work at the proper time, and you believe that the non-commissioned officer or the officer of the day saw that they got to work properly?—Yes.

345. Then, you believe that the water, with rare exceptions, was flowing from five minutes after reveille until 8 o'clock, at any rate?—Yes.

346. Has it been different on any other transport you have been on board?—I do not remember precisely. I came back on the "Tongariro," and we had not as much then. We had not as much on the "Cornwall" going over.

347. How many were there on your previous return voyage?—About the same number—a thousand.

348. And the washing-accommodation was not as good as that on the "Britannic"?—Not nearly so convenient.

349. And the water supplied on the "Tongariro" was not as plentiful as on the "Britannic"?—No, it was not so plentiful.

350. You say all this of your own knowledge?—Yes, sir.

351. Was it ever part of your duty to inspect the latrines?—Yes, sir.

352. How often?—Every day.

353. That was at the officer's inspection every morning?—Yes, sir.

354. Did you ever see them at any other part of the day?—Sometimes. I would go there irregularly and see them. They were always clean and well flushed out. There was only once when there was any stoppage, and that was remedied at once. Waste had been thrown in, and the pipe was blocked.

355. You would say, on the whole, that the latrines were in what condition?—Quite clean.

356. Were they as good as those on board the "Tongariro"?—I could not say. I do not remember the "Tongariro's" particularly.

357. Do you think the men had any difficulty in getting to the latrines in a cleanly condition?—No.

358. Do you think, if the latrines had been dirty in the course of the day, that it would have ever come to your knowledge?—Yes, I am certain of it. There was a fatigue party detailed to keep them thoroughly clean. They had to thoroughly scrub them out in the morning, and if there were any complaints during the day they had to go back and do it again.

359. Do you remember who was the non-commissioned officer in charge?—They changed.

360. Was a Sergeant Henderson in your regiment, do you remember?—I have a Sergeant Henderson.

361. Did the tea and coffee ever come under your observation?—Yes; the complaints about them were that they were greasy, and that is a complaint always made on a troopship. The men got soup, or tea, or coffee, and it is made in the same boiler, and, however well they scrubbed it out, it is bound to be greasy.

362. Do you believe that there was an honest endeavour to clean the boilers, or were the cooks very lax in their work?—I do not think they were lax.

363. Had you detailed any men from your regiment as cook's mates?—No; there was no room for them in the galley. The men peeled the potatoes, and work like that, but they did not work in the galley.

364. Should you not have detailed men for that purpose?—They were not required. They would have been in the way.

365. Now about the space on board the "Britannic": have you any idea whether there was room for men to hang their hammocks if they had chosen to do so?—I believe there was plenty of room. There were never any complaints about not being room to hang their hammocks. The men said it was close, but they had been used to sleeping out in the open. I never had a single complaint about there not being room, but the place was stuffy in the lower troop-decks forward. During a good part of the time they were unable to open the ports because the ship was rolling.

366. Was the ventilation better upon the lower deck, or upon the 'tween decks?—On the 'tween decks. The fans were not most judiciously placed, but the fans could not be altered once we were at sea.

367. How many windsails were there into the lower deck?—There were electric fans, and I think three windsails.



368. On the lower deck?—Yes; and there was an exhaust for foul air forward.

369. Where to?—Leading up on to the upper deck.

370. You mean to say in addition to the exhaust?—There were electric fans and there were windsails.

371. Do you remember how many windsails?—I believe, three.

372. Were there any complaints made to you about the ventilation?—The men said it was very stuffy.

373. And was there any effort made to improve the ventilation?—I do not see how anything more could be done.

374. Could they have put down more windsails?—No. The windsails can only be put down in one place where there was already sufficient ventilation and electric fans. But the fans were forcing the air under the hatchway—trying to force it forward into the foul air—and consequently it did not affect it very far.

375. Then, the ventilation you consider was bad?—No, not bad. It might have been very much improved.

376. How could it have been improved?—Chiefly by placing the fans in different places.

377. You feel sure that there could not have been more windsails put down?—I do not think so; it would have had the effect of stopping the hatchway.

378. There are no holes down which the windsails could have gone?—No.

379. Was there any ventilation into the 'tween decks?—Yes; the electric fans were there. They were not so badly off, as they were often able to have the ports open.

380. Are you able to give us any information about the outbreak of disease, whether that was consequent upon the lack of ventilation or not?—It was just the same on board the "Tongariro." It is owing to the men coming down from a dry climate and sleeping out in the air there; they are bound to get colds, everybody had them.

381. Were there medical officers attached to your regiment?—Yes.

382. Were you satisfied that they took a proper interest in the welfare and health of the men?—Yes, sir.

383. You had no complaint to make about them?—None at all.

384. You are satisfied that they had more than a perfunctory interest in their men, and that they looked after their business?—I am well satisfied; they were very keen.

385. Was there any or much drunkenness brought under your observation on board during the voyage?—Very little. There were a few cases at Albany.

386. But during the voyage?—No. The men were not supposed to get liquor at all on the voyage. I believe it had been obtained from what I have heard, but I could find out nothing about it.

387. Where do you imagine they got it?—From the ship's crew, if at all.

388. Do you think it was stolen from the ship's stores?—I cannot tell at all. It is only hearsay; what I have been told since I came back.

389. Were there any punishments for drunkenness on board in your regiment?—Yes, for the men at Albany.

390. But apart from that?—No.

391. What transports have you been on board?—Coming back the "Tongariro" and the "Britannic" and going the "Cornwall" and the "Knight Templar."

392. How did the discipline on board the "Britannic" compare with the discipline on all those other occasions?—It was very good. You could hardly compare the discipline going over and coming back. Going over the men have plenty of work, and coming back they have almost no work, and they think they have finished on the way home.

393. Was it as good as on the "Tongariro"?—Yes, sir; better.

394. It was better on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir; much better. There was only one occasion when the men paraded about the fish, and that was a slight breach of discipline.

395. Do you think more discipline could have been wisely enforced?—No.

396. Do you mean that the men would not tolerate it?—It was inexpedient.

397. Were you drafted with Imperial troops in South Africa?—Yes.

398. How would our colonial discipline compare with that of the Imperial troops?—Very well. It is more rough-and-ready, but the men are under just as strict discipline.

399. That is, in the field?—Yes, sir.

400. How do you imagine it would be possible to enforce discipline on colonial troops in a transport, and as regards the discipline of Imperial troops on transports?—It would be harder, for this reason that the non-commissioned officers are not so highly trained.

401. Were there copies of the transport regulations on board?—Yes, sir; the purser had a copy.

402. And they were available for your information?—Yes.

403. Regulation 1487 provides that a final inspection shall be held as soon as the embarkation is complete: do you know whether there was an inspection by the medical officers in South Africa before the men embarked or after the men embarked?—I was told that the ship had been inspected before the men embarked, and our own medical officers went round after we got on board.

404. Regulation 1539 says, "It is the duty of the officers, immediately after they have embarked, to see that their men are allotted to berths, divided into messes, and instructed in the proper method of rolling bedding and slinging hammocks; that their valises, arms, accoutrements, and ammunition (if any) are properly disposed of; and that their necessaries, hammocks, and bedding, when served out, are marked." Was there proper inspection—I am speaking of your own regiment?—Yes; the quartermaster and the adjutant were there, and arranged about the messing for the men at their tables, and the men were paraded the next few mornings and instructed in rolling up their hammocks neatly.

405. You consider, then, that all of this regulation was faithfully carried out?—Yes; we came on board on a tug, and it took two or three days to get straight.

406. But was that regulation carried out?—Yes, sir.

407. The instruction of men hanging their hammocks?—Yes, sir.

408. When the blankets were served out I suppose you cannot charge your memory as to what officers were on duty to see to them being served?—I am not positive, but Captain Colbeck was one.

409. Was he an efficient officer?—Very.

410. And the quartermaster, was he there?—He was acting-quartermaster for the whole ship at the time.

411. Did the adjutant report to you that the bedding had been served out?—Yes.

412. Did he allude to any complaints made by anybody, or did he make complaint himself as to the appearance of the blankets?—No, sir.

413. You are satisfied, then, that the blankets that were served out were in good condition?—I had no complaints, sir. I spoke to some of the men, and they said that there had been complaints made about the blankets being issued full of vermin, but when I spoke to the men about them they assured me they were clean.

414. How soon after leaving Durban do you remember a complaint being made about vermin?—I had no complaint whatever.

415. Are you able to form any idea as to the number of men who would be infected with vermin when they embarked?—No.

416. You could not form an impression?—No. There were not many, I believe. They had been camped in a clean place.

417. Do you believe there was very much vermin on board the ship?—I do not.

418. Was there any vermin on board the ship?—I do not know.

419. Was there any vermin in the officers' quarters?—Not to my knowledge.

420. What bedding did the officers use?—It was supplied by the ship. All the blankets and bedding had to be handed in at Durban at daylight. I had to hand in our blankets and mess-kits, and then get on the tug to get on board the "Britannic."

421. When the blankets were issued on board do you know whether there was a separate issue for the officers and for the men?—The officers' beds were made up in their bunks. They were made up before night.

422. In the course of your inspection did you ever see the men's blankets?—Yes, some of them.

423. What appearance had those you saw?—Many of the men had been very careless with them; they were constantly leaving them about the deck.

424. Did they present the appearance of being old blankets that would be likely to be infected with vermin?—No.

425. Then, do you believe that the blankets were or were not infected with vermin?—I believe not.

426. Regulation 1542 provides, "The first issue of bedding should take place, if possible, during daylight. Officers commanding companies, &c., and drafts are to be present at the issue, and will be personally responsible for the amount taken over by them." What time did you embark?—We came off in the morning. They were issued as soon as possible after the men had had their meal.

427. Were they issued during daylight?—They may not all have been supplied before daylight, but it was the first business proceeded with.

428. You have no charge to prefer against the transport officers about the blankets?—No; as soon as we came on board they asked us to send a party to draw them.

429. And you did send a party?—Yes, sir.

430. I see here that officers commanding companies are to be present at the issue?—Yes; they were instructed to be present.

431. You believe they were so present?—Yes, sir.

432. Regulation 1542 also says, "The troops should be mustered with their bedding as soon as possible to see that it is complete, and that each man has his own bedding." Do you know if there was any parade of the bedding?—Not except to show the men how to roll up their kits in their own quarters.

433. How soon was this done after leaving Durban?—I believe, the next morning.

434. Were there many men sick when you left Durban?—A good many.

435. I see there is a regulation about men to help the cooks: "1544. When a separate galley is provided for the troops the cooking must be done by them. The soldier selected as cook may be assisted by one or two men, according to the numbers embarked. When a separate galley is not provided the cooking shall be done by the ship's cooks, with assistance from the troops. A baker is provided by the ship, but one or more soldiers are to assist him." Were these men detailed to assist the cooks?—Yes: outside the galley peeling potatoes, and work of that sort.

436. But no more were detailed as cook's assistants?—Not in the galley. We were told that we could take over the cooking altogether, but we had not qualified cooks.

437. Do you believe the cooking was nearly as good as that on board the "Tongariro" for the men?—I speak from memory, but I think we had more complaints on the "Tongariro" of short issue.

438. But the quality of the cooking?—It was good on the "Tongariro." I speak from memory, but I think we had some complaints.

439. Regulation 1545 says, "The places where troops are to fall in for parade, which will also be where they are to fall in on alarm of fire or collision, will be settled as soon as possible after

embarkation." Was any attempt made to parade the men on board the ship?—They were paraded at fire-stations and for boat-drill.

440. And this regulation was in spirit complied with?—Yes, it was complied with.

441. Do you think the troops might have been given more exercise than they had?—There was no room to exercise them.

442. Could not arrangements have been made to send a third of them below, and have exercised the others on the deck?—Our aim was to keep the men on deck as much as possible. We had a lot of wet weather, but when it was fine we tried to keep them on deck.

443. Supposing you had to come through again the conditions on board the "Britannic," would you not exercise the men more, or are you satisfied that you did what was proper?—I am satisfied we did what was proper.

444. Do you not think if you had them up you could have kept them in hand better?—You could not see the men when they were paraded, and the parades might have degenerated.

445. Were there any watches on board the ship?—A constant guard was maintained.

446. How many men were on guard?—About eighty for the whole ship.

447. And the sentries were properly posted?—Yes, sir.

448. Do you know whether the officers of the day visited the sentries?—Yes, sir.

449. You are satisfied that the officers of the day did their duty?—Quite.

450. Did the commander of the transport ever go round with the officer commanding?—Yes; almost every day. He was ill part of the time, but whenever he could come he did; that was nearly every day.

451. Did he ever express any opinion upon the condition of the decks or ventilation, or any of the subjects affecting the health of the men?—I think about the third day out he complained about the lower troop-deck that it was not as clean as it might be, and after that he was perfectly satisfied with the way the decks were kept.

452. Do you believe that the men ever committed a nuisance in the lower deck?—No.

453. You think any such assertion is untrue?—Yes, I do.

454. Do you think the men would have tolerated such a thing?—I should hope not.

455. Do you think it would have come to your knowledge if such had been the case?—Yes.

456. Regulation 1556 says, "The wearing of uniform by officers will be strictly enforced." Did the officers wear their uniforms on board?—Yes; always.

457. That rule was complied with?—Yes, sir.

458. Regulation 1558 says, "When there are more than two captains on board besides the commanding officer, a 'captain of the day' is to be appointed, to whom the officer of the day and the military officer of the watch are to report all unusual occurrences for the commanding officer's information. In transports, when the troops on board consist of a mixed force of not less than eight hundred of all ranks, the number of officers required for daily duty, in addition to the adjutant and quartermaster, is usually one officer of the day and three officers of the watch. In freight-ships, or when the numbers are less than eight hundred, a smaller number suffices. The total number of officers, exclusive of the commanding officer, adjutant, and quartermaster, to be detailed for duty will thus under ordinary circumstances be two captains and nine subalterns." How many officers were on duty each day, including the brigade officer?—Each regiment had a captain and an orderly officer. There were four officers besides the brigade captain, besides which each squadron had to detail its own orderly officer to attend all issues of food.

459. And you believe the orderly officers of each squadron did attend each issue of food?—Yes; I always saw them when I was there.

460. Did any of the officers send in reports?—It had to be done every day.

461. Which officers?—The captain and the subaltern sent in theirs, and the non-commissioned officer in charge of the guard had to send in one.

462. That rule was complied with?—Yes; they had to send them in.

463. Regulation 1564 says, "The officer of the day is to command the guard, and will be responsible that the sentries are posted and instructed in their duties as soon as practicable. He will be responsible that the routine appointed for the troops is carried out, and will be referred to when necessary in all matters not requiring the intervention of the commanding officer, giving every assistance in his power to the officers of the ship. He is to attend when bedding is being taken down, to see that it is done in an orderly manner. He is to see that hammocks and bedding are stowed in the proper places at 6 a.m. He will ascertain from the master if bedding can be aired each morning, and see it properly secured in the places set apart for the purpose." Did the officer of the day command the guard?—Yes.

464. You believe him to have seen that the sentries were properly posted?—He had to inspect them and visit them all.

465. And you are satisfied that he properly carried out his business?—Yes, sir.

466. About the airing of the bedding?—The men were allowed to air their bedding practically when they liked.

467. And did many take advantage of that?—A good many.

468. A man would be able to air his bedding if ever he made application?—Yes; but a good deal of the weather was wet and not suitable.

469. Regulation 1564 also says that the officer of the day "will see that the troop-decks are swept clean after the hammocks are down, and before and after each meal; also that the troop-decks and women's quarters are cleaned at the regulated time, being cleared at 7.45 a.m. of all persons except the mess orderlies." Used the lower decks to be cleared when they were being swept?—Yes, sir.

470. Do you think there was any hardship inflicted on the men by being forced to go up on deck?—In wet weather we would allow the men to remain below.

471. Generally speaking, if seas were breaking over would the men have been ordered up on deck?—No.

472. Do you believe that the lower decks were kept properly cleaned?—Yes, sir.

473. Did they use fresh or salt water?—Generally salt.

474. Do you not know that is against the regulations?—I cannot speak for absolute certainty, but I believe it was salt.

475. Do you know whether there was any insect-powder available on board the ship?—I could not say about insect-powder. There were plenty of disinfectants.

476. Then, supposing the quarters had become infected with lice, was there any possibility of getting them clean?—I cannot speak about insects.

477. What were the disinfectants?—Mostly carbolic powder. Some was liquid, but that was not used.

478. Regulation 1567 provides that "The medical officer in charge is to furnish the commanding officer daily with a report of the sick under his care." Did the medical officer make out his report?—It was sent in to Colonel Davies.

479. Do you believe that the surgeons attached to your regiment went down below and were cognisant of the condition of the men?—Yes, sir. One came round with us on inspection.

480. You feel sure that the medical officers attended to their duty in seeing to the general hygiene of the ship?—Yes.

481. Regulation 1582 says, "In order that troops may disembark in a fit condition to take the field, arrangements are to be made to carry out the physical training exercises laid down in 'Infantry Drill,' section 46. If possible, rope-climbing is also to be practised." Why was not something of that done on board the ship?—Mainly for want of deck-space.

482. Do you not think it would have been better if they had been compelled to exercise in some way or another?—Yes; I think it would have been better for the men, but I hardly think it is practicable on board the boat.

483. Why was it not practicable? Do you mean to say with colonial troops, when returning, that it is impossible to keep proper discipline?—No; there was strict discipline, but you cannot see the men on parade, and if they misbehaved you could not check it.

484. Would your answer be that you think such parades not being under the officers' eye completely, that the men would not benefit by them?—They would lose their utility.

485. Was the deck-space on the "Britannic" less than the "Tongariro's"?—Yes, sir.

486. Do you think the men suffered considerable inconvenience from want of deck-space more than is inseparable from transports?—Well, a passenger-boat has nothing like the accommodation that a cargo-boat has.

487. Regulation 1585 provides for a regular morning parade: how often was there a morning parade?—I cannot say, but not often.

488. Do you not think it would have been a good thing if they had had a morning standing parade?—They would have been standing so close together that to hold a parade it meant the men would fall in, and there was just room to see the front rank only.

489. Do you wish me to understand that you think it would be inexpedient to have that parade?—Yes, to have kept men standing about doing nothing.

490. I see Regulation 1602 says, "General musters of bedding are to be made frequently during the voyage, and always on the day after departure from, and on the day before arrival at, each port." Was that complied with at all?—It was in a way. We got reports in that no blankets were missing, and all kits and bedding were properly rolled up and placed in bedding-racks. Any bedding and kits not put away were collected, and taken charge of by the guard.

491. Regulation 1610 states, "Arrangements are made for a daily allowance of water at the rate of a gallon a head, and for a reasonable quantity in addition for washing and other purposes, but the commanding officer must prevent waste." Do you think they got the water the regulation provides for?—I believe they got more. They had drinking-water all day, and they had washing-water for two hours in the morning.

492. And was there an ample supply of fresh water for cooking?—There was only once when the supply failed, and that was for an hour and a half. Something had gone wrong with the pump.

493. Then, generally about your non-commissioned officers: do you think you had a fair sample of non-commissioned officers, or were they inexperienced?—They were above the average of colonial non-commissioned officers. Nearly all of them had previous service.

494. Do you believe that they were impressed with the responsibility of the office that attached to them, or were they only troopers with stripes on their arms?—No; I believe they tried to carry out their responsibilities.

495. And, on the whole, you were satisfied with your non-commissioned officers?—The fault of the colonial non-commissioned officers, as a rule, is that they wait to see a crime committed, and do not check the men in time.

496. Do you think they would bring drunkenness before your notice when they saw it?—Yes.

497. You disbelieve that there was much drunkenness on board the ship?—Yes, sir, I do.

498. What was the quality of the beer: was it as good as you could expect beer to be on board ship?—There were complaints at first. It had been stirred up by the boat, but we drank some ourselves. When it was being brought up it got stirred up, also by the rolling of the vessel; but we let some of it settle, and it was not half bad.

499. Now, in the saloon were the officers sober?—Yes, sir.

500. You are satisfied that there was no more drunkenness, either in the saloon or any other part of the ship, than is incidental to a body of men brought together?—None came before me.

501. *Mr. McNab.*] What was the provision made for insuring that the proper weight of meat was handed out daily to the men?—It was weighed in bulk and issued out to the quartermaster, and then handed over to the cooks.

502. It was the duty of the quartermaster to see that the proper weight of meat was supplied?—The quartermaster, and the staff officer, and the orderly officers were present, and were supposed to see that the proper amount of meat was issued to the men. The squadron officers were also present.

503. With regard to the quality of the meat, the inspection of the meat devolved upon Captain Young?—It was the duty of the officer of the day, and the veterinary surgeon, and the medical officer to inspect the meat when it was brought up from the hold.

504. Do you know of your own knowledge whether, after this meat had been inspected and left in the butcher's shop, it could not have been divided so that the best of it would go to the officers' mess and the less-inviting parts to the men?—No; the men's meat was handed over to their own cooks at their own galley.

505. From the butcher's shop?—Yes, from the butcher's shop.

506. And the officers'?—They had another galley.

507. That also came from the butcher's shop?—Yes; it was all thawed in one place in the butcher's shop.

508. This is the point: Was it possible to have a separation of the officers' portion from the men's when it left the butcher's shop?—When it was issued to the men it was not supposed to be touched by anybody again except by the cooks.

509. So that the division into officers' portion and men's portion would take place immediately under the eye of the inspecting officers?—We were not supposed to see anything about the officers' meat. We had to see that the meat was issued to the men. It was thawed in the same place, but we had nothing to do with seeing what was handed out to the officers' galley.

510. Did the meat that ultimately went to the officers' table come up with the men's, and go into the butcher's shop with the men's?—Yes.

511. Did the separation of the officers' meat from the men's take place immediately under the eye of the officers who were told off to see to the issue of the meat?—Yes. They had to see the meat weighed, and to satisfy themselves that the proper quantity of good meat was issued to the cooks for the men, and that it was taken away to the cooks' galley at once.

512. Did the separation of the officers' meat from the men's take place immediately under the eye of the officers who were appointed to see that a proper supply of good meat was issued to the troops?—It might have been taken before, but it could not be taken after they went to see the meat issued to the men. They had nothing to do with the issue of the meat to the saloon galley. As a matter of fact, the whole of the meat was brought up at the same time and put into the butcher's shop.

513. Which officer would be able to tell me when this separation of the meat took place, and under whose eye it took place?—I think, Captain Lewin or any captain or subaltern of the day.

514. Could you give me the name of any officer who was always on duty with the veterinary surgeon?—Surgeon-Captain Bauchop was generally there.

515. Any other?—He generally took that duty. The medical officers took it in turns, but he generally took that duty.

516. Without cutting the meat up previously, could the quality be properly inspected by the veterinary surgeon?—Yes.

517. Where was the meat put to thaw?—In the butcher's shop. They could thaw a little, if necessary, under the turtle deck on the port side on a grating.

518. How high would the grating be above the floor?—It was about 15 in. on one side, but when the grating was broken there were only about 4 in. underneath between it and the deck.

519. It was on that same grating that the fish on the memorable occasion was placed?—Yes. That was the first occasion on which we had any complaint. The support underneath the grating on the outer side was broken.

520. Were there any complaints to you about the meat being thawed there?—Never a complaint. When the fish was dirty was the first complaint.

521. It was exactly on the same place that the meat was thawed on?—Yes.

522. When the complaint was made about the fish being exposed on that place, the fish had been put on exactly the same place as through the voyage the meat had been placed, and yet that invoked no complaint?—No; I think the real reason for the complaint was that somebody had cut the sack open. I did not see it myself, but I was told the sack was cut open.

523. Was the fish in sacks?—Yes.

524. Was it possible for any drainage or overflow from the latrines to cover the ground immediately below the grating?—I do not think so. The men said that with the sharp jerking of the ship some had gone over, but to do that it must have flowed over the step into the latrine. The door of the latrine was on the other side, and lower down by about 8 ft., and there was a step to go over of about 16 in. or 18 in. The floor of the latrine might have got filled with water, and some may have washed over; but I do not think it was possible for it to reach this place, because the ship had a list the other way.

525. When the first complaint was made to you regarding the fish it was a complaint about the taste of the fish?—It was bad. The first complaint was that the men would not have it. Captain Haselden was the officer of the day, and he came to me and said the men would not have the fish. The North Island regiment was served first and the South Island regiment next. I went to see it, taking the orderly officer with me, to see what was the matter. The men said the fish was bad, and I went inside and saw it was quite good.

526. When the first complaint was made it was a complaint about the taste of the fish?—Yes; that the taste was distinctly bad. That was the first complaint made by the men on the deck, and after the fish was brought up they said it was dirty, but when they brought up the fish they could only produce scraps. Some had thrown their fish overboard, and the rest was eaten by the men down below.

527. It was the second complaint that the men made?—It was the third complaint: two lots complained that it was stinking.

528. It was the third complaint about the fish being abused when lying on the deck?—That was after we said the fish was good.

529. It was never suggested at the first two complaints that the fish had been abused when lying on the deck?—No.

530. I understood you to say in your examination-in-chief that the meat which was drawn for the officers was taken out of the same place as the men's?—Yes.

531. When the men were being instructed in the use of the hammocks, was there any trial made of hanging the hammocks over the table to see how many could be accommodated?—I could not speak from personal knowledge.

532. You know how many men have been lost since the vessel left Durban?—Yes.

533. Was it about twenty?—I think it was nineteen.

534. Do you consider that that heavy death-rate was inevitable?—I think it was mainly caused by a chill following on measles, and from concealing measles—that is, men having measles and not going sick.

535. That would only apply to life on the steamer?—That would apply to most of the men since landing. With regard to the deaths on the steamer, the first case was one of a man who was a stowaway. He was practically at death's door when he came on board.

536. You think the heavy death-rate was through taking chill after measles?—Most of the deaths. Men are very susceptible to catching a chill when they come from a dry climate into a moist one.

537. Can you give the Commission any further indication than that of why there should be 2 per cent. of deaths on the voyage home? I want to find out whether it had anything to do with the provisioning of the troops, or the overcrowding, or the treatment of the men?—I do not think it was due to overcrowding, but to the men exposing themselves in wet weather; then they caught a chill and would not go sick. The inspection at Wellington was on a cold day, and about forty men were taken out of the ranks as having measles.

538. It was a cold day, you say: do you think the Public Health Department did the right thing in taking such a number of cases over to Somes Island when their condition was so serious?—I cannot speak on that with certainty. I suppose they did the best they could. I consider they did the best they could.

539. Then, what were you referring to when speaking about the number of men being taken out of the ranks?—The men had not gone sick. They were waiting about hoping to escape quarantine. Going along the ranks, if a man showed symptoms of ill health he was made to stand aside, and taken down afterwards to the saloon or to the place just outside the smoking and music room, which was under cover, for further examination. A great many of these men had measles.

540. Then, you think the Health Department, in their inspection of the vessel, did not go the best way about it, considering the general condition and health of the men?—Yes, I do. It was the fault of the men themselves. They did not report themselves. They did not realise what cold on measles is, and they hoped to pass the medical officer and get on shore. The consequence was they were bad through waiting about on the deck in the cold.

541. You think, then, that it was due to the action of many of the men themselves, in their zeal to get on shore, that they exposed themselves during the inspection before the Health Department?—Yes; they would not go to our own doctors when they were sick beforehand. They hoped to get on shore without being quarantined.

542. That applies, then, to those men that the Health Department detected and who were not in the hospital?—Yes; and that was the cause of a great deal of sickness.

543. I suppose you would put forward a like reason for those who got through the Health Officer's inspection and went on shore?—Yes.

544. Going back to the men who were in the hospital when you landed here, and who were taken charge of by the Health Department, when were the sick men belonging to your regiment taken charge of by the Health Department?—I believe, about 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. They were being taken off a little before 10 o'clock. I came down, and Surgeon-Major Pearlless was there seeing them taken off.

545. If you had had your own way and had had the disposal of these sick men in this city, would you have sent them on to the mainland or would you have asked the Government to have Somes Island to put them upon?—I cannot speak upon that point. I do not know what arrangements could be made.

546. The death of the men is a serious question in connection with the whole trip?—Yes.

547. Can you throw any light upon the question that would locate the blame either on the original regulations of the Transport Department during the voyage itself, or on the Public Health Department at this end that took over the men from the ship's hospital? Can you help us to locate it?—No, I do not think I can. I do not know the past condition of all the men in the hospital, and when they landed the Public Health Department took charge of the men. It was a medical matter pure and simple. It turned out a very cold day, and it was bitterly cold for men going over to Somes Island; but I think they would rather be on shore than on board ship.

548. You cannot throw any light upon that point, although it is the most important matter of the whole question? You cannot assist us in coming to a conclusion?—No; I do not know the proportion of the men who were sick, but who were not in hospital when we landed.

549. I will ask you again, In the case of a vessel coming from South Africa—a troopship—and there was illness on board, and it arrived at the port of destination, and you were commanding officer, would you suggest to leave the men under the charge of their own surgeon until they were cured, or would you put them under the control of the Health Department? I will put it this other way: There is a vessel reported as coming here from South Africa with a thousand troops on board and fifty men in the hospital, there being some serious cases amongst them, and you were asked what should be done with the sick men, would you say that on the following morning at 10 o'clock you would take them from under the control of their own surgeons and put them under the control of the Public Health Department at Somes Island, when the alternative was that they could be taken off the steamer to some place ashore under the control of their own surgeons, and you considered that the surgeons were competent men: which course would you advise?—I would prefer their own surgeons; but there was no room in the Hospital for the men to go to.

550. I do not say the Wellington Hospital. Would you suggest that they should be left under their own surgeons?—I do not think it would make any difference, unless there was some particular case which it was difficult to understand.

551. We are now getting evidence for the benefit of the future—of course, we cannot help the past—and I want to see whether we have not learned a lesson from the “Britannic” already?—I think it would be well if the men could be transferred with as little moving as possible, but I do not think it is very necessary to keep their own surgeons, because with the medical-history sheet any competent surgeon could deal with the cases.

552. Then you can hardly advise us what to do with a troopship which is supposed to arrive this afternoon with sickness on board?—Personally, I should prefer myself to be treated by my own surgeons, and I think the men would.

553. Do you think that if the British Government Transport Regulations were such that a substantial reduction in the number of men allotted to a certain vessel were made, that would not result in the men being landed here in a better condition, with less risk and with fewer deaths? Do you not think that, without being extravagant in space, a material increase of space might be made with advantage to the health of the men?—As a rule that has been done. About, approximately, twenty-five per cent. less men than are provided for in the regulations have been put on board ship, but when we came away that rule was stopped because there were no transports.

554. Take the case of the “Britannic”: do you consider that a reduction in the number of men on board from 1,000 to 850 would not have resulted in the men being landed here physically better fit?—I do not think it would have made much difference. The vessel had been surveyed, and I was assured by the officers of the vessel that they would carry as many third-class passengers in taking emigrants to the United States.

555. We do not mean what transport officers say. We want to find out whether even the transport regulations are bad. That being so, you know the space supplied to the officers was very much larger than that for the men?—Yes.

556. How many officers were there on board?—Eighty-eight.

557. That is to say, one-twelfth of the men on board the vessel were officers. Were there any deaths amongst the officers?—No.

558. Does that not go to show that the Imperial regulations might have been altered in the direction of giving more space to the troops with advantage from a physical point of view?—Yes, it would have been of advantage; they would be more comfortable.

559. Have you any doubt in your own mind that if there had been a material increase in the space allotted to the troops, and the best provision made on the vessel for ventilation, the men would have come through the trip, with the help of the medical department on board the ship, as fit as the officers?—No. I do not think the sickness was caused by the crowding.

560. I want an answer to the question. You can amplify it afterwards; but I want “No” or “Yes”?—No.

561. What, then, do you attribute as the cause that distinguishes the mortality amongst the men from that amongst the officers, when they were in the same ship, under the same treatment, and have done the same trekking beforehand? The mortality amongst the officers was nil, amongst the men 2 per cent.?—Lack of taking care of themselves and a want of self-control.

562. As shown in what?—In carelessness in getting chills and carelessness in what they ate and drank. On trek that is the great cause of there being more enteric amongst the men; and they are careless about getting chills.

563. Then, am I to understand that there was anything special in regard to the “Britannic” men, as opposed to the men who came back in any other troopship after the conclusion of the war, that singled them out for a higher death-rate, that this Commission must report as being inevitable?—One reason for the increase in sickness was that we were longer on the high veldt in the cold weather. The others were not there for so long a time, so that our men were more susceptible to chill and getting cold.

564. Would not those causes have operated with relatively the same force amongst the officers as amongst the men?—Yes; but, as a rule, officers have more thought of their health. It is very hard to induce men to take even rudimentary precautions.

565. Are any of these elements that are known in moving troops—that is, the habits of the men?—They are well known.

566. Is not that a further reason why, when they come to be put on board ship, every effort should be made by increased space to mitigate what are known to be weakening habits on the part of the men?—Yes; increased space is advisable, if it can be afforded.



567. Then, it is a question of £ s. d.?—Not altogether. When we started to come here the boats were not to be got.

568. Is it not rather that sooner than go in the boats some men would prefer to wait a little longer in South Africa?—Yes.

569. That is still purely a question of £ s. d.?—Yes.

570. Looking at it now from that point of view, would you not suggest, if you had charge of a transport after a war ending, and men being brought down from the clear air of the veldt and the open camps to be put on board ship, to land in this colony in winter, that every effort should be made to supply the men with a maximum amount of accommodation that could be got?—Yes, as much as it was possible to get.

571. Consonant with the financial resources at the disposal of the State?—Yes.

572. *Mr. Millar.*] I think you said you were in command of the 2nd regiment: did you bring the men down from the front to Durban?—Yes.

573. What was the state of health of the men when you left the front?—Very good, except that a good many men came back from hospital who were convalescent and fit to travel.

574. Were you medically examined at Durban?—Yes.

575. And passed by the medical officer?—Yes.

576. I think you said complaints were made about the lower hold being stuffy?—Yes.

577. Did you ever go through these troop-decks at night when the hammocks were hung?—No.

578. Do you know the officers who did?—There were two officers every night who had to visit the decks after the hammocks were hung.

579. I think you said there was ample space for the hooks?—We never had a complaint of the want of space.

580. Did these officers ever say that the air was stuffy?—Yes.

581. Do you know if the temperature was ever taken?—Not that I know of.

582. Do you know if any effort was made to improve the ventilation?—Yes; wind-sails were put down.

583. I think you said there were three windsails?—That was the maximum that could be put in. They had to go through the hatchway. The complaint was when it was wet weather and the ship was rolling, and the ports shut down and one of the hatches fastened down.

584. Any other place where windsails could be put?—No.

585. Do you know Surgeon-Captain Young?—Yes.

586. Is he not an expert in hygiene?—I know nothing about that.

587. If Surgeon-Captain Young said there was ample space to put in twelve windsails if you wanted to, would you contradict that statement?—I should doubt it.

588. I think you said that some of the fans used for ventilation in the troop-decks could have been in a better position?—Yes, but they were fixtures.

589. I presume there was an electrical engineer on board?—Yes.

590. Do you know if any request was made to him to alter the position of the fans?—They were built in in the ship, and could not be altered. I called the attention of the captain of the ship to it, and he said the position could not be altered.

591. I suppose you know that the amount of space allowed to a trooper by the transport regulations is 52 cubic feet. I think you said that the "Britannic" would be allowed to carry the same number of steerage passengers?—Yes; in the two forward troop-decks, where there would be 500 troopers.

592. And there were another 500 aft and the Australians?—Yes.

593. And they could put as many down there, too?—They would not carry steerage passengers aft.

594. Then, the statement is not right, because by law they would not be allowed to put the steerage passenger in 52 cubic feet?—I do not know.

595. You have said it would be better to increase the amount of space in transports?—It would be to the comfort of the men.

596. Would it not be for the health of the men as well?—Probably.

597. But you do not think that the confinement in a vitiated atmosphere such as these men inhaled had much to do with the sickness and ultimate death of a large proportion of the troops?—No.

598. Do you think it conduced to their health inhaling that vitiated atmosphere for twelve hours, as we have had it in evidence?—No; it would make them more liable to contract any disease that was about.

599. *The Chairman.*] You say the patients who were being put on the tug at Wellington were under Major Pearless's care?—He was there superintending their being put on the tug, and he arranged for stimulants for them.

600. *Mr. McNab.*] Up to that time there had only been two deaths on board?—Two New-Zealanders.

601. *Colonel Davies.*] You are quite sure that your orderly officers inspected the quarters every night?—Yes; they reported in writing each day.

602. And you say the discipline on the ship compared well with that on other ships on which you have been?—Yes.

603. Was it better than in other ships?—Better than in others coming back.

604. Than in those going there?—Better than in one of them.

605. In your opinion, every man had room to hang his hammock?—I never had a complaint of want of room.

606. You never had a complaint that the men had no opportunity to wash or bathe?—No.



607. Are you satisfied the coppers, and latrines, and lavatories were kept clean?—Quite satisfied.

608. Do you know of any complaint made to me, or to any of my staff, that was not attended to?—No; they were all attended to.

609. Did you ever hear the officers of the ship make any remarks about the discipline?—Yes; I have heard the captain and other officers remark that the behaviour of the men was very good.

610. Did they say whether it was better or worse than that to which they were accustomed?—Better.

611. With regard to the ventilation, have you known men to tie up the windsails and stuff up the exhaust-pipes?—Yes, they stuffed them up, because they thought there was too much air.

612. You have heard that it had been done?—It was reported that it had been done.

613. The Chairman examined you on the King's regulations, and one paragraph commenced, "In order that troops may be in a proper condition to take the field, let them be instructed," and so on; but these troops were not to take the field when they landed?—No.

614. Was there any room to drill them on board?—No.

615. Was not all the bedding mustered every morning?—Yes; and it was stowed away after reveille, and placed down below, and that which was left by the men sleeping on deck was also taken down below.

616. There were eighty-three officers on board?—Yes.

617. And you had ample room?—Yes.

618. How many officers had bad colds?—Nearly all.

619. Do you know of any who had not a bad cold?—No.

620. You had a bad cold?—Yes, and I have it still.

621. We had plenty of room?—Yes; we had rooms on the upper deck.

622. And ample ventilation without draught?—Yes.

623. You said that if Captain Young said you could have twelve windsails down your hatch-way it was wrong?—Yes.

624. But if he said twelve windsails in the ship?—That might be right; I think that would be quite possible.

625. You say the ship's officers told you they could carry the same number of steerage passengers?—Yes.

626. You do not know the law as to the space allowed to a steerage passenger?—I do not know.

627. And you do not know the amount allowed your men?—No.

628. Then, they might have had the allowance of steerage passengers?—They might have had.

629. The men who came with the Tenth were attached to your regiment?—Yes.

630. Was there a sergeants' mess?—I arranged for it after leaving.

631. Do you remember Sergeant-Major Cowell?—Yes; he joined us coming home.

632. Was it by your orders he went to the Tenth on board?—No.

633. Did he do it without orders?—Yes; he claimed that he was promoted sergeant-major before leaving, and that it was a permanent appointment, and not knowing anything definitely about that I told him to keep his rank nominally until we landed.

634. Did you know the sergeants in the Tenth did not mess in the sergeants' mess?—I did not know at the time.

635. Any reason?—None, except that the others did not want them.

636. The Eighth did not want them?—No, or they did not want to go with them.

637. I think the Chairman asked you about the discipline of colonial troops as compared with that of Imperial troops in the field, and you said it was much about equal: was there any difficulty with the colonial troops?—We never had any difficulty with our troops.

638. He also asked you if you could give any reason for any difference of behaviour in the Imperial and colonial troops returning on transports. I do not mean in the case of the men on the "Britannic," but why sometimes the colonial ships should be slacker than the Imperial?—Because if they were in a colonial ship and they committed an offence there would be no serious punishment to give them, and they know that on previous occasions when a man has been promised serious punishment there has been no result to it.

639. Do you think the principal difference lies in this: that in one case the man is a soldier possibly for years to come, and in the other case directly he sets his foot on shore he is free, and he can get anybody to listen to all sorts of trumped-up stories?—The main reason is that he knows the moment he is on shore he is free, and there is no more punishment for him.

640. *Mr. McNab.*] You stated that they closed up the mouth of the windsail?—The bottom of the windsail was tied up, but it was not reported at the time.

641. Can you tell the Commission whether the mouth of that windsail was an open mouth, or whether the air that came down through the windsail was disturbed before it was allowed to go into the 'tween decks: did it come through in one volume or was it reticulated into the room?—They tried to carry it well back into the room. It came down one mouth, but it was spread out as much as possible.

642. You said, in answer to Colonel Davies, that nearly all the officers had colds?—Yes.

643. How many had pneumonia?—There were two who were seriously ill on board, I think, with pneumonia, but not for long.

644. Then there was only one case of pneumonia for every forty officers?—Yes.

645. And under the surroundings of the officers all the pneumonia cases recovered?—They were only mild, and they recovered.

646. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you ever have applications for water to wash clothes?—Never direct applications. Water was supplied for two full days before reaching New Zealand. That was the first time I heard about it.

647. I suppose you are aware that water was not issued to the men for washing clothes before that?—No; they had water to wash themselves, and they washed clothes in that.

648. Did that rule all the way out?—Yes; they also had the salt-water spray.

649. Do you know what the condenser was capable of condensing in the day?—No.

650. Do you know whether they had sufficient appliances to allow them to wash?—Yes; they took water in buckets. There was washing going on the whole time, but it was not general until two days before reaching New Zealand.

651. So that the trooper in charge of the water-tap could give them water if they asked for it?—They got it from the lavatories.

652. You saw clothes hanging out to dry?—Yes.

653. It is not correct to say they did not get water?—No.

654. *The Chairman.*] Sergeant-Major Cowell told us this morning that Sergeant Tasker was lying for three days and nights in a hammock without getting medical assistance: do you think it is possible?—I do not think it is possible.

Lieutenant ALEXANDER WYNYARD JOSS examined on oath.\* (No. 60.)

655. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your rank?—Lieutenant.

656. You are not a New-Zealander?—No; I am an Australian officer.

657. You were a passenger on board the "Britannic" when she recently came from Durban?—Yes; I was attached to the 8th regiment.

658. When you went out to South Africa to what Australian contingent were you attached?—To the Fifth Queensland Bushmen.

659. You came to Wellington in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

660. On what other troopship have you been before you came in the "Britannic"?—I went out in the "Templemore."

661. Did you take your round of duty with the other officers on board the "Britannic"?—I was twice orderly officer on board.

662. How did the discipline on board the "Britannic" compare with that on board the other troopship?—Very favourably indeed; in fact, better.

663. Could you tell the Commission how Colonel Davies's officers carried out the duties assigned to them?—In every way perfectly. I did not notice any slackness amongst the officers.

664. Did you find the non-commissioned officers assisting the officers in every way?—Yes, they did splendid work.

665. Were the men, on the whole, amenable to discipline?—Yes.

666. Did you notice if amongst the men there was any drunkenness?—Not on board the vessel.

667. With regard to the food on board the "Britannic," did it compare favourably with that on board the vessel in which you had previously travelled?—I think it was better than that supplied to the "Templemore."

668. When you were on duty as orderly officer did the men ever make a complaint with regard to the food?—No. I invited complaints, but none were made. There was one meal incident, I think, on the first day I was orderly officer. One man from each table was told off to report, and these men came up with the food and asked if that was sufficient for seventeen men. I thought it was a very small supply for seventeen men, and I told the men to wait. I turned to Sergeant Mack and asked him if that was not a rather small allowance for seventeen men. He took it then to the cook and asked, "Is this intended for seventeen men?" and the cook said it was only meant for eleven. The trooper said that he had asked for rations for seventeen. I asked why he went away with so little, and he said he did not know, it might be the amount appointed to be served out. He did not draw sufficient, not knowing the proper quantity. The men were, of course, given another portion of meat so as to make it up to seventeen rations. The meet was good also.

669. Then, you found that on one occasion, at any rate, a non-commissioned officer whose duty it was to get the food for the table accepted without demur less than he was entitled to?—I could not swear it was a non-commissioned officer. It was the mess orderly.

670. Did you notice when on duty if at any time the meat supplied to the men appeared to be tainted?—No. I was twice on duty, and on both occasions I tasted the meat, and it was not tainted.

671. Was it wholesome?—Yes, it was indeed.

672. Thoroughly cooked?—It was well cooked. There was one occasion on which it was what you hardly call underdone.

673. Did any men ever complain to you when on duty about the meat being underdone?—No.

674. With regard to the sleeping-accommodation, did you ever notice how the hooks for the hammocks were arranged?—They were hung fore-and-aft, and there were two hooks for each hammock. Sometimes two hammocks were hung on three hooks.

675. Were there sufficient to accommodate hammocks for all the men?—There appeared to be so. When I visited them all the hammocks were not hung.

676. Did you visit them after they had turned in at night?—Yes; it would be about 7 or 8 o'clock when I went down.

677. How many hammocks would it be that were not hung?—I could not give you any idea of the number that were not hung. I did not count them, but I could see that there was plenty of room for more.

\*This evidence has not been corrected by witness, owing to his having to leave for Australia immediately.

678. Recalling your experience of the former troopship, do you remember whether the men took readily to the hammocks, or whether there were any difficulties in training them to it?—At first the men were in difficulties in hanging the hammocks, but in a few days they got all right and settled down to it.

679. Have you had any ambulance training or medical training?—No.

680. *The Chairman.*] Were the men more crowded on board the "Britannic" than on board the "Templemore"?—I should say they were more crowded on the "Templemore." We mustered, officers and men, about 560 to 590. Of course, we had horses.

681. How many horses?—About 270.

682. Do you know the relative sizes of the "Britannic" and the "Templemore"?—I think the "Britannic" was larger than the "Templemore."

683. Was this your first return voyage from South Africa?—Yes.

684. Do you think it would have been expedient or possible to have exercised the men on board the "Britannic"?—Oh, yes; there was plenty of room to exercise the men.

685. Do you think it would have been a good thing to exercise the men?—The men had plenty of exercise. We were always arranging sports for them.

686. How often were there sports?—I think, about three times, and the sports were carried on for two days.

687. Do you think that grumbling by the men might have been avoided if the men were occupied with drills and parades?—I do not think so. The men were coming home, and they are not so subject to discipline as they are going out, although they turned out in a very smart manner for two fire-alarms that we gave.

688. Then, you think there would have been dissatisfaction if they were compelled to parade regularly?—Well, hardly dissatisfaction; but there would have been grumbling, as men always will grumble.

689. Would you recommend, if you were going again, that the men should be paraded, or was the practice on board the "Britannic" the best?—I could not see how much improvement could be made.

690. You say you were only twice orderly officer?—Yes, twice.

691. Did you see the meat?—Yes; in the butcher's shop, and also in the galley.

692. Did you see it weighed?—Yes.

693. After you had seen it in the butcher's shop?—I missed it once, but the orderly captain was there.

694. After it had left the butcher's shop what became of it?—It was taken straight to the cooks' galley.

695. Did you see the best joints picked out for the officers' mess?—No.

696. You do not think that after it had been cut up for the men the officers' was taken from the best parts?—No.

697. Was it better than what went to the men?—It was more daintily cooked.

698. If it had been so taken you would have observed it?—Yes.

699. What caused you to taste the meat?—It was in orders.

700. Was it not because a complaint had been made as to the quality of the meat?—Some complaint had been made previously.

701. It was not in response to a request that you tasted the meat?—No; simply because it was in orders.

702. And the other articles of food on board: were they fair?—Yes; they had sago one day and apples another, and I tasted them all.

703. How did they taste?—Very well indeed.

704. Wholesome?—Yes.

705. Any fault to find with them?—No.

706. Have you ever been up country in Queensland?—Yes.

707. How would the food on the "Britannic" compare with shearers' food?—Better.

708. As tastily cooked?—Yes.

709. Then, you think it was certainly not worse than that given to the ordinary run of shearers?—No, certainly not.

710. I do not want to draw a comparison between your non-commissioned officers in the Queensland Bushmen and those on board the "Britannic"; but are you satisfied that these men did their duty as far as comparatively inexperienced men could do it?—I think that during the two days when I was so much with them they did their work splendidly. There was only one occasion on which I had to call the attention of a non-commissioned officer to anything.

711. *Colonel Davies.*] You say you tasted the food because it was in orders?—Yes.

712. Who gave you that order?—I do not know the name of the officer, but a ship's officer said to me, "You will have to taste the food."

713. Do you know that my own staff officer went down and tasted the food every day?—I do, because the chief steward told me so.

714. He went down with the chief steward and tasted the meat?—Yes; and one day the chief steward had some in his hand, and I asked where it was going, and he said, "To Captain Matthews, your staff officer."

715. Did you see the tea?—I saw it, but I did not taste it.

• 716. Any complaints about it?—No; I always asked the men if there were any complaints.

717. And although the "Templemore" was going to Africa and the "Britannic" was coming back you consider the discipline on board the "Britannic" better than on the other ship?—I do.

718. How do you think the discipline of the officers and the general carrying-on of matters on board the "Britannic" would compare with other troopships?—Very favourably. I have been with officers on the other ship, and I consider that these officers did their duty very well.

719. You never saw any one wanting in respect to me, for instance?—No, sir, never; they were always most respectful to you.

Major DONALD POLSON, D.S.O., examined on oath. (No. 61.)

720. *Mr. Millar.*] To which contingent did you belong?—To the Eighth.

721. Did you belong to any previous contingent?—To the Fifth.

722. You returned by the "Britannic"?—Yes; I came back in charge of the North Island Regiment.

723. Did you bring the North Island Regiment from the front to Durban?—No; Major Bartlett brought them down, and I took charge of them on board the "Britannic."

724. Were they medically inspected before they went on board?—Yes; they all were.

725. What was the general state of their health when they got on board?—It was good.

726. A fairly healthy lot of men?—Yes.

727. How many men of your regiment died on board ship?—One.

728. How many since their landing?—I think it is seven.

729. Can you account in any way, or have you any theory, as to what caused the illness on board?—To my mind there is no question; it was the rough weather, and the damp cold weather we experienced after coming away from a dry climate.

730. That would affect both officers and men alike?—Quite so.

731. There were no deaths amongst the officers in your regiment?—No.

732. Are you of opinion that the sanitary conditions and the hygienic conditions of the men's quarters had anything to do with the men's illness?—No; in my opinion it had nothing to do with it.

733. Do you consider that the surroundings of the men were of the same description to enable them to throw off a disease as the surroundings of the officers?—I scarcely think they were.

734. Do you think they had sufficient space down below?—I know they had space within the regulations; but in my opinion they should have had more.

735. In your opinion the men should have had more space?—Yes.

736. I suppose that would apply with still greater force to what you may call irregular or green troops than to trained men?—Yes.

737. What is your opinion of what would have been the state of health of your men if they had had more space?—I think if the men had had more space on the "Britannic" it would not have made much difference in the state of their health.

738. Do you consider that the medical attendance for your men was all it should be?—All it should be.

739. Do you think that it would be possible for a man to be lying for one or three days in a hammock ill without receiving medical assistance?—It was impossible without its coming to my notice.

740. Did you ever have any complaint as to the state of the atmosphere in the troop-decks?—The first day out from Durban the electric fans did not work, but they were soon put in order. They and the windsails were placed in such positions that one man would complain that the decks were too hot, and another that they were too cold, but there was no general complaint.

741. Did you ever go down to see the state of the atmosphere after their hammocks were hung?—Yes.

742. How often were you down during the voyage?—On two occasions.

743. Do you consider there was room to hang more hammocks?—No, because all the available space was taken up.

744. Were the hooks occupied when you were down?—Yes; but there are many ways of slinging hammocks, and they could have slung more if they wanted to do so.

745. If they slung two hammocks on three hooks?—It is possible to hang eleven hammocks on twelve hooks, and one man could use four hooks for a hammock and yet not occupy much more space.

746. From the position of the hooks on board the "Britannic" how could you possibly hang eleven hammocks on twelve hooks?—For this reason, there were rows of hooks from one end of the hold to the other, and they were so placed that the end of a hammock in one row would be practically where the middle of the man in the next row was.

747. On the occasion you went down they were not hung in that manner?—I saw some that were not, but the general run were.

748. Do you think there was any necessity for the men to lie on the tables or on the deck?—There was sufficient room to hang all the hammocks, but some men slept on the tables or on the deck of their own accord.

749. With regard to the food, did the men complain as to the way in which the food was cooked and as to the quality of the food?—Yes, there were complaints occasionally as to the cooking.

750. How often were there complaints as to the quality?—I suppose six or seven times on the voyage.

751. How often out of these six or seven times did you find the complaint was warranted?—Only once.

752. What was the fault on that occasion?—On that occasion it was in reference to some fish. It was not a complaint as to the quality of the fish; but it was a justifiable complaint in my opinion.

753. What was the nature of the other complaint?—Sometimes there would be a complaint that the stew was sour.

754. What did you find out about that on investigation?—I and another officer, Captain Matthews, chief staff officer, went down and inspected it, and we found that it was sour. We went to the chief steward, and he pointed out that it was on account of pickles being in it that it tasted sour, and we satisfied ourselves that it was.

755. What was the stew like, was it just watery or was it fairly good stew?—It was fairly good.

756. And the mixing of pickles with it would not injure it?—No.

757. Upon the other four occasions what were the complaints: did you ever have a complaint about the meat being rotten?—The orderly officer used to go round, and they brought up all sorts of complaints. There was no general complaint. One man would complain of the soup, another of the meat, and so on; but there was no general complaint.

758. Whenever a complaint was made about the meat being tainted and bad, was any effort made to rectify it and give something else in place of it?—Yes.

759. Upon every occasion where the food was shown to be bad other rations were given?—On the only two occasions that I know of, when the complaint was shown to be justifiable, the men got other rations.

760. Upon the other occasions, when individual complaints were made, were they dealt with on their merits as they arose?—Yes.

761. What about the quantity: did you ever receive complaints of a shortage of supply?—There would be individual complaints, but the general opinion was that the quantity was sufficient. There would be sometimes individual complaints about not getting enough, but on no occasion was there a general complaint.

762. Now, as to the cooking, did you ever inspect the cooks' galley?—I was there many times.

763. How did you find the meat cooked?—It was always boiled in big coppers.

764. And was it sufficiently boiled?—I believe on some occasions there were joints not sufficiently cooked. In fact, I have seen some myself that were raw inside.

765. Do you think the accommodation in the galley was sufficient to do the cooking thoroughly for the number of men?—No, I consider the galley accommodation was deficient.

766. Then you think that might account for the bad cooking on occasions?—Yes, I suppose that was really the reason.

767. Were the men qualified cooks?—The head cook was. He was a man who knew his business.

768. So it was not the inexperience of the cooks that caused it?—No.

769. Was the galley kept clean?—It was generally clean. It was not what I should call a particularly clean galley.

770. Did you ever have complaints as to the greasy state of the tea and coffee?—Yes, several times.

771. Did you inquire into it?—Yes.

772. What was the cause?—It was that the coppers used for boiling the meat for the mid-day meal were the same as were used for boiling the tea at night.

773. Was it possible that they were not properly cleaned out?—On one occasion I went down with Colonel Davies, and the cook assured us they were cleaned out with soda and hot water every day, and he could do no more.

774. Did you ever see grease on the tea?—No, but occasionally it was bad. One does not expect to get very good tea on board ship, and I have seen it rather bad on the "Britannic."

775. Any other complaints made to you?—Anything about the apple episode; we have heard that there were maggots on the apples?—I never heard of it.

776. The matter never came before you?—No.

777. Did you ever hear of any of the biscuits being maggoty?—Never maggoty. I recollect one barrel of biscuits being put over the side because they were mouldy. Other biscuits were given in place of them.

778. You never had a complaint as to the scarcity of the biscuits?—No; in fact there never was a scarcity.

779. Did you ever have a complaint as to the inability of the men to get water to wash?—On the first two days after leaving Albany there was a complaint that the water was not turned on as soon as usual. The matter was reported to the chief officer of the ship, and he put another man on to attend to this duty.

780. When was the water usually turned on?—At reveille or before it.

781. Reveille went at 6 o'clock: do you know whether it was turned on then?—I was informed by my orderly officer that it was.

782. When was it stopped?—At 8 o'clock, or about eight. It was never turned off before.

783. The orders were that the water was to be on from 6 to 8, and your orderly officers reported to you that such had been done?—Yes.

784. If evidence has been given that at a quarter past 7 a man could not get a wash, would that be correct?—No, except on the first two days after leaving Albany, when there was a complaint that the water was not turned on at reveille.

785. Was the complaint general throughout the voyage?—No, there was no complaint except on that occasion.

786. Did you ever have an application for water to wash clothes?—Not until we were nearing New Zealand. From Melbourne to New Zealand it was on all day, and I have seen men washing clothes before that, but we had no request for water.

787. Concerning the discipline on board the "Britannic," how do you consider the discipline was?—This is the fourth troopship I have travelled in, and I think the discipline of the "Britannic" was better than that on the other three.

788. Outward and homeward?—Outward and homeward. I think the discipline was very good on board the "Britannic." I should like to mention that while the Health Officers were on board at Melbourne—there were two of them—one remarked to the other, after the medical inspection, "You did not take long about this"; and the other said, "No, if we always had cases like this, with such discipline on board, it would not take long."

789. Was there any drunkenness from the drink-supply in the ship?—None whatever.

790. At neither end of the ship?—No; if there had been it would have been at once noticed.

791. Do you consider that anything more could be done to look after the health and comfort of the men than was done by the officers?—No.

792. *Mr. McNab.*] From the time you left Durban until the present time, I suppose, you are aware that twenty troopers have died?—Yes.

793. Of that twenty, up to the moment when Dr. Pearless handed his men over to the Health Department, only two had died?—Yes.

794. And eighteen since that?—Yes.

795. We are a Commission inquiring into this matter, with the view of reporting to the House upon it. As the commanding officer of one of the regiments, would you say to us that we should report that this was inevitable, or that it could have been remedied in some way?—So far as I know, it was inevitable.

796. Then, you think it was inevitable that 2 per cent. of the fighting strength should perish on their road home and within three weeks after their arrival?—I scarcely understand what you mean by the word "inevitable." Is it that any means could have been taken to reduce the mortality? If so, I must answer, As far as I know, none.

797. Then, you think, when Major Pearless handed over these men to the Health Department eighteen were doomed to death?—No, I do not say that. I understood that when Major Pearless handed the men over there were only three or four cases that were considered serious. The other men, I understood, were all suffering from measles.

798. I will put it in a different way, because this Commission will advise for the future. With your knowledge of what has transpired, if there was to-morrow a troopship to arrive with a thousand men on board and fifty of them in hospital, and we were to ask you whether these sick men should be taken ashore under the control of their own surgeons and provision found for them ashore, or that they should be taken away from their own surgeons and put on one of the harbour boats and taken to Somes Island, which course would you suggest we should follow?—I certainly would recommend you should allow them to remain under their own medical officers, and not place them under fresh men.

799. You think that is an element which could be fairly considered in regard to the comfort of the sick men?—Yes, for the reason that the medical officer who had been attending them would know the peculiarities of the different cases.

800. We come down now to the day they landed. You remember the day the men were taken to Somes Island?—Yes.

801. Did you see any of them taken from the vessel and put on the ferry-boat?—Yes, I saw them going on board.

802. Do you think they were as comfortable on the deck of the ferry-boat, from the time they went off the "Britannic" until they got into the quarantine station, as they would have been if their shifting had been on to the wharf and then into ambulances for transmission to some place within two or three miles of the wharf?—I did not see the men after they got on the ferry-boat, and could not say if they were on deck or down below.

803. In answer to Mr. Millar I understood you to say that you did not think if there was more space it would have affected the death-rate?—That is what I said.

804. Do you know the officers had considerably more space than the men?—Yes.

805. And that the death-rate amongst them was absolutely nil?—Yes.

806. What do you suggest to the Commission was the reason of no officer dying throughout the trip, and twenty of the men dying?—Well, the proportion was so different, and I consider officers on landing generally take better care of themselves.

807. What was the proportion of the officers on the ship?—I think the number of officers on board the ship who landed here was forty-one New-Zealanders.

808. How many went off before?—I think thirty-two Australians.

809. There would be about eighty officers on board?—Yes.

810. And not a death amongst them?—No.

811. Were there not a large number of men died who never landed at all, but went straight to quarantine?—There were only a few died after landing here.

811A. Were not a number taken from the ship's hospital to Somes Island?—Yes.

812. How does the question of the proportion of officers taking care of themselves after landing explain the great difference in the mortality between the officers and the men?—The officers, as a rule, do not expose themselves as the men do. For instance, I saw men on wet days going about the ship with only singlets on, and officers would not do that. Consequently, they would land in a better condition.

813. You suggest that the cubic feet of air-space given to the men, as opposed to that given to the officers, was not a factor in determining the condition of the men when they landed in New Zealand?—I would not say that.

814. Would you say it was not a factor in determining the number of deaths?—Well, it probably was a factor, from the fact that the atmosphere down in the men's quarters was a very different temperature to what it was on deck.

815. And when you know that pneumonia was the cause of a large number of deaths, would not that suggest to you all the more that it was a question of overcrowding and foul atmosphere?

—No, because I think if there had been half the number of men on board the atmosphere would have remained much the same in the holds.

816. Do you know whether pneumonia lives on close, foul atmosphere or on pure atmosphere?—I should think it lived on pure atmosphere.

817. And you do not think the foul atmosphere would be apt to foster pneumonia?—Probably it would.

818. Is it not one of the great causes of pneumonia?—I think it was usually caused by the men contracting colds and not taking care of themselves.

819. You do not think that the health of the men could have been improved if there had been a greater amount of space given to the men on the 'tween decks or on the lower deck?—In my opinion it would not have made much difference. I am basing my opinion on the experience I had coming back in the "Tagus." There the men had as much room as they liked, and the proportion of deaths was about the same.

820. How many men were there on the "Tagus"?—I think it was 750.

821. Were there fourteen deaths on the "Tagus"?—I think there were twelve.

822. Can you name any other troopship bringing troops to New Zealand that had the heavy mortality that the "Tagus" and the "Britannic" had?—I think I am right in saying these two were the worst.

823. Then, to conclude, you would not suggest that giving more room to the men on a troopship would reduce the number of deaths?—I think it would not. Of course, it would be very much better for the comfort of the men, and that would improve their condition.

824. And you cannot suggest any other course that might have been followed here when the men landed that would have reduced the number of deaths?—Except that their own medical men should attend them. Beyond that I could not suggest anything.

825. *The Chairman.*] Are you qualified in hygiene?—No; mine is only the opinion of a layman.

826. Used you ever to visit the hospital on board?—I was in it every day, without exception.

827. What do you think of the cleanliness of the hospital?—It was clean, as ships' hospitals go.

828. The orderlies were fairly attentive to their work?—I never heard any complaint.

829. And were the medical officers of your regiment in fault?—No; I can say that Surgeon-Captain Eccles was down there day and night, and I know that others were also.

830. Then, so far as you know, no death amongst your men could be attributed to Major Pearless, who was the principal medical officer on board, or to Captain Eccles?—No; certainly not.

831. We have had it stated that on the last night before arriving in Wellington there was an orgie in the hospital and a scene of drunkenness?—I never heard of it; and I think it could not occur without my hearing of it, because the hospital was situated between the two decks occupied by my men.

832. Do you believe your orderly officer would have failed to find it out if it was going on?—I think it would be impossible.

833. We had a statement—first that all the orderlies were drunk, and then the number was reduced to one: was that true?—It is impossible; they could not get the drink.

834. You never heard of it, officially or unofficially?—No; this is the first I have heard of it.

835. With regard to the non-commissioned officers, was the hospital sergeant a capable man? In my opinion he was. He was an attentive man.

836. He was never reported as being incapable or inattentive?—No.

837. Nor did your medical officers ever complain about him?—No.

838. One of His Majesty's regulations is that the non-commissioned officers should teach the men how to hang their hammocks: do you think the spirit of that regulation was carried out?—The men on the "Britannic" had the teaching going over. Whether the non-commissioned officers taught them again, I do not know, but they were supposed to know it.

839. You are satisfied the non-commissioned officers did their duty in the matter of the hammocks?—Yes.

840. Were there hooks for all the hammocks?—Yes: when we left Durban we took on board twenty-six Australians, and the question cropped up as to where these men should go. Colonel Chaytor and I did not want them with our men. I sent the orderly officer to measure the space, and found that we had a few more men on board than were allowed for under the "Yeomanry" regulations, and not more than under the "regulars" regulations.

841. Were these Australians in excess of the Yeomanry regulations?—Yes.

842. Were the Yeomanry regulations exceeded before they came on board?—In my quarters the excess number of men was eighteen over the sitting-accommodation provided for on the Yeomanry scale.

843. How much less than the Imperial regulations?—In the Imperial regulation I think the proportion is 100 to 120.

844. When did you take command?—After the men were put on board.

845. Can you tell us anything about the issuing of bedding?—I did not see it.

846. Were officers of your regiment detailed to see the blankets served out?—I do not know. It was the quartermaster's duty to do that.

847. Did you see the blankets soon after embarkation?—I saw some within three days after they were in use; some were brought to me.

848. What appearance did they present?—Clean.

849. Did you go down with Colonel Davies to the men?—Yes.

850. Could you give us any idea of whether the men were lousy on the veldt?—It was very peculiar if any of them were not. I have been so myself. It was a common thing.

851. Could you give us any idea of the proportion in 100 men? Would it be twenty-five, or fifty, or what?—I should say 100; it is such a common thing on the veldt.

852. Do you believe that many of the men had lice on them when they embarked?—No doubt. They could not help themselves.

853. Had they not an opportunity of cleaning themselves at Newcastle?—Even if they had, cleanliness will not keep lice away.

854. When was the first complaint made about the blankets?—I never heard a complaint about the blankets on that point.

855. What was the complaint?—It was only one night when a few of the men complained that some of their blankets were in the hold, and we had a little difficulty in getting them up, as it was not reported until after dark.

856. Did you order parades of your regiments, or would that come from the officer commanding?—That would come from the officer commanding.

857. Do you think it would have conduced to the happiness and well-being of the men if they paraded more often?—I do not see how it would. They did not have their arms, and the weather would not have allowed it often.

858. Not by way of giving them employment?—I think it would not. We had no room to drill, and it would only be a muster and dismiss again.

859. Would that have kept them more in hand than they were?—They were perfectly in hand.

860. You are satisfied the discipline was ample?—Ample.

861. Could you tell us anything about the meat?—I have seen the meat frequently.

862. Had you many complaints about the quality?—Probably half a dozen. The meat was inspected every day by a medical man or by Captain Young. One evening the quartermaster sergeant said that, judging from appearance, he thought the meat to be cooked next day was not good. Captain Young and I went to see it, and I saw that part of it had a slightly green appearance; but Captain Young said it was all right, and passed it as good.

863. What was the cause of the green meat?—I do not know; but had I not seen the meat passed by an expert I should have thought it was bad, and I believe that is the reason why the men complained at times.

864. *Colonel Davies.*] Do you remember that an officer inspected the men's quarters every night?—Yes; he reported frequently. It was the invariable custom.

865. The discipline was the best you have seen on a troopship?—Without doubt.

866. You think every man in your regiment had ample room and means to wash and bathe?—I never had any complaint as to the washing, and I know there were eleven basins at our end of the ship which were always available.

867. Was there a salt-water bath?—Yes.

868. Can you tell us about it?—It was put up about the second or third day from Durban. On the first day that it was up nearly all the men used it, and the next day only a few used it, and the next thing we heard was that it was ripped by some of the men with their knives. We had it repaired, but the men would not use it.

869. You went with me to inspect the quarters every morning?—Yes.

870. Any complaint?—No; you complimented the men on the appearance of their quarters.

871. Do you know of any complaint brought to me and not attended to?—No.

872. Do you remember men tying up the windsail on account of the draught?—I have known that to be done.

873. Did you have a cold on board?—Yes.

874. Did it all go?—I have still got it.

875. Most of the officers had colds?—I should think a majority of them had.

876. Do you remember that fish business when the men came on deck?—Yes.

877. Do you remember two Australians there?—Yes; they brought some fish up.

878. Were you with me in your quarters when I went to inspect them next day?—Yes.

879. Do you remember the Australians apologizing to me?—Yes; they said they were sorry for what they had done.

880. You say that on two mornings the men had to wait for water?—Yes, on two mornings.

881. Did we have to wait sometimes?—Not on that occasion; but one day we had to go without it, and next day without tea for breakfast, but that was another matter.

882. Do you remember we were inconvenienced in the same sort of way?—Yes.

883. About sports and that sort of thing: I asked you if you would take that in hand shortly after we left Durban?—Yes; and we organized sports.

884. On how many occasions were there sports?—On five days; and we would have had more sports, but, if you recollect, latterly there were so few men turned up to see the sports that it was not worth while going on with them.

885. They had the whole of our deck for their sports?—Yes.

886. They did not take the trouble to come up?—Only about fifty the last day of the tugs-of-war.

887. You said you had a few in excess of the Yeomanry scale?—Yes; about eighteen.

888. And that included all the men in your regiment?—Yes.

889. Then, you had always a certain number of men on duty?—Yes.

890. On alternate days you had a guard?—Yes; I think its strength was forty.

891. Then, you never could have had at any time down below more men than the Yeomanry regulations allowed?—No; we had less always.

892. *Mr. Millar.*] In your own regiment you had eighteen men too many?—In excess of the Yeomanry regulations.



893. Did that include the Tenth draft?—They were with Colonel Chaytor in the forward troop-decks.

894. So you had eighteen of your men beyond the Yeomanry regulations?—Yes.

895. Out of a total strength of how many?—480, I think, and the Australians would make it 500.

896. When you said you had eighteen men above the Yeomanry scale it was men of your own regiment alone before you took in the Australians?—Yes.

897. Then, you had eighteen men of your own as well as twenty-one Australians in excess?—Yes; but on no occasion was the whole regiment down below at once.

SATURDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper GEORGE STEWART sworn and examined. (No. 62.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—George Stewart.
2. You were a member of one of the contingents?—Yes; the Eighth Contingent.
3. What squadron?—A squadron.
4. What rank?—Trooper.
5. What is your age?—Twenty-seven.
6. What occupation did you follow before you went away with the contingent?—I was second officer on the "Wakatu."
7. You have volunteered to give evidence, I understand?—Yes, sir.
8. Were you in any other contingent before this one?—No.
9. You know the scope of our inquiry—to inquire into alleged grievances, and want of accommodation, and lack of discipline, and so on, on board the ship: will you make any statement you would like to make?—Well, all I can say is that coming home in the "Britannic" we were all right—that is, the Eighth Contingent was all right—until the Tenth details and the Auckland lot got with us. They started barracking on board the boat about the food, and that. The food would be tainted on some days, but if you took it back to the galley you could always get it renewed. The orderly officer came round every day, and he would see if the meat was bad or tainted, and he would make you go up to the galley and change it. You could always get it renewed. There was plenty of butter, jam, bread—whatever you wanted to get—pickles, or anything. I can only say we were well fed. I have been on board the Union boats, and I have seen worse tucker given than what we were getting in the "Britannic." As for the sleeping-accommodation, I think there was ample room; I know there was for A and B squadrons. There was always one or two hooks to spare for the hammocks. We had fine weather all the way across, and it was far better to sleep on deck than down below. I do not think the officers could have treated us any better than what they did.
10. Have you anything to say about the washing-accommodation?—We had a bath there from the starboard rail to the midship house, about 8 ft. by 4 ft. The bath was filled up all day long with water—the hose ran into it all day long. You could be in all day long if you liked. There were lavatories there, and you could go in and wash yourself if you did not like to go into the bath.
11. Before you became second officer did you live with the men on steamers?—Yes; living with men for about twelve years, both on the coast and deep water.
12. How does the food on board the "Britannic" compare with what the men had on the "Wakatu"?—Of course, the "Wakatu" is away from the Union Company, and there is a providore who gets so-much for finding her; but, as to the Union boats, I have been in them eleven years, and in the fore-castle I have seen worse tucker than what came down to our deck in the "Britannic." You had your boiled meat, spuds, soup, and peas—if you did not have peas you had carrots or turnips. There was plenty of jam, fresh butter, pickles, and bread.
13. Plenty of bread?—Any amount of bread; we had a loaf a man a day.
14. You consider that the ration supplied to the men on board the "Britannic" was fully equal to that, or nearly to that, supplied to the sailors on board ship?—Yes, and better. I wish I had got it every time I was in a boat at sea.
15. Which deck were you on?—No. 5 hold, lower deck.
16. How did the ventilation where you were with the A squadron compare with the ventilation in the ordinary fore-castle: was it hotter and closer?—It was a lot cooler. There is only a ventilator on a fore-castle-head.
17. Generally, you think the air in the lower deck was as good on board the "Britannic" as it is in the ordinary fore-castle of a ship?—Far better, and not so muggy, because there were the skylights, and you could lift your skylights off all the time. They were 8 ft. skylights, and they had a windsail coming right down the hold. You could guide the windsail fore or aft.
18. It had a movable end?—Yes, sir, you could shift it where you liked. There was always a terrible draught under them.
19. Were the skylights generally kept open or closed?—Always open, except when there was a bit of spray and too much wind.
20. Generally speaking, do you consider that the ventilation—that the air down below—was as good as that in the sailors' quarters on board ship?—Yes, and far better. I have slept in fore-castles where you could hardly breathe. Most of the Union Company's fore-castles are the same.
21. Do I understand there were skylights in addition to the hatchway?—Yes, sir; skylights on both sides. We used to get all our stores up through the skylights.
22. And they were ordinarily open, top and bottom?—Yes; through all the decks.

23. You say that A squadron was happy until the details came?—Yes; we were all right until the details came along—these Tenth details. I think they were a lot of boys.

24. When did they come amongst you?—A lot of them came amongst us at Klerksdorp.

25. Do you mean to say that the grumbling began at Klerksdorp?—There were rows with the men very nearly all the time.

26. Between the Tenth and Eighth?—Yes, sir; if the Eighth had come back by themselves I do not think there would have been a word about anything.

27. Then, directly the Tenth came and joined you at Klerksdorp they promoted dissatisfaction?—They were grumbling, and they caused other men to grumble too.

28. At Klerksdorp?—Yes, sir.

29. What were they grumbling at at Klerksdorp?—Oh, one thing and another; sometimes they would reckon they were not getting enough to eat, and the tea was not right.

30. Were there details of the Tenth in your deck on board the ship?—Yes, some of them.

31. Then, you think they were the people who caused the dissatisfaction on board?—I do not think any of the Wellington men grumbled.

32. You spoke about their grumbling at the tea at Klerksdorp: do you consider the tea on board the “Britannic” was as good as it ought to have been?—I think so.

33. You think it was as good tea as ordinarily given on board ship?—Yes; we had milk in it, which we never get on a Union boat.

34. It has been urged that the tea was pretty well always greasy?—That was the men’s own fault if it was. I know at our table it was never greasy. We would get our soup in a tin at dinner-time. If I was orderly I would fetch the soup down in a tea-can. If they did not wash the can out the tea would be bound to be greasy.

35. You think the tea when it came from the galley was clean?—Yes, when it came from the galley. It was the men’s own fault if it was not.

36. You think if there was any grease in it it came through the carelessness of the orderly men?—Yes, from the can. You could get as much hot water as ever you liked to carry away.

37. All day?—Yes, all day. It was just outside the galley.

38. Could men have taken any of that water to wash their hands in if they liked?—Yes; the cooks used it and it was there all day long. They would not say a word about it if you went twenty times a day and got water out of it.

39. The washing-accommodation—the lavatories: how did they compare with the washing-accommodation provided for sailors on boats?—They were just the same on the “Britannic” as those provided for the fore cabin on any other boat. There were four or five dishes and taps. Of course, two hundred men could not all get in at once, but they could all have a wash if they did not like to have a bath.

40. Do you think it was possible for the men to get a wash if they took the trouble to go for it?—Oh, certainly, any man at all could go in and get a wash.

41. You are sure that a man could get a wash before inspection if he wished to do so?—Yes, long before inspection.

42. *Mr. McNab.*] Do you remember what the Auckland squadrons were?—I think it was B, C, and D. They were living in No. 4 hold.

43. They were living in the bottom hold?—No; in the same hold as what we were living, only in a different part of the ship, along the main ’tween decks, and in No. 4 hold. We were living right under the stern, in No. 5 hold.

44. Was it the case that the hatchway leading to the lowest hold of all was ever covered over at night by men on the upper ’tween decks who wanted to sleep on the top of the hatchway?—No; because the lower hold of all was only for hammocks—where we used to put our hammocks of mornings.

45. I am speaking of the lower deck?—No; it was never like that.

46. If any one says that, either in evidence or outside, would you emphatically contradict it?—Yes; in our hold I can say there was plenty of ventilation all the time right through.

47. Were there many men from your hold who went into the hospital?—I think there were five or six out of A squadron.

48. Were there any from your hold who died in the hospital, or since?—Yes; there has been two, I think.

49. Did they die ashore or on the “Britannic”?—They died on Somes Island. I am not sure whether it is one or two we lost in our lot.

Dr. HENRY POLLEN sworn and examined. (No. 63.)

50. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name?—Henry Pollen.

51. What is your status in the profession?—I am M.D. of Dublin University.

52. What is your official position?—Port Health Officer.

53. I suppose the best way will be for me to ask you questions, or would you like to volunteer a statement?—I have here a report I made to the Chief Health Officer, which I shall read. It is dated 5th August, 1902: “The Chief Health Officer, —*Re* inspection of troopship ‘Britannic’: I have to report that on Friday, the 1st instant, I went off to the troopship ‘Britannic’ leaving wharf at 8.40 a.m. I took off with me at the same time Mr. Willis, Mr. Schauer and his assistants, Customhouse officers, Lieut.-Colonel Newall and his staff officer, and a squad of Permanent Artillerymen; the latter were put on board by Colonel Newall to collect blankets, &c., and to assist Inspector Schauer in the work of disinfecting. On arrival at the troopship I was met by Surgeon-Major Pearless, P.M.O., who told me there was a considerable amount of sickness on board, and showed me a list of some forty-five cases, mainly pneumonia and measles. I was informed there was nothing of a serious nature: however, I immediately stopped any one going on

board from the launch except Lieut-Colonel Newall and his officer, who stated they would take the risk of quarantine, and whom Colonel Davies told me wanted to come on board on urgent departmental business. I then sent the launch back for Dr. Valintine. In the meantime I inspected the crew carefully, and found they were all healthy and well and showed no signs of illness, except one A.B. This man was in his bunk, isolated in the forepart of the ship, and was suffering from measles. On Dr. Valintine's arrival at the ship we consulted, and Dr. Valintine decided that, as practically all the soldiers on board were contacts, very little could be done, except to send the measles cases to Somes Island, and the pneumonia and other cases to Hospital. Dr. Valintine accordingly sent word on shore to have twelve beds ready in the Hospital, and instructions to be sent to the Defence Department to have arrangements made for a medical man to take charge of the Somes Island invalids. He also, I understand, sent instructions to have all necessary accommodation at Somes Island. I then inspected the soldiers, who were ordered to parade in companies on each side of the ship. Dr. Valintine inspected the companies on one side and I inspected them on the other. On my side I stopped some sixteen men who had not reported themselves sick, but who were evidently so; I ordered these to parade later on, with the result that seven of them were sent to the ship's hospital as measles cases. In company then with the regimental medical officers, Dr. Valintine and I inspected the ship's hospital and drafted off the cases to the Wellington Hospital and Somes Island. The ship's hospital was overcrowded, the ventilation was bad, the hospital floor was very dirty, and instead of there being no serious cases as the P.M.O. had led me to believe when I first came on board the ship, I noticed several very serious cases indeed. As the boat from Sydney was waiting in the stream to be inspected, I left the 'Britannic' at 2.15 p.m., Dr. Valintine remaining on board to make further arrangements. The 'Britannic' was berthed at the Queen's Wharf at 5 p.m. I would like to report that on the arrival of the ship, in accordance with a memo. I received from the Department, dated the 28th July, I informed the captain that all blankets used by the troopers had to be thoroughly disinfected or burnt. The next day the captain told me that this order had been countermanded by the Department, but as the blankets had been moved from the ship into the 'Duco' and put back again, and as I had given the order in the first instance (at the captain's request), I signed a certificate to that effect, having agreed with the captain that the Department should be liable for any possible shortage in restoring blankets back to the ship. On Saturday, the 2nd instant, at Dr. Valintine's request, I acted for him and attended at the 'Britannic' at 9 a.m. to superintend the removal of patients to the Hospital and at Somes Island. The patients were removed with every care and attention possible, though there were no hospital orderlies available. I would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Surgeon-Captain Eccles while I was inspecting the troopers, and also to express my opinion that I do not think those in authority on board realised the serious nature of some of the sickness in the ship's hospital. This, at any rate, was the impression conveyed to my mind. It may be, of course, the object was to make light of the sickness, so as to avoid possible quarantine.—HY. POLLEN, M.D., Port Health Officer." This is the report I got from the captain of the ship. (Exhibit C.). There was some question about the discipline on board the ship. I should like to say that every assistance was given to me by the officers of the ship, and regimental officers, and that I thought the discipline very good indeed. The men all paraded, and there was no barracking, as in some other troopships I have inspected. In fact, I was very pleased with the discipline on the ship.

54. Who is Dr. Valintine?—Dr. Valintine is the District Health Officer.

55. You say "The ship's hospital was overcrowded, the ventilation was bad." Who is to blame for the hospital being overcrowded—could it have been avoided, do you think?—Well there was plenty of room in the other parts of the ship—in the officers' quarters, the saloon. Of course it is impossible for me to say what could have been done, but there was no question about the hospital being overcrowded. A tarpaulin divided the hospital from the rest of the ship. It was only nominally isolated from the rest of the ship. It was evidently a temporary arrangement made. It is only right to say that measles cases were dropping down every hour. Even the morning we were there there were eight, ten, or fifteen cases reported, so that evidently the accommodation had to be made rapidly for them.

56. Do you know how long the hospital had been overcrowded?—No. There were four or five men lying on the floor. They had no beds for them. They had evidently been there that day or perhaps the previous day.

57. You say something about the officers' quarters?—There seemed to be ample room there.

58. Unoccupied room?—There were large cabins.

59. Were they in the occupation of officers, or could they have been availed of for hospital accommodation?—Oh yes, the officers were in them.

60. "The ventilation was bad." Could the ventilation have been improved do you think?—I should say it could have been improved. When I saw it, of course, the ship was still, and not moving at the time.

61. Were there means to have improved ventilation?—Well, I really do not know enough about the ship to say.

62. You are simply stating that the atmosphere was bad?—It was simply stifling. I was very glad to get on deck.

63. You would not say it was caused by neglect?—I would not like to say. I was only on the ship about six hours altogether.

64. "The hospital floor was very dirty." Was that old dirt? Or do you imagine that it showed neglect of the hospital, or was it incidental to the disembarkation of the troops, and the disintegration of discipline on that occasion?—Of course there are so many degrees in these things. It struck me that if there had been so many orderlies about the hospital it should have been better. The spitting-cups were full, and evidently had not been emptied for a considerable time. If they

had had hospital sisters and orderlies it would have been in better condition. But whether it was possible to do it under the circumstances I cannot say.

65. "Instead of there being no serious cases, as the Principal Medical Officer had led me to believe when I first came on board the ship, I noticed several very serious cases indeed." What was the nature of those cases?—Cases of pneumonia, and severe cases of measles with lung symptoms, evidently going on to pneumonia. The impression conveyed to my mind was that all hands wanted to get free, and did not want to be quarantined, and it struck me that they did not realise how serious the illness was. When I went on board and heard of measles being on the ship, I suggested the possibility of quarantine to Colonel Davies and the Principal Medical Officer, and the idea I got was that they did not think it was serious enough for me to quarantine the ship—that was my impression. They stated they landed cases at Melbourne, and there was no question of quarantine there, and they pooch-pooched the idea of quarantining for measles. Their opinion did not affect the result. Dr. Valentine and I decided to break the ship up. The atmosphere of the hospital seemed a mass of poison, and the sooner the ship was broken up the better.

66. What do you mean by the expression "instead of there being no serious cases, as the Principal Medical Officer had led me to believe when I first came on board the ship, I noticed several very serious cases indeed." What do you wish to convey by that sentence?—The first impression conveyed to me when I went on board the ship was that they were only mild measles cases in the hospital. I may have misunderstood him. I thought they were only cases of measles, and I was surprised to find the serious nature of the cases in the hospital.

67. Might it not have been in his mind that pneumonia was not a question of quarantine, and therefore he would not report them to you. That is quite true.

68. You say it was reeking poison down below?—Well, yes; the atmosphere in the hospital seemed to me foul and bad. In the light of subsequent events I feel sure that the hospital was in an unsanitary condition. The deaths that resulted were from a form of poison-pneumonia. The hospital was in such a state that the sooner it was shut up the better.

69. Was this avoidable? Who was to blame for the poisonous condition below?—I think they wanted more space. I do not know whether it was unavoidable or not. The space in the hospital was too small. Everything ought to have been sacrificed, to my mind, to the health of the troops, when a dangerous epidemic was threatened. If there was space anywhere it ought to have been got at any cost. These lung cases wanted fresh air, even if they had to turn the captain out of his room.

70. How do you imagine this poisonous atmosphere first came? What was the reason of it?—Of course, measles is a mild disease, taken by itself; but in a crowded ship, where the atmosphere is done up, it becomes more serious, and often a deadly disease. The air gets gradually poisoned, and a form of pneumonia supervenes.

71. I am anxious to obtain evidence whether it was possible to avoid the spread of measles through the "Britannic"?—I think it would have been almost impossible, unless they had plenty of space, and isolation.

72. But in a crowded ship you would not feel it was your duty to say that there had been lack of reasonable precautions on board, either by the medical staff or the military staff?—They must have understood the danger of measles breaking out, and if they tried to check it by isolating the first cases carefully, that is all, to my mind, that could have been done. Once it got a hold I do not think any precautions would have stopped it spreading.

73. Suppose there had been several cases infected on shore prior to embarkation, do you think that isolation was practicable on board the ship?—In a few cases on board ship I think it ought to be.

74. Then, you think there was not reasonable precaution taken to isolate the cases?—I do not know what course was taken, sir.

75. Have you ever studied the Transport Regulations?—No, sir.

76. They do not come under your observation?—No.

77. Should you imagine that the Transport Regulations have been drafted or approved by the military medical authorities in England?—I should think they had, as they are so accustomed to the work.

78. Do you imagine that if the ordinary Transport Regulations are not exceeded that the space provided for the men would be so insufficient as to be likely to produce an outbreak of sickness? With the experience of the authorities at Home, do you think it is likely they would put men on board ship improperly?—I do not know, sir. I can only say that in the crew's quarters there was only one case of sickness. There seemed ample space, and there was practically no sickness; whereas on the other side where the soldiers were, they seemed very much crowded, and there was a great deal of sickness. In a crew of 157 there was only one case of sickness where the space was evenly distributed.

79. Did you go below on the troop-decks?—Yes, I went all over the ship.

80. What was the condition of the decks?—There was a good deal of confusion when I was there; they were getting ready to go on shore.

81. I mean as regards ordinary cleanliness?—It did not strike me as being anything more than one could expect—no better and no worse. She was a low ship—the 'tween-decks were low. The whole atmosphere below was not good.

82. When you went on board the first morning were the hospital orderlies about?—There were not so many there as I should have imagined.

83. You do not know how many were there?—I do not know. It was very hard to get in between the beds—the hospital was really packed.

84. You do not know when the rush of patients took place?—I can imagine that it had taken place very shortly. They were dropping down the day I was there.

85. Was any blame attached to the medical officers for not sending these men to the hospital?—The men themselves were holding back. They did not want to go to the hospital.

86. You think that in the discovery of the disease the medical officers were not to blame?—I should think not. You cannot say it is measles until the rash comes out. These men did not report themselves sick. There are four days of cold before measles come out.

87. Supposing a man complains that he has got influenza on board a troopship?—The medical officer should suspect measles at once if there were other cases on board.

88. How should the doctor look for the measles?—He should examine suspected cases daily, and look out for the eruption, and order them down to bed.

89. Were you present at the disembarkation of the patients?—I was; yes. I was acting for the Department.

90. Take those who went to Somes Island, how were they placed on board the tug?—They were carried. The orderlies had all left and we had some difficulty in getting assistance. There was a very narrow exit from the hospital, and it was almost impossible to use a stretcher, so that they had to be carried on a man's back.

91. Were the medical officers of the "Britannic" in evidence?—Surgeon-Major Fearless was there, and another officer, Dr. Purdy, and myself. I saw each man on board the ship.

92. Are you satisfied they were taken on board the tug as comfortably as circumstances would allow?—I am quite satisfied they were.

93. There was no neglect?—I am quite satisfied there was no neglect or ill treatment. They were transported with every care and attention possible.

94. Were they kept below?—The bad ones were sent down below, and the others were kept under shelter on the deck. I do not know what happened after the tug left the ship.

95. Were they sufficiently clothed?—They had blankets. I saw each man on board.

96. You are quite sure they were put on board with all the comfort and conveniences which the circumstances would allow?—Yes. It would have been better if they could have been carried in stretchers, but it was not possible.

97. Do you think any injury came to any of the patients through not being in a stretcher?—I should not think so, sir.

98. Was there any medical staff on board the tug to look after them?—Yes, Dr. Purdy, and three or four trained nurses.

99. Female nurses?—Yes; I had got them for the Department that morning.

100. You are satisfied that they attended to their business?—They were all trained nurses, I knew them personally.

101. Were there any orderlies—anybody to help the men?—No hospital orderlies were available at all next morning. The ship's men, I think, helped.

102. Were there any men on board the tug to accompany them to Somes Island?—I do not think so—there might have been some Permanent Artillerymen.

103. Those who could not be placed below: do you think they suffered in health by being left on deck?—I think not; it was a mild morning, and they were under shelter.

104. Is it dangerous to expose pneumonia patients to fresh air?—Yes, it is dangerous to expose them to unduly cold air.

105. Do you think any deaths are likely to have resulted consequent on the passage from the "Britannic" to Somes Island?—I would not like to say positively, but I do not think so. There were some very bad cases on board, and, of course, the exposure on the tug was not good for them, if it could have been helped.

106. Why were they not sent to the Hospital?—They could not take them at the Hospital. We sent twelve cases to the Hospital, I think—over our limit. We had arranged for space beforehand. They had no room for infectious cases in the Hospital.

107. Are they allowed to take in infectious cases?—Yes, but they had no room.

108. Was it even possible to have placed these men in a private hospital, or anywhere to have avoided sending them to Somes Island?—Once they had to be moved, it did not matter whether it was to a private hospital—they were just as much exposed one way or the other.

109. You consider that sending them to Somes Island was no more injurious or dangerous than any other method of moving them from the "Britannic"?—No, I do not, sir.

110. Would you say you think the discipline, as far as you could see, on board the ship was better than any you have seen?—I have inspected all the troopships that have come back. There was no barracking, the men were well behaved; they filed up, and they obeyed their officers promptly—it was striking to my mind, between the discipline on board the ship and that on board the others.

111. You say the ship was dirty?—She was a dirty ship, and that was the impression conveyed to me.

112. Do you think the dirtiness of the ship in any way contributed to the spread of disease?—Dirt does help to spread disease and insanitary conditions, particularly this form of pneumonia. We have had experience of it. Of course, I cannot speak as an expert of what a transport ought to be, but she struck me as being low between decks and stuffy. I cannot say that I saw any dirt more than one would expect, with men spitting about the deck and the crowding. I cannot call to my mind any particular instance of dirt.

113. Are you under the impression that the hospital orderlies had not been in hand?—Well, the impression I got was that they took very little interest in their work and left the men.

114. You think the last night the hospital was practically without orderlies?—I do not know of my own knowledge that it was; I was told it was.

115. *Mr. McNab.*] I judge from your evidence that you regard cleanliness and roominess as important factors in the treatment of pneumonia and measles cases?—Oh, most decidedly.

116. And these would also be important factors in determining the health of large bodies of troops taking long passages if they can be maintained?—They are the first principles—it is the first thing to see to.

117. So that the more you can secure that desirable result the better condition you may expect the men to land in at the end of the voyage?—Quite so.

118. Did you notice whether, with the larger amount of room at their disposal on board the "Britannic," the officers arrived in better physical condition than the men?—Speaking generally I think the men on board the "Britannic" looked sickly and weedy. The officers looked all right; there was no sickness amongst them, nor amongst the crew. But the men gave me the impression of being a sickly lot.

119. Without referring to the limits and the possibility of its being done, the more the Transport Regulations provide for room the better for the men?—Men who are not accustomed to be crowded together cannot have too much room.

120. Does not that suggest that where you are dealing with Volunteers, such as these were, who have not been accustomed to the crowded barrack life of the soldier-army, that the roominess of his transport is a matter which should receive every consideration?—I do, most undoubtedly. My private impression is that these irregular troops suffer from being huddled together, as they have not been accustomed to it.

121. As members of the Commission, would we, in your opinion, be following the right lines in looking upon that as one of the lessons we have learned from the South African war—the extra room required by the irregulars as opposed to the strictly trained and disciplined Imperial soldier?—I think that follows as a matter of common-sense, as these irregulars have not been accustomed to being crowded together, and they have not been trained.

122. How high were the 'tween-decks?—I have no idea.

123. If the evidence proves that they were very low?—I should say about 6 ft. or 7 ft.

124. If these 'tween-decks had been 8 ft. 6 in. in place of 6 ft. 6 in. would not that have been an important factor so far as the health of the men was concerned who were so crowded together?—Oh, most decidedly; they would have so much more extra cubic space without interfering with the deck-room.

125. Then, in regulating and controlling the health of the men through the voyage, apart from the great number of men there, the low decks was an element that the medical staff had to cope with?—Certainly; most decidedly. I could not say that the medical staff with the material at hand did not do all they possibly could. I have no evidence to show that they did not.

126. In a return that the Health Department gave us they state that the cause of death was "septic pneumonia." Will you explain in popular language the difference between septic pneumonia and pneumonia simply; or is there any difference?—There is a difference. There are several names. What this man died of was bronchial pneumonia—extension of inflammation to the small capillary tubes, bronchial tubes. That form is almost a distinct form, which is of rather a dangerous nature, and it is caused by overcrowding. It is different from other pneumonia.

127. Did that indicate a form of pneumonia that is intimately associated with overcrowding?—With overcrowding, yes.

128. With ample room and bright clean surroundings, would it have been possible for septic pneumonia to have existed?—According to the quantity of fresh air and cleanliness, of course, you would have reduced it down to a minimum. The more crowded, the more danger there is. Of course overcrowding is not the only cause of this septic pneumonia. They might, after measles, expose themselves to the cold, and the cold might bring on this form of pneumonia.

129. After measles exposure to cold?—Say a man came off the ship with measles on him and got out too much in the cold he might develop this illness.

130. If a man who went away from the vessel into town and afterwards died of pneumonia, that might be the result of his own carelessness?—The original poison was got on the vessel.

131. Do you know of your own knowledge whether any of those who died from septic pneumonia had taken the pneumonia after they had taken the measles?—The only case I personally attended died of pneumonia following measles.

132. Then, from what you have said previously, am I to understand that that man's septic pneumonia might not have been due to overcrowding at all. What would you say is your opinion?—My opinion in this special case was that this man got the disease on board the ship—that it was due to poison that he had obtained on board. There was no evidence of the man having exposed himself afterwards.

133. And I suppose, apart altogether from getting in such a low condition that death resulted from pneumonia, the same causes would operate to reduce the systems of everybody on board the steamer?—It would make them all the more liable. Another twelve hours in that ship would have produced another fifty cases—that is, speaking very roughly.

134. Do you think it would have been better if, when the men were shifted from the steamer, the medical officers who had been with the cases throughout had been retained to look after the cases?—There were not so very many cases. Of course, there would have been no harm having more doctors. There was a doctor in charge of thirty-five cases with nothing else to do.

135. You do not think it would have been an improvement by having continuous treatment under the same medical man?—I do not think that made much difference.

136. Why did you send any cases to the Wellington Hospital and not take them all in bulk to Somes Island, was there any reason?—We wanted to get the measles cases separated from the other cases, if possible, and these were cases of rheumatism and debility, and some were convalescent from typhoid. One case of measles was sent to the Hospital, which went rather by accident, as the rash developed the morning after he went.

137. If there had been hospital accommodation ashore, and you had had the option of ordering the patients from the ship to the hospital accommodation ashore, or to Somes Island, which would

you have selected them to be sent to?—I would have sent them to the shore, to the nearest place.

138. You did not attend the patients; it was another doctor that attended the patients?—Dr. Purdy was in charge of the patients at Somes Island.

139. *Mr. Millar.*] I see by that report, doctor, that it was about 8 o'clock when you went on board?—Yes.

140. You said under cross-examination just now that the whole atmosphere was bad: that would be before 9 o'clock in the morning, I presume?—I did not go below for about an hour after I got on board.

141. That would be after?—It would be half-past 10 before I got down below.

142. From the time the men got up until that time, there would have been a fair opportunity for some pure air to have got down there?—I should think there ought to have been. But I do not know how they ventilate ships.

143. Judging by what you found yourself at that hour in the morning, what would you imagine the place would have been like when the men were sleeping down there?—I should think it would have been much worse.

144. Would you consider it the duty of the medical staff on board to take the temperature of the hold when there is a number of men like that on board?—I think it would be a precaution. Of course, it would be only right to know what the temperature was the men were in. That is the only certain way of knowing, by the thermometer.

145. You consider it was the duty of some person on board the ship to have taken the temperatures?—Well, speaking roughly, it would come within the duties of the medical officers if there were any temperatures of over 105, or 106, or freezing temperature—there should be some way of judging them. It would be part of the ordinary common-sense treatment of the ship.

146. Then, if the temperature had never been taken during the whole trip you think there must have been neglect?—I would not go so far as saying that. They may have been satisfied with their own observations that it was neither too hot nor too cold.

147. Do you think it would be at all likely that with five hundred men sleeping on the troop-decks that the temperature could be very cold?—I should think it would be pretty warm with five hundred men sleeping down there.

148. What do you consider a fair amount of cubic space for an ordinary person to live in, without any luxury, to keep himself absolutely healthy?—I think they ought to have 10 ft. by 10 ft. by 10 ft. I do not know whether they ever could have that on board ship.

149. There is a difference between that and 52 ft. 52 ft. is the maximum allowed by the Transport Regulations. Do you think that is sufficient for troops such as the men on the "Britannic"?—I think it is very small. I do not think it would be sufficient to live in. I would not like to say more.

150. You have already expressed your opinion that it was too small for irregular troops?—Yes; I think exception ought to be made for them.

151. You went into the crew's quarters?—Yes; they were all right.

152. Did the crew's quarters appear cleaner than the troop-deck?—The contrast was striking. I noticed it on account of the little sickness of the crew in comparison with the soldiers.

153. I think you said, in your opinion as a medical man, under the conditions ruling on board that ship, that if a man came to you with a cold that you would suspect measles?—Oh, yes; I think so, if measles were about. I would take his temperature for a day or two; and if the rash did not come out on the fourth day, then, of course, you would exclude measles. He may not have a rise in temperature, but you would begin to look out for measles.

154. If it has been stated in evidence that men have gone with colds, and they have never been examined, but have laid in their hammocks for two or three days without being examined, would you consider that the medical staff were doing their duty?—They might probably have overlooked some cases of measles on board. I think with measles on board that medical men would regard men with catarrh as suspicious cases. I think they would all admit that.

155. How many deaths took place in the Hospital, do you know?—I cannot speak of my own knowledge, but I think there were two deaths at the Hospital.

156. I think you said that two patients were sent to the Hospital?—Ten, I think. I tried to get twelve beds. I rang up the matron, and we asked for twelve beds, and were promised eight.

157. Were any of those suffering with pneumonia?—I cannot say.

158. Can you give us any information as to the cause of the large amount of mortality on Somes Island, as against those patients in the Hospital?—Yes, they did not send measles cases to the Hospital; and we did not, as far as we know, send cases of pneumonia. The mortality was from disease which was secondary to measles.

159. I think you said it would have been better had you been able to prevent exposure?—The cases were pretty serious in the Hospital, and the quicker we got them into comfortable beds the better. The less exposure they got the better.

160. I think you said it was impossible to send any more cases to the Hospital than you did send?—We sent more than we ought to have. We got into a row over it. They had no room. We struck the Hospital at a very crowded time. There was no accommodation for infectious diseases at all either in the Plague Hospital or the Wellington Hospital. All the beds were filled, so we had to fall back on Somes Island; there was no other place to send them.

161. Then I think you said, doctor, that the impression conveyed to your mind on going on board the "Britannic" was that she was the dirtiest ship of the lot: you mean troopships?—Perhaps "dirty" is a big word. She seemed more overcrowded and more stuffy than any of the other ships. It is my impression; I may be wrong.

162. Might that impression not be conveyed to you to a large extent by the lowness of the 'tween-decks?—It is possible.



163. Did the decks look as if they had been attended to?—The upper deck and all the officers' quarters were all right. The troop-decks looked dirty. I did not take special notice of it.

164. It did not strike you that the lower decks were dirty?—They may have been dirty or they may have been clean.

165. You do not know whether the decks had been cleaned up prior to your arrival?—No. There was a good deal of confusion when I was on board.

166. The evidence has gone in the direction of showing that the decks were either clean or washed by 10 o'clock, so, of course, the cleaning could not have taken place when you went on board?—No.

167. You would not, under those circumstances, know whether that was the normal state of the deck or not when you saw it?—I never really took much notice, Mr. Millar. What did impress me was the lack of accommodation in the hospital for the number of sick men. It was crowded.

168. How did the size of the hospital compare with those on the other troopships?—It was different altogether. In the "Orient" it was close to the saloon. They were in separate cabins, and they had plenty of air. In this ship there were three little hospitals; they were all together practically, and gloomy-looking; it would be impossible to describe them almost. There were ladders coming down into them; in fact, it was not a regular hospital at all, just a partly partitioned space between decks.

169. Then, under conditions such as that, would it tend to the recovery of sick men?—Quite the reverse. The sooner that hospital was broken up the better. That is what influenced us in breaking up the ship as soon as possible. We all felt there was not space enough.

170. The conditions the medical men worked under on that ship were not favourable?—They were not favourable.

171. I think you said the orderlies were not to be found?—The next morning they were not there. I do not know what time they left.

172. There were some patients left in the hospital?—Oh, yes; they were all there.

173. After she came alongside the wharf?—They did not leave until the next morning. Dr. Pearless was down there, and we got the ship's men to help us and some of the men's mates.

174. But the orderlies had all left?—Yes.

175. You do not know whether they were dismissed by their officers, or whether they went of their own free will?—No, I do not.

176. *Major Pearless.*] You would naturally expect some confusion and dirt on the day of landing, I suppose?—Yes.

177. You say several cases of measles probably developed while you were there?—Yes.

178. Could the hospital have been perfectly sweet and not overcrowded when these cases were sent down?—They were on the floor, doctor. There were two or three bad cases, and some of them could not hold up their heads.

179. Were most of those men sent down by you and Dr. Valentine that morning?—I sent sixteen cases down to the hospital to remain there; eight of them had measles.

180. Do you think it was possible to make arrangements in that time for patients?—Oh no, there was no room; every bed in the hospital was full, and the swinging cots were occupied that morning.

181. You would not say she was overcrowded before you got down there?—I cannot say what happened the day before.

182. Do you think it fair to compare the sickness between the crew and the troops, when the latter had just come from active service?—You could state the difference: that the crew were not sick and the other men were.

183. I think you said the troops should have been examined every day when the measles were on board?—I did not say that, but I think it.

184. You say there were no hospital orderlies available when the men transhipped. Did you not tell me, before we lifted anchor, that you would take sole charge of the hospital?—I do not remember, but feel sure I did not.

185. Do you know what is the usual date of crisis of pneumonia?—What form of pneumonia?

186. Septic pneumonia?—It varies. In the cases I had there was no crisis at all. It is according to the seriousness of the case. I do not think there is any fixed date.

187. You admit that exposure to cold brings on one form of pneumonia?—I said so.

188. Do you not think that putting the men on board the tug was likely to cause pneumonia?—I do not think so. As I have said, they had to be transported, and they were transported with every care possible. They would have died quicker if they had been left in the ship's hospital.

189. You say that probably if they had been left there another hour there would have been fifty more cases?—I said another day, if they were exposed to the same conditions. They were all huddled together with only a tarpaulin partition between them.

190. Have you heard of any case of septic pneumonia except those sent to *Somes Island*?—Yes; I had one myself privately.

Dr. VALINTINE sworn and examined. (No. 64.)

191. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—Thomas Valentine.

192. What is your official position?—Assistant Chief Health Officer.

193. What is your status in the profession?—I hold the diploma of Public Health of the Royal Colleges, and am also a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London.

194. Did you go on board the "Britannic"?—I did, sir.



195. Do you remember the date?—Yes; on the 1st of August, about 10 o'clock. I should say about an hour after the Port Health Officer went on board.

196. Did you go into the hospital?—I did.

197. What condition did you find the hospital in?—The hospital was not in a clean condition, sir. The floors were dirty, and there was a good deal of expectoration lying about. Of course, it must be understood that male attendants will not look after a hospital like female attendants will, and the demand on the hospital accommodation was extraordinary.

198. Do you imagine that the dirty condition of the hospital was of ancient standing, or was it as clean as any transport coming into port, or was the condition due to relaxation of discipline?—Yes, owing to the latter, I think.

199. Did the hospital have the appearance of being ill or well kept during the voyage?—There was no means of gauging that.

200. Have you inspected other troopships that have arrived?—I have not officially examined any troopships in these waters. I have only examined some of the ordinary passenger-boats that have carried troops.

201. What other ships have you inspected?—The "Karama" was the last ship I examined. She carried about fifty troopers.

202. But transports under the conditions of the "Britannic" you have not previously inspected?—No, sir.

203. You cannot draw a comparison between this ship and the ordinary run of transports?—I can to a certain extent, as regards overcrowding and that sort of thing.

204. And with regard to the hospital accommodation?—I could not.

205. To what do you attribute the outbreak of septic pneumonia on board the steamer?—To the crowding in the hospital.

206. Not to the crowding in the 'tween-decks?—To a less extent, sir, yes.

207. Did you go down to the men's quarters and inspect them?—I did.

208. How did they strike you?—It was impossible to estimate exactly, because all the men were on deck. I saw the troop-deck, but it is impossible for me to pass an opinion on the crowding, except a general one.

209. And as to the cleanliness?—They appeared clean.

210. Was your attention drawn in any way to the condition of the ventilation in the troop-decks?—No.

211. You did not take notice of it?—No; I did not take any special notice of it.

212. You do not know whether it is up to the ordinary ventilation on board ship, more or less?—I could not say, sir.

213. Cases of measles having developed within ten days of departure from Durban, was it possible do you think to isolate those cases, so as to prevent it spreading?—I do not see any other possible means of isolating the cases in so short a time other than what was done.

214. Do you imagine that the measles which broke out before arrival at Albany would have been contracted on shore or on board ship, or could you give me an opinion about that?—They could have been contracted on shore if cases broke out within a fortnight after leaving Durban. Those cases that cropped up subsequently would undoubtedly be contracted on board the ship.

215. You think it was not possible to prevent the spread of disease. Could not the earlier cases have been isolated?—I do not think so, sir. Measles is a very infectious disease, especially under insanitary conditions and conditions of overcrowding.

216. Do you imagine that the condition of crowding on board a transport generally would conduce to rapid spread of measles and pneumonia?—Undoubtedly, when the measles were once introduced.

217. Do you think it would be possible to avoid the spread of pneumonia on board ship?—I should say not under the conditions. The men, as far as I could judge, were overcrowded. I think 80 cubic feet would be allowed per man, and I do not see how it would be possible when an epidemic occurred under such conditions to limit the spread of the outbreak.

218. Do you know accurately what space is allowed?—It is 80 feet, according to Dr. Lane Notter, who is a Surgeon-general in the Army Medical Department.

219. Did you superintend the landing of the patients from the "Britannic"?—No; I had to go to see the Rangitikei County Council on the Saturday. I left the "Britannic" at 5 o'clock on the Friday, and left by the Manawatu train on the following day, so I do not know anything about that. I gave instructions before I left as to their landing.

220. Was the ship alongside the wharf when you left her?—Yes, sir.

221. Were the orderlies on duty then?—I do not know.

222. You were not down in the hospital, then?—I landed from the upper deck. I think I was last in the hospital about half-past three. I had to go over to one of His Majesty's ships, the "Torch," in the harbour, and then I returned to the ship.

223. And were the orderlies on duty during that day?—There were certainly orderlies in the hospital.

224. Were you able to gauge their efficiency or their attention to duty at all?—No; I was not in a position to judge.

225. Was it you who ordered the patients to go from the "Britannic" to Somes Island?—Before I left I sent a letter to Surgeon-Major Pearless, to Dr. Pollen, and Dr. Purdy, who was to take over the charge of the men when they got to Somes Island. I arranged with Dr. Purdy that the worst cases were to be taken to the Hospital in Wellington, and the other cases to Somes Island. When I first got on board I was told there were thirty-seven cases of sickness—twenty-five measles and twelve pneumonia.

226. Twelve pneumonia, secondary to measles?—They were mostly secondary to measles. I sent a messenger on shore asking the Hospital surgeon for twenty beds, and got an answer back to say that he could not accommodate twenty, and that eight was the utmost he could take. I subsequently heard that eleven patients were sent to the Hospital.

227. Could you have obtained accommodation for the patients that went to Somes Island anywhere in Wellington?—I do not know of any place. We have had much trouble to accommodate infectious cases already in Wellington. The Hospital was full, and even the Plague Hospital was full. On that day they had only eleven beds vacant. At the present time I do not know of any other place to put infectious cases. There are infectious cases now being treated outside that should be in hospital.

228. You are sure that it was the only practicable course left to send them to the island?—Yes, absolutely.

229. Do you think any special danger was incurred in transferring them from the "Britannic" to Somes Island?—There should have been no special danger. As I say, sir, I was not there when the men were transported to the island. The worst cases were to be taken to the Hospital and ordinary measles cases should not incur any danger in being transported to the island.

230. And patients with pneumonia?—I was not aware that any pneumonia patients were taken.

231. You do not know what cases were taken?—It just depends on the stage of pneumonia. There were some men there who were obviously too ill to be taken to the island. I would like to make a statement about the reason I did not quarantine the "Britannic." In the first place, after having a look round, I thought it was my duty to empty the ship with all possible dispatch because of the measles on board, and with overcrowding the measles might assume malignant proportions.

232. There was some danger in leaving the men on board?—Yes, sir, I am sure of it. I would do the same to-morrow under the same circumstances. It would have been impossible to accommodate 1,018 men on the island. There is accommodation there, under normal conditions, for 400 at the outside. Another reason was, that it would have been unfair to those men who were seriously ill to have sent them to the island, and the fairest way to treat them was to send them from the wharf to the Hospital. In connection with that, I may say that I want it distinctly understood that I take the entire responsibility for not quarantining the "Britannic." I should certainly do the same to-morrow under similar circumstances.

233. Do you think there was less loss of life by sending the men to Somes Island than there would have been by keeping them on board the "Britannic"?—Well, as far as one can possibly say, I am certain of it. If the men had been kept there, I think, from the light of knowledge gained subsequently, that it would have taken us certainly forty-eight hours to make preparation for those men on Somes Island.

234. Are you able to form any opinion as to the treatment of the cases on board the ship?—No.

235. You have no evidence or any knowledge of that?—No.

236. You did not attend any of the patients on Somes Island?—No.

237. The patients being landed on Somes Island, did your responsibility cease?—Well, of course, I was indirectly responsible. I left the ship at 5 o'clock. I made arrangements with the Defence Department for a doctor to take charge of the sick, and Dr. Purdy was appointed. As far as my actual responsibility was concerned, it ceased when I went down the side of the ship.

238. When were the sick on board the "Britannic" transferred from the Principal Medical Officer on board the "Britannic" to the Health Department, or to any other medical men?—The next morning—on the Saturday morning.

239. The medical officers of the regiments were in charge until Saturday?—Yes, until the men were off the ship.

240. Then, if the orderlies were absent from duty the night the ship lay alongside the wharf, no responsibility rests on the Health Department for that?—No, sir; we never undertake that responsibility.

241. Do you know when Dr. Purdy was put in charge?—Dr. Purdy took charge next morning. He came off to the "Britannic," and he arranged to be there the first thing next morning. On Saturday, before I went up the Manawatu line, I wrote to Dr. Purdy, Dr. Pollen, and Surgeon-Major Fearless about taking over the sick.

242. Have you copies of those letters?—No, I have not copies of those letters, but the gentlemen concerned will remember them. I wrote them before the Manawatu train went, and there was no one at the office to copy the letters.

243. Was a sufficient staff of nurses and hospital assistants placed on Somes Island?—Yes.

244. In the cases of pneumonia which have developed since, was the seed of pneumonia in the patients?—That would be hard to say. I should certainly think that the germs of pneumonia must have been in them. In some cases, it must certainly have been in them.

245. Is there any medical knowledge as to the time it takes to develop pneumonia?—There is no definite incubation period known, as there is for such fevers as measles.

246. Then, is it possible to say at what period pneumonia is contracted?—No.

247. Is septic pneumonia very contagious?—No, not under ordinary conditions of life, but in an atmosphere that had been polluted by organic matter, it would be infectious. The conditions of overcrowding, such as you get in a barrack or transport, with a limited supply of fresh air, it would certainly be infectious, but under ordinary conditions it is not. There was a bad epidemic of pneumonia in Yorkshire. It occurred among the poor people living in small houses. It did not affect the better parts of the town at all.

248. Did that spread rapidly?—Yes. It was at a place called Middlesborough, in Yorkshire.

249. *Mr. McNab.*] I understand you would lay great stress in the transportation of troops in having as much fresh air and room as can possibly be got?—Certainly.

250. And when, in addition, the 'tween decks are only 6 ft. in height, with the same amount of air-space per man but the decks are 8 ft. in height, the ship with the decks 6 ft. in height would be more insanitary than the one with the decks 8 ft. in height?—It just depends on the cubic space, and the position of the ventilators. For instance, a 10 ft. room with a window up to the top of the room would be a much better room for air-space than a room of the same height with a window only half-way up.

251. Then, under the surroundings of crowded vessels and 'tween decks, with their natural difficulty of ventilation, the higher the ceilings the better it would be, would it not?—Yes.

252. If possible one should seek to get as high ceilings as you can get hold of to stow away troops?—Well, of course, there would be a limit to that. The mere fact of the height of the 'tween decks would give better facilities for ventilation.

253. If you were attending to a vessel that was going away with a large body of troops, and you wanted to give instructions to the officer commanding what he was to look out for as likely to arise during the trip, would you not warn him about the diseases and complaints that would likely arise from overcrowding, and suggest pneumonia as being one, in crowded and insanitary quarters?—Well, pneumonia would have occurred to me owing to my recent experiences with these troopships. I remember when the "Tagus" came back, some time ago, I did not go on board her, but I happened to be talking to one of the nursing sisters, and she said that there was pneumonia on the "Tagus," and I said, "I suppose it is infectious pneumonia?" And she said "No, it is not." She would not have it at all.

254. With your recent knowledge of what takes place on board of transports, if you were giving advice to the officer commanding when leaving on the beginning of a voyage, would you naturally mention pneumonia to him?—I should mention pneumonia, certainly.

255. Do you think that men like our own soldiers—irregulars—would be more difficult to deal with in crowded troopships than the strictly-trained British soldier?—Undoubtedly. The men want training to keep clean on board ship as well as everything else.

256. And the regulations regarding the transportation of irregulars should be interpreted as liberally as possible on account of their special conditions?—Yes; certainly.

257. As we are a Commission who are to advise His Excellency, would you think it would be a reasonable suggestion that we should indicate that as one of the lessons which the South African war has taught us?—I think so, certainly.

258. If when the "Britannic" arrived you had had at your disposal hospital accommodation on shore that could have taken all the patients, would you have sent them to that hospital on shore, or would you have sent them to Somes Island?—If I had had accommodation for all the patients on shore I should certainly have sent them to the hospital on shore in preference to sending them to the island.

259. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your opinion of the hospital itself, as to the part of the ship it was in, and its formation: do you think it was a suitable place?—I should say the portion of the ship was suitable, sir. The hospital, of course, was crowded. As far as I remember, taking a very rough estimate, I should say the main hospital was about 30 ft. square and about 7 ft. high. That would give to the number of men there between 200 and 300 cubic feet per man.

260. Was the ventilation good in the hospital?—No.

261. Was it clean when you went in?—No; it was not clean. There was a lot of sputa lying about. The men had expectorated a good deal. My own experience is that male orderlies do not attend to matters like trained nurses. Of course, all these men were amateurs.

262. I think you said when you went on board there were forty-seven cases of sickness?—There were thirty-seven reported—twelve pneumonia and twenty-five measles—when I went up the ship's side. Then, subsequently, I suggested to Colonel Davies that the men should be lined on either side of the ship, and that Dr. Pollen and I should make an inspection. Dr. Pollen took one side and I took the other, with the result that we stopped about twenty more men who were sickening for measles. In connection with that, I do not know whether it is out of place to say that the men did not look the undisciplined crowd that the papers would have us believe. The men stood at "attention" as we went down the lines.

263. And the discipline was good?—Excellent.

264. Did you order the removal of the men to the Hospital?—Yes.

265. How many did you send to the Hospital?—I sent a messenger on shore to ask how much hospital accommodation they could give. I said I wanted at least twenty beds, and the answer I received through our Department from Dr. Ewart was to the effect that only eight beds could be provided. Subsequently they managed to provide for eleven.

266. Do you know what cases were included in those eleven? Were they pneumonia cases or what?—There were some cases that were very bad. I arranged with Dr. Pearlless that the worst cases should be taken to the Hospital.

267. Of pneumonia?—The worst cases irrespective of that, yes. I said that, of course, infectious cases could not be admitted unless sent to a special ward.

268. Can you give me any idea of how many of the eleven sent to the Hospital were suffering from pneumonia?—Roughly, I think about six.

269. Eleven of the worst cases were sent to the Hospital?—Yes, that was my instruction.

270. Can you give any explanation how, out of the eleven of the worst cases which were on board when the ship arrived here, there were only two deaths in the Hospital, whilst there was an exceptionally large mortality on Somes Island?—I heard subsequently that the eleven worst cases were not taken to the Hospital.

271. Although you gave instructions that the eleven cases were to go?—Yes.

272. Have you an opinion yourself what has been the cause of the large mortality on *Somes Island* with the number of patients sent there?—Septic pneumonia.

273. What has been the cause of that?—The condition of overcrowding incidental to a transport—the men are liable to it. The mere fact of breathing polluted air would render them specially liable to the ravages of the disease.

274. In your opinion, if there had been room in the Hospital to send all the cases that were sent to *Somes Island*, would you have had the same mortality. Yes, I think so, because on working out the statistics of those cases of pneumonia treated on shore and those treated on the island, those treated on the island showed less percentage of mortality. I can only roughly give you the figures. So far as I remember, there were thirty-three cases of pneumonia on the island, of which thirteen died. I think this shows a mortality of about 39 per cent. There were eleven cases of pneumonia from the "*Britannic*" treated on shore, and of these five died. The percentage is therefore in favour of *Somes Island*. These are the pneumonia cases alone—five died on shore, treated either in private or in the general Hospital, and one died in the *Auckland Hospital*. (See Exhibit D.)

275. Have you any idea of the surroundings of the deaths which were dealt with privately?—Yes, I have knowledge of one case.

276. And you think the surroundings of that case were as favourable as if he had been in the Hospital?—No. When I saw the man he was in the *White Swan Hotel*. He was in a small room, which was ill-ventilated. His father was practically nursing him, and he would not open the window—that was last Saturday week. I immediately ordered him out of the bedroom, and Dr. Martin attended him. He was removed to a private hospital, where the conditions were certainly equal to the general Hospital as far as general conditions go, and he died, I think, on the following Wednesday.

277. Was it Scott's boarding-house?—No; it was Miss Hutchinson's private hospital, in *Brougham Street*. I think he died about six days after I saw him. He was not very ill when I saw him with Dr. Martin. It was last Saturday week that I visited all those cases of sickness in the town and hunted up all those I could find.

278. In the return we have here there is only one death in the Hospital from pneumonia?—In the Hospital, yes, there may have been only one; but there were five deaths from pneumonia, I think you will find.

279. Do you think that *Somes Island* has the proper accommodation and is a suitable place for dealing with pneumonic cases?—Not altogether; the hospital buildings were erected some forty years ago, and they are not in accordance with all the advanced principles of hygiene; but, at the same time, I am perfectly confident that you would not have found better accommodation in *Wellington*.

280. The Hospital being crowded, you could not have got better accommodation?—No.

281. Do you think that the medical staff on board the "*Britannic*," knowing the hospital accommodation they had on board, and the number of cases they had—do you consider they did their duty satisfactorily during the trip?—Of course, I am not in a position to say, really; it would be impossible for me to estimate that.

282. The condition in which you found the men at the time you went on board the ship: do you consider that every attention had been paid to them, as far you could judge, at that period?—As far as I could judge.

283. I think you said 80 cubic feet were allowed by the regulations?—Yes.

284. Is that the regulation from the Imperial Yeomanry scale?—The book of Lane Notter's refers to the regulations.

285. The Imperial Yeomanry scale is 20 per cent. greater?—Yes.

286. So that the Imperial Yeomanry scale would be about 100 ft. according to that?—Yes, roughly.

287. You were on the troop-deck?—Yes.

288. Would you consider, as far as your judgment will enable you, that the men received 100 cubic feet, or 80 cubic feet?—It is impossible for me to estimate it, because all the men were on the upper deck. There was not a soul on the 'tween decks. I could not even give you the roughest idea.

289. Do you think that deck, from what you saw, was capable of being well ventilated?—Yes; I should think so.

290. By means of windsails?—Yes; windsails and that sort of thing.

291. Were there openings in both ends of the troop-decks?—I could not say.

292. Did you see many places where a windsail could be put down?—No; I did not see that. I took a very cursory glance indeed of the troop-deck.

293. I think you said that pure air and space were things which would do more to prevent pneumonia than anything else?—Quite so.

294. Therefore the reverse would tend to breed pneumonia?—Quite so.

295. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] The hospital was overcrowded when you saw it; but may that not be due to the fact that both you and Dr. Pollen sent in additional cases that morning?—Yes, possibly, sir.

296. It does not follow that it was overcrowded before you saw it?—We sent down some twenty cases I think.

297. That would naturally overcrowd it?—Yes.

298. Do you think, had it been possible to send all the measles cases to the *Wellington Hospital*, that there would have been so many deaths?—Yes, I think so; because I think you will agree with me that measles transported under careful circumstances should not influence the mortality of the disease.

299. How do you account for this fact, that at the Hospital one man out of nine pneumonic cases died, on board ship two died out of eleven, and you admit there were about 40 per cent. died on Somes Island?—Well, the statistics that I have are not exactly in accordance with those numbers.

300. Of course the best arrangements possible were made by you; but does not this rather point to the fact that Somes Island was unfit for these patients?—No; the disease may have assumed a much more malignant type. The longer they were crowded the more likely the disease was to assume a more malignant type.

301. *The Chairman.*] These twenty men you sent down—were they conscious they were ill?—I think so, sir; but they were trying to get through.

302. You think they did not report themselves to their own doctors?—Some of them certainly did not.

303. You think the doctors had no opportunity of examining them—that the men rather kept away from the doctors?—Yes; I expect that was it.

Dr. PURDY sworn and examined. (No. 65.)

304. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—James Robert Purdy, M.B., C.M.

305. How did you come to be connected with the "Britannic" patients?—Well, I happened to be summoned for the Medical Board that morning—she arrived on the 1st August. I was in the office when an urgent message came from Dr. Valintine to ring up the Hospital and arrange for twenty beds at the Wellington Hospital for the serious cases.

306. What is the Medical Board?—The Medical Board is a Board of three medical men who meet in connection with military medical matters. Dr. Valintine sent an urgent message to ring up the Hospital about the serious cases on the "Britannic," and to arrange with the Defence Department to send a medical man over to visit some thirty-odd cases of measles at the island. The man who brought the message was a man who came from the ship, and was not going back. We found, when ringing up the Hospital, that we could only get eight beds, and I volunteered to take the note back, seeing I had to wait in town until the Board met, and that would not be until the "Britannic" came in. The General said through the telephone that they wanted a medical man: could the Department find one, as it would be difficult to get a man at a minute's notice. Mr. Horniman, of the Health Department, said that there was a medical man at the office at the time, and he asked me if I would go to visit them, and I said "Yes," and that is how I came on board the "Britannic."

307. Were you in the hospital on board the ship?—I went all over the ship, sir.

308. Were you in the hospital at all?—Yes; on the Friday in the afternoon.

309. Did you find the hospital overcrowded?—I do not think it was overcrowded, sir, not for a ship's hospital. It was full, but I would not call it overcrowded.

310. Did the orderlies seem attentive to their duties, or were you able to form any impression on that point at all?—As far as I could see, the few orderlies that were about were attentive enough. None of the men made any complaint about want of attention, or that. Everybody was very busy, but I did not see any neglect of duty.

311. Now, as to the cleanliness, how did that strike you?—Well, some of the men were very dirty. I do not think the hospital was very dirty, sir. It was a rather low deck; that was the only objection I had to it. But, seeing that so many men had been tramping backwards and forwards through the hospital that day, I do not think that it was very dirty.

312. Have you had to do with transport hospitals before at all: have you ever inspected them?—I saw those on the "Manila" and "Orient."

313. How did the "Britannic" hospital compare with those?—Not as favourably.

314. In accommodation?—Nothing like as comfortable; there was not the same space. The deck on the "Britannic" did not seem to be more than 7 ft. high at the outside, perhaps not that.

315. Did you take notice of the ventilation?—Yes. On the Friday afternoon I did not notice anything very disagreeable in the hospital, but on the Saturday morning it was not pleasant. There was a reason for that.

316. What was that reason?—Because the hospital orderlies left the ship as soon as she got to the wharf. Sergeant-Major Charters very kindly volunteered, and got half a dozen men, and Dr. Eccles stayed up all night with the men. But I suppose I was there early in the morning, and the place had not been ventilated properly by the time I was there.

317. Was that absence of ventilation consequent upon the steamer being stationary?—I think a great deal had to do with that, as one side of the boat was bang-up alongside the wharf. It was a very cold raw night. That was the only time I noticed the hospital stuffy.

318. Do you think anything was neglected that could have contributed to better ventilation?—I do not think so, sir. I may say that I was responsible for stopping the men coming ashore on the Friday—I mean all the sick men. My orders were that I was to take charge of those for the island; but we did not get to the wharf until 5 o'clock, and it was getting dark and drizzling with rain. It was a very raw cold night, and by the time the men were off the ship it was nearly a quarter to 6. I rang up Popham's to ask why the ambulance was not there, and he said it was just starting. I said, "You had better wait a bit," and I went back to the ship and I saw Dr. Eccles and Colonel Davies, and I said, "I think it is improper that the men should be disembarked to-night; I will not hear of it"; and Dr. Valintine said, "All right," and that he agreed. We arranged that they should stay on board all night. Of course, the orderlies had left as soon as the boat had come to the wharf.

319. Had the orderlies permission to leave the ship?—I cannot tell, sir. I arranged that I should be there the first thing next morning to see that the men were sent off to the Hospital. I was there at twenty minutes past 9.

320. And the following morning at half-past 9, what sort of a day was it?—It was not a bad morning; a fair August morning. I would judge that the temperature would be about 50°.

321. Did you yourself supervise the disembarkation of the men?—Yes. First of all, I helped to see the men sent away to the Hospital, because we recognised we wanted to get them away quickly. I argued that if they could give us eight beds they must give us ten, and then Dr. Fearless insisted that an eleventh man should go. The man was really very ill, and I backed him up. This man did go, and he died that night; but some of the men that went to the Hospital were practically convalescent. One of the men, Sergeant Deighton, who was being sent to the Hospital, was convalescing from enteric, or malaria, and his niece came on board and asked for permission to take him to a private house; and after consultation with the doctors we agreed that it would not be disadvantageous for him to go there, and he went, and that left another vacancy at the Hospital.

322. Would it not have been possible to have arranged any accommodation for them on the mainland?—Absolutely impossible. We tried to do that, but we found it absolutely impossible. We were informed that there were some slight cases of measles on board, and a few bad measles cases; and so Dr. Valentine wanted to take all the bad cases on shore, and leave all the ordinary cases on the island. When we could not get more than eight beds in the Wellington Hospital we tried the Fever Hospital, but that was full, and it was impossible to arrange for any private apartments either, so we had to do the best we could under the circumstances, and we sent over to the island to see that everything was in order.

323. Did you personally superintend the placing of the men on the tug-boat?—Yes, sir. I had three trained nurses with me.

324. Were they in the tug?—Yes, sir.

325. And how were the men got from the hospital to the tug?—Simply carried over the gangway.

326. Was there a noticeable absence of stretchers?—I did not notice any absence of stretchers, because it was impossible to use stretchers. We found it better to carry the sick men. Both Dr. Fearless and myself agreed that it would be better to carry them. The captain of the ship kindly gave me the assistance of four sailors, and we carried all the bad cases very carefully down the gangways, and also over the side of the ship. There were only about ten cases that required carrying.

327. If there was an absence of stretchers, that did not conduce to discomfort in getting the men on board the tug?—We discussed the point on the Saturday morning, and we came to the conclusion that it was better to carry them. We came to this conclusion because we tried to carry the first man on the stretcher he was lying on, but the alley-ways were too narrow. You had to go up a long alley-way, and turn round corners. I think Dr. Fearless suggested it would be very much more comfortable and safer for the men to be carried. After arranging with the captain for the sailors I agreed to this. I was supposed to take charge of the men after they left the ship, so I realised it was my duty to transfer them as carefully as possible.

328. And you are quite satisfied that was done?—I am quite satisfied.

329. Were the men put down below on the tug?—No. They were put on the main deck.

330. Had they blankets?—They had blankets and great-coats. We had a couple of bottles of brandy with us too. I was going to put them below, but when I saw the arrangements that were made I thought it would be better for them to be on the deck. The tug had high, closed bulwarks, and was tarpaulined off, which made a kind of verandah. It was just as good as if they were in a room. All the patients were perfectly warm and comfortable.

331. Do you think they suffered in course of transit from the wharf to the island?—I do not think they did. In fact, if there was any change in their condition it was for the better, as far as I was able to see. They were certainly very much more lively, with the exception of some half-dozen men who were supposed to be dying when I transhipped them. I did not think that I would be able to get two of the men to the island. One man had collapsed, and it was only careful attention and nursing that kept him going. These two men were the first shifted, and one of them recovered; only, unfortunately, Brown (the bad case) ultimately died, after recovering for a time and being kept alive for many days.

332. Have you formed any opinions as to the cause of the outbreak of pneumonia on board the "Britannic"?—I think it was secondary after measles, but I do not know whether there were many cases on board the "Britannic." I should think it was due to the same cause that it is always undoubtedly due to. For instance, the first man who died at Somes Island is a typical case. This man never reported himself sick on the boat; I know this for an absolute fact. He managed to dodge one of the two inspecting officers at the inspection. I saw him at the gangway just as the paymaster was handing him his cheque. I said, "Good heavens, man! you are surely not going ashore." He said, "I'm all right." I said, "Why, you can scarcely speak; you may be dead in two or three days if you don't take care—come and let me look at your throat." I took him back on board. His throat was very swollen, congested, and ulcerated; he had a very bad septic throat. I said, "It is very foolish for you to go ashore—you cannot travel in this state; it is far better for you to come to the island. If anybody has been prejudicing you against it, it is quite wrong. It is a comfortable place." He ultimately saw the sense of it, and agreed to come. On the evening of the 2nd the measles rash came out. About four days is the catarrhal stage of the measles; that is the very infectious stage of the disease, just before the rash comes out. His temperature on admission to the island was 104. Now, that man had undoubtedly been fighting this so as to get ashore. He never reported himself sick; he was walking about amongst his chums.

333. And had been contaminating them?—Undoubtedly. He died on the 7th August. We had several cases like that.

334. Is it your impression that the men were not malingering at all, but were doing the reverse—they were concealing their illness so that they could get ashore?—There was one man

who assured me he had never felt ill, and felt quite well now. I took his temperature: it was 104·6. I said that a man with a temperature like that might just as well stand before the Boers with Mausers at 600 yards, as walk about the way he was doing. There were a lot of men like that who swore there was nothing the matter with them. There was another man with his ear covered up walking about. I found on questioning him there was a slight discharge from it. He had been taken over to the island, and I sent him straight to the hospital and took his temperature. It was 105·6, and, of course, he died. This must have been going on in the ship at least a week before they landed.

335. What is your opinion as to that not having been discovered by the medical men on board?—Well, if a man does not report himself sick on board ship, how can the medical officer know? A medical man cannot go fossicking round when he has a great many cases in the hospital coming into port. If I were a medical man on board ship I could not possibly go round the whole ship. The sailors can hide themselves, and the captain himself would not be able to find them.

336. If these men had at the earliest opportunity reported to the medical men, would that have been a material factor in their chances of recovery?—Undoubtedly, sir. We had a proof of that in the "Orient." I paraded every squadron, and went personally along myself and judged for myself which men were sick and which men were not. The consequence was that we had only two men left on the island. I made every man speak to me. We had over two hundred men under medical treatment the first day, and we sent them all away perfectly well. Of course, they were not measles cases.

337. Do you think that the mortality consequent upon measles and pneumonia was the result of unavoidable causes?—Undoubtedly, sir.

338. You would not attribute blame to any one in particular?—I think that their dirt and uncleanness probably had something to do with it. The underclothing of some of the men was very filthy, and some of the men were filthy in their habits. They would not use the spittoons. I spoke to one man about it; I said, "You might by chance sometimes hit the spittoon." They would not spit in the spittoons at all; even if you brought them a bucket they would not spit in it. I saw, myself, a man on the "Orient" spitting on the deck when he had only a foot to go to spit over the side. The first thing I did when I got on shore was to telephone for new kits and new clothes, and that made a difference in their condition.

339. If it has been alleged that there were great signs of expectoration all over the floor of the hospital on the Saturday morning, that would be attributable to what?—Judging from what I saw on the island, it would be attributable to the men themselves.

340. Were the men in a fit state of health to use the spittoons?—Oh, yes, quite so.

341. You think the great number of the men refused to avail themselves of the conveniences given to them to spit?—I could not come to any other conclusion, for I saw no reason why they should not use the spittoons. If a man was so ill that he could not spit, there was always a nurse handy, and there were rags for him to wipe his mouth with. And if the man was very ill there was always an orderly told off to watch him. They were treated better than they would have been in an ordinary hospital; they had the best of everything they could possibly get.

342. Have you been brought in contact with many returned troopers?—Yes, a great many. I examined a good many of the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth before they went away, and I have seen most of them since they came back. I saw something of the discipline on board the "Britannic," and thought it was excellent, judging from other things I have seen. I mean to say the men obeyed orders—whenever they were told to do a thing they did it.

343. Did you see a condition of discipline when men did not do what they were told?—I saw a condition of things on the island when the "Orient" men were there enough to make my hair grey.

344. Do you think the septic pneumonia was latent in the troops before they embarked?—No, sir, I do not think that.

345. Do you think measles were?—What I think really happened, as far as I have been able to judge from a medical point of view, was that probably there were one or two cases of measles—men who had sickened for measles in Africa—on board; that they were very mild, and probably did report or did not; and that these two men, before it was discovered, probably infected some dozen or fourteen more men, and that those fourteen men in their catarrhal stage probably infected all the men just when they were coming into port—probably sixty or seventy cases.

346. Do you think it was possible to have isolated the disease?—I do not think it is possible to isolate measles, unless the first two men are reported sufficiently early. What makes it such an infectious disease is that the greatest period of infection is in the catarrhal stage—that is, before the rash comes out. He is generally pretty bad for two or three days before the rash comes out; he has a brassy cough, and he has a nasty cold.

347. *Mr. McNab.*] If there were extensive colds throughout the vessel, would that tend to hide the budding measles?—Undoubtedly—I mean to say on a troopship like that. Measles is purely a catarrhal condition. You could not diagnose measles in the catarrhal condition, without the rash coming out, unless you have a measles epidemic on at the time.

348. If, doctor, you had had it in evidence that at the last moment Colonel Davies's column—where measles were unknown—was recruited on board the steamer by details from another contingent where they were known to have had measles, would you suspect them as having introduced the measles?—Very probably. The difficulty about the measles is the infectivity at the catarrhal stage. He might have measles very slightly, but he could infect fifty other men.

349. And the measles and the pneumonia combined would be a very great aggravation of simple pneumonia occurring on the road out?—Secondary pneumonia is probably the deadliest thing known to medical science.



350. What is secondary pneumonia?—Secondary pneumonia is pneumonia following on an illness, such as typhoid, small-pox, scarlet fever, and other illnesses.

351. The dangerous base that was introduced into the vessel was the introduction of the measles?—Undoubtedly.

352. From what you have seen of the men not only on board the "Britannic," but the "Orient" and other transports, what is your opinion of the hygienic discipline of the New-Zealanders?—Well, I must say it pained me excessively to see the dirty habits of the men. I never could credit that it was possible. I had always been under the impression that the New-Zealander was a clean man, and that it was a clean country, but certainly the majority of the men were not clean; and I could not understand it, because you would get, say, twelve men messing together, and perhaps four of them would be clean, and the other eight beastly dirty. It struck me that if four men could keep themselves clean, why could not the other eight men, under similar conditions, keep themselves clean?

353. I suppose, when brought together in large bodies, individual uncleanness enormously exaggerates the cleanliness of the lot?—Undoubtedly. I went all over the "Britannic" when she came round with the Imperial troops, and there were, I believe, more men on board her than at this time, and all the men were as clean as new pins, and the decks were perfectly clean. Everything was sweet and clean about the ship. If they could keep it clean, surely our men could have kept it clean.

354. I suppose it is only by extreme cleanliness on a troopship that disease and death is avoided?—Undoubtedly, personal cleanliness.

355. Do you think it is possible, seeing the men as you did, that the medical officers could get these men to keep themselves clean?—I do not think it was possible. They had not sufficient changes of clothing, and some men were so dirty they would not even brush their clothes, or shake them, or anything. A man could go on parade with a perfectly clean face and be absolutely dirty underneath. Some of the men who came on the island I am quite sure had not washed their feet for a month. I do not mean the sick men—some of the men who had not reported themselves sick at all.

356. *Mr. Millar.*] When you went on board the "Britannic" did the ship appear to be dirty or clean?—She was not as clean as when I saw her the first time she came into port. She was not bad though, considering that it was the day of arrival.

357. What time did you go on first?—I left the wharf at twenty-two minutes past 12. I went on board with Sir Joseph Ward and Mr. McNab. I think it would be about 1 p.m. when we got on board.

358. Then, if the ship had been cleaned up that day she would be cleaned up prior to your going on board?—I should think so.

359. Are you of opinion that the number of men crowded into the "Britannic" had anything to do with the development of pneumonia?—I should think it might be a factor in the case, only for this reason: that the major part of the pneumonia practically did not break out in the "Britannic." The great factor was this: the men disguising the fact that they were ill. One of the strongest men in the contingent did not report himself ill, and went up to Martinborough. He came down again six days after landing, with measles on him, and was taken over to the island, and died there.

360. I think we have evidence that there were eleven cases of pneumonia on board the "Britannic"?—Yes; but that is not an unusual number on board a full ship coming from a climate like that of Africa.

361. Do you think the Eighth Contingent were sufficiently long in Africa for the climate to have any effect on them?—Well, I should think that even if they had only been there a week it would have had an effect on them.

362. Coming right back into a cold climate?—It depends a good deal on the season of the year they left, but climate affects people so differently. The air there is very dry. I am told that almost every man suffers from catarrh as soon as he gets on the ship at sea. It does not matter if he has only been there a month; that is what I learned from the medical officers of the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth. If you get a certain proportion of cases you certainly get a certain proportion of pneumonia.

363. Officers and men would be subject to the same thing?—Yes.

364. How do you account for it that in none of the vessels have any of the officers died from pneumonia, or been attacked?—I suppose, for the same reason as was proved on active service in South Africa—that they take more care of themselves than the men. Most of the officers are cleanly in their habits and have clean clothes. Most of the officers, to my knowledge, bought clean clothing out of their own private means.

365. The hygienic conditions surrounding them had something to do with it—the ventilation, and the amount of space, and everything of that sort?—I should think probably it would help. But the officers have not the dirty habits of the men.

366. I think you said dirty underclothing might help to develop pneumonia?—Yes.

367. Then, if there was no opportunity given to the men to wash their clothes for the whole voyage, thereby compelling them to wear dirty clothes, would that assist the disease?—Yes, sir, it would be a factor. It would contribute towards their dirt.

368. You believe that they only had one change?—I think they had only one change, but am not sure. I was so very busy on the island—working twenty hours a day practically—that I had no time to go minutely into these things. I know that all their clothes were very dirty. We had to destroy most of them, they were not worth fumigating.

369. Would a foul and close atmosphere be a factor in the development of pneumonia?—Undoubtedly.



370. Would you think it necessary that the temperature ought to be taken in the troop-decks where the men are sleeping, and everything?—I should not think so. I do not know what object would be served. If it would serve any object I would take it.

371. How would you ascertain the temperature of the deck that the men slept in: how would you know what state the men were living in?—If you wanted to find out you could take the temperature.

372. Do you consider it was any one's duty to take the temperature?—Well, I have never been on board a transport as a medical officer. All the duties of the medical officers are laid down very clearly, and I do not think that is one of them.

373. As a medical man, would you consider it necessary if you had a large number under your control, and sickness had broken out—would you deem it necessary to take the temperature?—Well, you see, the duties of the medical officers are so peculiar with regiments. He is simply a non-combatant. He has his sick parade, and he can order a man off parade if he sees him ill, and no one can stop him. But he can make himself disagreeable by putting his nose in where he is not wanted, and if he attends to the sick on board ship I should think he was doing his duty. If he got an outbreak of malignant fever, then it would be his duty to isolate the patients as much as possible, and get hold of all the contacts. A doctor working at top under many difficulties cannot be expected to go into minutiae of little moment, and even if of importance, which he could not, under the circumstances, alter.

374. The whole of the evidence goes to show that the temperature was never taken, and the ventilation was defective: who was responsible for that?—I could not answer that, sir.

375. As far as the medical staff are concerned, you consider their duty is to look after the sick alone?—Not exactly; they ought to look after the sanitation of the ship as well. But if you had five hundred men sleeping on a deck in a crowded state it would be folly to say, "They cannot sleep here," unless there was some other place to put them.

376. Would you think it was the duty of a medical man, if there was a large number of men with colds, to look for measles?—No, I do not think I would. Of course, circumstances alter cases. You cannot state what one would do, except under certain circumstances. As a rule, the ordinary trooper comes up before he is ill, and does not wait for you to run after him, and for one man that is really ill you have five that are not.

377. If we had it in evidence from a medical authority that if there was a man suffering from cold he would immediately look for measles, what would you say about that?—I do not see quite how he could say such a thing. If I were a medical officer on board ship, and a man came up and reported to me that he had a cold, I should immediately look after him and try and get data to go upon to see if he had been exposed to any infections. I would take his temperature and examine him, and look out if anything developed; but I do not think I would parade the whole of the ship, strip them, and examine them for measles. A man should be on the look-out for anything, as so many things begin with a slight cold.

378. He said that if a man came to him with a cold he would immediately look out for measles?—It is rather an absurd statement to make, from a professional point of view. If he said he would put a man under observation to see what illness he was going to develop, I could understand it. I think it is rather a far-fetched idea.

379. Would you think it was far-fetched if the man had come from a place infected with measles?—Oh, no; I would not think that.

380. Can you give me some explanation as to the large number of deaths from pneumonia at Somes Island, as against the number who died in the Hospital?—My statistics do not show that. I lost fewer men on Somes Island than they did in the Hospital.

381. The return we have seen shows there was only one died of pneumonia at the Hospital?—Then, they are not the returns we have. As far as we could make out, there were eleven cases of pneumonia in Wellington, diagnosed by the medical men on shore as pneumonia, with five deaths.

382. Dr. Valintine gave instructions that the eleven worst cases were to be sent to the Hospital, did he not?—Yes; provided that they were not of an infectious nature. That was the trouble, don't you see.

383. Then, the worst cases were not sent to the Hospital?—No. I would have sent every man to the Hospital, but our instructions were paramount from the Hospital that they would turn anybody out with measles on them.

384. Has cold anything to do with the development of pneumonia?—It is always held that cold is a factor in pneumonia.

385. Is it your opinion that it has not?—No, not exactly. I have very strong opinions on pneumonia. I have been through several bad pneumonia troubles, and I have seen them just as bad in summer as in winter; but cold has to do with pneumonia. Sudden alterations in temperature may cause pneumonia. I have had many cases in the height of summer. I remember a man was playing tennis on a broiling hot day with the sun over 100°, and about 80° in the shade. He sprained his ankle, and he sat down and rested himself under the shade of a tree, and he lay at the point of death with pneumonia for three days. The sudden alteration in temperature from 100° to 80° was responsible for it. It has always been held in England that pneumonia follows measles.

386. Does this septic pneumonia ever commence with measles?—Yes; you get septic pneumonia from several causes. I think the term "secondary pneumonia" covers everything.

387. I understand that secondary pneumonia was consequent upon some other disease?—Yes; quite so—some other illness.

388. Is secondary pneumonia separate from any other?—Yes; there is ordinary pneumonia.

389. Might men coming back from South Africa in a climate such as that, and then being huddled together on board ship—is it possible for these men to have the seeds of pneumonia waiting development?—I do not think so. Pneumonia is a disease with a very short incubation period. You do not get a six, seven, or fourteen days incubation period.

390. Would you consider that if pneumonia was there a sudden immersion into cold water would do anything towards developing it?—I may say that most modern medical men treat their cases of pneumonia by cold bathing. I have saved several lives of pneumonic patients by cold bathing. It is laid down as one of the standing rules of the profession now that as soon as a man's temperature went up to 105° he should be cold-sponged. We saved several cases on the island by cold-sponging.

391. If the statement has been made that the action of the medical men in compelling men to go into salt water was instrumental in developing pneumonia in their cases, would you say it was true or untrue?—I think, if a man had measles and he was compelled to bath in salt water, it would probably give him pneumonia.

392. And no cases came under your notice?—I can absolutely say that there were no cases of cold bathing on the island among the "Britannic" men at all. I took the "Britannic" men over, and the first thing I did was to send my nurses up to the hospital to see that everything was right, and then I took the men up and they were put straight to bed. There was not one washed in cold water.

393. You saw the men disembark from the "Britannic": you superintended the whole of the invalids?—Yes.

394. You saw this man Brown taken ashore to the island?—Yes; he was carried ashore and carried up on a stretcher. He was a man I was particularly anxious about; I gave specific instructions about him.

395. Did you personally see this man Brown taken from the hospital on the "Britannic" and see him put on board the tug-boat?—Yes, I saw the man carried on board the tug-boat.

396. How was he taken: was he carried?—We found it was better to carry them; there were two or three bad cases carried. We had a very careful man there, and we found, from experience of the first few cases, it would do the men less injury if they were carried on a man's back. We had to do the best we could for the men, as the alley-ways were narrow. They were carried perfectly steadily; I am quite certain of that. It did them no harm. I would not swear that I saw him absolutely carried down, but what I will swear is that they were all taken on board with every care and attention, because the men were dangerously ill. Brown was taken on shore in a dying condition. I was told before I left the boat that I was certain to lose four men, probably six. As a matter of fact, only three of them died.

397. There was a statement made that Brown was carried ashore like a sack of wheat?—That is not true, sir. If he was carried on a man's back he was carried carefully under instructions. Dr. Eccles and Dr. Pearlless helped, and Dr. Pollen and I also helped, and, although I did not personally see every man go over, they were all seen to and attended to.

398. You are perfectly satisfied that every care was given to every man in transshipment from the "Britannic" to the tug?—I am quite satisfied. I think the fact that Brown got almost better and then died of weakness was a proof of it. Brown told us himself, in my presence, that he had absolutely nothing to complain about, and said that he had been treated "like a king." He had no idea, he said, that there was such a place on God's earth.

399. If his father made a statement to the contrary and said that his son told him that he would sooner shoot himself than travel again in the "Britannic," do you think that is correct?—He may have said that, but I am speaking about what he said on the island after he had left the ship. I have some statistics here in regard to pneumonia, which may be of interest to the Commission. The United States Government reports for 1901, which have just been published, show that pneumonia is the one disease whose mortality is increasing. This is simple pneumonia, not secondary pneumonia, which is more fatal. The records for the last forty years prove that, however varied the treatment, the mortality was essentially the same. The hospital statistics show a death-rate from 20 to 40 per cent.—that is, in the United States Government reports. Pye-Smith, in Allbutt's "System of Medicine," cites 73 private cases of ordinary pneumonia, with 25 deaths—a mortality of over 33 per cent.; 111 deaths in 434 cases in hospital and private, a mortality of 25.5 per cent. At Stockholm in private and hospital we have 281 deaths in 2,618 cases, about 12 or 13 per cent. In the Middlesex Hospital there were 192 deaths in 1,010—that is, about 20 per cent. In the Massachusetts Hospital in the United States for the ten years ending 1889 there were 1,000 cases, with a mortality of 25 per cent. Pepper, the great American authority, states that the mortality ranges from 12 to 34 per cent.; and Powell, in his work on "Diseases of the Lungs"—the standard authority—states that for the Middlesex Hospital, in the ten years starting in 1880 to 1889, there were 673 cases, with 116 deaths—a mortality of 17 per cent. It varied in some of these years from 12 to 24 per cent.; but in 1892, between the 1st January and the 1st November, they had 82 cases and 21 deaths, a mortality of 26 per cent. In 1889, 1890, 1891 they had 274 cases, with 49 deaths—a mortality of 18 per cent. At the same time—1889, 1890, 1891—the London Temperance Hospital had 54 cases, with 17 deaths, a mortality of 31 per cent. Then, there is the famous epidemic of pneumonia at Middlesborough, where the published mortality was set as 40 per cent.; but it was generally understood among practitioners in Yorkshire that there were a great many more than that, who were put down to something else.

400. *Mr. Millar.*] Are those the latest statistics?—Yes. You can rarely get any text-book that gives you data later than ten years back. The last one, however, is from the Medical Annual of 1902, and is the United States Report for 1901. It says all the latest reports are proving that the mortality is increasing, and that it is supposed to be due to influenza. Some medical men

state that it is due to the increased prosperity of the people, owing to the people taking drink and stimulants more freely. But, whatever the cause, there is no doubt that the mortality is increasing, judging from all the statistics we can get hold of. Allbutt's statistics are the latest reliable statistics that have been published in text-book form. They are given by Pye-Smith in Allbutt's "System of Medicine," which was published three or four years ago. (The volume I quote from was published in 1898.)

401. *Surgeon-Major Fearless.*] Did Brown complain to you that he was not properly attended to on the "Britannic"?—I do not think he did. I think everybody recognises that I had very hard work to do over there, and I had no time to go round and ask questions outside my work.

402. As far as you know, he did not complain?—No, he did not complain.

403. Do you think the hospital when you saw it was dirtier than a hospital usually is on landing?—I do not think so.

404. Do you not think that by leaving a high, dry climate and getting into a cold climate in about three days out, that it is an important factor in developing pneumonia?—I have already said that. If you get a certain number of men on board with catarrh in any climate, from whatever cause, you are certain to get a proportion with pneumonia.

405. *The Chairman.*] I have heard it mentioned in the town that there were fees charged for vaccinating the troopers on the "Orient": do you know if that is the case?—No, it is not the case. I have vaccinated two hundred of them, at any rate, and I got no fee for it. I asked Dr. Mason before we began if it would be necessary to take the names of the men and make out certificates, and he said No, because there would be no fee.

TUESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Dr. MASON sworn and examined. (No. 66.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name, please?—James Malcolm Mason.

2. You are in the medical profession?—Yes.

3. What is your position?—Chief Health Officer.

4. And your diplomas?—I am an M.D., and I am a diplomate in public health of the University of Cambridge. All our officers have special qualifications in sanitary science. It is a necessary preliminary to their getting appointed.

5. Did you see the troopship "Britannic" either in Auckland or Wellington?—No, sir.

6. You cannot speak as to her condition?—Not of my own knowledge.

7. Were you in Wellington when the invalids disembarked from the "Britannic"?—No, sir.

8. You can give us no information until what period?—Until they were in the hospital at *Somes Island*.

9. Do you remember at what date that was?—I do not remember the exact date, but I can find out.

10. How soon was it after their landing there?—Three or four days. As soon as I heard of the illness on board the "Britannic" I came straight down from Auckland.

11. Are you in a position to give the Commission any information as to why they were sent to *Somes Island* in preference to any other place?—It is a properly gazetted quarantine station. The hospital is set apart for that purpose. Besides, the invalids could not have been accommodated in Wellington.

12. Do you think it would have been impracticable to speedily obtain proper housing for the invalids anywhere on the mainland?—Yes, sir, I think so.

13. Then, you gave your entire approval to removing them to *Somes Island*?—Yes, sir; I fully indorse Dr. Valintine's action.

14. You are not able to give us any information as to their transit. Has anything come officially under your notice as to their transport from the "Britannic" to *Somes Island*?—I have asked both Dr. Purdy and Dr. Valintine to supply you with that information. From my own knowledge I know nothing.

15. Who was in charge of the patients at *Somes Island* when you first saw the men?—Dr. Purdy.

16. Were you satisfied with the accommodation there: was it sufficient?—Oh, yes; absolutely at the time. The hospital, of course, is not of modern design.

17. You are quite sure it was not prejudicial to health?—Not at all, sir.

18. Then, speaking as Principal Health Officer, you are satisfied with the arrangements which were made during your absence for the care of these patients?—Absolutely.

19. And their treatment when they were under Dr. Purdy's care?—Yes; I supervised that. When I say supervised, I mean I entered into the medical aspect of each case with the doctor in charge, and perfectly agreed with his treatment.

20. Are you satisfied that every reasonable care was taken to enable those men to recover?—I think so. All that passed under my own observation I am perfectly satisfied about.

21. Have you arrived at any theory as to the cause of the outbreak of pneumonia on board?—I think so; it is a common occurrence for men if their powers of resistance have been depressed by measles, or by getting cold, to contract pneumonia. The bacillus of pneumonia, like that of consumption, is, more or less, always about; it is only waiting for an open porthole, so to speak. Every one who is exposed to the contagion does not necessarily suffer from the disease; it requires an antecedent depression to allow it to fructify.

22. Should you imagine that it was possible by any precaution to prevent any cases of measles getting on board the steamer at the Cape?—I should think it would be absolutely im-

possible. A man might get on board in the incubation stage. Unless you were to strip every man and take his temperature you could not judge.

23. Measles having got aboard, you would say that, from the practical standpoint of the embarkation of troops, it could not be avoided—the danger of the disease breaking out?—I do not think so.

24. The disease having once broken out, would it be possible to so isolate the case as to preclude further cases?—Not on any transport I have ever known.

25. Have you had much to do with transports?—I had some experience in the old days. I have been on several transports.

26. And you believe that an epidemic of measles is a danger that any ship is liable to when there is a large number of men on board?—Yes; that is if measles existed at the port of embarkation.

27. Then, can you attribute it to any cause, or is there any reason for the large number of pneumonic cases on board the “*Britannic*”?—There was not, I believe, a large number on board the ship.

28. Among the number who disembarked from the ship?—You could hardly expect but that lung-trouble would follow the behaviour of some of the troopers. Several of the patients I saw on shore were in places unsuitable for treatment, and we had to remove them to the Hospital.

29. Were there any cases you found out too late for treatment?—They were not too late, in a sense. There were four, I understand from Dr. Purdy, who were transhipped from the “*Britannic*.” They were thought to be in a dying condition. The doctors considered they were practically moribund. That, of course, is Dr. Purdy’s statement to me, sir.

30. Do you think, then, that the men were indiscreet in their conduct after disembarkation?—Most decidedly many were.

31. And to that, you think, is attributable, to some extent, the large death-rate?—I would not say the “large” death-rate, but a number of the pneumonic cases.

32. Do you imagine that any system of ventilation on board the “*Britannic*” would have averted the pneumonic outbreak?—I do not think so. Of course, the better ventilated the ship is the healthier it is; but, as troopships go, the regulations do not allow the same cubic space on a transport as is allowed in an ordinary gaol. It is something like 72 cubic feet on board ship to 600 cubic feet in a gaol.

33. Then, you would not attribute blame to the medical officers on board the “*Britannic*” for the prevalence of measles on board the steamer?—Not at all, sir.

34. Nor for the subsequent development of pneumonia?—Not as far as I know. So far as I can gather from the reports of my officers, the treatment was what any medical man would have given.

35. *Mr. McNab.*] I suppose, doctor, the more insanitary the men’s habits, the more virulence the pneumonia would assume when it came on in its secondary form?—That is so, sir.

36. And personal cleanliness of all kinds would therefore tend to reduce the virulence of the outbreak?—Certainly; one of the main lines of treatment is to clean the men, in every sense of the word.

37. And if you had free power to do what you pleased would you think it necessary to have a thorough hygienic discipline among the men?—I certainly would. They want it more than the ordinary soldier.

38. Previous to embarking, would you think it necessary for the men to have a complete outfit of clean underclothing?—Well, if I had the power I would do as we did when the “*Orient*” men were disembarked—give them clean underclothing. We did that when we disembarked the men from the “*Orient*.”

39. What would you do in the case of men who, so far as their own persons were concerned, never washed themselves from one end of the voyage to the other?—If I had anything to do with them, I would parade them for a bath.

40. You would have a bath parade?—I should think so.

41. Do you know whether that is done in the troopships?—It is done regularly in the army. I do not know what they do on transports, but there is a regular bath parade in most camps.

42. And am I to understand your opinion to be that the carrying-out of that system would be a very material element indeed in reducing the virulence of any subsequent outbreak of pneumonia?—Yes; if the men were clean it would certainly tend to increase their power of resistance to the disease.

43. You express no opinion as to whether they could have been paraded for a bath on board the vessel?—I should think, judging from the difficulty of handling the “*Orient*” men, it would have been beyond the task of the officers to do it.

44. Then, you have seen large bodies of the returned contingent men, after their return, in connection with quarantine?—Yes.

45. From the knowledge gained in that way, do you think it possible for the strict scrubbing-brush discipline to be carried out?—I should say not on board a troopship.

46. Is it not the case that with the drilled soldier coming home from the war, his whole discipline and training makes him a very different man to bring home in large numbers in a troopship than our own irregular forces?—Most decidedly.

47. Would you think the Commission would be justified in considering that one of the lessons we have learned from the South African war is this particular lesson?—Most decidedly; I think it is the greatest.

48. You cannot suggest anything, then, for the future, but strict emphasis being given to personal cleanliness of all kinds, and discipline?—Yes. Of course, I do not know of my own knowledge of the troops on the “*Britannic*” at all as to the question of discipline.

49. What you have seen in regard to the men, am I to understand that you think that sufficient to account for what has taken place, without surmising something else that you cannot detect?—Quite so. The want of personal cleanliness has been a considerable factor in producing their ill-health.

50. *Colonel Davies.*] You said, I think, that there were four men shipped to *Somes Island* who were expected to die?—I was careful to say that that was *Dr. Purdy's* report.

51. Did they die, do you know?—I do not know. I do not know their names.

52. You say that in the army it is the custom to have bathing-parades?—Yes.

53. Do you mean on board ship?—No; I said distinctly on shore.

54. You have never heard of it being done on board ship?—No.

55. Do you not think if this was done in cold and wet weather on the deck of a ship, and had given the men colds, that it would be made an excuse in the colony for the deaths of these men?—Certainly; I think so.

56. You have no personal knowledge of the discipline on the "*Britannic*"?—No.

57. Have you any reports from your officers?—Yes; every officer has reported that the discipline on board the "*Britannic*" was excellent.

58. Have they reported that it was better than that on other troopships?—They said it was excellent in comparison to the others.

59. *Mr. McNab.*] If the washing of the men was done—not on the open deck, but in a room, like where a bath generally is—it would not have the effect of causing extra colds?—No. The practice usually adopted on board is to rig up a sail-bath.

Captain TODD, D.S.O., sworn and examined. (No. 67.)

60. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—*Thomas John Marr Todd.*

61. Were you a member of either of the contingents?—Yes, sir; I went out with the *Second Contingent* in the first place, and then I joined the *Eighth* on their arrival at *Durban*.

62. You were on board the "*Britannic*"?—Yes, sir.

63. Did you return to *New Zealand* on any other occasion from *South Africa*?—Yes, sir, in the "*Tongariro*."

64. What rank did you hold?—Captain, sir.

65. Had you any other official duties besides that of captain?—Yes, sir; I was adjutant.

66. Do I understand that you come here to make a statement, or have you been subpoenaed?—I have been called, sir.

67. You were with the *Eighth* at *Newcastle*?—Yes, sir.

68. How long were the men at *Newcastle* previous to coming down to *Durban*?—I think we were there about a week, sir.

69. Had the men an opportunity while at *Newcastle* of getting clean clothes?—They had their kit-bags with them. They brought them from *Klerksdorp*.

70. Were those things clean?—Yes, sir.

71. Have you any idea what the kit-bags would contain: what the regular outfit would be?—It was the same kit-bag they brought out from *New Zealand*, containing one complete change of clothing.

72. What notice did you get to march from *Newcastle* to embark?—We got about four hours' notice. We got it at midnight, and we had to go in the morning.

73. You got orders at midnight, and you started early in the morning?—Yes, sir. I may say, though, that we were expecting to get orders.

74. Was there any attempt made to get more clean clothes for the men?—Yes, sir.

75. Where?—At *Maritzburg*. Major *Bartlett* wired about them.

76. Who is Major *Bartlett*?—Major *Bartlett* was the officer commanding the *1st* regiment at that time.

77. What did they do at *Maritzburg*?—We applied for a complete change for the men, not necessarily because the men were badly in want of it, but because we were entitled to it.

78. This came under your observation as adjutant?—Yes, sir.

79. What happened when you got to *Maritzburg*?—The authorities said that we had not been in *Africa* a sufficient time, that we had two lots of clothing when we arrived. We came out with two lots of clothing, and we had drawn clothing at *Newcastle* three months previously.

80. That was during the three or four days you were there?—We drew some clothes at *Newcastle* in *March*, because we left our kits behind at *Maritzburg*.

81. Then they refused to give you spare clothing at *Maritzburg*?—I could not say as to spare clothing, sir.

82. Well, change of clothing?—Yes, sir.

83. Are not the regulations distinct that new underclothing was to be supplied?—It was so in the early part of the war, sir. I think, if I remember rightly, that the commanding officer had to state that all the men coming back had drawn fresh clothing, but that was after we had been in the field a certain number of months.

84. Then, neither the quartermaster nor the officer commanding, nor yourself as adjutant, are to blame if the men did not get clothes prior to embarkation?—Undoubtedly not, sir.

85. How long did you remain at *Maritzburg*?—We passed right through. The quartermaster was sent on ahead.

86. Did he go ahead?—Yes, I think Captain *Lewin* went ahead.

87. And at *Durban* you embarked practically immediately on arrival?—Yes, straight from the train, sir.

88. What time did you get on board the "*Britannic*"?—In the forenoon some time.

89. When was the issue of bedding made?—That afternoon.

90. Do you know in whose presence it was made?—Captain Lewin was appointed quartermaster, and he supervised the issue of the equipment and the bedding.

91. Were any other officers sent to supervise the issue of bedding?—Yes; the regimental officers were. Mr. Bullock was appointed to ours.

92. Did each squadron detail an officer?—Yes, sir. The officer in command of each squadron checked over and took the quantities from their quartermasters.

93. Did you yourself see the blankets issued?—No, sir.

94. Did you at any time shortly after embarkation notice them?—Yes, sir.

95. Do you remember when they first came under your observation?—They came under my observation the first morning after we started from Durban. Some of the men had been lying on the deck and some of the blankets got damp, and the ship's officers complained about this. I think the quartermaster gave instructions that they were to be returned to the store. They were returned to the store and the men complained about it at night, so fresh blankets were issued to them.

96. Did you notice what appearance the blankets presented: were they clean or dirty?—I have no reason to believe they were dirty, sir. The men would have complained to me immediately if they had been dirty.

97. No men complained to you of their dirtiness?—No, sir.

98. And you did not notice yourself that they were dirty?—No, sir.

99. Do you imagine that by any chance the blankets were lousy when they were served out to the men?—Well, if they had been, the men would have immediately noticed it and would have complained.

100. When did you have the first complaint about the lousy blankets?—The first I heard about it was just before we got to Albany.

101. You did not hear of it during the first three or four days?—No, sir.

102. How often were there regimental parades?—The roll was called by each troop officer every morning.

103. What do you mean by a troop officer?—A troop-sergeant. Every morning he reported to the squadron sergeant-major and the squadron sergeant-major reported to the regimental sergeant-major any absentees and any who were sick.

104. Were there any parades of the regiment for the officers commanding regiments' inspection?—Yes; there was a parade for the fire-stations.

105. But inspection parades?—When the quarters were inspected all the men except the mess orderlies had to leave the troop-decks and go up on deck. As regards parades, sir, we had no exercise parades or arms parades, because we had no arms.

106. But inspection parades to see to the cleanliness of the men?—No. But the squadron leaders would have reported anything in regard to men being very dirty.

107. As adjutant, do you know if orders were issued at any time for parades of inspection by the officer commanding the regiment, or by the officers commanding the squadrons?—I do not think so, sir.

108. Now, were complaints made to you as adjutant, officially, at any time about the food?—Yes, sir, I think twice only.

109. And what were those complaints on these two occasions?—One was about some ling-fish served out to the men. They said they did not want it; that it was not good. The matter was brought under the commanding officer's notice, and he had the matter remedied.

110. Was this the occasion when the dogs were supposed to have "pumped-ship" on it?—The first I heard about that, sir, was when I reached New Zealand. I never heard of it before.

111. Do you think that it is an invention?—I would not like to say. If it was not, I would have heard about it on board.

112. What was the complaint about the ling-fish?—They stated that it had been lying on the deck, and dragged through the dirt. My own private opinion is that they did not like ling-fish. I am pretty safe in saying that half of this fish was eaten. A full issue of tinned meat was issued instead.

113. Then the complaint was remedied?—Yes, sir, immediately; because I remember that Colonel Davies was late for his lunch over it.

114. What was the other complaint?—If I remember rightly it was about some meat or stew. They said they did not like it—it was not cooked as well as it ought to be. That was remedied also.

115. How was that remedied?—I think it was twice or three times they were given tinned meat in place of the meat they complained of.

116. Was it ever part of your duty to inspect the men's dinners?—No, sir.

117. Did you chance to see them?—Yes, sir.

118. You say you returned on the "Tongariro" on a previous occasion?—Yes, sir.

119. How do you think the men's dinners compared on board the "Britannic" with those they got on board the "Tongariro"?—Well, personally, I think the "Tongariro's" may have been a little better, but still we had more complaints on the "Tongariro." We used to have complaints twice and thrice a week.

120. Were you adjutant on the "Tongariro"?—Yes, sir.

121. What did you think yourself of the dinner supplied on board the "Britannic" when you saw them?—Well, the men seemed to be enjoying themselves—they were happy enough.

122. Did the meals present a wholesome appearance?—Yes, sir; I saw the orderlies carrying the stuff down, and I have seen the men in the troop-decks eating it. The men would very soon let one know if it was not all right.

123. Then, there were no more complaints than have come within your experience before?—Far less, sir.

124. Which part of the ship was your regiment in?—In the after part.

125. I suppose you used to go round with the officer commanding?—Yes, but not always with the officer commanding. I have been round four or five times a day inspecting generally, and also round the latrines.

126. Well, did you see the latrines ordinarily in good order?—Yes, sir. They were in very good order. Once or twice I remember Sergeant-Major Charters said to me, "What do you think of that, sir?" They were on the after part of the ship, the port side, and one time I saw them they were beautifully clean. I think the remark he made to me was, "You could eat your dinner off them." They were very clean indeed.

127. As to the washing-places, was the ordinary accommodation provided on board the "Britannic"?—The "Britannic" is the first official transport I have ever been on. They had about a dozen wash-basins for our regiment—five hundred strong.

128. Do you consider it possible for the men to have washed before the water was shut off in the morning if they had got up at the proper hour?—Yes, sir, I think so.

129. Did complaints ever come to you, as adjutant of the regiment, that it was impossible for a man to get a wash?—Yes; I think once or twice there were complaints—once I am sure about. The second day out something went wrong with the pump. The engineer got to work on it and got it fixed up.

130. The complaint was that the water was not running on account of the machinery?—Yes, on one occasion only, sir.

131. Then you think, ordinarily, when there was no accident to the pipe, that men could get a wash before the water was shut off in the morning?—Yes, if any system was observed. Of course, if four or five men got arguing together about whose turn it was, and everything else, there would not be time. But there is no doubt that there was sufficient accommodation for them to wash in.

132. Did the quality of the meat ever come under your observation at all?—I cannot honestly say that I saw the fresh meat cut up.

133. Was the meat supplied to your own mess good in quality?—Yes, sir.

134. Do you happen to know whether special meat was reserved for the officers' table?—I could not say, sir.

135. *Mr. McNab.*] When you refer to the complaints that were made, were they made from the tables of the North Island regiment?—Yes, sir. I do not know anything about the South Island regiment.

136. But all complaints that would ever come to Colonel Davies's knowledge would have passed through you?—No, sir, they would not; only for the North Island regiment.

137. All the complaints that Colonel Davies could have got from the North Island men would have come through you?—Not necessarily, sir. They would come from the regimental captain of the day to the ship's captain of the day. But I would know about them.

138. Do you know of any other complaints reaching the magnitude that they would be reported to the officer commanding the troops coming from the North Island men that were not included in these two or three you have mentioned?—Not from memory, sir. The men seemed to be so contented on board the boat. I think they are putting the officers in a bit of a box in complaining now. They seemed to be so contented that many of these things have escaped my memory.

139. Throughout the voyage there was a marked absence of complaints?—Absolutely, sir.

140. Did you often go round with Colonel Davies on his inspection of a morning?—I used to go round with Major Polson, the commanding officer of the regiment, and when Colonel Davies inspected I was there also.

141. Did the men make any complaints then?—No, sir; I do not think there was a direct complaint made to Colonel Davies by the North Island regiment.

142. Were you aware during the trip of any purchases of food from the cooks or the sailors?—I heard that some of it was going on, and I spoke to the purser about it. The purser told me to tell the men if they caught any of the cooks selling food they were to take the stuff from them and clear out with it. I do not think there was as much selling on board the "Britannic" as what I saw on the "Tongariro." Of course, there was the regulation ship's canteen on board.

143. What would be sold at the ship's canteen—would meat and tea, and coffee, and things like that be sold at a ship's canteen?—Yes; tinned meats, anchovies, biscuits, sweets, and things like that. We had no wet canteen.

144. Then, there was a recognized and authorised canteen on board the vessel for the sale of food other than spirituous liquors?—Yes, sir.

145. The extent of that was a matter that came within the regulations?—Yes, sir.

146. Then, when the men say that hundreds of men at night purchased from the cooks, could that have taken place at any other than the licensed canteen?—Well, sir, many things happen on board a transport.

147. Did the men buy the food with that magnitude—hundreds at one time?—No, sir. I think that statement would be absolutely untrue.

148. You do not know of extensive and regular purchases of meals from the cooks outside of the regular canteen?—No, sir, I do not know of it. I feel sure it was not carried on, because I would undoubtedly know. It came under my notice once early in the voyage, and I spoke to the purser about it. I said, "This is not the game, to buy stuff from the cooks. They are taking it from the men." He said, "Todd, if you find that this is going on you may tell your men to take the stuff away from them, not to pay for it." I told the men that. But I feel sure that it ceased. Some men with more money than the others might try to get a few pies from the saloon galley, and other small articles.



149. If a man said in evidence that he paid £2 10s. for meals during the trip, would you think that it would be at the regular canteen that he made the purchases, or were they illegitimate purchases?—I think they would be legitimate purchases from the canteen.

150. Having heard the regulation read out from the "Regulations for His Majesty's Transport Service" regarding the licensing of canteens, the canteen established under this regulation is the same which you refer to where the purchases were made?—Yes, sir.

151. *Colonel Davies.*] You went round with the officer commanding your regiment when I inspected your part of the ship?—Yes, sir.

152. Did you ever see any lack of discipline on board the boat?—No, sir, far from it.

153. What is your opinion of the discipline on the ship, taken as a whole?—It was excellent, sir. I have had experience with the First, Second, and Third as adjutant, and I say that the discipline of the Eighth, both in the field and on the boat, was exemplary.

154. You think it was better than with the other contingents?—Yes, sir, I think it was. The crime-sheets and everything else compare favourably with the other contingents.

155. And you think it is the best discipline you have ever seen on board ship?—Yes, sir.

156. Do you think the discipline of the troops throughout was the best you have seen in any colonial contingent?—Yes, sir. In regard to the trip up to Auckland in the "Britannic," I may say that I was in charge of the men on the trip. The captain of the ship was so pleased with the efforts made by the troops to clean up and to put the ship in good order that he gave each trooper a present of a bottle of English beer for lunch, and charged it to the ship's expenses. I thought the troopers behaved very well indeed.

157. *Mr. McNab.*] Are you leaving the colony, Captain Todd?—Yes, sir. I am going back to South Africa.

158. You are perfectly independent of the Defence Department and the Government and any other Department in giving evidence?—Yes, sir.

Sergeant-Major CHARTERS sworn and examined. (No. 68.)

159. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—Alexander Burnet Charters.

160. Your rank?—Regimental sergeant-major.

161. Of which contingent?—Eighth, 1st regiment.

162. You came out on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

163. Were you subpoenaed to give evidence, or did you offer to come?—I was subpoenaed.

164. Are there any points you wish to state particularly to the Commission, or would you prefer to be examined by the members?—I would prefer to be examined.

165. On board the vessel what were your duties as sergeant-major?—I had, in a sense, to fill Sergeant-Major Rogers's place. He was taken ill—he had his knee injured, and he also had a chest-complaint—so he told me off to act as ship's sergeant-major in addition to my own duties as regimental sergeant-major. That is in regard to the deck work.

166. So you acted as ship's sergeant-major as well?—Yes, as far as the deck work was concerned.

167. Did it come within your duties to accompany Colonel Davies when on his round of inspection of a morning?—Yes, sir, that was my duty as ship's sergeant-major.

168. Do you remember, when you were going round with the colonel, if many complaints were made to the colonel at the morning inspection?—There was only one case in which I remember any complaint being made, and that was by a Tenth detail man.

169. What was the complaint?—I really forget what it was about, but the complaint was about four days old. If he had not allowed four days to elapse some attention would have been paid to it.

170. Did any other complaints of the men come under your notice?—I did not give them any encouragement to come and complain, except in this way: that Sergeant-Major Rogers told any of the men that if they had any bad meat, or anything like that, that they did not care about, they could come and show it to us. There was only one occasion when it came down to me, and then the meat was badly cooked, but it was perfectly good. I took it to the chief steward, and we went together to the cook-house. There was no need to bring the meat down to us, as the orderly officer was there, and he had already attended to the complaint.

171. Do you remember the complaint the men made—that the meat was underdone or tainted?—Underdone.

172. Did it ever come within your knowledge, and, if so, how often, of complaints made by the men that the meat was tainted?—There were no complaints made to me personally that the meat was tainted. Of course, one would hear men going about complaining of these things.

173. There was no complaint made to you at any time that the meat was tainted?—No, sir, not to me.

174. Did you ever go to see the meat after it was cooked?—I was at the issue of meat every other day for three meals. The regimental sergeant-major of No. 2 regiment and myself used to take it in turns to see to the issue of rations.

175. Then, half the cooked meat came under your notice?—Yes, came under my notice very frequently.

176. Did you ever see any meat issued cooked that was tainted and unfit for food?—No, sir; I never saw it myself.

177. Is the Commission to understand that an issue of such meat never took place whilst you were on duty?—It was never brought under my notice. I was present, and, so far as I know, nothing was said to me at the time.

178. If the orderlies who were taking the meat to their respective messes had made a complaint on seeing it, you would have heard of it, at any rate?—Well, if they had made a complaint there at the time I would have heard of it.



179. So that they went away with the meat from the cook without making any complaint there?—Yes.

180. Beyond that it got out of your action?—Yes.

181. Do you know anything of the men extensively buying provisions from the cooks and sailors?—I do, sir.

182. Well, can you throw any light upon that?—Well, I know it was done. Major Polson had five men up before him one day who complained that they had been buying food from cooks and sailors. Major Polson asked if they would come and give evidence. I sent for them two or three times, but they would not come and give direct evidence. They acknowledged they bought it, but they would not make any statement, so that nobody could get a grip of the offenders.

183. There was a regular canteen in accordance with military regulations carried on in the vessel?—Yes, sir.

184. When men in evidence say that the troops by the hundred got food at one meal and at one time, could that have taken place on board the vessel at any other than the military canteen—say, supper on a particular night?—Well, I never saw them get supper at night-time. I suppose some of them could get it.

185. Was it possible that meals could have been got by the hundred outside of the military canteen and not have come under your notice?—I do not think so.

186. And if men say that they got meals by the hundred you would suggest that it was at the military canteen they got it?—I really could not say.

187. To what extent, from your notice of it, was the military canteen made use of?—Well, I was very seldom there; but I know the men were always buying there, but what they bought and how much they bought I really could not say.

188. Would you say it was well patronised?—It was well patronised, certainly.

189. If it was stated in evidence that a man paid £2 10s. for his meals on board the vessel during her trip, would you suggest that that was at the military canteen he got them, or do you think he got them from the cooks and sailors illegitimately?—I suppose he could if he was silly enough to pay it. But I never heard of any man paying anything in advance.

190. And you really do not know?—No, I really do not know anything about that.

191. Did you find the men on the whole of the vessel amenable to discipline?—I was agreeably surprised coming home. I thought we would have trouble with them, but we had no trouble on the way across.

192. There was good discipline on board the vessel?—There was good discipline, and it was recognised by the Australian officers.

193. *Mr. Millar.*] I understood you to say that you went round with Colonel Davies every morning on his inspection?—Yes, sir.

194. Did you ever make any inspection as to the men's personal cleanliness?—Well, no, I cannot say that I did.

195. Did you ever see such an inspection, as far as the men's bodies are concerned?—No, I cannot say that I saw any of that.

196. You never during the whole of that trip saw it done?—No, sir. It may have been done and I would see nothing of it. I had nothing to do with any of the squadrons.

197. Are you aware of its having been done?—I am not aware of it; it did not come under my notice.

198. Do you not think it should have been done?—I really do not see how it could have been done.

199. If it has been done, and is a common thing on board a troopship, do you still think it could not be done?—I did not say that it could not be done. I said I did not see how it could be done very well.

200. I suppose you yourself have knowledge of what effect cleanliness has on pneumonia?—Well, I suppose the cleaner they are the less effect it would have. But I know nothing about it; I am not a medical man.

201. Then, under those circumstances, would you assume that there would have been fewer cases of pneumonia if there had been more cases of cleanliness?—I would not say that, sir.

202. Did you ever find out what the temperature was down in the hold when the men were there?—No, I cannot say I did.

203. Were you ever down there when the hammocks were swung?—I was down every night.

204. On which troop-deck?—Every troop-deck.

205. Did you ever find the atmosphere foul?—I found it foul once or twice.

206. What was the reason?—Because some of the men did not like sleeping in the hammocks, and they preferred to sleep on the hard floor. I used to prefer it myself going out in the "Surrey." But they used to sleep just below the hatchway, and when everybody was in bed they used to tie up the mouth of the windsail.

207. How often?—I have seen it several times.

208. More than twice?—Yes, more than twice—several times.

209. Was it the duty of anybody on board to prevent them from sleeping on deck?—No, there was no one to prevent them.

210. No one ever interfered with them sleeping on the deck, no matter whether it was wet or dry?—No.

211. Irrespective of the state of the deck, whether it was wet or cold, he could sleep on it?—Yes, he could if he liked.

212. Was it any person's duty to see that the hammocks were properly swung, and that the men were sleeping in their hammocks?—There was no rule about the men sleeping out of their hammocks if they preferred to do so.

213. The men, then, could sleep anywhere?—Yes, sir.
214. And no one troubled?—No one troubled so long as they did not sleep right in the way of where people had to pass.
215. No person interfered with the men, they could sleep where they liked, and no one ever troubled about them?—Well, they could not sleep where they liked. They could sleep down on the troop-decks except where anybody wanted to pass.
216. They could sleep on the main deck, or could they sleep on any portion of the troop-deck so long as they did not impede any traffic which might be necessary?—Yes. There were certain parts of the main deck they were not allowed to sleep on.
217. They could sleep on any portion of the main deck?—Yes; but not along the alley-ways on each side where it was so narrow. There was only one place where they slept, just alongside some of the boats just abaft the promenade deck.
218. And yet, under those conditions, you consider the officers did their duty towards those men?—I do, sir.
219. Were there enough hooks in the 'tween decks?—Yes.
- 219A. To hang every hammock?—Yes.
220. So that if any one had desired to insist on the men sleeping in the hammocks there were hooks enough on board?—Each man had a hammock at the start, but they would stow them away anywhere so that they would not have to use them.
221. So there was no excuse for the men not sleeping in their hammocks on the hooks?—No; except that some of them lost their hammocks as soon as they got them. They did not have them when we landed.
222. How many short were you?—I do not know, but the quartermaster told me three hundred, and, I think, from three hundred to five hundred blankets.
223. Were there enough hammock-hooks in the ship to hang every hammock, and had every man a hammock to hang?—Yes.
224. Did you see much drunkenness on board the ship?—Very little, sir.
225. So that the men can be said to be fairly temperate?—They were very temperate, sir.
226. And you consider that the health and the comfort of the men were properly looked after by their officers during the trip?—As far as they could look after them, they did.
227. Do you think there was more food sold at the canteen than from the ship's galley?—I really could not say, sir; I never actually saw food sold from the ship's galley myself.
228. You are aware that food was sold from the galley?—It must have been sold, for these men complained about it, but they would make no formal complaint.
229. You invited the men to make a formal complaint?—We were always asking for men to come forward to give evidence, but they never would.
230. At the time you sent for that evidence did Major Polson instruct you to get that evidence for the purpose of proceeding against those persons for selling ship's stores?—Yes, sir.
231. And you were unable to get any of the men to come up and formally give evidence?—I sent out to non-commissioned officers repeatedly to see if they could get men to come forward, and not a single man would come forward.
232. Are you aware whether it was Major Polson's object to take action against the people who were selling the food?—I think that would be his intention.
233. And he wanted direct evidence for that purpose?—Yes.
234. And the men who were supposed to have bought food refused to come and give evidence?—Yes.
235. And the officers could do nothing further in the matter?—They could do nothing without direct evidence.
236. Did the officers personally investigate about the selling of food after it came to their knowledge?—I can only answer for my own commanding officer, Major Polson.
237. Did he make personal investigations as to the statement about stores being sold?—He did. He was very sore over it.
238. So that the men, by refusing to give evidence, assisted the crew in carrying on in this manner?—Yes, sir.
239. *Colonel Davies.*] With reference to the men sleeping on the troop-decks, did you ever see any men sleeping on the troop-decks when they were wet?—No, sir.
240. Did you ever see the troop-decks wet at night?—No, sir, never at night.
241. You say that the men were allowed to sleep practically where they liked in their own quarters: do you think that that was allowed out of consideration for the men's own feelings, or through carelessness on the part of their officers?—Their own feelings only.
242. Because it was thought to be more convenient to them?—Yes, sir.
243. And because they liked it better?—Yes, sir; for my own part I always preferred it when going out.
244. You went over the whole ship with me every morning?—Yes, sir.
245. And what was your opinion as to the cleanliness of the ship?—I thought the ship was remarkably clean. The latrines had no smell, and you could not tell they were latrines until you went inside the door.
246. You have seen me going through the latrines every morning and turning up the wash-basins?—Yes, sir, every morning.
247. And what is your opinion about the discipline on the ship?—I do not think it could have been much better. I was very pleased with the discipline in my own regiment, and was pleased with it all through.
248. Did you ever see any want of discipline on the ship at all?—No, sir.
249. For instance, I went round the ship every morning, and every man stood at attention wherever he was?—Yes, sir.

250. With the exception of one case, do you remember? I only remember one man, as we were going into the troop-deck?—Yes, sir; the only case was that of a barber who had a razor in his hand.

251. Do you think the men had ample accommodation to wash?—Yes, sir. There was always plenty of water in the wash-basins, as far as I knew.

252. Did they have more fresh water coming back on the "Britannic" or going out in the "Surrey"?—They had more on the "Britannic." I seldom saw fresh water on the "Surrey." They had salt water.

Sergeant-Major JACKSON sworn and examined. (No. 69.)

253. *Mr. Millar.*] What is your Christian name and surname?—Cranworth Franklin Jackson.

254. Which contingent were you in?—I was with two contingents—the Fourth and Eighth.

255. What rank did you hold?—I was acting-sergeant-major when Sergeant-Major Pender was bad on the voyage.

256. Have you volunteered to give evidence on this inquiry, or have you been subpoenaed?—I volunteered, sir.

257. Have you any fault to find in connection with the transport of the troops from Durban to here in the "Britannic"?—No, sir.

258. Nothing?—No.

259. Would you prefer to make a statement or reply to questions?—To reply to questions.

260. You were acting-sergeant-major during the voyage: did you have any complaints made to you as to the shortness of food?—Yes.

261. How many times had you complaints?—Once or twice. A complaint was made to Colonel Davies, which he rectified as well as possible.

262. What were the complaints that were made to you yourself?—The meat was bad—it was tainted.

263. Did you report that to your superior officer, and have steps taken to rectify it?—Yes.

264. Upon the occasion that it was reported to you did the men get other meat in lieu of it?—Yes.

265. They got an increased supply?—I would not say they got an increased supply, but I think it was rectified.

266. You are not sure?—I am quite positive they got more. I know Colonel Davies took steps to rectify matters.

267. Upon the occasion that the complaint was made to you it was rectified by Colonel Davies?—Yes.

268. Was that the only instance when you had complaints made to you?—Yes.

269. Now as to the quality of the food: had you any complaints as to the quality of the food?—No.

270. Do you think the food issued to the men was of good quality?—Well, under the circumstances; but it was not saloon food.

271. Was it good, wholesome food?—Well, I had it myself, and I did not complain.

272. Were you in the habit of seeing this food daily?—Yes.

273. So you had a fair opportunity of forming a fair opinion during the whole trip?—Yes.

274. Then, during the whole voyage, you had only two complaints as to the quality or quantity of the food?—Yes.

275. Did you ever take any steps yourself to find out whether there was any cause for complaint: did you ever go and ask for complaints?—I would not go and ask for them. If they complained to me I would go and see about it myself.

276. Do you think the orderlies would make complaints if there was anything to complain about?—They would, sir.

277. So you do not think there was any necessity for an officer to make inquiries from the men as to whether there were any complaints?—I do, sir. It was done every day when the officers of the day went round.

278. Was the cooking of the food good?—Nothing wrong with it, sir.

279. No faults?—There were no faults with it. I think on the previous troopship it was far worse. On that boat we got meat only once a day (the "Tagus"), and we had it three times a day on the "Britannic."

280. Did you mess with the non-commissioned officers?—Yes.

281. Did you ever get your food badly cooked?—No.

282. It was always well cooked?—Yes, sir, as far as I recollect.

283. The beef was always well done?—I would not say the beef was always well done. The beef, as a rule, was a little underdone.

284. Was it underdone so much as to be unfit for consumption?—No, sir, it was not.

285. You never at your mess, nor, as far as you know, knew of any food being placed on the table for the men that was unfit to eat through being insufficiently cooked?—No, not on one occasion.

286. Were the potatoes good?—They could have been better.

287. Were they wholesome?—They were wholesome, but small. Of course, you cannot expect to get the best potatoes at sea.

288. But, whatever potatoes were given you, the quality was all right?—Yes.

289. As to the quantity, did you get sufficient potatoes?—I always had sufficient.

290. You always saw sufficient at the sergeants' mess?—Yes; the orderly officer told us to go back for more if we did not get sufficient.

291. Did that apply to the men also?—Certainly; in fact, I saw the orderly officer send them back myself.

292. Do you know any occasion upon which they were refused when they went to get more?—Yes, I think on one or two occasions they were refused.

293. Do you think it was possible for a mess orderly to make a mistake by not taking sufficient potatoes in the first instance?—Yes, sir. Sometimes the mess orderlies might be too lazy to go back and get them a second time.

294. You think, on the whole, the ship was prepared to find sufficient food—that is to say, if there was not enough issued in the first instance, upon application again more could be got?—Yes; I saw orderly officers send them back dozens of times.

295. What was the quality of the biscuits on board?—I think that the quality of the biscuits was not of the best, but they were eatable.

296. Did you ever see them maggoty?—Never.

297. There were always plenty of those available?—Yes; there was a cask always full on the troop-deck.

298. Was there any parade made of the men to see as to their personal cleanliness?—I know for a fact that Major Polson was through the ship every day, and Surgeon-Major Fearless and Dr. Eccles.

299. But that was to inspect the quarters?—Yes.

300. Did they ever inspect the men?—Only the men's quarters, so far as I know.

301. They went and saw that the decks were cleaned up, and that everything was all right down in the troop-deck?—Yes.

302. You have no knowledge if they had a personal inspection of the men to see that they were clean personally?—No.

303. Did you ever see that done in a troopship?—No, never.

304. What vessel did you go out with?—With the "Gymeric," and back with the "Tagus," and then I went out with the Eighth on the "Surrey."

305. Then, upon none of these occasions did any of the officers or medical men look after the personal cleanliness, to see whether the men were cleanly themselves?—No, not so far as I know. I do not think there was any necessity for it.

306. Has cleanliness not got a lot to do with health?—Certainly.

307. Then, we can assume that, if cleanliness has a lot to do with health, in an unhealthy ship special attention must be paid to cleanliness?—Well, the men's own intelligence ought to tell them that. I should think the non-commissioned officers should see to that.

308. Did they ever get instructions to see to it?—No.

309. Do you expect the non-commissioned officers to do it when they do not get instructions about it?—No.

310. Would a trooper permit a non-commissioned officer to do a thing like that unless an order was given for it?—If a trooper gets an order from a non-commissioned officer he is supposed to obey it.

311. Supposing it did not appear in orders, do you think the men would accept it from him?—Yes; they would be put in the guard-room if they did not.

312. Independent of whether an order had been issued from your officers?—Yes.

313. Then, a non-commissioned officer has authority over them whether an order is issued or not?—Yes. But if a non-commissioned officer gives a wrong order he takes the responsibility of it.

314. Supposing a non-commissioned officer gave an order for a man to strip himself, would a man do that?—No, I do not think he would.

315. If an officer gave the order would it be obeyed?—I doubt it, sir, unless you took them one by one into a private room.

316. But supposing you paraded all the men and asked them to open their shirts, and you looked at their naked chests, how long would that take an officer?—Not very long, sir.

317. It would give you some idea as to their cleanliness?—Yes.

318. Was that ever done on board the "Britannic"?—No.

319. Do you think, even with the limited accommodation she had on board, it could have been done?—Well, there was so much to attend to on board.

320. What was there to attend to—there were no drills, no parades?—There was the cleaning-up of the ship.

321. All that was practically done from reveille in the morning until 7 o'clock at night was the cleaning-up of the 'tween decks?—There were the guards and orderlies.

322. There were some eighty guards, all told, out of a thousand men?—Yes, I should think about that.

323. You think that the work was so very much that it was impossible to parade the men to see as to their personal cleanliness?—I do not say that, sir.

324. It was not because there was not time to do it, then?—There was certainly time to do it.

325. Did you find the discipline of the men good during the trip?—I found it excellent.

326. Do you think that the officers did all that was in their power to look after the comfort and health of the men?—I am positive of that.

327. Then, on the whole, you do not consider that the statement of the men in regard to their food and accommodation are warranted by the facts?—To a certain extent they are, some of them; but some of them were certainly false statements. One piece of evidence that came up here was that of a man who cut one of the officer's kits open and took two pairs of riding-pants out of it, and when a man will do that he is low enough to do anything.

328. *The Chairman.*] On this occasion when the meat was reported tainted did you think it was tainted?—I did.

329. Do you know of many other occasions when it was tainted, from your experience in your own mess?—Yes, on several occasions it was tainted, but I did not think the matter could be

rectified very well on account of the refrigerator ; I think there was something wrong there, but, of course, I am not positive.

330. Had the sergeants a separate galley to the men?—I think the food was cooked in the saloon galley ; it was shifted from the men's quarters.

331. You think the sergeants' food was better than the men's?—Many a time it was not as good.

332. About the potatoes : have you any idea what weight of potatoes was served out to the men? Did they get  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb., or what quantity do you think they got per diem?—I would not like to say, sir ; I really do not know.

333. Have you any idea what weight you got in the sergeants' mess?—I should think we got about 10 lb. of potatoes.

334. For how many persons?—For eleven at our mess.

335. Do you think it was near 1 lb. per head per man?—Yes, sir, I do. I know there was always sufficient.

336. Do you imagine you got more than the men?—Sometimes the men got more than we did ; not only on one occasion, but on several occasions.

337. *Mr. McNab.*] In regard to the tainted meat, was that before you got to Albany or after, do you remember?—I think it was after we left Albany.

WEDNESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Surgeon-Major PEARLESS re-examined. (No. 70.)

1. *Mr. McNab.*] Will you give the Commission a list of the men sent from the hospital on board the "Britannic" to Somes Island, so far as is within your knowledge?—Yes, sir. They are as follows : Laughton, Dawson, Cameron, Gower, Brown (died), Allan, Corry, Ryan (died), Bennett, Eivers, Atkins, Mousted (died), Murphy, Lunn (died), Allsopp, Sebelin, Purvis, Nicholson (died), Macalister, Hursthouse, Fleetwood (died), Page, Fitzgerald, Cowell, Hooper, Lile, Easton, Pye, Maude, Johnson, Droon, Webster, and Lucas.

2. Will you also supply us with a list of those, so far as you can learn, who were not in the hospital the night before, and who were probably picked up by the Health Officers?—Yes. It is as follows : 5832, Riley ; 6175, Murray ; 9075, O'Niel (died) ; 5091, Marcks (died) ; 5849, Ward ; 5365, Lorange (died) ; 5888, Ferrar (died) ; 8754, Thorburn ; 6319, Craig (died) ; 5835, Robinson ; 5398, Turner.

3. Were there any, so far as you know, who broke out from the hospital on the "Britannic" ?—The following men must have broken out from the hospital on the "Britannic" : 9019, Tuohy ; 5302, Sergeant Best ; 5341, Trooper Eustace ; 8993, Trooper Nicholson. I am sure about Nicholson.

4. Can you let us have a list of those who were sent to the Wellington Hospital from the "Britannic" on the 2nd August?—Yes. It is as follows : Larsen, Pender, McAnally, Duke, Blissett, Tonks (died), Churton (Crichton ?), Nelson, McHarry, Dean, and Thomas (died).

5. Could you give us a list of those that are recorded as having been admitted to the Hospital at Wellington on the 2nd August that did not come out of the hospital on the "Britannic" ?—6102, Reay ; and 5994, O'Brien.

6. Can you supply us with a list of those who are recorded as being present at Somes Island, but were not sent from the steamer?—Yes. August 3, Fitzherbert ; August 4, McConaghey and Runceman ; August 6, Boyle, McLaren, Lund, Ramsay, Smith, Gosling, McAlpine, Rodgers, Hogg ; August 7, Newslam (died), Swanberg, M. Burke, J. Burke (died), Pevreal ; August 9, Cooper and Dawson.

7. And the same list showing those sent to Wellington Hospital?—Yes. August 3, Peterson, Scott, Lewis ; August 20, Rusden and Retter.

8. And a list of those who have been attended privately, but who were not sent direct from the steamer?—August 22, Farrier Neilson, Troopers Turner (died) and Johnston ; August 14, Trooper Gomez (died).

9. When you came on board the "Britannic" did you find that the Transport authorities had fitted up the hospital with reasonable accommodation, and supplies of medicines, and all the various requisites necessary for a hospital on board a transport?—Yes ; I thought it was very well fitted up, as I had no shortage of drugs at all. I bought a few extras at Albany of what we were running out of.

10. Did you have any causes of complaint against the authorities for neglecting the hospital department?—None whatever.

11. Had you any control over the men who were put on board the "Britannic" previous to their coming on board?—No ; they were examined by the Health officers at Durban on the wharf.

12. Quite independent of you?—Yes.

13. And you had simply to take charge of the men that you found on board the troopship?—Yes.

14. When the first cases of measles appeared on board the vessel would it have been possible to so isolate the cases that measles would not have spread through the ship?—No ; I think it is both useless and impracticable to try and isolate measles on board a troopship. I can tell you why I think it is : because the men do not come to the hospital until the rash is out, and during the two or three days previous it is in the greatest stage of infection, so that they infected men before they came.

15. Did you find generally a disinclination on the part of the men to report themselves sick?—Only when getting near Wellington.

16. Was it marked then?—Yes, it was. The men did not attend like they ought to have done.

17. Do you think that the efforts of the men to avoid the doctors and the hospital on approaching the shores of New Zealand were disastrous for the men who took ill?—Yes, most decidedly.

18. From what has since transpired, can you give us any figures in support of that?—Thirty-three men who had been in the ship's hospital the night before were sent out to the hospital at Somes Island, and out of this number six died. Eleven men were detected by the Health officers on the morning of arrival, and were sent over to Somes Island, and out of that number five died—that is, nearly half. I think that points clearly to the fact that concealment has a great deal to do with fatality.

19. You handed over your hospital to the Health Department?—Yes, sir.

20. The last night that you had charge of the hospital had you any trouble with the hospital orderlies?—No, none whatever. I never heard of any drunkenness among them at all.

21. What night was that?—The night we sighted Cape Farewell; that would be the 31st July.

22. Who was in charge the night the vessel was alongside the wharf?—Dr. Eccles.

23. Were you not in charge yourself?—I was not in charge that night.

24. Did you take charge next day again?—I went down next morning and saw to the transhipping of the men.

25. Did Dr. Eccles make any complaint about the orderlies, or anything?—No; the original orderlies were not there, but four Auckland men volunteered to attend to the patients all night, and they did very well indeed.

26. Can you give us any information as to whether the orderlies left with Surgeon-Captain Eccles's consent, or whether they left of their own accord?—I think there was some misunderstanding, sir. The hospital sergeant asked me what they were to do when we got alongside the wharf. I had been told by the Health officers that as soon as we came alongside the wharf they would take sole charge, and would see to the transhipment of patients. Of course, I never intended the hospital orderlies to leave until they were relieved by others; but I think they must have misunderstood me. I think it would be very much better if the system adopted in Melbourne was done here. After the Port Health Officer had inspected the ship the military medical officer came off with part of a bearer corps, and took sole charge of the men, and told us that we had nothing more to do with them. I think something of the same sort should be done here. The Wellington Bearer Corps should come down and take charge, as they are trained to the work.

27. I suppose you would find it difficult when the vessel is up against the wharf to keep the men to their duties who know they have to go off next day?—Yes; and, more than that, three of the hospital orderlies had to go south with the southern portion of the troops.

28. Do you consider that the arrangements that were made to meet the emergency of the orderlies having to leave for the south, and off duty, resulted in any material injury to the patients?—No, none whatever.

29. Had you any facilities for getting trained nurses from the shore to fill the vacancies caused by the men going away?—I do not know where I could have got them at all, except, as I say, the Bearer Corps, or a portion of them, might have been got, as they were trained for this work.

30. With your experience of this trip, doctor, is there anything you could suggest to us for recommending that would tend to reduce or do away with an outbreak such as took place on board your vessel?—I do not know what you could do, sir. It was an outbreak that was hard indeed to cope with. So many men got sick all of a sudden, and it might not happen again. I mean to say that you could not have hospital accommodation just for the chance of getting an epidemic. It would take up all the ship's room.

31. Do you think that the cleanliness on board the vessel was insisted on throughout the voyage—I mean in regard to the cleanliness of the ship itself?—The ship was kept very clean, sir.

32. You are quite satisfied about that?—Yes. I am not absolutely certain that the hospital itself was clean when we came alongside, because there was a lot of traffic in and out.

33. Were your orderlies under the same regulations regarding discipline as the men, and looked to being liberated at the earliest possible moment?—Exactly, sir. If I had told them straight out to stop they would have stayed, but they misunderstood what I said. They thought they were free as soon as they got alongside. I meant them to go when they were relieved.

34. Do you remember anything about some cases of measles that it is alleged were not admitted into the hospital on the ship on their reporting themselves?—Yes, sir, there were two. Dr. Bauchop saw these cases, and that morning the hospital accommodation was being enlarged, and he left them out until it was completed, and then they were taken in.

35. What was the size of the hospital?—It was not far off 40 ft. long, and the whole width of the ship across, about 40 ft.

36. Mention has been made of some smell that could be detected in the hospital: did you ever hear of such a thing?—I expect the smell was when the bed-pans were being removed; that is unavoidable.

37. No complaint was ever made to you, and you never detected it yourself?—No, except, as I say, when the bed-pans were being used. No complaints were ever made to me in the hospital.

38. Did you unintentionally cause the Port Health Officer to believe that there was nothing of a serious nature on board?—No; he must have misunderstood me. Pneumonia is always serious. I gave him a list of forty-five cases of sickness.

39. How was it that the Health Officer found the hospital so dirty?—Chiefly because of the natural confusion on landing all over the ship, and sick men were run in that morning; there were twenty cases, I think. The friends of the patients were in and out, and it was totally impossible to keep the hospital clean.

40. Were the hospital orderlies trained men?—Eight of them were trained men. They were attached to the R.A.M.C. Corps in Africa whilst we were on duty, and they had a good training.

41. You are quite satisfied with the way they did their work?—Yes, sir, quite satisfied; they did the work well. They had very unpleasant work at times, because some of the men were so filthy in their habits.

42. How many men do you think, doctor, you had on an average in the hospital all the way over?—Up to Melbourne, I should think about fifteen or sixteen. The day after we left Melbourne I believe there were twenty-eight cases, and then they increased every day, by seven, eight, and nine cases.

43. You had your hands full, then?—Yes, perfectly full.

44. And in the hospital how many deaths were there?—Two amongst the men. One stow-away died: he was dying when he was found.

45. Did you see the men being carried down from the vessel on to the tender taking them to *Somes Island*?—I did; but I was not there the whole time—sometimes I was superintending in the hospital and sometimes on deck.

46. How were they carried down?—We started to carry the men down on stretchers, but we found that it knocked the men about so much that we decided to have them carried down on men's backs. It was the safest way to take them down the gangway, as it was too narrow for the men to get abreast.

47. You are satisfied that it was the best plan to take?—Yes, quite satisfied. I think one man stated that I had not enough men to help tranship these patients, but I had plenty. The captain gave me four sailors, and I had six men of my own, and seven Permanent Artillerymen.

48. If the men that you were dealing with were men who were themselves cleanly in their personal habits, and took pride in their cleanliness, would not that have materially reduced the work of a hospital on board a troopship?—Decidedly.

49. From what you have seen of irregular troops on board a troopship, do you consider that as a class they are personally cleanly in their habits?—No.

50. That, then, will always be an element which the medical department of the transport service will have to cope with?—Yes.

51. And a serious factor, I suppose?—Yes.

52. Do you think that the discipline of the short service that the men are under—practically a year's service—and sometimes less than that, going to South Africa, could possibly overcome the inertia of the men in regard to their hygiene?—Of course, the discipline is not equal to regular troops; it cannot be expected.

53. And therefore you cannot expect the men to get trained into such personal cleanly habits as the regular soldier?—No, I do not think so.

Sergeant ANGUS McALPINE sworn and examined. (No. 71.)

54. *The Chairman.*] What is your Christian name and surname?—Angus McAlpine.

55. Were you on board the "*Britannic*"?—Yes, sir.

56. What rank did you hold?—I was ranked as mess-sergeant, sir. I was acting as a detective on board.

57. You mean police work?—Yes, sir.

58. You volunteered to come and give evidence: what do you wish to tell us about?—I wanted to say that the officers on board the "*Britannic*" did everything they possibly could do for the troops. It was the fault of the ship authorities that the food was bad.

59. The food was bad, you think?—The meat was bad—it was too long in the freezer. I will answer any questions you like to put before me.

60. What was your rank in the contingent before you became acting-detective?—Mess-sergeant.

61. But on shore?—Yes, sir; I was mess-sergeant.

62. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—Baker.

63. Were you in either of the other contingents?—No, sir, only the Eighth.

64. What do you mean by saying that the meat was too long in the freezer?—Well, sir, I have been to sea, and I have seen a lot of frozen meat, and used a lot of it. This meat was starting to turn blue, and the fat was getting very yellowish. You can always tell if you have seen anything of frozen meat whether it has been too long in the freezer.

65. Do you mean that it had become tainted?—Well, it had started to lose its flavour; it started to get a nasty taste. It had a zinc taste. It tasted something like if you licked a bit of tin or zinc.

66. Then, do you think that the meat was beginning to go bad?—Yes.

67. To what extent was this the case: out of a dozen carcasses how many would be tainted?—Oh, not many. It was generally found out by the officer on duty. He used to inquire into all that.

68. Did your duties take you up to the butcher's shop at all?—Where I was on the ship was right over the butcher's shop, so I used to watch these things.

69. Have you any idea how many carcasses would be bad in a hundred?—I could not tell you that, sir. I was never down in the freezer.

70. But those that came under your eye: do you think there were five in the hundred, ten in the hundred, or what?—Five or six in a hundred, I should think.

71. Do you think those went into consumption, or were they inspected and thrown out?—They were inspected and destroyed.

72. Do you happen to know, by your own observation, not by hearsay, who inspected the meat?—Yes; I saw Captain Lewin inspecting the meat. I saw him with the purser of the ship and the chief steward.

73. You do not know anything about any of the inspection by any of the medical staff?—No, sir.

74. Where did you mess yourself?—With the sergeants.

75. Was the meat you got of the same quality as that given to the men, do you think?—Yes, the meat was of the same quality.

76. Was it from the same carcasses, do you imagine?—Yes; but it was cooked in a different place—in the saloon galley.

77. Do you think there was any difference between the meat supplied to the sergeants' mess and that supplied to the men's mess?—The difference was this: that our meat was allowed to thaw a little bit, and the troops' meat was never allowed to thaw. It was never properly cooked: it was boiled, and ours was generally roasted.

78. Do you think there was any difference in the quality of the meat served to the sergeants and to the privates?—No; it was the same.

79. Have you been in a ship's galley before?—Yes, with the cooks as baker.

80. What sort of galley did they have on board the "Britannic"?—Well, for the troops' galley it was a bit too small. There was not enough accommodation. There were not enough steam-pans and steam-pressers for the number of men on board.

81. Do you imagine that it was impossible to make the utensils clean before the tea and coffee was put in?—I do not think they could have done any better than they were doing.

82. They were clean?—Yes, sir; they were as clean as they could possibly be under the circumstances.

83. Do you think it is likely that they were ordinarily more greasy than they are generally on board ship?—I never worked on a troopship before, but I have done steerage-passenger work.

84. How did it compare with that?—It was not so good on the "Britannic." The tea was not made the same way. It was put in a dixie and the steam turned on, and it was carried away in large tea-pots. On the "Britannic" it was boiled in a big steam-boiler.

85. Where tea and coffee are made in a boiler for emigrants, would it be better tea and coffee than that supplied to the men?—No, not when it is made in the boiler.

86. Then, you think that tea made in a tea-pot is better than that made in a steam-boiler?—Yes, because soup and stuff has been boiled in it before.

87. How was the bread?—It was good.

88. Have you any idea how much they got?—Yes; we were a bit short of bread. They were supposed to get pound cobs, and they were getting about  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of bread a day.

89. You do not think they got more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. a day?—No; but they had biscuits. They got as many as they wanted—good biscuits, too.

90. You do not think they got much more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of bread a day?—Yes, soft bread.

91. But unlimited biscuits?—Yes, they had plenty of biscuits, and of good quality, what I saw of them.

92. Generally, how was the cooking on board?—Well, I do not think it could be improved, under the circumstances, for the number on board the boat.

93. Was it up to the average of ship's cooking when large crowds of people were on board?—It was not equal to passenger-carrying boats—steerage passengers. It was not up to the mark.

94. What vessels were you on?—The Shaw, Savill, and Albion's.

95. Have you ever been on an emigrant-ship carrying a large number of passengers?—No, not more than four or five hundred.

96. Do you think the cooks did their duty?—Yes; I am certain of it.

97. You were acting-detective on board?—Yes, sir.

98. Do you imagine that there was much thieving by the ship's cooks and stewards of the stores to sell to the men?—There was at first, but the officers stopped it. An order was given that the troops were not to buy food off the cooks.

99. After that order was issued how many bought food?—There were always one or two who got it on the sly.

100. Would there be five-and-twenty?—Yes; there might be that, I suppose. But I could not say how many.

101. Supposing we have an assertion by one man that there were three hundred, and by two or three that there were up to two hundred, who used to buy food from the cooks daily, would that be true or false?—I do not think there were three hundred. There would be about twenty or thirty, I think—that is, after the order was issued.

102. Was much business done at the canteen?—Yes; but the canteen never had the proper sort of food, not for troopers—not nourishing food. There was a lot of lollies, and toffy, and sherbet, and stuff like that.

103. What did they sell at the canteen?—Carroll's lollies, sherbet, and all sorts of mixed toffy. The figs were all sold out in a day.

104. Then, the canteen was in short supply?—Oh, yes; I am sure of it.

105. Were tea and coffee sold from the canteen?—No, sir.

106. Coming back to the meat, you think 5 or 6 per cent. of the carcasses, on inspection, were found to be tainted?—Yes; there was always a carcase or so tainted; about every other day, or every four days, it was discovered to be bad.

107. Do you think that went into consumption for the men?—No; the men would not allow it. They used to destroy it themselves if they saw anything wrong.

108. You do not believe that tainted meat went into consumption except by an accident?—Yes, sir; that is right.

109. *Mr. McNab.*] You said that the meat had been too long in the freezer: what do you mean exactly by that?—I said I thought it had been too long in the freezer.



110. How long would you state?—I should think it had been in for eighteen months or two years.

111. And do you suggest that it goes bad if it has been in for eighteen months or two years?—Well, it has not the same flavour. It has a nasty taste about it.

112. Try and recall what you saw about the freezer. Do you remember, when they opened the freezer to get some meat out, whether the meat would be exposed to the air for a little while, and then closed up again, and so on?—I never saw it come out of the freezer. I saw it coming up from the freezer to the butcher's shop.

113. You could not tell me whether the door of the freezing-chamber was left open; and the meat got a little thawed?—Well, if the door is left open too long the meat would go bad.

114. You could not say whether it was left open?—I could not say.

115. You do not make any complaints yourself about the meat?—No.

116. *Mr. Millar.*] Did you say you thought the meat had been eighteen months in the freezer?—Yes, sir.

117. Was not that ship carrying troops all the time for months and months?—Yes, sir; but it might have been in a freezer and put on board.

118. Do you consider that that meat was eighteen months in the freezer at the Cape?—Yes, that is my idea of the meat.

119. Do you think it is likely, when there was such a demand for meat at the Cape, that it would be allowed to remain there so long?—Well, the meat would probably come from the colony, be shipped to London, and back again to the Cape, and perhaps lie in London for a while.

120. You mean to say that the meat had been freezing altogether for eighteen months?—Yes, sir.

121. Not necessarily in the freezer of the "Britannic"?—No, sir, not necessarily in the "Britannic."

122. *The Chairman.*] Where did the meat come from that was stowed on board?—I could not say, sir.

123. How was it that you knew it had been eighteen months or two years in the freezer?—By the look of the meat.

124. Have you ever been engaged in a freezing-works?—No, but I have handled a lot of frozen meat on board ship.

125. *Mr. McNab.*] When you handled the frozen meat on board the other ships did you know exactly the age of the frozen meat you were handling?—Well, we had an idea, sir.

126. But did you know?—I did not know the age.

127. So that your authority for your statement is the experience you got on other vessels, where you did not know for certain the age of the meat?—That is right. I was in a publichouse the other day and saw some troopers who were talking about being here and giving evidence, and they said they were talking about officers being drunk on board the "Britannic." I was amongst the officers all the time on board, and I never saw any drunkenness. The men were talking about it in a hotel, and that is where I heard it.

128. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us who the man was?—No, I do not know his name. He was a South Island man. I was in the North Island regiment, and did not mix up with the South Island men.

129. He was just a casual man in the hotel?—Yes, sir; he had a blue overcoat on, and I knew he was one of them by the way he was talking.

130. *Mr. McNab.*] The statement is not true?—Oh, no, it is not true.

131. *The Chairman.*] You cannot give us the name of any one who has stated that publicly?—No.

*The Chairman:* If such a thing should ever be stated in your presence I particularly wish you to obtain the man's name and communicate with me, so that we may examine him.

Trooper CALLAM sworn and examined. (No. 72.)

132. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—Arthur Callam.

133. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

134. Your rank?—Trooper, A squadron.

135. What was your occupation before joining?—Blacksmith.

136. What is your age?—Twenty-four.

137. You desire to give some evidence before the Commission regarding the "Britannic," do you?—I do not really desire to give any, I have hardly any complaints to make at all. There was a rumour going about that all the officers were drunk. I just came down to put in a word against that.

138. There is no truth in the rumour, then?—Personally, I say there is absolutely none.

139. Had you any cause for complaint in your squadron?—Except about the food. After the first week I gave up eating the boat's food. I used to get it off one of the sailors. He used to get enough for about four men.

140. Did you ever try to get any food at the dry canteen?—Well, there was very little to get there. After we left Albany there was just a little. There was nothing except a bit of tobacco and a few bits of stickjaw; that was about all you could get there.

141. Did you ever make a complaint to the orderly officer of the day about the food?—The first week the whole squadron was making complaints when it came down.

142. Your squadron, then, made complaint to the orderly officer?—They made several that I know of.

143. Do you remember what orderly officer it was?—I could not say who it was.

144. Was it during the first week?—Yes, it was.

145. Were any of your own squadron officers on duty during the first week?—I do not remember exactly; I would not like to say.

146. You cannot give us the name of an officer to whom you made complaint?—Well, there was Captain Cameron. They made several complaints to him. The head man of our own table made the complaints.

147. Do you remember what the nature of the complaints were?—Yes; about the food.

148. What was the complaint made when Captain Cameron came round?—They said they could not eat the meat—it was bad; and he said he would see about it.

149. Was it badly cooked, or what?—It was both badly cooked and bad meat.

150. What was wrong with the meat?—A wee bit flavoury, I think.

151. Was that during the first week you were out?—I would not say that the complaint was made to Captain Cameron during the first week. All the food I used to eat on board the ship was the soup. Whenever I was down there the men were making a row about the bad meat.

152. What was the result of the complaints?—Captain Cameron said he would see into it.

153. And you say nothing was done?—Well, I could not say that; there was nothing else heard about it.

154. Were there any other matters you had to complain about, or that you did complain about?—I never complained about anything myself. I never used to sleep down below, so I could not complain about the want of room.

155. *Mr. Millar.*] Had you a fair opportunity of seeing the officers on the deck?—Yes, I think I had a pretty fair opportunity.

156. And did you see the majority of them every day?—Yes, I think I can say I saw the majority of them.

157. Did you ever see any sign of drunkenness among the officers?—Not once.

158. Do you think it was possible for it to have gone on to any large extent without your seeing it?—No; it could not have gone on to any large extent unless they had kept to their own cabins, and then I would not have seen anything of it, of course.

159. So that if the officers were drinking it must have gone on in their own cabins?—As far as I could see, it must have.

160. Would there be many more of the troops who would have a better opportunity of seeing whether the officers were drunk than you had?—I was pretty often down in the saloon.

161. Did you ever see any of it in the saloon?—No, not once. I used to go down to the saloon with an order to get ginger-ale and stuff from the bar down there.

162. And did you see any drunkenness about?—Well, I saw some officers at the bar, but I never saw them under the influence of liquor. They spoke like gentlemen.

163. Therefore there is no truth in the statement that they were drunk?—Personally, as far as I am concerned, there is no truth in it. I never saw it.

164. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us the names of some men who would be prepared to come to the Commission and say that any of the officers were drunk?—I mainly came down here to put in a word against it. I heard that such a complaint was made at the Commission, and as I thought that the officers had treated me fair and square I would come down.

165. Can you bring some men here who will have the courage to say that before the Commission?—I could not get one at all.

*The Chairman:* I authorise you, if you hear any one say so, to report the same to me as Chairman of the Commission, and I will have him called as a witness. You may tell any man who will make that statement that we will listen to him.

166. *The Chairman.*] How often did you eat the soup?—I suppose, three or four times out of the week.

167. Was it good?—Well, sometimes it was pretty fair; other times it was worse.

168. Was it nasty, or what was wrong with it?—There were different qualities different days; some days it was pretty fair, but not as good as the ordinary soup you get at home.

169. On the whole, was it wholesome?—Well, it was very ordinary on the whole.

170. Did it seem made of wholesome meat, or of bad meat?—I would not like to say what kind of meat it was.

171. Did it taste tainted, or what?—Yes, now and again it did—very tainted.

#### THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Dr. BAUCHOP sworn and examined. (No. 73).

1. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—William Forsaith Lewis Bauchop.

2. What are your qualifications?—L.R.C.P. and S., &c.

3. You were a doctor on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

4. Amongst your duties, doctor, did you ever have to see to the condition of the meat when it was issued to the cooks?—Yes, sir. Major Pearlless asked me to attend just after we left Albany.

5. So that from leaving Albany you had to do with the inspection of the meat?—I did for a few days, and then Captain Young looked after it.

6. Then, it was previous to Captain Young taking charge that you looked after it?—Yes.

7. Do you remember whether it was after leaving Albany or before?—I think it was before we came to Albany.

8. It was just before Captain Young took it over?—Yes. I was not on duty all the time. I had been ill with malaria, and I was not out of bed until a week after we left.

9. When you were on duty inspecting the meat what condition did you find it in?—The meat was mildewy, I believe, on two occasions—that is, the whole quarter was not bad, but parts of it were. The ribs were blue and discoloured and mildewed, due, I believe, to imperfect thawing.

10. Did you have occasion to condemn any meat during the time you were on duty?—Yes.
11. What proportion of meat, on the whole, did you condemn—what quantity?—There was one quarter, and some carcasses of mutton—two, I think—on one occasion.
12. You are perfectly satisfied that you condemned what meat was unfit, and that all the meat passed by you was quite fit for human food?—Yes, sir.
13. Was it part of your duty to see what portion of the meat went to the saloon galley and what portion went to the men's galley?—I was asked to attend at 8 a.m., 11 a.m., and 6 p.m., and the quarters were cut up then. Sometimes they were not cut up, as there might be tinned beef served out. But I attended three times a day. I could not say as to which particular part of the ship the meat went to.
14. You had to satisfy yourself that all of it was fit for food, but you had nothing to do with any selection of particular joints to different places?—No, I was not asked to do that.
15. Do you remember any cases of measles during the voyage being reported, and the patients not being taken directly into the hospital, and being allowed to go back into their quarters?—Just the night before we landed there were two cases.
16. What was the reason on that occasion that they were not taken into the hospital?—The hospital was full, and they were making other arrangements, adding to the hospital. In one case the rash was not clearly developed. It was put aside for observation as well as for want of room.
17. But you are positive that they could not be accommodated in the hospital because of want of room?—Yes, sir.
18. Coming now to the night when the vessel was in the harbour here, were you on duty that night?—No; I went south by the "Mararoa."
19. So that you were not on duty the night she was in Wellington after arrival?—No.
20. Coming back now to the events of the voyage, do you think it possible, when the first case of measles developed on board the vessel, that it could have been effectively isolated to prevent any further outbreak?—I do not think you can isolate measles on board ship.
21. Do you think, with your experience now of the voyage, that anything could have been done with the means at your disposal to prevent the measles getting such a hold through the vessel?—No, I do not think so; I think all possible means were taken.
22. Did you find, in connection with the examination of the men, an unwillingness at any period of the voyage for the men to report themselves to the hospital authorities?—I could not say that.
23. Were you present when the Health authorities made the inspection?—Yes; I went round the hospital with them in the morning. I did not see the crew inspected.
24. But the troopers?—I saw Dr. Pollen there.
25. Were you present when the Health officers sent a large number of men into the hospital?—I did not see that.
26. *Mr. Millar.*] Where was the hospital on board the "Britannic"?—It was aft.
27. Was it properly bulkheaded and isolated from the rest of the troop-deck?—Well, there was not a bulkhead actually, but it opened on the troop-deck aft—there was an open door.
28. Was it a wooden bulkhead or a canvas one?—I could not say. I know at the forward part there was a very heavy iron door.
29. Was there a heavy iron door right across the deck?—I did not notice the wall, but the door was a very heavy one, opening from the saloon into the hospital.
30. Was the hospital simply partitioned off by means of canvas screens, or was it properly partitioned off?—It was properly enclosed. It was really a room.
31. By wood or iron?—By wood. I think afterwards we put tarpaulins and canvas up when the hospital was extended.
32. Your main hospital was properly isolated, then?—Yes, for the full width of the ship.
33. And what means of ventilation did you have in it?—Portholes, and the door on to the troop-deck was usually open. The men came in after the sick-parade through the after door. Then there were staircases leading from the upper deck, which gave a ventilating passage.
34. Do you think the ventilation was sufficient?—Oh, yes.
35. Did you keep the temperature of the hospital?—No. I do not think that was taken.
36. Never at any time?—I could not say; so far as I know, it was not.
37. When a sick-parade took place did the men come down and parade at a given hour?—Yes; half-past 9.
38. What was the general condition, as far as you could see, as to the personal cleanliness of the men?—The men were fairly clean.
39. Then, you think the habits of the men were sufficiently clean to prevent that being a factor in the outbreak of disease?—I should think so.
40. Did you pay any attention to a case which was reported of a Sergeant Tasker, said to be suffering with pneumonia, who lay in his hammock for three days?—I do not remember his name.
41. You personally never received a report that Tasker was lying in his hammock suffering from pneumonia, and that he was allowed to remain there?—Not that I remember.
42. Did you keep a record daily of the cases reported to you?—There was a morning sick-report. We had forms which were filled up each day.
43. And to whom were those forms given?—Surgeon-Major Pearlless, I think.
44. And did those forms give the names of the cases reported and their treatment?—Yes, the disease they were suffering from.
45. And their treatment?—That was entered on the dispenser's form. We simply used to tell the dispenser what to give the men.
46. Would your report say that the man was being treated in his hammock, or that he was committed to the hospital?—Yes; it would show whether he was admitted to the hospital or not.

47. So that the production of those forms would give the date when the men were reported sick, and the date they were taken into the hospital and treated?—Yes.

48. Then, by getting those forms we can ascertain how long Sergeant Tasker had been reported sick before he was finally treated?—I do not know where the forms are.

49. Would those forms be sent to the Defence Department on arrival here?—No, I do not think so.

50. What permanent record is kept of the men?—Surgeon-Major Pearless has his notes. We did not keep them; we simply reported to him.

51. You made up those reports daily?—Yes, every morning.

52. When you made up those reports yourself to whom did you hand them over?—I did not always hand them over. They were sometimes kept in my cabin and filed.

53. Then, the only record that there is of the treatment of the men are the notes kept by Surgeon-Major Pearless?—Yes; and one's memory.

54. We cannot ascertain from any documentary evidence to prove or disprove any of those statements which have been made by certain troopers?—The dispensers kept a record of what they made up.

55. The dispenser's book would only show what medicine was dispensed, and the date?—Yes.

56. You could not ascertain from the dispenser's book when the case was first reported?—He would probably have it dated; if medicine were ordered for the first time, then he would have the date, and if he were treated again he would also have the date.

57. But assuming a man reported himself, and you sent him back, as you say, under observation, would the dispenser have any record of that?—His name would be recorded on the sick-report.

58. Then, you think the dispenser's book will give us all the information in that connection?—No, I do not think that.

59. Where do you think the information can be got at all: can it be got anywhere except from the memory of the doctors, or the notes of Major Pearless?—Probably from Major Pearless's notes.

60. There was no such thing as what you might call a "log-book" or journal kept from day to day of the medical treatment of men by the medical officers?—Yes; there were two books.

61. Then, who has these?—I do not know.

62. Where were those books kept?—They were kept in the dispensary.

63. What were the books that were kept?—Large account-books.

64. Was that practically only a book to account for the drugs that were used?—No; an account of all the patients in the hospital.

65. Did that book contain the names of men who were not in the hospital?—No; that was only a hospital book. The men who were being treated outside the hospital were entered in the morning sick-parade report.

66. And who has got these reports, do you know?—I could not say.

67. Were there any orders given to hand over those reports to Surgeon-Major Pearless, or to any officer in command of the ship?—I believe not.

68. Did you ever find the atmosphere in the troop-decks what you might call "very thick" at night-time?—Well, it was fairly warm.

69. Was the atmosphere down there conducive to good health, or, on the contrary, would it conduce to the development of disease?—I was not very often down below. I merely did the hospital work in the mornings. I seldom attended the troop-decks, but the atmosphere was not too close.

70. From what you saw yourself, do you think the ventilation was sufficient?—I could not say as to the amount of cubic space in the troop-decks.

71. Do you know if the temperature was ever taken at any time in these troop-decks?—I could not say.

71A. You yourself never took it?—No.

72. *The Chairman.*] Supposing a man was brought to the hospital on Monday morning, what record would be made of his case—say that he had measles?—Well, he was admitted to the hospital, and his name was entered in the ward-book.

73. As suffering from measles?—Yes; and the diet and everything was entered.

74. When would the next entry be made about the man?—The same day, or possibly two entries might be made if two visits were paid to him.

75. Speaking of Sergeant Tasker, Sergeant-Major Cowell swore that he was taken to the hospital; that he was suffering from pneumonia; that he was refused admission to the hospital and was sent back to his hammock, and allowed to lie there for three days: did such a case come under your observation at all?—I do not remember his name at all. Dr. Rogers and I attended to the South Island men, and he might have been a North-Islander.

76. Do you believe that the administration of the hospital was such that it would be possible for a man to be in his hammock three days and three nights after he was reported ill without being taken into the hospital?—I do not think so. Every case in which a man was reported ill was attended to, as far as I know.

77. Then, of your own knowledge you can say nothing about Tasker?—No, I do not know anything about him.

78. And your general impression is that it is not possible?—I do not think it is possible, as if a man reported himself ill he would certainly be attended to.

79. Supposing a man was taken ill in the middle of the day, what course had he to pursue to get admission to the hospital?—He simply had to report. Anybody would take a message for him, and report to any surgeon.

80. Was there a surgeon on duty every day specially detailed?—Yes, sir.
81. Were his services available at any time?—Yes; or if he was not handy at the time somebody else would attend to him.
82. You say you went south immediately on arrival at Wellington?—Yes, sir.
83. How soon after?—I think it was at 6 o'clock that evening.
84. Who gave you leave to absent yourself from the "Britannic"?—I was told that I could go south.
85. By whom?—By Major Pearlless.
86. Do you know under whose care the sick were when the "Britannic" came alongside the wharf?—I believe they were handed over to the Health authorities here.
87. At what period?—I do not know exactly at what time of the day; after the Health officers came off, I think.
88. Before she came alongside the wharf?—I think so.
89. How do you come to be under that impression?—Because Dr. Pollen and Dr. Valintine had made arrangements, I believe, to take the sick off. They were going to take them off that night, but it came on to rain very heavily.
90. Then, do you imagine that the hospital orderlies and the medical men were absent from the "Britannic" because they believed that the sick were under the care of the Health Department?—We were told that we were at liberty to go after the Health authorities came off.
91. After the Health authorities came on to the steamer the medical men on board the "Britannic" thought their responsibilities for the sick on board had lapsed?—Yes.
92. About the meat: am I right in supposing you said that only on two occasions you found the meat looking mildewed?—Yes, twice.
93. Did you see it on any other occasions?—No; Captain Young took up those duties afterwards.
94. How often did you see it before you were relieved?—Perhaps for six or seven days; I am not sure exactly.
95. How often in a day?—Three times a day.
96. And never on any occasion except twice did you see anything wrong with the meat?—No.
97. Did you look carefully at it?—I examined every piece, first before it was cut up, and then after it was cut up.
98. And on these two occasions when the meat was bad did you yourself notice it, or was your attention drawn to it by others?—On one occasion I was asked to inspect two carcasses of mutton in the evening, I think.
99. That was one of the two occasions?—Yes.
100. Did the meat when it came under your observation first appear to have been properly frozen, or was it half-thawed, or was it in any way in bad condition?—It was very soft. It was chilled beef, and it was kept in the freezing-room, and about every four days they took a supply out, and kept it in a cool-room just off the butcher's shop.
101. Was the beef originally frozen beef?—No; it was chilled beef, and it was then frozen.
102. And then it was three or four days in course of thawing?—Yes.
103. Was that the invariable practice on board?—Yes.
104. Do you know the temperature the cool-room was at all?—No, I do not.
105. Was it below or above freezing-point?—It was below freezing-point I should say. There were blocks of ice there.
106. During the time it was your duty to see to the meat are you aware of any separate carcasses being reserved for the officers?—No; I believe that the meat was issued impartially. As far as I know, there was nothing reserved.
107. Were you satisfied with the quality of the meat on the officers' table?—Yes; it was excellent meat.
108. And you feel sure that the same quality of meat was served to the men as was served to the officers?—Yes; I saw the whole day's supply cut up.

FRIDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Sergeant-Major CALVERT sworn and examined. (No. 74.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—George Gordon Calvert.
2. What is your rank?—Sergeant-major.
3. Which regiment?—The 1st regiment.
4. Were you on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.
5. What rank did you hold on board the "Britannic"?—Sergeant-major.
6. Had you any special duties in connection with the issue of meat on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir; I was present when the meat was being cut up for the troops, and when it was being brought out of the hold.
7. How often were you on duty?—Every day, sir.
8. When did you first see the meat?—On the 9th of the month.
9. But what period of the day did you first see the meat?—I saw the breakfast-meat, which was cut up at night; then the dinner-meat, and that for tea.
10. Did you see it when it came out of the refrigerator?—Yes, sir; that was about every third or fourth day, when they got it out of the chamber.
11. When the meat came out of the refrigerating-chamber what condition did it appear in?—Very fair, with the exception of five sheep and two quarters of beef.
12. When did you take the duties over?—On the 9th.

13. Three days after you left?—Yes.

14. And after that, during the whole voyage, you had two quarters of beef and five sheep condemned: what was the condition of that meat?—It was mildewed, and I did not consider it was fit for the troops' galley.

15. What does "mildewed" indicate: is it a sign that it has been badly thawed, or that the meat is tainted, or what?—Well, I fancy it must have been before it was taken into the refrigerator at all.

16. You think that it was not in good condition when it was put into the refrigerator?—Yes, sir, in those particular cases.

17. But the other meat?—The other meat was pretty fair.

18. Did it present a wholesome appearance when it came out of the refrigerator?—Yes, sir.

19. What happened to it after that?—It was taken to a cool-store.

20. How long was it, as a rule, in the cool-store?—It was brought out of the refrigerator about every three days.

21. Then, some of the meat would be thawed for two or three days before it was used?—No, sir. The cool-chamber was down to freezing-point.

22. They still retained it frozen?—Yes, sir.

23. When it came out of the cool-chamber what happened to the meat?—It was cut up and sent to the galley.

24. Was it cut before it was thawed or after it was thawed?—It was allowed to thaw for about twelve hours.

25. Was it cut up in your presence?—Yes, sir.

26. You saw it almost every day?—Yes.

27. Was any of the meat which you saw cut up to be served out to the men bad in quality?—Not that I saw cut up.

28. If it had been bad in quality do you think you would have seen it?—Yes; one day there was a quarter of beef cut up, and I at once called the attention of Dr. Bauchop to it.

29. And what was done with that?—It was thrown overboard.

30. Did you see meat green at any time served out to the men?—No, sir. The day before I was put on there was bad meat which went to the cook-house. I did not have any myself, but complaints had been made to Colonel Davies, and Major Polson sent up for me and asked me if I would take up the duties.

31. And are you qualified by former practice to have anything to do with the meat?—I had about ten years' experience in the trade.

32. In butchering?—Yes; I was slaughterman.

33. Have you ever been in a refrigerating-works?—Only in the bacon-curing line, sir. Otherwise I have had nothing to do with the freezer.

34. And you have been ten years in the meat trade?—Yes.

35. And you think your experience in the meat trade would enable you to detect bad meat if it was put before you?—Yes, sir.

36. Do you know if Veterinary Captain Young made any inspection of the meat?—Yes; Dr. Bauchop was on first, and then Captain Young came. Captain Young was there when every piece of meat was taken out of the butcher's shop and sent up to the cook-house. Captain Young was always present.

37. And Captain Young attended regularly to his business?—Yes, sir.

38. Then, statements that have been made that the great bulk of the meat was tainted would be untrue?—It is not true, sir.

39. Did the meat deteriorate in cooking after it had been thawed and cut up: did it then appear bad?—No; unless on this particular occasion that I have alluded to.

40. You are quite sure that after you yourself were appointed to inspect the meat, that no bad meat ever went into consumption?—Yes, sir.

41. *Mr. McNab.* Would you be present when the separation of the meat was made to the officers' galley and to the men's galley?—Yes; the meat for the officers' galley was cut up and sent up to the saloon galley, and then to the troop's galley. There was no actual selecting at all.

42. Then, they had the first meat that came?—Yes, sir.

43. And you can say emphatically that the meat the men got was the same meat that the officers got?—Yes, exactly.

44. Would it have been possible after you had been over the meat for any person to have smuggled away the best of the stuff intended for the men and taken it to the officers' galley?—No; there were men working in the cook-house belonging to the troopers, and I told them to take particular notice to see that there was none of it went to the saloon galley from the troopers' galley, and I made inquiries from time to time and they told me that it never happened.

45. Do I understand you to mean that in the butcher's shop there were men drawn from the troops?—Yes; both in the butcher's shop and in the galley. There was a butcher working constantly in the butcher's shop, and then there were a couple of troopers working in the galley.

46. So that they would have been party to any arrangement of picking?—Yes.

47. Had you anything to do with the weight of the meat that was supplied day by day?—The weights of the quarters and the sheep were marked on them.

48. And what were your instructions about the quantity of meat that was to be issued per day?—1½ lb.

49. And was it part of your duties to see that this 1½ lb. was issued for them?—Yes; Major Polson told me to see that the right quantity was taken to the cook-house. Of course, if there was tinned meat issued—which was issued very often, or if complaint had been made about the fresh meat—there was only 1 lb. allowed. But when fresh meat was issued 1½ lb. was allowed.

50. And you can give evidence before the Commission that from your own knowledge, and carrying out the instructions given to you, you saw that when no tinned meats were issued  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of meat was issued to the men, and that when tinned meat was issued 1 lb. was issued per day?—Yes, sir.

51. *The Chairman.*] On the days they got fresh meat for breakfast and dinner did they get tinned meat for tea, or what?—I will just quote from my notes for the first few days. On the 9th July there was a total issue of 1,186 lb. of meat.

52. Was that all fresh?—No; 216 lb. of that was tinned meat. The following day there were 660 lb. issued for dinner of fresh meat, and 228 lb. issued for tea of preserved meat, and for breakfast there were 310 lb. of meat issued—a total of 1,198 lb.

53. Have you got particulars of the meat issued every day?—No, sir; not with me. I have it in another pocket-book. I will supply you with full particulars later. (The list of meats served is as follows:—July 13—breakfast, bacon; dinner and tea, fresh beef, 916 lb. July 14—breakfast, dinner, and tea, fresh beef, 1,140 lb. July 15—breakfast and dinner, fresh beef, 950 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 216 lb. July 16—breakfast, fish; dinner and tea, fresh beef, 920 lb. July 17—breakfast, dinner, and tea, fresh beef, 1,140 lb. July 18—breakfast, bacon; dinner, fresh beef, 650 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 216 lb. July 19—breakfast and dinner, fresh beef, 925 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 216 lb. July 25—breakfast, fish; dinner, fresh beef, 620 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 216 lb. July 26—breakfast, fresh beef, 275 lb.; dinner, ling (condemned and replaced with preserved beef); tea, cheese. July 27—at Melbourne. July 28—breakfast, bacon; dinner, fresh beef, 600 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 252 lb. July 29—breakfast and dinner, fresh beef, 920 lb.; tea, preserved beef, 216 lb.)

54. Can you give us any other date?—Yes. On the 11th there was issued for breakfast 320 lb. of fresh meat; dinner, 650 lb. of fresh meat; and tea, 230 lb. of fresh meat. It was all fresh meat that day—a total of 1,200 lb. Those are the only three days I have down in this book.

55. Those are not selected days—they are just chance days?—They are the first three days after I took charge.

56. And you feel sure that the meat issued subsequently was of similar quantity?—Yes, sir; within a few pounds each day.

57. Who ordered you to do this duty?—Major Polson.

58. Were you paid by the ship for doing this work?—No, sir.

59. You got no extra pay?—No, sir.

60. *Colonel Davies.*] Have you been out in any other contingent?—Yes; the Fifth, sir.

61. What was your opinion of the discipline on board the “Britannic”?—I consider it was very good, sir.

62. As good as you have been accustomed to seeing?—Yes, sir.

63. *Captain Lewin.*] Were you present at the time those blankets were issued by Quartermaster-Sergeant McDonnell?—Yes, sir.

64. Will you please tell the Commission in what state the blankets were?—The blankets looked all very nice and clean. They were folded up, and done up in bundles of ten.

65. Were there any new blankets amongst them?—Yes, there were some new blankets.

66. *The Chairman.*] Do you believe any of the blankets were lousy that were served out to the men?—Well, they did not look like it, sir.

67. When did you first hear complaints of there being lice on the blankets?—Right from the very commencement.

68. The next day, for instance?—Yes, right from the commencement.

69. Do you believe they were lousy, or do you believe the lice were brought on board by other people?—Well, I do not think they could possibly be rid of the lice when they came on board, as they had the same clothes as they had been wearing on the veldt, and it is impossible to keep free from lice.

70. What was the condition of the blankets when they were served?—Well, they looked to me to be very clean.

71. Have you an opinion as to whether there was lice on them or not?—Well, I would not be prepared to swear that lice were on them; there might have been some blankets with some on.

72. Did you find any trace of lice on your own blankets?—I had ship's blankets issued to me; but I got new blankets to come on the boat with that I got when leaving the hospital at Elandsfontein; otherwise I think the blankets were all that could be desired. They were far better than the blankets issued on the “Tagus.”

73. *Mr. McNab.*] Would you have passed the blankets that you saw issued as being clean?—Yes, sir.

Colonel DAVIES re-examined. (No. 75.)

74. *The Chairman.*] Do you wish to bring any further evidence, or to submit any evidence as to the quality of the meat, or as to the accommodation, or as to the ventilation, or as to the discipline on board the “Britannic”?—No, sir. I am perfectly satisfied that everything was done, both by my officers and by the ship's officers, that it was possible to do for the health and comfort of the troops. I am also perfectly satisfied that the discipline of the Eighth Contingent was as good, if not better, than any contingent that ever left New Zealand. But, if you wish, I would be perfectly prepared to call the whole of the officers and the rest of the non-commissioned officers and men of the brigade, as I am satisfied that you have only heard the few growlers. I should like to say that the men who work are not the men who growl, and that the men who growled in this instance are the men—most of them—who have not seen anything; they have just been over for a week or two and done nothing—they are, in fact, men who have not done any work.

75. Can you explain to the Commission at what period the control of the patients in the hospital passed from the officers under your command to the Health Department?—I should say

as soon as the Health Department had inspected the men on board ; certainly as soon as the vessel came alongside, because at that time the Health Department ordered certain men to be sent to the Hospital and certain men to go to Somes Island, which was clearly taking them out of the hands of my medical officers.

76. Then, the fact of the orderlies being allowed to proceed on shore may be attributed to the fact that the medical officers believed their responsibilities had ceased, and the Health Department had taken the men in charge?—I think, if there was any hitch at that time, sir, it was caused by a misunderstanding between the two—each thought the other was in charge. The South Island orderlies had to go south by the boat the afternoon we came in.

77. And the medical officers, when did their employment cease?—They are all paid by the Imperial authorities to the 13th August—forty days after embarkation.

78. But were they at liberty to go?—They were not at liberty to leave the ship until they disposed of their patients. It was the duty of the Principal Medical Officer to see that these patients were handed over to the Health Department, undoubtedly.

79. Do you think there was at any time any formal taking over by the Health Department?—Nothing more than the fact of their coming on board and inspecting the whole of the men, and giving instructions as to what was to be done immediately the ship came alongside. That, I take it, was taking charge.

80. *Mr. McNab.*] Would it be an advantage to the officer commanding returning troops if the men of any bearer corps or ambulance corps could be put into his hospital when the vessel lands, and take charge of the sick soldiers at once?—Certainly, I think it would be of advantage to have trained men of a bearer corps available, to be at the call either of the military medical staff officers at each port or under orders from the Health Department.

81. Which do you think would be preferable—the military or the Health Department?—Well, naturally I think the military ought to deal with military.

82. There is a question, then, of the discipline of the men going on board to take charge?—I do not think there is any difficulty about that. It was not that which occurred to me. It would be of immense benefit to the colony to have a well-trained bearer corps in each centre, and to give them plenty of work, not only for the ships, but on other occasions.

83. Under the present system there is this disadvantage: that hospital orderlies who may be southern men may be compelled to wait for some time after their mates had got away home to the South, through their not being relieved by a military ambulance or bearer corps when the steamer arrives?—Such a thing might occur, but I do not think anything of that sort should have occurred. I am not aware that there were not plenty of orderlies available when the vessel was alongside.

84. Would the day-to-day returns in the hospital come under your knowledge: would they be put in your possession?—Nothing more than simply the list of sick men, with their complaints, was shown to me. This list was shown to me every day.

85. You could not tell us whether we could get possession of a list of the men who were reported ill in the hospital from time to time?—Yes; from the Principal Medical Officer, unless he destroyed them. The list was made out every day and shown to me.

86. You do not know whether it would be in any of his duties to deposit that report in the Volunteer office in this colony, or whether it went back to the Old Country?—They did not belong to the Defence Forces of this colony; therefore the records would not necessarily be handed in.

Dr. MASON re-examined. (No. 76.)

87. *The Chairman.*] At what period do you consider the responsibility of the Health officers for the welfare of the patients on board the "Britannic" was transferred to them from the medical officers on board the ship?—As soon as the invalids were put on board the tug to be taken from the ship to the island or the shore.

88. You think that no responsibility devolved on the Department till then?—There could be no responsibility until then. We could not interfere with the internal economy of the ship.

89. There is evidence that certain men were ordered to go to the Hospital, and certain men to Somes Island; the men were inspected by the officials of the Health Department, and some were ordered to Hospital: was not that assuming control of the sick on board the ship?—It is, in a sense, if that was done; the command would be given on board the ship, but until the patients were put on board the tug no responsibility could be attached to us. We are responsible immediately they are handed over the side, and the responsibility of sending some to Somes Island and some to the Hospital would be ours.

90. What I want to arrive at is when the medical officers who had been in charge of the patients had a right to consider that their responsibilities had been removed from them?—When they saw their men on land, and not until then. There would be a divided responsibility while they were being carried from the ship to the land. There is no special ruling on that particular point.

91. There has evidently been confusion, and what we want to arrive at is how that confusion arose. The Health Department will admit that they issued orders to the men to proceed to the hospital on board the "Britannic"?—Yes.

92. Was not that assuming control of the sick?—I do not think so. All that the Health Department was permitted to do was to take charge of the sick after they left the ship. There could have been no confusion in the minds of the Health officials. It would have been the first time in my knowledge if they had interfered with the treatment on board.

93. The original intention, I understand, was that the men should disembark the day she came alongside the wharf?—That would be the ordinary procedure in every case where a vessel arrives with sickness on board.



94. Were not the original orders that the patients were to be disembarked the day she came alongside the wharf?—That would be a general instruction from me to the Health officers under me. But they are allowed perfect latitude. For instance, had our arrangements not been complete—and it is not always easy to arrange exact accommodation, as you do not know how many sick may be on board—it would be a wrong thing for any officer to land sick men until he knew they could be better looked after than on board the ship. If he had not everything ready I should certainly condemn his action in landing invalids.

95. Could the medical officer in charge of the troops prevent the disembarkation of the men?—He could enter a protest if he had any objections, and it would have gone before the Minister. The troops would have been landed all the same, though, if the Health authorities thought it best for their welfare.

96. Even if the senior medical officer had protested the Health Department would have done what it thought advisable?—Yes.

97. Does not that imply that the Health Department was virtually in charge of the sick men on board the ship?—Not at all, sir.

98. Did the medical officer in charge of the sick on board the “*Britannic*” ever at any time say to you, as principal Health officer, that he considered the responsibility had passed to you from him?—Not at all, sir.

99. Did you ever at any period of the transshipment of the patients formally relieve him of any responsibility in the matter?—No, sir.

100. It would appear from the evidence that has come before me that there was a time when no one seemed to be aware who was responsible for the men, and I want to try and arrive at who was to blame for that?—Well, from my point of view, there is no doubt that it was the surgeon in charge of the troops.

101. *Mr. Millar.*] Were you on board the “*Britannic*” at all, Dr. Mason?—Not at all, sir.

102. What officers of your Department did go on board?—Dr. Pollen and Dr. Valintine, the Port Health Officer, and the District Health Officer for Wellington.

103. Do you know at what time the patients were supposed to leave the “*Britannic*”?—I do not know, except by second-hand knowledge; that would be in their reports to me.

104. Have you read that arrangements had been made to take the men into hospital that night?—I did not.

105. You did not know that it was the original intention to transfer the sick to the Hospital and to *Somes Island* on the same day she arrived here?—No, I do not.

106. Would Dr. Valintine be able to give us that information?—Yes.

107. We have had evidence that the patients were left in the hospital without any attention at all during the whole night the “*Britannic*” was at the wharf, and you do not think that the Health Department was in any way responsible?—Not at all. Had there been any suggestion that they had wanted us to look after the patients we would certainly have done it, but it would have been the first time that we had done so.

108. I suppose you were aware that it was the intention to disembark the whole of the *South Island* men on that night?—That was the impression I had.

109. Therefore if there were any *South Island* orderlies in the hospital they would go along with their mates?—Well, an orderly is not supposed to leave his work because of an impression. He should get an order from his commanding officer first.

110. And if his commanding officer told him he was to go?—Then, I should say that the surgeon in charge was acting wrongly in dismissing his orderlies because of an impression.

111. The surgeon in charge says his opinion was that the Health Department at Dr. Pollen’s visit had practically taken control of the ship, and had ordered men into the hospital: do you think that the surgeon was wrong in coming to that conclusion?—I think so, most decidedly.

112. We have evidence that the Principal Medical Officer on board gave authority to the other medical men that they could go, as they were finished on board, and some of them did leave?—Well, all I can say is that the ordinary procedure is for a doctor to see that his patients were being looked after before he left them. I would not leave a patient until I knew somebody else was going to look after him. If there was anything in writing relieving me of the care of the patient I might go at once.

113. If I am to judge by Dr. Pollen’s evidence I can come to no other conclusion but that the Health Department had assumed the control at the time he went on board?—Well, he conveyed an impression which the head of the Department certainly would not.

114. As soon as ever your officers came to the conclusion that certain persons should go to *island*, did they not make arrangements for their transport?—I understand they set about finding when it would be convenient and safe to land the patients. That would be their duty.

115. And arranged for their transport?—Yes. Perhaps Dr. Valintine would be better able to speak about that.

116. If the transport was fixed for that night, and the medical officer on board the ship thought his patients were to be transferred that night, could that medical officer be blamed if he told his staff they could be relieved from duty?—I can only say that if I were in the same place I would see that my sick men were looked after before I left them. I would not go away on being told. I would have to be formally relieved. Certainly I would not dismiss the orderlies before the sick were landed, as their help would be required in landing the sick.

117. From your knowledge of what has transpired, do you not think it advisable to draw out a regulation to make it absolutely clear at what time your Department takes over the control of the sick?—I am quite willing to issue such an instruction, but for this I should not have conceived it necessary.

118. *Mr. McNab.*] Supposing, doctor, that a vessel came in and, for some cause or another, you had to order the vessel into quarantine, what is the custom in regard to quarantine? Do you as a Public Health Department staff that vessel with medical men, or do the medical men go into quarantine with the vessel and continue the treatment of their passengers in quarantine?—The ship's surgeon always goes into quarantine to look after his patients. We do not staff the ship with medical men. Nor do they in any part of the world that I know of.

119. Then, are we to understand that it is only on special occasions that you send medical men into quarantine with a vessel that has incurred quarantine?—We have never done so before. It is only when we land them, then we look after their well-being; but on board ship we never interfere with their treatment unless some public-health aspect crops up—if, for instance, small-pox was on board.

120. That is the world-wide treatment of quarantine?—Yes; not only in this colony, but everywhere else that I have been.

121. You take out some of the passengers as being liable to quarantine—following that rule you have stated as being universal—and your liability only comes in when you have actually taken physical possession of the patient?—Quite so. Our position is not so much to look after the invalid as to protect the rest of the colony from infection; and if we put a ship into quarantine the surgeon on board always remains and looks after his own sick men. We should not think of interfering with his treatment; and if you would not interfere with his treatment I do not see that we have a right to interfere in anything else.

Dr. Mason added the following to his evidence:—

"The ship herself could only go where, and lie where, the Port Health Officer directed. The captain of the ship would have to take his orders from the Health Officer—that is, unless he chose to go out to sea again. Surgeon-Major King did not consider he was relieved of his responsibility with regard to the 'Orient' troopers. As a matter of fact, he is now in attendance upon the invalid at Mahanga Bay."

MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

WILLIAM NELSON, Esq., sworn and examined. (No. 77.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—William Nelson.
2. And your calling?—I am manager of Nelson Bros.' Tomoana Freezing-works.
3. How long have you been acquainted with the trade in this colony and in England?—For twenty years.
4. Statements have been made before the Commission by several witnesses that the frozen meat on board the "Britannic" was tainted. Before I go any further I would like to ask you if your firm supplied any meat to the "Britannic"?—No, we did not.
5. You can have no personal interest in the matter?—No.
6. Would you tell us whether meat coming out of a refrigerator would be likely to be tainted, or whether it would be possible for a certain percentage of carcasses to be tainted and the others not to be tainted? In fact, if you would make a statement as to the curing of meat by the frozen process and the probability of its becoming tainted it would be of service to the Commission. This question refers to both beef and mutton?—Of course, it depends whether they say there was a trace of something wrong about the beef, or whether they say that the beef was bad as a whole. There is a very great difference between the two statements. The best evidence that I can possibly give with regard to it is on the assumption that it is New Zealand meat, and of my absolute knowledge of the percentage of New Zealand meat which, during my twenty years' experience, I have known to be damaged. In regard to the experience of my own meat during the last two years out of shipments of something like seventy to eighty thousand quarters of beef, the only question raised in regard to it has referred to something like half a dozen quarters, and even that charge was not substantiated. Beyond that, although I cannot speak with absolute knowledge about shipments from the rest of the colony as I can with regard to our own company, I know that from the large consignments our company has handled in London the amount of damaged meat is practically nominal. It therefore appears very improbable that any beef supplied from New Zealand could by any means be described as "putrid" or unfit for consumption. If the meat passed through London, then the Board of Trade would have condemned any such meat long before it would have got to the "Britannic." With reference to mutton, I should think that in New Zealand the question of bad mutton is almost an unknown thing. I have practically no knowledge of anything bad in connection with it. If the meat on the "Britannic" came from Australian ports, of course I could not make an absolute assertion that it could not have been bad meat; but there, again, our company in London handles very large quantities of their meat, and, although ten years ago it used not to be an uncommon thing to have bad meat, it has become very uncommon of late years. I should think it has become so uncommon that it would be impossible for the "Britannic" to get possession of enough stores to carry all her troops for the voyage that you could possibly condemn. If the fault lay with her own chamber, by allowing it to get too high a temperature, the whole of the meat would have become so bad, that it would all have to be thrown overboard; the whole lot would have been absolutely uneatable. There could have been no half-measures about it.
7. Then, generally speaking, you would say that you cannot believe the meat would be bad on board ship?—It is extremely improbable, and almost impossible.
8. Could you give us a short explanation of what "bone-stink" is, and how that would affect a quarter of beef?—Yes; all that I have already said is based upon my own knowledge that "bone-

stink," either in beef or mutton, must of necessity be created before that meat is frozen, as once the meat is frozen anything of the kind is arrested. The complaint known to the trade as "bone-stink" commences in the centre of the joint, and it cannot possibly commence after the joint is frozen. After the meat is once frozen anything wrong must then commence from the outside, and not from the inside.

9. Would it be possible for so much meat to be bought at Home by an unscrupulous contractor, and stored away for selling wholesale to transports?—No, it would not be possible. The Board of Trade would prevent that, as they are very exacting. They pass no meat which is palpably wrong.

10. Do you know anything of the shipment of frozen meat on board transports? How is it passed? Do you know who puts it on board?—I do not know that.

11. Is it probable that a man who has been in the butchering trade, or that a veterinary surgeon who professes to be specially qualified in hygiene, would see frozen meat issued every day without distinguishing which was bad, if it was so: is it easy to distinguish bad meat in its uncooked condition?—He would have no difficulty whatever.

12. If it appeared daily before a competent man, cut up into joints, it would be impossible that he should be mistaken?—Oh, quite.

13. And that applies to the veterinary surgeon?—Certainly.

14. And what about the butcher—the man who had been in the trade for ten or twelve years?—Yes; he would know, certainly.

15. Can you give us any idea of the percentage in mutton that would have "bone-stink"?—Practically none. It is almost an unknown thing. Out of some millions of sheep I have not heard of it.

16. Is it reasonable to suppose that meat which went on board properly frozen was fit for human consumption?—I feel certain that it must have been.

17. *Mr. Millar.*] If evidence were given that sides of beef were brought up out of the freezing-chamber green, and thrown overboard, would that meat have been bad before it was put in the freezing-chamber at all?—Assuming it to be frozen meat, and presuming that it was all right when it was put in the freezer, I should say, very distinctly, that either every quarter must have been in the same condition or there was no such quarter as you suggest in the chamber.

18. It has been admitted by everybody that on one occasion a side of beef was thrown overboard as being green and unfit for food?—Of course, there are such a number of things that happen on board ship. A quarter of beef may have been taken out of the store, and it may not have been thrown overboard the moment it came out of the store; it may have been lying about for a time.

19. My object in asking that question was to find out whether it would be possible for such a thing to have taken place in a freezing-chamber without the rest of the meat being affected?—I should say that, if one quarter is absolutely bad, every quarter in the place must have been bad. There would not be any fit to eat.

20. Would chilled meat be more likely to suffer than frozen meat?—Yes, it would.

21. Have you any knowledge of what inspection goes on at the Cape?—No, I have not.

22. So that if a direct shipment of chilled meat had gone from Buenos Ayres to the Cape, would that meat be under the same rigid inspection as if it were under the Board of Trade in England?—That I have no knowledge of. I know nothing of Cape lines. Chilled beef is much more liable to have something wrong with it than frozen meat.

23. *The Chairman.*] How long can they keep meat chilled?—If it is scientifically carried out it can be kept chilled several months, but it wants enormous care.

24. *Mr. Millar.*] Would a veterinary surgeon or a competent medical authority when seeing meat cut up be able to discover "bone-stink" in a quarter of beef?—Yes; there is absolutely no question about that when you get to it.

25. Could meat which appeared green on the outside be fit for human consumption? Yes; it does not necessarily condemn a joint because it is very much discoloured. It may be green and black, and all kinds of colours, and still be fit to eat, as the process of freezing has a different effect upon fat meat as against lean meat. Lean meat often looks discoloured where fat meat shows no symptoms of discolouration.

26. *The Chairman.*] How many sheep does your firm handle in the course of a year?—One and a half to two millions.

27. And how many quarters of beef?—I should say from four to five hundred thousand quarters of beef.

## EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE TRANSPORT "ORIENT."

MONDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1902.

Corporal MACKENZIE sworn and examined. (No. 78.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your Christian name and surname?—John Murdoch Mackenzie.
2. Did you belong to either of the contingents?—The Ninth Contingent.
3. What rank?—Corporal.
4. What ship did you return in?—The "Orient."
5. What was your occupation before you went with the contingent?—Farmer, sir.
6. You have volunteered to give evidence before this Commission, I understand: are they with regard to complaints as to accommodation, or what?—The accommodation was crowded, sir.
7. Will you state what has come under your own observation?—Well, as regards the food, I was in charge of the table. The corporal was always at the head of a table. Some of the tables had sixteen, some eighteen, and so on. The table I was at had, say, sixteen men. Some of the tables did not have as many as they should have. The food in the first place was short, and in the second place it was bad food. We would get porridge in the morning, for instance, and we would get a dessertspoonful a man. We would get stew—it was meant to be an Irish stew—but it was mostly water; there was a little meat and a few potatoes in it. We were supposed to have sausages on certain evenings, and we got one sausage to one man. The orderly officer, when complained to, said, "Oh, well, give a big sausage to a big man, and a little sausage to a little man."
8. Who was he?—Captain Henderson.
9. That was for supper?—Yes. We had pork at certain times, or what was once pork. It was mostly thrown out of the portholes by the men.
10. Was this fresh pork?—It was salt pork—bacon, I suppose they would call it.
11. What did you yourself call it?—Well, it was bacon unfit to eat. It was rotten and smelt high. The butter was often put out the porthole. The bread was fairly good. We had five loaves to sixteen men. We complained about that, and got a little more. I think it was half a loaf extra. We could get good food by buying it. Speaking for myself, the only real meal I had on board was what I bought. There was a complaint made to Colonel Abbott between Albany and Melbourne, and the food improved for about two days. The men were disheartened at complaining to the orderly officers, because the orderly officers would argue with them that they were getting good food, and told them that they were getting good butter, when the men knew that it was bad. They knew what good butter was. They often argued that the food was good when the men complained about it. They would sometimes tell the men to go up to the cooks' galley and get fresh food, and they would return without it. The ship's quartermaster was there and they could not get it. As regards sleeping-room at my table, there was room for about nine men to sleep in hammocks above the table. The other seven had to sleep where they could. Some of them would sleep on the tables, some under the tables, and some on the paths leading past, and some on the forms, wherever they could. Some of the men who were sleeping in the passages would be trodden on by men coming down with their hobnailed boots. You could not go up on deck without walking over sleeping men. Between the table and the forms you would have to sleep sideways. The men were very much crowded at the table when having their meals. The mess orderlies at my table always had to stand up until some one was done. Some of the men had to sleep on the deck, some in the wash-house, and wherever they could sleep. First when we went on board, when the sailors came round in the morning they wet the men's blankets before they were awake. When the men got the blankets wet they were put straight down into the hold, and they were told that there would not be any fresh issue of blankets, so men had to sleep in their clothes or their overcoats. Some men would have been glad to do a little thing, but for the disgrace, to have been put in the cells to get good sleeping-accommodation and food.
12. Have you anything to say about the hospital orderlies?—The hospital orderlies did their work as well as they could.
13. Do you wish to complain generally of the discipline?—No, sir. I think the discipline was very good. The men were ordered not to go near the crew's quarters, and they did not get near. The officers used the promenade deck for themselves and the sergeants, and very seldom a man went across that promenade deck, although they were so crowded, and had only the poop deck to themselves.
14. With regard to the food being short, you say you got five loaves for sixteen men: what was the weight of the loaf?—I could not say.
15. Have you any idea of the weight of bread that each man got?—I do not know, sir.
16. Did he get a ration of 1 lb.?—I do not think so. I could not say definitely.
17. Were there any biscuits issued to the men?—There was a box now and again left on the troop-deck, and the men could help themselves. There were five hundred men on the troop-deck, and before they could all get there the biscuits would all be gone.
18. How often were the biscuits put there?—About every two or three days.
19. Was the box of biscuits more often full than empty?—More often empty when I went for them. I had not a show to get near them.
20. What quality was the biscuits?—Well, I could not say—just an ordinary case of biscuits.
21. Were they good biscuits?—They were bad for nourishment—just dry; just flour and water.

22. What do they generally make biscuits of?—The biscuits that we generally got at the front were twice as good. If we could only have got bully beef and biscuits we would have been satisfied.

23. What contingent were you in?—The Ninth, sir.

24. How long were you on the veldt?—From the 27th April, when we landed, and we sailed from Durban on the 10th July.

25. And how long were you on the veldt?—All that time.

26. Were you actively engaged at all?—Not altogether, sir.

27. Were you ever under fire?—No, sir, only just sniping.

28. What was the usual breakfast you had on board?—I do not remember exactly. There was porridge—about a dessertspoonful a man—and then I think there was a little meat and potatoes. We could not eat the potatoes.

29. What was the matter with them?—They were not altogether rotten, but they were yellow, and had a nasty taste about them.

30. Not as good as the potatoes you would get here?—Not as good as pigs' potatoes that are given to pigs in New Zealand.

31. What was the size of them?—About  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. through.

32. Larger than an ordinary marble?—Yes. It was a big potato we got if it was the size of a small hen's egg.

33. You had porridge, and stew, and bread and biscuits for breakfast?—We never had any biscuits. We had never enough of them. They were for between meals. They were for the men between meals, so that they could get a snack in the evening. It was very seldom there were enough. They used to carry the biscuits about in their pockets and chew them as they went. The biscuits were eaten up greedily.

34. They could not get as many biscuits as they liked?—They could not, sir.

35. Did you get jam or butter?—We got butter.

36. Any jam?—We could buy jam.

37. There was none supplied to you?—There was a little jam supplied.

38. Did you always get butter or jam—one or the other?—We always got butter every day.

39. And jam some days?—Yes.

40. And some days you had butter and jam?—Yes; some of them would get a slice of bread-and-jam when it was issued, and that would be the last you would see of it.

41. And then for dinner what did you get?—We got soup. No tea or coffee, or anything.

42. You used to get soup?—Yes; that was good, although it was thin; meat and potatoes, and some sort of beans that were never eaten.

43. Why not?—I do not know why it was.

44. Did you try them yourself: what was the matter with them?—They had a taste that few men could eat them.

45. Were they bad?—I could not say, because it was a bean I never saw before, and I knew nothing about them. I know the men would not eat them.

46. Were the beans in any way bad, do you think?—Well, it is hard to say whether the bean was bad or not. They had an offensive smell, but some beans have that when they are good.

47. You had soup, and meat, and beans, and potatoes: what else did you have?—Nothing else that I remember.

48. Never any puddings?—Some days we had puddings.

49. What were they?—Plum-puddings—a very small piece a man.

50. How often?—I think, on Wednesdays and Sundays.

51. Did you ever get rice?—Sometimes there was rice in the stew.

52. You never had rice and apples, or rice and tapioca?—Yes, we had something like that. It seemed to be a mixture. There was about a dessertspoonful to a man.

53. How often did they get that?—Once or twice a week.

54. Was there any day in the week when they did not get pudding?—Yes, sir, I think so.

55. Did they get meat again in the evening?—They would get one sausage one man, and the bit of pork, which was rather bad.

56. Was it hot or cold?—It was hot.

57. Were you obliged to eat cold meat?—If we got a good bit of meat we would save it until it was cold.

58. Was the quality of the meat bad?—Yes; I never tasted anything like it in New Zealand. It was tough and almost indigestible.

59. What other meat did you get?—We got roast meat, that was mostly fresh and wholesome. We could eat that; it was good meat.

60. How often did you get roast meat?—Those tables which were supplied first usually got the roast meat. The sergeants and non-commissioned officers were mostly supplied first, and therefore the men very seldom got roast meat.

61. You got potatoes how often?—Once a day.

62. You got none for dinner?—Yes.

63. You said you got potatoes in the morning?—Yes; there was a potato put in the stew.

64. What was the quality of the bread?—The bread was fairly good.

65. And did you buy food on board the ship?—Yes; but we did not know who the men were.

66. Where did you buy it—at the men's galley or the saloon galley?—Well, I do not know where the saloon galley was, but it seemed to be from the galley where the men's food came from.

67. What sort of food was it?—Fried chops and potatoes—and those potatoes were good—and onions. We could buy cakes or buns and a cup of tea.

68. How much did you pay on each occasion?—Well, for a couple of chops and potatoes, 1s.; a cup of tea, 3d.; cup of tea and cakes, 6d.

69. How many do you think bought food?—Large numbers of them; it would be impossible to give an estimate.

70. More than a hundred?—Yes, more than a hundred. Whoever had money when they left Durban spent most of it in buying food, as far as I could notice.

71. You say that between Melbourne and New Zealand complaint was made?—Complaints were made to Colonel Abbott. They got a fish for tea and paraded with it, and Colonel Abbott heard of it, and he came down.

72. Did you yourself make a complaint about the food?—Yes, sir; to the orderly officer.

73. Who was he?—There was a fresh orderly officer every day.

74. Can you give us a specific instance when you complained to an orderly officer?—Most of the officers we did not know by name.

75. You cannot give me any instance where you made an official complaint to an officer?—Well, I do not like to give it. He is a young officer, and I would rather not mention his name.

76. You are compelled to give his name?—Well, one night when we had pork it was as bad as usual, and I complained to a young officer, Mr. Sandle. He looked at the pork and smelt it, and said, "It is very high," and passed on.

77. Do you imagine that he did nothing more in the matter?—No, I cannot imagine that he did any more; that is as far as he went.

78. You feel sure that he took no further steps?—That was the last we heard of it.

79. Was the pork bad afterwards?—Yes, sir.

80. He took no further steps?—I do not know; but I can say that the pork did not improve on any future occasion.

81. About the accommodation: you say there was only room for nine men, and seven had to sleep wherever they could?—Yes. Some of the hooks that were above the passage were claimed by the sergeants.

82. How many hooks were there available for the men?—At my table there were nine. That was all the table used.

83. Were there any others beside the nine?—No, sir.

84. How far were the hooks apart?—18 in. apart, but that is a guess.

85. Your table was about 12 ft. long?—Hardly.

86. Was there only space over the table for men to hang their hammocks?—Yes.

87. How wide was it between the tables and the ship?—About 9 ft.

88. You are quite sure there were no hooks for the other seven men to hang their hammocks on if they had chosen to hang them?—No, sir. The hooks at the end of the tables were claimed by the tables opposite them, and rightfully so.

89. Am I to understand that not much more than half the number could hang their hammocks?—At my table that was so, sir.

90. And at the other tables?—Yes, sir, not many more.

91. You say there was no fresh issue of blankets if a man got his blankets wet?—Yes, sir.

92. Was the man not responsible for keeping it dry?—Yes, sir. But when a man was asleep on the deck the sailors would come along when he was sound asleep and hose the decks and wet his blanket. Afterwards they asked the sailors to wake them up first.

93. How often did this happen that the men were wetted through by the sailors?—About two or three nights after we left.

94. But to how many did it happen?—I could not say. There was a fatigue party told off to carry the blankets into the valise-room, and they had a big job in hand. Whenever the blankets were wet the men could not look after them, and the fatigue party was sent round to collect these blankets and put them in the valise-room, where they were left until the end of the voyage.

95. Whose fault was it that the blankets got wet?—It is hard to say.

96. Primarily, if you are served out with a blanket it is your duty to keep it in proper order?—Yes; according to that, if he gets it wet he is to blame.

97. You have no official complaint to make: you admit that it was the soldier's own fault?—Yes, sir.

98. Regarding the ventilation, what deck were you on—the 'tween deck or lower deck?—The 'tween deck.

99. What ventilation had you?—One windsail at the end.

100. And hatchway?—Yes, sir.

101. Did the ventilation go down the hatchway, or down another part of the deck?—Well, very little air came down there, sir.

102. Did the windsail come down that part or another part?—Down another part.

103. Were any complaints made about the ventilation?—No, sir. I took it for granted that it would remain like that.

104. Do you attach blame to the surgeon-major, or Colonel Abbott, or whom, about the ventilation?—We cannot attach the blame to any one, I think. We were marched on board, and our orders were to stay there, and the order was obeyed.

105. Did you think the ventilation could have been improved?—No, sir.

106. You think there was no neglect on the part of any person in authority that the ventilation was no better?—Of course, I am not a shipbuilder, so I do not see how it could have been improved.

107. Who was to blame if there was anything wrong with the ventilation?—No one.

108. You say there was no room in the hospital?—That the hospital was crowded, yes, sir.

109. How do you know that?—Because the orderlies stated so, and the men were sent into the orderly room; all the clerks working there had to clear out, and it was made part of the hospital.

110. Were the officers in any way to blame for the want of space in the hospital?—No, sir.

111. Was Colonel Abbott to blame?—No, sir. I have got no complaints about the hospital at all, sir.

112. You stated there was no room in the hospital?—Some men were taken bad with colds, and we were told if we had colds to go to the dispensers and get medicine and stop on the troop-deck.

113. Have you had many colds?—No, sir, not many. I had one on the "Orient." Those I have had before were very slight colds.

114. You make a complaint that a man with a cold was not taken into hospital?—I do not complain about it. A man would not like to go into the hospital with a cold.

115. There was no blame attached to the doctor for not taking him into the hospital?—No, sir.

116. *Mr. Millar.*] What vessel did you go across to Africa in?—The "Devon."

117. Had you any salt pork on board her?—I do not remember, sir.

118. Did you ever see corned pork before you went on the "Orient"?—No, sir.

119. You would not know that there is always a certain smell with pork on board ship?—No, sir.

120. It was possible that the pork was good pork only that it had a disagreeable smell: did it taste badly?—I did not taste it.

121. Why did you say it was bad, then?—I heard the other men say it.

122. You made a statement that it was rotten, and you now say you never tasted it. You also said that the officers said it was bad?—Yes, sir.

123. I think you said the salt pork was the same all the way over?—Yes, sir.

124. How often did you have it?—We had it every week—sometimes twice a week, sir.

125. How long were you on the voyage altogether?—We got on the boat on the 9th July, and were taken off on Somes Island on Monday week.

126. Were there provisions sent over from the shore when you arrived here?—We did not get them on the boat, we got them on the island.

127. You did not get any fresh provisions sent over to the boat?—No; I did not see any.

128. You had the same dietary scale in the harbour as you had when you were at sea?—Yes, sir.

129. You were on the "Orient" from the 9th July to the 11th August?—Yes, sir.

130. Was the fresh meat you got tainted, or was it good?—The roast meat was good, sir.

131. Did you have any mutton, coming out?—Yes; we had roast mutton.

132. Was that good?—That was good, sir.

133. Was there beef?—Yes, sir.

134. Did you ever get beef which was bad—such as tainted, or anything of that sort?—No, sir.

135. Was it the fault of the cooks that it was not cooked?—I could not say.

136. Was there any complaint, as a rule, about the cooking?—No, sir.

137. This one case which you brought under the notice of Mr. Sandle was in connection with the pork, and he did not take any action with it, and, as far as you know, there was no practical result?—No, sir.

138. The same pork was issued afterwards?—Yes, sir.

139. Do you know if your meat was inspected by a medical man?—I do not know, sir; I could not say.

140. If it were inspected, do you think the surgeon would allow an issue of bad meat?—He would not, sir; I do not think so.

141. So that, if in evidence it is stated by him that the meat was daily inspected, you would be quite satisfied that the medical man would not allow bad meat to be issued?—Yes, sir.

142. Did you have plenty of water on board?—No, sir; but plenty to drink.

143. Did you have sufficient for washing?—No, sir.

144. You say there was sufficient washing-accommodation?—If they were given time to have a wash there was, sir.

145. How long were you given to wash?—Some time in the early morning, just about breakfast-time.

146. What do you call breakfast-time?—About half-past 7.

147. When did reveille sound?—I am not certain as to that. I think it was about half-past 6.

148. So that in reality the water was only on for an hour for washing purposes?—There was no knowing how early they could have got up to wash.

149. Would the water have been available if they had got up early?—That is more than I can tell you. I know there would be crowds waiting that could not get a wash.

150. You say you do not know what time the water was turned on. You do not know whether, if these men had got up a little earlier, they would have got a wash?—No, sir; but I do not think so, because it was always crowded.

151. How many wash-houses were there?—Really, I do not know; I did not count them, sir. I know the wash-house was always crowded, and you could hardly push your way in when the water was turned on.

152. Do you think the discipline was good on board the boat right through?—I think so, sir.

153. And you think your officers did everything they could to look after the comfort of their men?—We do not know what our officers did, sir. As far as it was possible, I think on the boat they could see no way to improve matters.

154. Not being able to improve matters they did not make any attempt?—No, sir.

155. Your whole complaints, then, are against the Imperial authorities for the manner in which they sent you away?—I would not like to say anything against the Imperial authorities. I believe in the Imperial authorities and in the Imperial Government. We do not know who is to blame.

156. The transport belongs to the Imperial Government, does it not?—Yes, sir; but we heard it belonged to a contractor.

157. You were in Imperial pay?—Yes, sir.

158. And you were sent out there in an Imperial transport?—Yes, sir.

159. And we know the "Orient" was an Imperial transport?—Yes, sir.

160. Therefore, if the "Orient" was overcrowded and your food was bad, and the accommodation not sufficient, it must have been the Transport officers of the Imperial Government who were responsible for it?—Yes, sir.

161. Therefore your complaint is that the Transport officers of the Imperial Government did not do their duty as far as the Ninth Contingent is concerned?—I do not know what their duty was. Their duty might have been to treat us like that.

162. If it was their duty to treat you like that, then your complaint is against the Imperial Government for having such regulations as would permit them to do such things?—Yes, sir, if the regulations were carried out.

163. That is to say, if the "Orient" was under Imperial regulations as regards accommodation and food which was supplied, then the Imperial regulations do not give justice to the troopers?—Yes, sir, if they were carried out properly.

164. If the regulations were exceeded, then it would be the fault of the Transport officers by giving insufficient food and accommodation?—Yes, sir.

165. As far as the "Orient" officers were concerned, you think they were not responsible for anything that took place on board?—I cannot say; I am not in a position to say that.

166. Did you see much drunkenness on board?—Very little, sir.

167. For instance, if a statement was made that there was drunkenness on board the ship, would you stigmatize that as being true or false?—I should say that there were a few men drunk, but they were drunk through habit. They got habitually drunk.

168. Were there facilities for men to get drunk if they wished?—As far as I could see, each mess could purchase so-much beer a head.

169. How much: a pint a man?—Yes, sir. A man could purchase that, and it would be drawn for the men; but some did not want it, and one that was greedy could drink as much as he liked and get drunk.

170. That is, if the others did not want it?—Yes, sir.

171. And there was a little of that went on?—Yes, sir; but very little, though.

172. Could they purchase any liquors outside the beer?—I do not know; I never purchased any.

173. *Mr. McNab.*] Have you ever been in action?—No, sir.

174. When the men came on board at South Africa were any of them in a sickly condition?—As far as I know, they were healthy men.

175. How many men were there altogether on the ship?—We never counted; but there were the Ninth Contingent, the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth details, and some Australians.

176. Were there a thousand men?—There were over a thousand men.

177. How many deaths occurred during the voyage?—None, sir.

178. Then, I suppose you think it was fairly satisfactory bringing them through without one man dying?—No; it was not very satisfactory when you remember that those men were strong men. They were weakened by the voyage.

179. You remember also that they came down from the fresh air on the veldt and they went into a close troopship: do not you think it was fairly good work bringing them through without one man dying?—Not when they can stand a lot.

180. Can you tell me of the name of a single troopship that brought a thousand men from South Africa to Australia that never lost a man?—Well, I cannot, sir.

181. Do you know if there is one troopship that has brought home a thousand men after the war closed without losing a man, outside your own troopship?—No, sir, I never watched what the other vessels did.

182. When I tell you that Colonel Davies stated in evidence that he did not know of one solitary case of a sick man in his column when he put his column on board the "Britannic," and he had control of all the men excepting the Australians and some eighty other men, and that three deaths took place during the voyage, will you now suggest that the "Orient" was singular in having a specially healthy number of men on board?—Well, I think so, sir.

183. Has your attention ever been drawn to this aspect of the case before?—No, except in the case of the "Tagus."

184. And your attention has not been called to the other troopships?—No, sir.

185. *The Chairman.*] You have stated you were in Imperial pay, and were an Imperial soldier?—Yes, sir.

186. Were you liable, then, to Imperial regulations?—We do not know how any of the New Zealand contingents were treated as to Imperial regulations.

187. Did the Imperial Government pay you?—I believe so, sir.

188. Do you believe you would be liable to the same regulations as the Imperial troops?—Certainly, sir.

189. Do you happen to know what space is allowed for hammocks for Imperial troops?—No, sir.

190. Do you know what the dietary scale is for Imperial troops?—No, sir, except 1 lb. of bread and meat.



191. If the Imperial Government undertakes to give certain rations, and you got those rations, would you feel you had any cause of complaint?—Certainly not, if we got those.

192. You do not know what the ration is?—No, sir.

193. *Mr. McNab.*] You mentioned the "Tagus" as a boat you are familiar with?—I know a lot of men who came back on the "Tagus."

194. How many men died on the "Tagus" from the day she left Africa to the Otago Heads?—I heard of two: one that died out from Albany, and one in sight of New Zealand. There is a grave in Albany of a "Tagus" man who died in the hospital there.

Surgeon-Captain ALEXANDER ROBERTSON FALCONER, B.A. B.Sc., M.B., B.Ch., examined on oath. (No. 79.)

195. *The Chairman.*] Were you attached to either of the contingents?—Yes; to the South Island battalion of the Ninth New Zealand regiment.

196. What rank did you hold?—Surgeon-captain.

197. Which transport were you on board of?—The transport "Orient."

198. For what reason do you appear before the Commission?—I was about to go to London for the purpose of completing my post-graduate work. As the first session is held in October, I was anxious to leave immediately; but I met Colonel Abbott this morning, and he said that in the event of an inquiry into the "Orient" I would be called as a witness, and I could not leave the country. So I came to volunteer evidence, in order that I may get away by the first train to-morrow morning.

199. Where did you embark?—At Durban, about the 10th July.

200. Do you know how many troops there were on board the "Orient"?—I have no definite knowledge of the number; but, roughly stated, there were between twelve and fourteen hundred. I was not the senior medical officer, and kept no account of the number.

201. Were the men in good health on embarkation, so far as you know?—Practically in good health.

202. What was the hospital accommodation on board the "Orient"?—There were forty-five berths in the saloon.

203. Was the saloon the hospital?—The fore part of the saloon was the hospital. I think it used to be the second saloon. The whole of the second saloon was the hospital.

204. How many medical officers were there on board?—Dr. King was in charge of the North Island battalion, and I was in charge of the South Island battalion. There was also the ship's medical officer, but he had no connection with the troops.

205. Were there no other doctors on board?—No.

206. How were you provided with hospital orderlies?—We had one steward, and a wardsman, and a dispenser, and a corporal, and two orderlies—one on each side; that is six.

207. So that the total strength of the hospital staff, excluding the surgeon, was six?—There were also two nursing sisters who assisted.

208. Were they on duty?—They were on duty. There was also a fatigue party of four whose duty was to clean up the hospital every day, and take that part of the work entirely away from the orderlies to enable them more efficiently to attend to the sick. So practically that would be twelve exclusive of the surgeons.

209. Had you much illness on board?—Of serious illnesses there were two cases of pleurisy which occurred on the 11th July, and a dangerous case of pneumonia which occurred on the 25th July. All these patients recovered before reaching New Zealand. These were exclusive of the cases of measles. I beg to hand in a list of all patients in the South Island battalion who passed through the hospital between Durban and Wellington: Trooper Hogg, scarlet fever, admitted 10th July, discharged 26th July; Sergeant Fraser, bronchitis, admitted 10th July, discharged 1st August; Trooper Rowland, pleurisy, admitted 11th July, discharged 1st August; Trooper Briggs, influenza, admitted 11th July, discharged 26th July; Trooper McQueen, sore throat, admitted 11th July, discharged 16th July; Quartermaster-Sergeant Lindsay, pleurisy, admitted 11th July, discharged 1st August; Trooper Coxon, debility, admitted 13th July, discharged 16th July; Corporal Culling, rheumatism, admitted 13th July, discharged 26th July; Trooper Wilson, diarrhoea, admitted 13th July, discharged 16th July; Trooper Rossiter, sore throat, admitted 13th July, discharged 17th July; Lance-Corporal Cooper, lumbago, admitted 14th July, discharged 20th July; Trooper Robinson, influenza, admitted 14th July, discharged 18th July; Trooper McDonald, goitre; Trooper Burke, pneumonia, admitted 15th July, discharged 6th August; Sergeant Mason, concussion, admitted 23rd July, discharged 6th August; Trooper Lester, influenza, admitted 20th July, discharged 28th July; Trooper Johnston, influenza, admitted 20th July, discharged 28th July. The following patients of South Island battalion were admitted to hospital suffering from measles on and after the 14th July, 1902: Troopers Campbell (?), Hall, Leith, Harrington, Souter (Sergeant), McKeown, Lester, Mather, Ward, Reid, Innis, Paulin, Jackson, Newton, McQueen, Forsyth, Dillop, Dunlop, Templeton, and about fifteen others (*vide* hospital book in possession of Senior Medical Officer).

210. How soon did the measles break out after leaving Durban?—About the 14th July, and we left on the 10th.

211. Was it possible to have discovered cases of measles before the embarkation?—It would be absolutely impos-ible.

212. Do you think that, by the Imperial authorities at Cape Town or by the Surgeon-Captain in charge, anything was left undone that might have been done to see that no men were embarked who were likely to get ill?—I do not think so. With regard to the medical officer in charge, it was decided by the officer commanding the brigade that Surgeon-Captain King, who was then in charge, and who had been a day on the vessel before I arrived, should be the senior officer. I

should say that nothing was left undone by the Imperial authorities or by the medical officer in charge to see that no cases of measles were allowed to go in the ship. As far as the South Island battalion is concerned, there was a short medical inspection on the wharf before going on board.

213. Who made the examination?—One of the Imperial medical officers.

214. Were you present?—I was not in absolute attendance, but I saw him make the inspection.

215. If there were any extraordinary diseases on board the "Orient" it was due to causes you think unpreventable?—Yes.

216. When the first case of measles happened what steps were taken to isolate the case?—The first case arose in my own battalion, and it was immediately isolated in one cabin. The man was told to take his blankets and wearing-apparel with him into the cabin, and neither he nor others who suffered from the same disease were allowed to leave that cabin or mix with the other men. Then a large white sheet was placed in front of the door and freely sprayed with disinfecting solution. As further cases gradually occurred on the voyage they were likewise isolated in the hospital cabins, and not allowed to mix with any other patients or persons on board, except the orderly attendants and the doctors.

217. How soon did the first two cases break out?—The dates would be more accurately ascertained from the hospital admission-book, which is in the Senior Medical Officer's possession.

218. About what date?—The first cases were about the 14th July. Other cases followed immediately, and then there was a break of a week, and then there was a recurrence of cases.

219. How many of those who came on board do you think had the seeds of disease in them before they embarked?—It is absolutely impossible to tell accurately, the incubation period of the disease being about ten days. By looking up the hospital admission-book some idea of those already infected would be got.

220. Do you think there was more than one case in which the man had the seeds of disease before embarkation?—I could not speak with any certainty on that point. I do not know whether there were any sickening for measles before they embarked. There were no complaints until the 14th July.

221. Supposing the seed had been acquired a week before embarkation, would it necessarily have shown before embarkation?—No. The first time it showed itself was about the 14th July. None had shown symptoms before that date.

222. After how many days does the disease display itself?—There is an incubation period of ten days, during which practically there are no symptoms.

223. Then, by the twentieth day it is quite possible for the disease to have been acquired on board?—Yes, certainly.

224. Were there many cases of pneumonia?—There was one case in the South Island battalion, which I treated successfully. This man had suffered from dysentery in the hospital on shore. He was dangerously ill, but he recovered. That is the only case of pneumonia in my battalion.

225. Where were the men of your battalion berthed on board the ship?—They were mixed; some were in No. 2 deck, and some in No. 3 and No. 4 decks.

226. Did the measles invade some particular portion of the ship, or was it practically all over the ship?—It started in the South Island battalion, and two days later there was a North Island case. It seemed to be fairly general.

227. How many cases of pneumonia on board altogether?—I think Dr. King had two cases, besides the one which I had, but he will be able to give you the official particulars.

228. To what was that attributable?—To ordinary causes.

229. You think the causes were not extraordinary?—No.

230. About the ventilation of the ship: did the ventilation of the men's quarters come under your observation at all?—That was a question for the Senior Medical Officer who went his morning rounds. I did not accompany him on the morning rounds. With regard to the ventilation of the hospital, that came under my own control; it was very good. I may say that the air-shafts, although it was not my duty to look after them, were always in use, and everything seemed to be done that could be done in respect to ventilation.

231. You say that advisedly?—Yes.

232. You do not think that there were complaints, and that more should have been done?—No.

233. Do you think the ventilation on the lower deck or on the 'tween decks was such as to produce disease?—It is a difficult question to answer. I have no absolute statistics as to the number of cubic feet for each man, and therefore am not in a position to express a definite opinion upon that subject, beyond this: that the air seemed to be fairly heavy sometimes when I went down. It could not be considered healthy for a prolonged period of residence, but it is a question of opinion whether for three weeks it was absolutely detrimental to health.

234. Did you ever have an opportunity of examining the food supplied to the men?—Well, I paid some attention to the food supplied to the hospital. I received no instructions to examine the food for the men, but occasionally of my own accord I went down and had a look at it.

235. You saw the food in the hospital?—Yes; on one occasion I had reason to complain of the food in the hospital. It was a custard containing sixty eggs which was ordered for the inmates. It was bad, and I reported the fact unofficially to the chief steward, and he took steps to rectify it, so that practically it did not occur again.

236. And the quality of the meat?—The quality of the meat supplied to the hospital was practically very good. I may say that the extra rations supplied to men going into hospital included three pints of excellent milk and a pint of beef-tea, and in addition to these, where cases required it, chicken, wine, brandy, arrowroot, butter, tea, and fish were given.

237. Taking the ordinary ration, of what quality was it?—Considering the circumstance of it being a troopship, the ration supplied to the hospital was good. The meat appeared to be good. Occasionally it might be a little underdone as regards the cooking.

238. What was the quality of the bread?—On the whole the bread was fair.

239. The biscuits?—Biscuits did not come down so much to the hospital.

240. Then, you do not know about the quality of the biscuits?—No. I have examined several biscuits, although it was not my duty to do so, and they seemed fairly good.

241. Had you sufficient drugs?—Quite a sufficiency of drugs. I had my Imperial medical panniers in addition, which there was not time to give in at Durban, and which I gave in at Dunedin. There were quite sufficient drugs.

242. Have you ever had experience before?—Yes; on board the “Kent” going over, and I had four years’ experience in a New Zealand asylum.

243. You say the quality was fairly good?—I heard no complaints about the quality of the meat.

244. Can you give us any information as to the quality of the meat supplied to the men?—No complaint reached me with regard to the quality of the food supplied to the men. Occasionally I visited the galley when my duties permitted me.

245. It has been urged that the salt pork and bacon supplied on board was generally rotten: did you ever hear of that?—No.

246. Was salt pork or bacon supplied to the hospital?—They always had sufficient fish and other things, and did not require to draw pork. I have seen the bacon and the specimens that came down to the hospital were good.

247. *Mr. McNab.*] The condition of the ventilation was referred to: do you not consider that if the ventilation was bad you would soon have had in the hospital an increased number of pneumonia patients?—Yes; it would have increased the sickness on board, and pneumonia would have increased.

248. The fact of the pneumonia cases being so few is a fair indication for the Commission to judge that the ventilation was, under the circumstances, fairly good?—Yes; I might add that there was not a single patient in bed from illness, apart from the measles cases, on landing at Port Chalmers. Measles is an epidemic disease the causes of which are extraordinary, and the latest medical authorities hold that ventilation has practically little connection with it.

249. You sailed with twelve to fourteen hundred on board the vessel: How many deaths were there during the voyage?—There was no death.

250. As a medical man, do you consider that a triumph in bringing troops from South Africa?—I believe it was the record. The Principal Medical Officer at Port Chalmers said they were the healthiest troops that had ever arrived there.

251. You think that a sufficient answer to any complaint that the conditions on board the “Orient” were not what they ought to have been, and that they could have made an improvement?—A quite sufficient answer.

252. Do you not think that if men who have been for months on the veldt are suddenly put on board a vessel, as they must be in a troopship, that would cause a still further tendency for men to flood the hospital?—Yes, it would. With regard to that, I may say that towards the end of the voyage the daily sick-parade lessened considerably.

253. Did you see the small-pox patient?—I have not seen him. There was no indication or suspicion of small-pox when we arrived at Port Chalmers. I had no knowledge that the man was ailing. He was not in my battalion. With regard to the isolation of the measles patients, I may say that when the hospital accommodation gave out the orderly room was requisitioned into the service, and after that a portion of No. 1 troop-deck and the guard-room was screened off and used for convalescent measles patients, and a guard was put on the orderly room, so that practically there was no mixing of the measles patients with the rest of the troops. This tended to lessen the number of cases. Again, out of a hundred blankets that were brought by the measles patients to the hospital from the troop-decks, there were practically only two blankets that had any suspicion of lousiness in them. The captain of the ship wished the hospital-floors to be washed out every day. I objected to that, as it would render the place too damp for measles patients. The hospital-floors were kept as clean as possible. I reported three men for breaking the quarantine bounds and mixing with the rest of the patients. Two of the men were dealt with by the Senior Medical Officer, and the third was to be crimed by Colonel Abbott when he was discharged from the hospital. It would probably be allowed to lapse owing to my leaving at Port Chalmers.

254. Were you with the contingent when they were in South Africa?—Yes.

255. How long were you in the field?—We were three months exactly in South Africa.

256. How long in the field?—We were practically in standing camps the whole time. We only had one short trip of six days, three days going out and three days coming back.

257. It was reasonable to suppose that your men would be in better fettle to be cooped up on a sea-voyage than men who had had three months in a drive?—Certainly. With regard to drives: as I understood, you would pick up more disease in a standing camp than you would on a trek, but you must separate drives from treks. The drives are the worst things. That is the common opinion amongst the troops themselves.

258. What would be the proportion of sickness in a drive and in a standing camp?—There are three things to compare—the drive, the trek, and the standing camp. As regards the men’s health, the trek would come first, and the drive last.

MONDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Dr. VALINTINE recalled and examined. (No. 80.)

1. *Mr. McNab.*] If previous to the voyage commencing septic pneumonia or measles had been on board the steamer, would it have an ill effect during the passage?—If the vessel had not been disinfected it is quite within the bounds of possibility.

2. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell me whether there is any fee charged by the Health Department, or by the medical officers acting under the Department, for vaccination?—The officers of the Department do not get paid anything. Neither Dr. Mason nor myself charge any fees, but private practitioners do get half a crown, but the Department absolutely gets no fee.

TUESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Sergeant J. D. N. BEASLEY sworn and examined. (No. 81.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us your name, please?—John Dennis Noble Beasley.

2. Were you a member of either of the contingents?—I was a member of the Seventh Contingent, and I was left in hospital, and came back with the Ninth on the "Orient."

3. What rank did you hold on board?—I was an acting-sergeant, and was made ship's orderly sergeant on the voyage home.

4. What squadron?—I was not attached to any squadron, sir.

5. What occupation did you follow before you went with the contingent?—I was a printer by trade, sir.

6. How do you come before the Commission: did you volunteer to give evidence?—I came before the Commission by telling Mr. Willis, M.H.R., certain things, and he told me to write to the Commission, and volunteer evidence. I did so, and was invited to come down to give evidence.

7. Would you be good enough to make any statement you wish?—My reason for coming forward was to say that I think the ship was as the men made it themselves. We started from Durban with an overcrowded ship. The embarkation staff-sergeant connected with the "Orient" reported this to the embarkation staff officer at Durban, that the ship was overcrowded, and he told him to "slump" them on and get them out of the country.

8. Did you hear this yourself?—No, I did not hear it actually myself; but the staff-sergeant told me, and showed me his report to the staff officer in Southampton in which he embodied that conversation.

9. You do not know any of this of your own knowledge—it is only hearsay?—Yes; beyond the fact that I saw the report the staff-sergeant sent in to the chief staff officer in which he embodied that conversation.

10. The staff-sergeant you refer to was reporting directly, you say, to the Transport officer at Southampton?—Yes, sir; I understand that he makes a report to the staff officer at Southampton.

11. Does not that seem very improbable to you? Would he not refer to his officers on shore? Has he no superior officer at Durban to refer to?—I understand that there is an embarkation staff officer at Durban.

12. But he made his written report to the officer in England?—Yes; to the chief staff officer in Southampton. Of course, this is just the conversation that took place between myself and the staff-sergeant. I did not hear the conversation between him and the staff officer.

13. What is the next thing?—The majority of the men complained about the blankets being lousy. Clean blankets, to my knowledge, were brought on board the boat from Durban from the Naval Victualling Department and served out.

14. That is to your own knowledge?—Yes, sir. A number of men were in the habit of sleeping on deck at night, and their blankets got wet from the spray of the sea, and rain on two occasions. Instead of hanging these blankets out in the daytime to dry and air, they would leave them about the deck, and I was responsible for collecting them. At night-time, instead of sleeping in their wet blankets, they would go down and take dry blankets from the hammock-racks, with the result that some of the men got different blankets.

15. You are positive the blankets were clean when they were issued?—Yes, sir. I drew fresh blankets and a hammock at Durban, and I was never lousy.

16. Do you happen to know where she came from before coming to Durban?—I do not know, sir. I was waiting six weeks in Cape Town for a steamer, and I went up to Durban to join her.

17. Is there anything more about the blankets?—No, sir; no more about the blankets. As to the state of the men's quarters, it was just as they made it themselves.

18. Were they dirty, do you mean?—They were clean when the men entered them, and they very seldom got dirty. On one occasion on going round with the orderly officer at night-time for final inspection to see lights out and everything, we caught a man making water at the end of the troop-decks. He was brought up before the colonel and fined £1. It was only a matter of going a few feet further to get to the latrines to use them.

19. Was he making it down the scuppers?—No; simply on the deck, sir.

20. The ship was clean when the men embarked?—Certainly, sir, very. After the men disembarked Captain Clark took charge, and I was left with him and a party of twenty men to clean up the ship, and in one corner we had to clean up the excreta of some of the men.

21. Was this in Wellington?—Yes, sir. Officers and non-commissioned officers were openly jibed at and jeered at by the men. The officers to a great extent neglected the men. They did not seem to take sufficient interest in the working of their companies, and left it mostly to the brigade officials. In the majority of cases the non-commissioned officers were not capable of

enforcing orders they gave. It seemed to be a weak spot in the Ninth Contingent, particularly so in regard to the North Island regiment. The cooking-accommodation of the ship seemed to be scarcely adequate to cope with the number of men on board, although the people in the galley did the best they could. The washing-accommodation and the latrines might have been better for the large number of men on board. There were altogether about thirty-five basins for the men to wash in. The water was turned on for an hour and a half every morning, from 6 till half-past 7, which meant that not more than half the men could wash in the morning. That is about all I have to say, but I am prepared to answer any questions.

22. What about the latrines?—I say there might have been more latrines as well as washing-accommodation. There were only about fourteen or fifteen holes at the outside.

23. For the total regiment?—Yes, sir; for the brigades, North and South Island.

24. About the latrines: you feel sure that there were not more than fourteen or fifteen holes?—Yes, sir; I was responsible for the cleaning-up of them. There were four set apart exclusively for the non-commissioned officers out of fourteen, but they had to be given up to the men, as there were not sufficient holes for the men. There were about a hundred non-commissioned officers.

25. Do I understand that there were only fourteen holes altogether, including those for the non-commissioned officers?—There were certainly no more than fifteen, sir.

26. Whereabouts were they situated?—The non-commissioned officers' latrine was situated on the starboard side aft.

27. How many holes were there there?—Four, sir.

28. And the others?—There were eight on the port side aft for the men, and forward I think there was one latrine each side.

29. How many seats in the latrines forward?—Only one seat in each. On the starboard side there was certainly only one seat, and on the port side the men were in the habit of using the crew's latrines, which they were not supposed to do.

30. Then, there were two latrines with only one seat each?—Yes, sir.

31. How many men did you have on board, do you remember?—We only issued 1,205 sets of blankets. The actual complement of the ship was 1,228. What the actual number aboard was I cannot say.

32. You do not know how many men were on board?—Something about fourteen hundred I have been given to understand. I would not say for certain, but I am positive that I issued 1,205 sets of blankets and hammocks.

33. How came it about that you did not issue fourteen hundred?—Some of the men brought their own blankets on board and desired to use them.

34. Have you any idea how many men brought them on board?—I am not certain, sir.

35. Were there ten men in every hundred, or twenty in every hundred, or what?—Not by any means. There were not a hundred sets of soldiers' blankets on board.

36. About the basins: you say the water was turned on from 6 to 7.30?—Yes, sir.

37. And there were thirty-five basins?—At the outside, sir.

38. How do you arrive at thirty-five: may there not have been between thirty and forty?—I do not know the exact number, but it was between thirty and forty.

39. Were they divided into forward and aft for the different regiments?—Forward there were only four basins, so all the men had to go aft to wash. The large wash-house contained sixteen basins, on the starboard side aft.

40. Were there any on the port side aft?—There were four basins connected with the latrines. The latrine and wash-house were in the same building.

41. Was that on the port side?—Yes, sir, on the port side aft. There were seven basins for non-commissioned officers, and one or two small wash-houses about in addition to those.

42. How many basins were there in those, do you think?—In one small place aft there were four, and in the other one the basins were missing. In several cases the basins were missing.

43. What was it built for?—One was built for two and another for four.

44. Did the men turn out regularly early in the morning?—They were very dilatory about it, sir.

45. If they turned out the instant reveille went, could they have got a wash?—I do not think they all could, sir.

46. How long do you think it ought to take a man to wash?—A man ought certainly to wash in three minutes when he is not working, as they were not doing.

47. Were there no means of getting water at any other time of the day?—Yes; there was water running all day, but that was drinking-water. As a matter of fact, some of them brought it up to the basins and had a wash.

48. Was there a bath for the men?—Yes, for a time.

49. Did the men take it whilst it was there?—Not many.

50. And was it taken away simply because they would not use it, or what?—I am not prepared to say that; it simply disappeared.

51. Have you any idea how many used it the day before it was taken away?—I counted thirty taking the bath one morning. There was only one bath, about 15 ft. by 5 ft.

52. Was the hose always playing into it?—It was partly filled by the sailors in the morning, and generally the boatswain would put the hose into it.

53. Could a man have got a bath every day if he had liked from the hose?—Yes, he could if he had liked, by asking the sailors to put the hose over him.

54. And by a little care he could have got fresh water to wash in?—Yes; although there was a guard placed over the tap to prevent the men using the water to excess, they certainly could have taken sufficient to get a wash.

55. If a man did not wash it was because he did not push for it?—Yes, sir.

56. Was the hosing kept on after the bath was done away with?—Well, if they had got up early in the morning the sailors would have been only too pleased to put it on them when they were hosing the decks.

57. You say the cooking-accommodation was scarcely adequate: do you know what size it was at all?—There was one small galley with two ranges.

58. And that was all the cooking-place there was?—Yes, sir; but on days when roasts were served they used to use the sailors' galley.

59. What was the men's galley used for, then?—For boiling and stewing principally.

60. But the roasting and the tea would be done elsewhere?—The tea was cooked in a big boiler on top of the range, made with hot water from the steam.

61. You do not know the size of the galley?—No; I am not prepared to say what the dimensions were.

62. Would it be 20 ft. by 10 ft.?—Less than that, I think, sir.

63. Was it 18 ft. by 8 ft.—we want to try and get something definite?—It was certainly not more than 20 ft. by 10 ft.

64. How was the food?—To my way of thinking, the food was in the majority of cases well cooked and well served. There were complaints, but they were frivolous. I think there was one complaint about the bread, that it was not half-cooked.

65. Had they biscuits as well as bread?—There was a box of biscuits on the troop-deck. They could get as many as they liked. They used to amuse themselves by throwing them at one another.

66. Were the biscuits of good quality?—Yes, sir.

67. You say that the officers and non-commissioned officers were openly jibed at by the men?—Yes, sir.

68. What does that represent?—A officer would be walking along the deck, and some one would sing out, "Who is a bastard?" and other such expressions; and some one would immediately call out the name of the officer who was passing. Matters of that kind were continually taking place.

69. And was notice taken of that by the officers on board: were there any punishments for that kind of thing?—Not for that kind of thing. There were two or three kinds of punishments for men refusing orders.

70. Were the insulting remarks made in an audible tone?—Yes, sir; but of course it is very hard to catch a man in a crowd.

71. You mean to say there was no effort made to put down that kind of thing?—No, sir, not by the non-commissioned officers. The men who tried to do so failed utterly.

72. Were there any cases of direct disobedience or orders?—Yes; two or three men were punished for direct disobedience.

73. Were there cases of disobedience of orders which were not punished?—Yes; I have seen cases of disobedience. It was the fault of the non-commissioned officers that the men were not reported to the commanding officers.

74. Do you know of any instance of a con-commissioned officer or man being brought before the captain of his squadron, or the officer commanding his regiment, or the officer commanding the brigade, who was not punished for direct disobedience of orders?—No, sir, I do not.

75. Then, you think that if any case was brought before the officers it was punished?—Yes, sir; it was dealt with severely by Colonel Abbott. As I said before, the non-commissioned officers failed utterly in their duty in not reporting many cases.

76. You say the non-commissioned officers neglected their men, and left it to the brigade officials?—Well, the squadron officers did not seem to be sufficiently in touch with the non-commissioned officers or the men.

77. How do you mean, not sufficiently in touch?—In the majority of cases the non-commissioned officers had no one to appeal to.

78. Did the officers go down and inspect the men's quarters?—They were inspected by the commanding officer nearly every day.

79. And the regimental officer on duty, did he attend?—He was always present.

80. Was there an orderly officer appointed each day?—There was a brigade officer each day; the thing was worked as a brigade, not as a regiment. Of course, the officers came from the different regiments in turn. There was only one orderly officer each day for the whole ship.

81. You are quite sure of that?—Yes, sir; there was the orderly captain and the orderly subaltern.

82. There were no regimental appointments at all?—No, sir, although there were regimental officers on board.

83. Did the regimental officers go amongst the men at all as officers?—Some did, sir; but in the majority of cases it was left to the orderly officers of the day.

84. *The Charman.*] You say the non-commissioned officers were incompetent to enforce the orders?—They did not seem to have sufficient determination to see that the orders were carried out.

85. Had these non-commissioned officers been in any other contingent?—In the majority of cases I think not.

86. Do you know who appointed the non-commissioned officers?—I do not know.

87. You consider that this applied particularly to the North Island regiment?—Yes; the regimental sergeant-major of the South Island regiment had been in the Third Contingent, but the sergeant-major of the North Island regiment did not seem to be able to get as much work out of his non-commissioned officers as the other.

88. What was the name of the sergeant-major of the North Island regiment?—I think, Sergeant-Major Herbert.

89. Who commanded the regiment?—Colonel Abbott.

90. That is the South Island regiment?—Yes.

91. Who commanded the North Island regiment?—I believe it was Major O'Brien.

92. Had he had any experience before this that you know of?—I believe he had been a Volunteer officer.

93. You do not know whether Major O'Brien had been with any other contingent?—Not to my knowledge.

94. You told us about the men openly jeering at the officers: was that of frequent occurrence?—It was a matter of common occurrence.

95. Were you on board when the ship went to *Somes Island*?—Yes.

96. You saw the state of the discipline when they landed?—On one occasion the men would not go off the ship. They said they ought to be sent to *Motuihi Island*. That was the North Island regiment, and they said they ought to be sent to *Motuihi Island* instead of *Somes Island*.

97. What did they do?—Well, there was simply a demonstration amongst themselves, and they resolved not to go, but they went afterwards. There was one occasion on which a fatigue party was ordered to go on shore to put things in order, but they did not go.

98. Do you mean to say that a fatigue party refused to go on shore when ordered to do so by their officers?—Several fatigue parties were ordered to land, and on several occasions the orders were countermanded. On one occasion there was a meeting of the men on the fore part of the ship to persuade the men not to go.

99. Did the fatigue party go or not?—Not that I know of, but things were in such confusion that I could not tell exactly.

100. Were the orders countermanded?—I could not say for certain.

101. You know that orders were issued, and that the men did not go?—Yes.

102. Do you know who issued the order?—I could not say; but, as far as I recollect, the order came out in the orders of the previous evening.

103. Were the officers cognisant of the riotous conduct of the men?—I do not see how they could be otherwise.

104. Was it reported to them by the non-commissioned officer?—I could not say.

105. Then, the men refused to land on *Somes Island*?—Well, no. I do not think they absolutely refused to land, but when an order was given to them to land there they simply disregarded it, and they had a demonstration on deck.

106. Were these demonstrations simply noisy conversations among themselves, or were they carried on in such a way that the officers could not know of them?—It was on deck, and they had composed a song in which they said that they would not go on shore on the island.

107. When you found the excreta in the corner of the troop-deck was there much sign of its having been used as a latrine?—No, sir; there was only the one instance of that.

108. Do you think that occurred during the voyage upon other occasions?—I am rather inclined to think that it was somebody trying to be smart before he went on shore. I think it was all a piece of bravado.

109. Would you think that it happened on more than that occasion?—No, sir.

110. You say that on one occasion you saw a man making water there?—Yes.

111. Did that occur on more than one occasion?—Well, there was a stench in the passage outside the troop-deck, and I should say that it had been done before; but that was the only occasion on which it came under my particular notice, and I put the man in the guard-room for it. I saw it myself.

112. Do you mean to tell us that the passage close to the troop-deck was stinking of urine?—Yes.

113. How often did you see it?—That was the third occasion that I saw it particularly, but the stench was so strong that I was positive it was often the case. Outside No. 4 deck there was a water-hole that was leading from the upper deck, I fancy, and that had been used as a urinal more than once, I think. I mean the scupper on the lower deck had been used for that purpose.

114. You say that the steamer started overcrowded: have you any idea how much measurement there was on board, according to the transport regulations?—I understood that we had on board the ship the number of hammock-hooks, and so forth, that were to be provided according to the ordinary regulations; but there would have been two hundred more on board had they been put up in accordance with the Yeomanry scale.

115. Supposing they were put in under the Yeomanry scale, would it have been proper to have placed that number on board?—I do not think so. Of course, it was not right from a sanitary point of view, but I am not prepared to say whether it was according to the scale. No. 4 deck was under the water-line of the ship, and No. 3 deck was also very much crowded; so that some of the men slept on the floor or on deck.

116. Were there hooks enough on board to hang hammocks for the men themselves?—I think there were enough for 1,228 men.

117. *Mr. Millar.*] That was the full complement that the ship could take?—Yes.

118. I have it from General Babington that the number allowed for was 1,226, and that the ship carried 1,339?—I can only say that I have taken the numbers from the sergeants at the tables, and I saw the number of rations issued. I know there was more than that number on board.

119. You issued 1,205 hammocks?—Yes; and, of course, twice that number of blankets.

120. What height were the troop-decks on the "*Orient*"?—I should not think No. 3 deck was more than 8 ft.



121. Were there troops on No. 2 deck?—Yes. No. 1 and No. 2 decks were forward. No. 2 deck was on one side, and the other side led down into the lower store-room. There were two tables occupied by sergeants on the starboard side of No. 2 deck.

122. Was there anything to prevent men sleeping in their hammocks?—Not to my knowledge.

123. They might sleep where they liked?—Yes. From the first night out a large number of them slept on deck.

124. Was there any discipline at all on board the ship?—There was discipline amongst the better class of men, who were prepared to do what they were told, but the majority of the men in my regiment, No. 7, were very inferior.

125. You say discipline was only maintained among those who were willing to do what they were told?—Yes.

126. Then, there would be no necessity for discipline amongst those men?—No.

127. What was the discipline amongst those men who would not do as they were told?—Well, we were all subject to the same discipline, but those men did not carry it out.

128. Was there much sickness on the way out?—There were seventy-seven cases of measles, as far as I remember.

129. Was there any examination of the men as to the state of their personal cleanliness?—Not to my knowledge.

130. I suppose if there had been such a thing as a daily parade you would know?—I would know. I think I was always present in the orderly-room. That was where I slept.

131. And you never saw a parade for the general cleanliness of the men?—Certainly not.

132. Would you have had room on the upper deck of the "Orient" for such a parade?—There was sufficient room on the promenade deck, where they paraded every day.

133. Then, there was a parade every day?—The men were supposed to fall in at 10.45, so that they might be out of the way until the lower decks were cleaned up for inspection, which took place at 11 o'clock.

134. Were they simply brought up there until the lower deck was cleaned, or were they brought up for inspection?—All the men were supposed to be cleared out of the lower decks by 10 o'clock. The deck orderlies were supposed to have the decks cleaned by 11 o'clock for inspection.

135. Was that order carried out?—Until the end of the journey it was not well carried out. The troop sergeants had not sufficient control over the men. I used to go there with the provost-sergeant to see that the decks were clean.

136. Was there much food bought by the troops on the "Orient"?—Food was sold from the saloon galley, and the firemen used to sell coffee.

137. Was there any sold from the canteen?—Dry goods could be bought from the canteen.

138. What could you buy there?—You could buy fish, and patent medicines, and soft drinks, and that sort of thing.

139. Was that largely availed of by the men?—Yes; they sold lollies and cigarettes, and other things of that sort.

140. As far as food was concerned, was that largely patronised by the men?—Yes.

141. And in addition to that the men purchased from the officers' galley: did they ever purchase from the troops' galley?—I never saw anything sold from the troops' galley.

142. There were other galleys on board, were there not?—There were three galleys—the troops' galley, the saloon galley, and the crew's galley.

143. And they only bought from the saloon galley?—Well, the firemen were in the habit of selling coffee at night. In fact, I saw a number of them down on the lower deck, where they were selling coffee, and sandwiches, and other things.

144. Were any steps taken by the officers to stop it?—An order was issued that the men were not to frequent the sailors' or firemen's quarters, but the practice was going on as strong at the end of the journey as it was at the beginning. It stopped for a few days. On one occasion, when I was going the visiting round with Captain Marshall, I pointed out to him that the men were selling the stuff, and he said that he would have a stop put to it.

145. That was as far as the firemen were concerned?—Yes.

146. But as far as the stoppage of buying from the saloon galley, was anything done?—Well, the men were very careful that neither the ship's officers nor the troop officers should see them.

147. Were the troop officers aware that food could be purchased from the saloon galley?—To my own knowledge, it was reported to a troop officer.

148. Any steps taken to stop it?—Not to my knowledge.

149. So that if the saloon galley was selling food, and that was reported to the officers, it must have been done with their knowledge?—Yes.

150. As far as you know, no steps were taken to stop it?—No.

151. Was there much drunkenness on board the "Orient"?—Well, there could not be much at the beginning of the voyage, as the men were only allowed a pint a day until after we left Albany. The men could buy beer at a penny a pint. There was not much drunkenness amongst the soldiers. I think the beer was stopped after we got into Melbourne. The men would draw beer for the whole table, and they were allowed a pint a day each; but some of the men were unable to drink the beer, and so some men would get more than they were entitled to. There were one or two cases of rowdy scenes reported in No. 1 deck. On one occasion I spoke to a man about his rowdy conduct, and he was full of regret for it. He was not reported to me again after I had told him that I would put him in the guard-room.



152. Any drunkenness amongst the officers?—I have seen one or two officers under the influence of liquor, but I would not say it was a regular thing amongst them. I have seen signs of over-indulgence amongst them.

153. As a general thing?—No.

154. So that if a statement has been made that there was drunkenness throughout the ship you do not agree with that?—No, not in the ordinary acceptation of the term.

155. *Mr. McNab.*] I understand from your remarks generally that the condition of the vessel was not very good owing to the behaviour of the men themselves individually?—I think so.

156. Do you remember whether there was any case of pneumonia on board?—There was one man who belonged to my regiment who was attached to the Ninth, and who was in hospital for the greater part of the journey. When he came on deck he told me he had had pneumonia, but whether he got that information from the doctor or not I could not say. It was not general, certainly. The only general complaint to my knowledge was with regard to measles.

157. Did they break out soon after you left Durban?—There were certainly a number of cases before we got to Albany.

158. Were there any sick men brought on board the vessel?—When the vessel left Cape Town to go to Durban I think there were eight or nine sick men put on board, but I did not compile a roll of the deaths on board before we got to Durban. We had seven men on board then who were down with sickness.

159. What was their complaint?—They were suffering from enteric and other diseases. One had bad legs, and he was put off at Albany.

160. Was there any general outbreak of pneumonia on board?—No.

161. I understood you in your evidence to say that the officers did not see that their orders were carried out?—I did not say that. I say the non-commissioned officers did not see the orders carried out, but I thought it was the fault of the squad officers, who were not sufficiently strong to back up the non-commissioned officers. Many of these things might have been avoided if there was any one to appeal to. The officers kept very much to themselves.

162. It was chiefly the Tenth who were on board?—No; it was the Ninth, with details from the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth.

163. Of course, the Ninth had been hurriedly gathered together in New Zealand, and had been sent away about the middle of March?—I am not aware of anything about that, as I was in South Africa at that time.

164. You do not know the conditions under which the Ninth had been got together?—No, I know nothing about it. I presume they were under the same conditions as the Seventh. Certainly some of the men would never have got into the Seventh.

165. The vessel came away from Cape Town to New Zealand without any deaths amongst the men?—No deaths were reported.

166. Have there been any deaths reported since their arrival in the colony?—No.

167. About the medical staff: did they appear to be attentive to their duties?—I think they did what they could to the best of their ability. Every available portion of the ship was used for hospital accommodation. I used to sleep in the orderly-room, and we had to give that up for hospital accommodation. That room was turned into a convalescent room, or a sort of isolated quarters.

#### FRIDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Dr. JAMES MALCOM MASON, M.D., F.G.S., D.P.H. Camb., examined on oath. (No. 82.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your official designation?—Chief Health Officer of the colony. I desire to put in evidence a question which was asked by the Hon. Mr. Jennings in the Legislative Council on the 2nd September (Order Paper No. 25, question 2). The question is as follows: "Hon Mr. Jennings to ask the Minister of Education, Whether the returned troopers by the steamer 'Britannic' were subjected to the same treatment as that meted out to Trooper D. A. Wray, of New Plymouth? That trooper, writing to the *Taranaki Herald* on the 25th August, states, *inter alia*, 'We were ordered (by the Health Officer) to strip and wash in the sea (at Somes Island). Some of us complained, owing to the cold and not feeling well. Under compulsion we had to strip and go into the sea. . . . The next day we all had bad colds, which have stuck to us ever since. Since my arrival in New Plymouth I have been in bed, and am under the doctor.'" I want to state that no man from the "Britannic" was asked to go into the water at all, nor was any man from the "Orient" ordered to go into the water.

2. That is, as far as you know?—The statement in the question alleges that the order was given by the Health Officer. That can only mean me, and I assert that I did not order any man to go into the water. What took place was this: A fatigue party was asked for to land at Somes Island and assist in pitching tents and taking stores up the hill. They landed about half-past 9 in the morning from the "Orient." My instructions were given through the commanding officer, and were that the men should take off their dirty clothes—and their clothes were very dirty—they were to pile them up in a heap, and put on the clean clothes which the Government supplied. Each man had two pairs of socks, a woollen vest, woollen drawers, dungaree pants, a shirt, a jacket, and a cap. The dirty clothes were supposed to be taken off and piled up before the men put on the clean clothes. I asked that they should wash before putting on the clean clothes. Some of them did. The fresh water is on the top of the hill, and it was suggested to the men that they might have a wash with salt water, and soap and towels were served out. I may say these men took from half-past 9 in the morning till about 2 o'clock in the afternoon to do this wash. There were, I think, some thirty or forty men in the party.

Though these men were landed early in the morning, through their delay in washing themselves no work in repairing the tents was done till afternoon, and in consequence the other men were landed when it was quite cold. The health of some of these men was not improved by their undressing all over the island. This they did despite continual warnings by me and orders from Colonel Abbott to them that they were exposing themselves to the cold air. Owing to the lateness of the hour I suggested that all the other men should march up to their tents and undress there. Colonel Abbott agreed, but the men paid no heed. As to the suitability of the encampment, I may say the officer who protested against the men being landed, and who alleged that if they were landed their health would suffer, accompanied me at my request on a round of the whole encampment at night. We asked every man who was awake if he was comfortable, and every man said "Yes." I asked him (Major O'Brien) if he was satisfied that his men were comfortable, and he said, "Perfectly." Another thing I should like to put on record is that the Health officials have been blamed for keeping the men on board the "Orient" as long as they were. The men were on board from Friday till Monday afternoon. Had this delay been due to the Health authorities I certainly think we should have been very much to blame, because we had measles and incipient pneumonia on board, and in all probability if these men had remained many more days on board we should have lost one or two hundred men. I want to say that I did everything I could in order to get these men landed as soon as ever they were vaccinated, but every obstacle was put in my way. These are the main facts I wish the Commissioners to know, and I can say confidently that no man's health, except my own, possibly, was injured by his stay on the island. The accommodation on the island was quite ample.

3. Do you not think that it is possible that the allegation in the question, whether true or untrue, may apply to some other officer of the Health Department besides yourself?—I was the only one, with the exception of Dr. Purdy, on the island.

4. You do not know whether Dr. Purdy issued such an order?—I know he did not.

5. You say that the cause of the delay in landing the men was consequent on vaccination?—No; the delay was entirely due to the military authorities.

6. What military authorities?—The officers in charge of the troops. The men refused to go on shore.

7. From Friday to Monday?—They came on shore on Monday, but they refused to go before. I heard an officer say the men refused to go off.

8. Which officer?—I think it was Captain Coventry.

9. To whom did he report?—To Colonel Abbott or Major O'Brien.

10. Then, you heard an officer report to Colonel Abbott that the men refused to leave the transport?—Yes.

11. Did you hear Colonel Abbott taking any action in consequence?—No. I told Captain Fraser to haul off when I communicated with the Minister of Health (Sir Joseph Ward).

12. You say the utmost difficulty was put in your way in landing the men: what do you mean by that?—We had to pitch the tents and land stores on the island, and I could not get a fatigue party to put the tents up or take the stores up the hill. On two occasions they were refused. I had to get the Permanent Artillery to carry up the stores.

13. To whom did you apply?—To the colonel.

14. And you know that the men did not go?—Yes.

15. Do you know anything which followed upon your application to Colonel Abbott?—Yes.

16. What steps were taken?—The colonel told me he put it in orders, and all along he seemed to do everything he could, and expressed his entire agreement with my requests; but the fact remains that the men did not go on shore to do the work.

17. Do you imply that the men were out of hand and would not obey their officers?—I simply state facts. I would rather you drew any inferences.

18. You said something about vaccination?—Yes; we had great difficulty in getting the men to parade for vaccination, also some difficulty in convincing them that they ought to submit to vaccination. In fact, I entered into a bond with one man for £300 that he would not get any harm from vaccination.

19. Was this objection to vaccination a matter of insubordination or a conscientious scruple?—Well, they all submitted to it as soon as I got hold of them. I did not ask the officers to help me to vaccinate; I only asked that they should parade the men, so that I might have a chance of talking to them.

20. Had they not a right to object?—I do not know. I forced no one; I convinced them. I do not think there is anything about "conscientious scruples" in quarantining. That is in the Vaccination Act. You can claim exemption when you are on land, but it is a different thing when it is a question of quarantining. In fact, all the men were vaccinated with the exception of one man. The only alternative would have been a residence on Somes Island for a lengthened period of time.

21. Do you make it a complaint of the lack of discipline or of dislike of being vaccinated?—A lack of discipline. Surely the officer could parade his men; that was all I asked.

22. The question has been brought under my notice that it has been alleged that the officers of the Health Department received fees for vaccinating the men?—We did not get fees.

23. No fees at all?—No; I only got abuse.

24. You are positive that no officer of the Health Department got any fees?—Absolutely certain that no officer got any fee.

25. I suppose that an outside medical man who is employed by the Health Department gets the usual 2s. 6d. fee?—I think there has been only one case where this has happened; that was the case of the "Wakanui," which came in with a case of small-pox on board, and a private practitioner went off with Dr. Valentine to her, and we paid him his fees; but no one in the

service is paid. One reason why I wish that Major O'Brien's protest, which I will put in, should appear is because I believe that the knowledge that this protest had been made was one of the main reasons why the men were not landed as soon as they should have been. The protest of Major O'Brien is as follows:—"H.M. Troopship 'Orient,' 9th August, 1902.—To Major Abbott, O.C. troops, 'Orient.'—*Re* men going under canvas on Somes Island.—SIR,—I have the honour to report that I have carefully examined the ground on Somes Island, and find that, in my opinion, it would be very deleterious to the health of the men to camp there under canvas at this time of year. 1. The ground is of a clayey nature and holds the wet, and the dampness arising from this would cause the men to suffer from colds and pneumonia. 2. The only two places on the island where men can camp in any numbers are very badly exposed to the prevailing winds, and would accentuate the evils mentioned in 1. I would respectfully point out to you that the men, having come from a warm climate, are peculiarly liable to contract severe colds and their attendant evils, and to go under canvas on such a wet and exposed place as Somes Island would expose them unnecessarily to contract diseases that might result in the death of many of them. I understand that the buildings on Somes Island will accommodate 436 men, and that 224 will be placed under canvas. I would suggest that these latter, being from the Auckland District, be sent on to Motuihi Island, Auckland Harbour, for quarantine; this being, in my opinion, a much more suitable spot for men to be encamped at this time of year. In conclusion, I would respectfully request that before disembarking men of my command to go under canvas you will forward my protest to the Commandant for his consideration. I append herewith a report of my medical officer, Surgeon-Captain King.—I have, &c., LUCIUS O'BRIEN, Major, Commanding North Island Regiment, Ninth N.Z. Contingent." "From Major F. N. Abbott, commanding troops, H.M.T. 'Orient,' to Commandant, New Zealand.—H.M. Troopship 'Orient,' 9th August, 1902.—SIR,—I received instructions to-day to pitch camp at Somes Island, on receipt of which, in company with Major O'Brien (commanding the North Island battalion), my Principal Medical Officer (Surgeon-Captain King), and Dr. Mason, I visited the island to arrange camp, &c. The facilities for camping are bad, owing to the hilly and exposed nature of the ground. Major O'Brien has forwarded to me unfavourable comments on the advisability of encamping on the island, which I enclose. Pending further instructions I am arranging for the disembarkation.—I have, &c., FRED. N. ABBOTT, Major."

26. Have you ever met Major O'Brien before this occasion?—Never.

27. You do not know whether he is a duly qualified medical man?—I should not say he knew anything about medical matters.

28. By having to fight the military authorities, do you mean the Defence Department?—No; I mean the military on board the transport. Major O'Brien's protest was, I believe, at the bottom of all the unrest. Both he and Colonel Abbott wanted the Auckland men sent on. They did not think I had power to make them land. With regard to all the other officers, the relations were very pleasant.

29. *Mr. McNab.*] Did you see the condition of the "Orient" when she arrived?—Yes, sir.

30. Shortly, what was the condition of the vessel?—Filthy condition, all except the hospital. It was in very good order.

31. You stated in your examination-in-chief that measles and incipient pneumonia were on board?—Yes.

32. What is "incipient pneumonia"?—Perhaps "potential pneumonia" would be a better term. The early stages of the disease, when a man is coughing badly without having any high rise in temperature: the condition in which, if he were cooped up with a number of other men, he would be likely to catch an acute form of the disease.

33. Do you wish the Commission to understand that if that pneumonia had got a start very grave consequences would have followed?—Yes. That was one of the reasons I was so anxious to get the men landed at once, to get them into the open air, and to clothe them in clean garments.

34. You think, then, there was a narrow boundary between the "Orient" and the "Britannic" in regard to after-consequences: that the "Orient" narrowly escaped the after-consequences which ensued in the "Britannic"?—I think so.

35. *Mr. Millar.*] Are you thoroughly satisfied with Somes Island as a suitable place as regards soil and other conditions for camping men?—Yes; the soil is volcanic and quite dry, and it is not swampy.

36. You do not think it is a place that would hold the damp?—Not at all; besides, the ground chosen for the camp slopes down, and it only wants five or six sensible men to trench the ground to make it perfect. The trenching, when it was done, was ridiculous.

37. You know the two camps?—Yes.

38. They were both on the top?—They were on the sides of the hill near the top.

39. And one was well sheltered by trees?—Yes; that is where we intended to put any invalids.

40. And the other was not too much exposed?—No. As a matter of fact, I made such arrangements that if it came on to rain I could put all the men under cover, though, of course, they would then have been crowded. The men themselves chose to sleep in the tents.

41. Did you put up a breakwind?—No. I ordered wood, &c., for such purposes, but I could not get them put up.

42. Was any request made for timber to put on the top?—Yes; the timber was sent, but it lay on the wharf till the other day, when the Public Works Department took it away. That was for a breakwind—a cover for the latrines. Colonel Abbott, I think it was, said that the colonials were not like the regular Tommies—they had finer feelings. Would I order wood as screens for the latrines? I said, "Certainly." The iron and wood came, but was not used.

43. Who was in charge of the fatigue party which landed at half-past 9?—Major O'Brien.

44. You gave your orders through him?—No; through the colonel.
45. Was he on shore?—No, I think not.
46. Did Major O'Brien go on shore?—Yes.
47. Did the order for the men to strip go through Major O'Brien?—Yes. I never spoke to the men myself unless we had to argue with them about the vaccination, and when I saw they paid no attention to what was said to them.
48. It was from Major O'Brien that the order came that the men should wash?—He was instructed to that effect before he went on shore. Colonel Abbott told him the men were to take off the dirty clothes, wash themselves, put on clean clothes, get the stores up to the top of the hill, tighten up the tents, and make all ready for the other men who were to come on shore later.
49. What sort of a day was it when the men landed and washed?—It was a bright sunny morning. I do not know that any of the men stripped and went in; they were standing about soaping and washing themselves all the morning, enjoying themselves, while the officers walked up and down on the shore. I asked Colonel Abbott several times if he could not get them to start work.
50. I suppose you saw all the men before they left the island?—Every one.
51. And you say, with a full knowledge of the circumstances, that no man's health suffered through having a bath?—No. The men themselves said that if they had known they could have been so comfortable on the island they would not have stayed in the ship at all.
52. When was the earliest moment when the men could have disembarked?—The fatigue party could have disembarked on Friday, or, at all events, on Saturday morning, and all the men could have been landed easily on Saturday night—in any case, on Sunday.
53. So that under any circumstances they were nearly two days longer on board the steamer than they need have been?—Yes; it was Monday before the fatigue party went ashore.
54. *The Chairman.*] Can you explain why pneumonia was only incipient on board the "Orient," which you say was very filthy, and was virulent on board the "Britannic," which was very clean?—I am not aware that it was virulent on the "Britannic." Most of the deaths, so far as I am aware, were after the men landed, and many of them wandered about the streets and did not report themselves. By keeping men in hand as we did on the island we were able to give them clean, warm clothes, prevent them from catching cold, although they seemed determined to do everything possible to catch it. They stripped all over the place, and we had great difficulty in trying to make them keep themselves warm and dry. Many were worse than children.
55. *Mr. Millar.*] Is it possible that Major O'Brien could have construed your suggestion about bathing into an order?—I do not think so.
56. *Colonel Abbott.*] What was the date of your first coming on board the "Orient"?—Friday.
57. What time?—Friday morning.
58. On what date did you place the ship in quarantine?—Friday, the 8th.
59. When did you commence vaccinating the men?—That forenoon.
60. Did you instruct any of the men to be sent on shore before being vaccinated?—No.
61. The instructions were that they were to be vaccinated before going on shore?—Yes.
62. Was it possible for any men to go on shore on Friday after being vaccinated?—I do not see why they should not.
63. What time did you begin vaccinating them?—About 12 o'clock. Twenty-five men could be done in about a quarter of an hour. I only wanted a fatigue party ashore first.
64. Did you give any instructions at all on the 8th to send a fatigue party on shore?—I did not give any instructions. What I did was to say, in talking over the matter with you, that I wanted a fatigue party to go on shore as soon as we had vaccinated twenty-five men, in order to pitch the tents and take up the stores.
65. That was on the 8th?—Yes, after we had had a conversation.
66. On the 8th you gave an order that you wanted a fatigue party?—Pardon me. I do not think I ever gave an order on board ship. I asked you, and you said you were willing to help me.
67. Was there ever any doubt as to the men having to go on shore on the island?—Never in my mind, and I told you so; not once, but many times.
68. When did you finish vaccinating the men?—I could tell you by looking at my book. I think on Saturday we did about half the men, and I had to send off the same afternoon for more lymph, and we finished on Sunday.
69. Did you go ashore with Major O'Brien and myself on Saturday?—Yes.
70. Did we look at the ground?—Yes.
71. Were you not vaccinating on Saturday, the 9th?—Yes.
72. Was not the wish expressed by you to land the fatigue party for the first time on the 9th?—I wanted you to order a fatigue party to go on shore as soon as we had vaccinated twenty-five men, and that statement was made to you on Friday, and every other day till they did land.
73. Do you not think it possible that perhaps an impression was created that the men, if vaccinated, might not have to land?—No. I told you and Major O'Brien in private distinctly that you had to go on shore, and you said, in answer to me, did I think it not better to send the Auckland men up to Motuihi. I said, No, I was not going to run the risk of infecting two parts of the colony, and I told you to give up all hope of sending the men to Auckland.
74. Did you see the fatigue party paraded on Saturday?—Yes, after I came back. I saw them sitting on the deck, but not before or while the tug was waiting for them.
75. Did you ask me why the fatigue party were not on shore?—Yes. After I had been on shore for about two hours with Captain Coad, of the "Orient," I came to you and asked you why you had not kept your promise and sent the fatigue party, and you said that the fatigue party was on deck, and that you had told an officer to see if the tug was alongside.

76. Did I report to you on Friday that the men were ready to go with their officer?—Yes. When the tug had returned from the island you told me they were ready to go, but it was late and cold then. The tug waited for about three-quarters of an hour, but no party came on board.

77. You did not see the men parade?—No; I saw them sitting on the deck. That was after I had been on shore for two hours, and said it was too cold then, and the order was countermanded. There was no use in landing a fatigue party when it was dark.

78. There was no objection on the part of the men to go on shore?—I cannot say; but they did not land, although we waited three-quarters of an hour for them.

79. Had the officer seen the men mustered, would he have taken them on shore in the tug?—I hope so. Of course, I do not know whether they were ready when the boat was there, but the fact is they did not land.

80. So it was a misunderstanding, and not a demonstration, on the part of the men against being put on shore on the island?—I cannot say what was the cause on this occasion; the fact is they did not land. They sang a song in which they said they would not go on the island.

81. I suppose it was a song very much in the way they would sing, "We won't go home till morning"?—If you took the song alone it might be so, but when you took it in connection with the fact that they did not land, and the shouts about tarring and feathering Captain Coad and me the night before, it was capable of quite another interpretation.

82. What happened on Sunday?—The tug could not come alongside on Sunday morning. I spent the time finishing the vaccination.

83. Did you see the men parade on Sunday morning with their kits ready to go on shore?—Yes; about 1 o'clock.

84. Did not the tug come alongside and was not able to hang on?—There was a bit of a sea on, and, as the men would not make any move, Captain Fraser hauled off and came back again.

85. For twenty-five men to go on board?—Well, you got on board, and so did Major O'Brien and others. The men could quite easily have stepped on board. We did.

86. Did you see the men parade in the morning between 9 and 10 o'clock?—Yes.

87. And the captain signalled for the "Janie Seddon," and she could not hang on to the ship?—Yes.

88. And she went back to the island?—Yes.

89. Did you see the men on the promenade deck?—I did not see them, but they might have been there.

90. You would not know?—No.

91. Then, you and myself and Major O'Brien did get on the "Janie Seddon" later on, but it was getting late then?—No; it was about 1 o'clock. Captain Joyce was then on board. It was calm right on from that time.

92. Was there not a heavy sea on?—No; nothing to prevent the party coming on board. We did.

93. Did you expect the men, if they got on shore that day, to do any work?—Yes, certainly; I told you what I thought they should do.

94. Blowing a gale as it was?—It was not blowing a gale. The tugs from the shore were landing things at the island.

95. You stated just now that an officer reported to me that the men refused to leave the ship and go on the tug?—Yes; to Major O'Brien in your presence.

96. It may have been that the men, having been kept waiting so long, objected to going in the tug?—Well, sir, I am willing that the most friendly construction should be put upon the message, because it does not matter to me. It was heard by many others.

97. It does not matter to me?—I will tell you what I think was the cause. The men had an idea that some of their officers had determined not to land on *Somes Island*. This got about amongst the men, and when a few of the men were willing to go in the tug I think the others were hustling them, and would not allow them.

98. The others may have been using a little friendly barracking, but there was no bad temper shown?—Well, you yourself came off and left the men on the vessel, and it was after a communication with the Commandant that you went back and the men were landed.

99. Do you think that if the Commandant had ordered the men to be landed on the 8th I would not have tried to get them on shore?—Yes, I think you would. I think you did not believe, in your own mind, that you were going to land on the island, although I told you so many times quite distinctly.

100. From your own observation during the delay in landing the men, do you think that, if I had received an order on the same day that we arrived in Wellington Harbour to land the whole of the men on *Somes Island*, the men were in that state of discipline that they would not obey me, and that the whole of the men would not have been off that day?—I am quite willing to believe that. You had a fancy that you would not be landed on the island, and possibly that may account for you not exercising the power you suggest you have.

101. Did you ever hear at any time of my giving an order, either on board the "Orient" or on *Somes Island*, that was not obeyed?—Well, I never heard men refuse to do what you ordered, but I know you gave many orders which were never obeyed. I could specify several cases. I know I several times asked you to put a guard on the water-tap and stores, but there never was one there, although you ordered it, and I complained often to you.

102. Had you no guard on the meat?—No; I saw men go up and slash the meat about with a knife, and I saw men kicking it down the hill.

103. Is it a fact that during the time we were on the island we had a lot of different orders, and it was impossible to carry out one thing, because we had to leave off in the middle and go on

with something else?—Yes; the orders were not from me, however. I must say you had a troublous time.

104. The men being settled down, we could not start on any system, but had to leave that off and go on with something else?—Yes, that is so.

105. So that it was no criterion of the state of discipline in which the men were when they were on the island?—You had a very difficult task.

106. Were the men quiet on the island?—Yes. They had a very pleasant time of it there, and were quite happy; but they would not work, nor would they keep the place clean.

107. You think they were rather slow in working?—It appeared so to me. We used to go round and show them how to clean up the latrines.

108. Were the latrines as deep as you wished?—No.

109. And as soon as you wanted them a little deeper they were made so?—Yes; but the men would not use them always.

110. Did you not see that the shelters for the latrines were on the island before we left?—There was only one of them put up, and a couple of men could have put that up in a very few minutes, although the timber and iron asked for were lying on the wharf.

111. And next day the men refused to use that latrine?—Yes.

112. Then, there was no necessity for making any more breakwinds?—No, not then. You should have made them put them up right away.

113. You said you had a difficulty in getting the men vaccinated?—Yes, very great difficulty in getting the men paraded; that is all I hold you responsible for.

114. Did not each troop officer bring his troop to the social hall to be vaccinated?—Yes, but only after great delays, and personal talking to by myself.

115. Not fast enough?—Oh, no, certainly not.

116. If they refused compulsory vaccination, could I order them?—I do not know—that is a matter for you. I wanted you to join hands with me and help me in getting them all vaccinated as quickly as possible. I wish to say here, Mr. Chairman, that Colonel Abbott put no obstacle in my way personally.

117. Did the men object to submit to vaccination when the small-pox case broke out?—Yes, some did; but I talked them all over.

118. I want to be particular on the chief point—that is, the delay in getting the men off the ship. Was it quite possible that the delay in disembarking was caused through an uncertainty as to whether we should disembark or not?—Yes; that is what I say was the reason why the men were not landed sooner. It was the feeling of their not being required to land, and I think I told you, not once but several times, previously that if you did not land the men on Somes Island I would not be a Government official for another hour. I told you I would not risk the extension of the disease to other parts of the colony when there was plenty of room for the men on Somes Island. The uncertainty was in your mind, never in mine.

119. Was there any hostile obstacle put in your way?—No.

120. Or any active opposition?—It was sufficiently effective to delay the disembarking from Friday till Monday.

121. Which may have been caused through my misunderstanding the orders?—Well, you did not express any doubt about your power to order the men to land. You evidently thought possibly the men might not be landed, and that in the face of repeated statements by me that you would have to land your men on Somes Island.

122. Was any refusal uttered?—You never refused.

123. Then, there was only the uncertainty as to whether we were to land which, coupled with the rough weather, and other things, caused the delay?—Neither of these can in any sense excuse the non-landing of the men.

124. On the Monday when I received orders from the Commandant to land the men was there any delay?—No; there was rather too much haste, I think, then.

125. You say that the ship was filthy?—Yes.

126. When did you inspect the ship?—Practically on the 9th and 10th.

127. That would be the day after we cast anchor?—Yes. I am perfectly willing to qualify the word "filthy," and state exactly what I saw.

128. Do you take into consideration that the day before they arrived in Wellington Harbour the men put on clean clothes and threw the dirty ones overboard, and were in an unsettled state when you saw them?—Yes; I quite agree with that. I was referring to the fact that there were pieces of butter thrown about the deck, and also pieces of meat, and the fellows were coughing and spitting about on the deck. There was one place where there was some water about the size of this room washing backwards and forwards.

129. It is quite possible for such a thing to happen, although the ship was clean the day before?—Yes.

130. It is quite possible that two days before, the ship was clean?—Yes.

131. At the time you saw it the men were preparing to go on shore?—Yes.

132. Or going about to different places to be vaccinated?—Going about to be vaccinated would not account for butter and dirty decks.

133. It was no criterion of the state of the ship two days before arriving in Wellington?—No; but Captain Coad told me it had been the same all the voyage.

134. Did any of the men, when you vaccinated them, speak disrespectfully in raising objection to be vaccinated?—No. I just argued with them. I did not mind that at all. I quite realised that some might object to being vaccinated. I never complained about that.

135. Was it not understood by the men that vaccination was compulsory?—I do not know; but evidently some did not think so, as they refused.

136. The feeling was that if they refused to be vaccinated on conscientious scruples they need not, and no order of mine could make them?—That is so; and I could not force them either.

137. Did the troop officers work to bring the men up?—Yes; they worked, certainly, but some in a half-hearted way.

138. And brought the men to you?—Well, they brought them after considerable and frequent delays.

139. How long were you vaccinating three hundred men?—I cannot say. We did them as fast as they came in, but we had long waits between.

140. Do you consider the time taken up in vaccinating the six hundred men was rather long?—I do not think so. The time was not taken up in vaccinating them, but in getting the men paraded.

141. The men were brought up fast enough?—No; not only did I complain, but Dr. King and other officers complained about having to stand about for so long a time, and several men said they would not come up.

142. But they did come?—Yes, ultimately; but I had to see the officer myself.

143. Was there any order for the men to be paraded?—You told me there was.

144. And they were paraded in front of their own officers before being vaccinated—that is, men who objected to being vaccinated?—There was no delay in that; it was occasioned by the men not being brought up to be argued with sufficiently early. There was a delay, certainly, when I had to talk to all these men to convince them they must be vaccinated.

145. Were not some of the men that objected to be vaccinated ordered to parade by their officers?—They must have been, because they came up ultimately.

146. Was a parade by the troop officers and the squadron officers ordered?—Yes.

147. And after that parade?—The men were vaccinated.

148. Could it be possible that any word was sent down to tell them to go up and be vaccinated which they did not understand?—I did not interfere with the troops at all. The order came from you.

149. There was no refusal to obey their officers?—Not direct refusal, perhaps, but there was considerable delay, and I had to appeal to them myself before the men were all paraded.

150. The duty of the officers was to bring the men to you, and when the men came before you they could refuse to be vaccinated?—Yes; that is all I asked, that they should be brought to me. I could do the rest.

JAMES ROBERT PURDY, M.B., C.M., examined on oath. (No. 83.)

151. *The Chairman.*] You are a member of the medical profession?—Yes.

152. Where are you in practice?—At the Hutt.

153. When did you first become acquainted with the difficulties on board the "Orient"?—I went on board the "Orient" with Dr. Mason on the 8th August. It was the morning she arrived I went on board. I was just leaving to go and see my measles cases on the island when Dr. Mason asked me if I would go on the "Orient" with him to see this case of supposed small-pox. I said I would, because it would only take me a few minutes, but from that time I was quarantined.

154. You knew nothing about the "Orient" until the troops came on shore at Somes Island?—Yes; I saw them on board the "Orient" before they came off. She was lying close to the island, and I was on board every day until Sunday.

155. Do you know anything about the difficulties in landing the men at Somes Island?—I had some experience of it.

156. Will you relate any circumstance you would like to mention in regard to it?—I know the Chief Health Officer wanted a fatigue party brought on shore on Saturday, and it was not possible for the men to go. They never left the ship.

157. Why do you say it was not possible to get them to go?—I understood it was not possible. I was not aware of any reason why they should not leave the ship, but I do know they did not go, and there is no doubt about it.

158. Do you know whom the Chief Health Officer asked for the fatigue party?—I do not know officially whom he asked.

159. All you know is that it was on Friday the "Orient" came in?—I know this went on for two or three days trying to get a fatigue party on shore. I was helping the Chief Health Officer to vaccinate eight hundred men, as he had asked me to go and help him. I went on the ship to help in the vaccination, and on Saturday we had not sufficient lymph to finish the vaccination, and some more was sent for, and we were waiting for this. We vaccinated 275 men the first day. I went off from the island to the ship on Saturday evening to help to vaccinate the men, but I could not return to the island that night because a big storm came up and the boat did not come alongside for me. It did not come until the Sunday morning. I saw the "Janie Seddon" put off from the island, but she could not get within 100 yards of the "Orient." I went on the main deck and shouted to them, and managed to make them hear, and Captain Fraser said he could not come alongside. I said, "We want you to go to Wellington for a medical man to come to the island and see my patients." I yelled to him, "Come back as soon as you can." I asked for a boat from the ship to go on shore, and I said I did not mind risking my neck; but the chief mate said it would not be possible to get a boat off. This was about half-past 2 o'clock. The "Janie Seddon" came back on Sunday, and she lay alongside for about twenty minutes. I got on board without any difficulty, and we lay by the ship for some time. During the time I was on board she broke two ropes and also the top rail of the gangway. The captain said, "We must get away; I cannot stay any longer." I said, "You had better cast off. This fatigue party you came for does not appear to be coming."



160. Was there any considerable difficulty in getting on board the tug?—I had not much difficulty.

161. Do you imagine there would have been a difficulty in getting the fatigue party on to the tug?—They could have got on board, because I did.

162. Why would not the skipper remain alongside the ship?—Because he broke two of his ropes when he was hanging alongside. The sea was rough. I admit it was pretty rough, but I got on board the tug, and I think twenty-five men could have been shipped into her in twenty minutes.

163. When did the men get on shore?—I think they came on shore on Monday morning.

164. Were you there then?—Yes. It was on the morning of the 11th; I know Sunday was the 10th, because two of my Somes Island patients died on Sunday, the 10th. When they came on shore they came about half-past 9 on Monday morning. There were twenty-five men, I think. I came down to the wharf in the morning, as part of my duty was to see all stores and look after newspapers and letters that came across. I went down to the wharf, and these men were sitting there doing nothing. No doubt it was half-past 2 o'clock before they did any work. It was nearly half-past 11 o'clock before I saw the first man start to wash himself. They all went for a bathe in the sea. It was quite warm.

165. How many went to bathe?—I think, all the twenty-five.

166. Did you advise them to bathe in the sea?—No.

167. Did you give them any instructions about washing in the sea?—I never spoke to the men at all.

168. Then, the men bathed there voluntarily on their own account?—I do not know. I know I did not give them any instructions.

169. Was Dr. Mason on shore?—No.

170. Any other medical man there?—None but myself.

171. You did not give them the order to bathe?—No. It was quite a warm morning though, and it could not do the men any harm.

172. When did they get their clean clothes?—As soon as they came on shore the quartermaster had everything ready for them.

173. Was it then that they bathed?—No; not for a considerable time after that. They grumbled and growled about having to give up their kits.

174. Do you remember the man Wray?—Yes; I saw him on parade. I recognised this was one of the difficulties we had to deal with, so instead of calling for sick-parades I insisted that every squadron should parade, and that I should see individually each man on the island, and judge for myself whether there was a large percentage of sickness or not. I personally went down each squadron as they were paraded, and made each man speak to me. At 3 o'clock I paraded eighty-four men and ten officers of the South Island contingent under Captain Ross. Only two men out of that lot were ordered to hospital. [Names given.] Amongst the others I find Wray, No. 7371, had a slight cold, which he said he had had for a day or two, and I gave him some cough-lozenges.

175. At the time he came under your notice did you see him medically?—He was not bad. He was not reported sick. I only saw him on the parade.

176. He was not taken into the hospital?—No, it was not necessary.

177. You administered some medicine?—I gave him some cough-lozenges.

178. You diagnosed his case?—Yes; he had a slight 'catarrh. I saw him again the next day. I saw all the men to whom medicine had been given.

179. Do you know anything of his health after this examination?—Yes; he was quite fit to leave the island. Every man said he was better when he left—*e.g.*, we had some ninety-six men in the hospital on the morning of 13th August, and by night they said they were all fit to go except two. I kept another three back, however. [List handed in.]

180. Was Dr. Valintine on Somes Island?—No.

181. Then, this man refers either to the Principal Health Officer or to yourself?—We were the only two medical men on the island. I was in uniform. There was so much looting on the island that I went about in uniform. I was not called a Health officer.

182. Did you see the discipline of the men on Somes Island?—Yes; but they were only there a short time. I had no trouble with the men, except in one or two cases. They seemed to do pretty much as they liked. They had come there expecting to find a sort of inferno, and when they found it was so beautiful and comfortable they simply went about all over the island.

183. Did you report on the camping-place?—No, not officially. I was not asked.

184. What sort of a camping-place was it?—Well, I have been in a good many camps in my time, and I said any man would consider this as an ideal camp. I went one night with two of the officers when there was a big storm on and it was howling on the island. I know it was a bad gale, because some trees were blown down that night at the Hutt. I saw it in the *Evening Post*, but you could not feel any wind in the camp, it was so sheltered.

185. You are satisfied the camp was healthy?—Yes; I only wish I could have treated all my "Britannic" patients in the tents. I believe, under suitable conditions, in treating pneumonia in tents.

186. You are certain that everything was suitable on the island, and not injurious to the health of the men?—Yes; I can prove that it was very much better than an ordinary camp. I have here a list of men in hospital handed over to me by Surgeon-Captain King.

187. That list shows, then, all the men from the "Orient" who were ill in the hospital on the ship?—Yes; there were sixty men in the hospital on the "Orient." Of course, many of them were convalescents, and none of them suffering from serious illness.



188. How many died?—Not one. They all went away from the island practically well, except the five men I detained. Of these sixty men, I may say that about twenty asked of their own accord permission to go into tents when they saw how comfortable things were made on the island. I said I did not want them to do that, but they preferred to go with their chums. They begged of me to allow them to go there, and I let them. Each tent had two bales of straw, and we only put five men into a tent.

189. Were you conscious of any obstruction on the part of Major O'Brien to prevent the men landing?—No, except that I was there on the first day when he entered a formal protest on medical grounds against the troops landing.

190. Do you imagine that he is a duly qualified medical man?—No. I told him he had no right to enter such a protest, and if I was the chief medical man I would not stand it.

191. Is he a medical man?—No, sir.

192. What do you think led Major O'Brien to put in this protest?—I have not the slightest idea.

193. When you first went on the "Orient" how did she strike you in the matter of cleanliness?—She seemed amazingly clean. She was very much cleaner than the "Britannic." She was a very fine ship.

194. On the troop-decks?—I must say some of the men were spitting anywhere they could. When we went down to the luncheon-room on the first day there were a lot of men around the door, and they were making a lot of rude remarks—remarks that I should not like to repeat here. There were some sixty or seventy men around the saloon-door when I went down with the captain to have luncheon with him. One day I saw one man deliberately standing and spitting on the deck; another I saw spit on the gangway, and I took him by the shoulder and asked him whether he could not spit in the sea. They were spitting all over the ship, although some of them had not a foot to walk to spit over the side.

195. Are you mentioning this as an instance of want of discipline?—I do not think any discipline would teach a man like that.

196. The ship struck you as being generally clean?—Very clean. The upper decks seemed clean, and there was any amount of hospital room.

197. *Colonel Abbott.*] On what particular day did you start vaccinating?—On the day the ship came into port, I think.

198. That would be the 8th?—I think so. I do not think we began the vaccination on the day after she arrived, because we had no lymph.

199. We cast anchor on the 8th?—I was on and off the ship from the time she cast anchor until Sunday morning, and I vaccinated over two hundred and fifty men. I know there was a day between the vaccinating of the first and second lots, because we ran short of lymph. They had to telegraph to Napier or elsewhere for more, and I believe it came down by the train. We began vaccinating on the 8th.

200. Was it possible on Saturday night to land the men owing to the heavy sea?—It was possible on the Saturday afternoon, because I came on board the "Orient" at half-past 6 o'clock in the evening from the island to help to continue the vaccination.

201. When was the storm?—About half-past 8 o'clock on the Saturday night, because the boat was to come back for me at 9 o'clock, and she did not come back.

202. What was the weather like on Sunday when you had stopped on board?—It was very bad weather, so bad that the "Janie Seddon" could not come alongside the ship.

203. Was not the dining-saloon on the same deck as the officers' cabins?—Yes, I think so.

204. So that the men were not at the saloon-door?—They were there when we came down to go into the dining-saloon. The men were all round the doors just outside on the deck, and were making all sorts of horrid remarks.

205. The question I want to ascertain is what part of the ship the men were in: were they on the main deck where the social hall is or were they down near the saloon?—I do not know the ship well; they were down near the saloon. We were in the captain's cabin, and he asked us to lunch with him. The men were clustered round the doors at each side of the main entrance to the dining-saloon. I had always considerable difficulty in getting to the gangway, because the men were standing about there on the deck.

206. You do not know the "Orient" very well, but were you on the promenade deck?—Yes.

207. Then you went down stairs, the top of which were on the same landing as my cabin?—Yes.

208. Then, when you got to the foot of those stairs?—That is where all the men were clustered together on the deck outside leading into the dining-saloon.

209. On the officers' deck?—I do not know if it is called the officers' deck.

210. On the promenade deck?—I do not know the promenade deck.

211. Are you quite sure the men were not down on the main deck?—It is quite possible they may have been, because I have a very hazy recollection of where the men were. I do not know ship decks well. I know what they said, because it amazed me, and I turned round to the captain and said, "That is pretty bad," and he said, "We are accustomed to that sort of thing."

212. Were not the men standing at the social hall waiting to be vaccinated that afternoon? Was not that the reason the men were there?—I do not say it might not be so, but it would be a very unusual time for them to be waiting to be vaccinated when we were at luncheon.

213. But that was the place where the men came to be vaccinated?—No; that is the place where we vaccinated the second batch. The first day you came into port this happened within two or three hours of our going on board the ship. We vaccinated the men at first on the way to the hospital. With the first batch I had one lot on one side of the deck, and the other medical officer had another lot on the other side. I think they came through the main saloon to get to us.

214. I understand you to say you vaccinated the men on the first day on the way to the hospital: that was forward of the dining-saloon?—I think so. We vaccinated the first batch of men in alleyways leading to the hospital, and to which access was gained by the main saloon. We vaccinated the second batch of men on Sunday, the 10th, in the social hall.

215. All the men were paraded and brought to you through the dining-saloon?—Yes.

216. Had you any cause to complain of the conduct of the men themselves?—No, I had not.

217. They came readily to be vaccinated?—No, some would not come; but as soon as it was pointed out to them how foolish it was they came.

218. When the men were waiting to be vaccinated was their conduct good?—Yes.

219. When the captain of the ship made that remark as to this sort of language being often heard, did you infer that he might have heard strong language amongst the sailors also?—I had better repeat what was said in my hearing. What was said was this: "Here are some more b—— going into eat"; and others said, "These b—— officers get too, much to eat," and the rest guffawed. It was the sort of thing one was not accustomed to, especially on a sort of ceremonial occasion.

220. You say the ship was clean when she came into port?—Yes.

221. It was about half-past 10 o'clock after we cast anchor that you saw her?—Yes.

222. And she was clean then?—Yes, on the upper deck.

223. Did you go down to the troop-decks?—No. I have no complaint to make of the ship from what I saw. I saw the hospital, and I think the men had a very proper hospital on board, and that it was well kept.

224. You stated that some of the men were filthy?—Yes, in their habits; and also vulgar in their behaviour. They were filthy in their language.

225. It is quite possible they did not see their officers when they used that language?—Very probably; they seemed never to see a superior officer on board.

226. Do you mean they were filthy in their habits?—Yes.

227. Were they filthy in their clothes?—No. The "Orient" men were not as dirty as the "Britannic" men, but a large number of them were fairly dirty.

228. It is quite possible that a man might be clean, although his shirt and trousers might be dirty from working?—Oh, yes.

229. So far as you know, the men were clean personally?—No; as far as I know, a great many of the men were not particularly clean.

230. What caused you to know that they were not personally clean?—General observation in going over the ship.

231. How could you tell whether a man was clean or not without taking off his clothes?—Every man had to partly strip to be vaccinated.

232. It was nothing more than you would expect from men who had just been doing fatigue work?—I think they were not as dirty as the "Britannic" men, but some of them were dirty.

Trooper HARRY PERCY examined on oath. (No. 84.)

233. *The Chairman.*] What contingent did you belong to?—The Ninth.

234. To what squadron?—The C squadron.

235. You were on board the "Orient"?—Yes.

236. You have volunteered to give evidence before this Commission: will you now make any statement you wish to make?—When we got on board she was in a filthy condition, and, as far as the troops are concerned, she was overcrowded. There was bad ventilation, and the food was improper both in quality and quantity, and the washing-accommodation was bad. The way the blankets, whether wet or dry, were thrown down in the hold was very wrong.

237. You were a trooper?—Yes.

238. What was your occupation before you joined?—A labourer.

239. Where did you embark?—At Durban.

240. Where did you come from before you embarked?—We came down from Newcastle by train.

241. Did you come straight through?—Yes.

242. How long were you at Durban before you embarked?—About half an hour.

243. How long were you in Newcastle?—About five or six days.

244. You had time to get into order after coming back from trek?—Yes.

245. You say the boat was filthy when you went on board?—Yes.

246. Can you give us some description of her state?—She was lousy; the blankets were lousy, and the hold where we slept. No. 3 was also lousy.

247. That is apart from the blankets?—Yes; the ship was pervaded with lice.

248. Do you chance to know what troops had been in her before you embarked?—I could not say for certain, but I heard it was Boer prisoners.

249. Was there anything else filthy about her besides the lice?—Yes; she was dirty.

250. Do you mean that there was lack of paint, or anything special? "Filthy" is such a general term that one wants to know something more specific?—Well, the whole of the decks were not scrubbed. I know ours was not the day we got on board.

251. At what time in the day did you embark?—About half-past 1 o'clock.

252. Used the decks to be scrubbed regularly by the men?—Yes, every morning.

253. Did they succeed in getting her clean?—I think, as far as they were able to.

254. The decks used to be scrubbed every day?—Yes.

255. The troop-decks where the men slept?—These were the troop-decks.

256. The troops did not clean the upper decks?—No.

257. Were they not sufficiently cleaned?—Not sufficiently, I think.

258. In what way did they lack sufficiency?—They did not wash them enough.
259. How did they wash them?—They swabbed them out.
260. Do you know the regulations for cleaning 'tween decks?—No ; but I know the regulations were stuck up throughout the ship.
261. Do you know that it is specially provided they shall not be slushed out with much water?—They used swabs.
262. Did they go over the whole deck with them?—Yes. It was the stuff left on the floor after the swabbing, and all kinds of grease and dirt.
263. What has that been caused by?—I do not know, I am sure. They never had soap or anything like that to scrub the floor with.
264. Did the men throw their meat about the deck?—Yes, at times.
265. And did they spit on the deck?—Some of them did.
266. Was it on account of the men's fault in throwing the food about and spitting on the deck that the decks were difficult to clean?—It was not altogether their fault, although it was partly so.
267. Did they use fresh water or salt water to clean the decks?—Fresh water.
268. And they never had soap?—I never saw any.
269. Any deck-scrubbers?—They had brooms and just swabs.
270. You say the ship was overcrowded : what do you mean by the word "overcrowded"?—There were too many in the hold.
271. Do you know what number of men there were at your table?—Sixteen.
272. How long was the table?—About 12 ft. long.
273. Was there room for the men to hang their hammocks?—Yes.
274. Where there hooks for every man?—There were not enough hooks.
275. Are you sure of that?—Yes.
276. Take your own table : how many dining at your table were unable to hang hammocks?—About three or four.
277. Was it that they did not choose to hang their hammocks, or that they could not?—They could not.
278. Do you think that there was any space wasted, or that the hooks were not properly availed of?—I think there were not enough hooks.
279. Do you know how far apart the hooks were?—I could not say ; they were pretty close.
280. Where did these three or four men sleep?—They either lay down in the passage or they went on deck.
281. Did any men sleep on deck through choice?—Some did.
282. You think that, whether they had a hammock or not, they would prefer to go on deck?—Some would.
283. You think that accounts for part of the men not finding hammock-space?—Some of the men slept on deck.
284. Did any sleep on the mess-table?—Yes.
285. Any on the floor of the troop-deck?—Yes.
286. You would say, generally, that in the other messes some of the men could not get hammock-space, as in yours?—Yes.
287. That is to say, that 25 per cent. of the men could not get hammock-room?—Yes.
288. Can you say on how many decks the troops were?—I think, three.
289. Which were you on?—No. 3.
290. Had you one or two hatches into your deck?—Two hatches.
291. Had you any windsails?—Two.
292. Any air-shoot through which the foul air could get out?—No.
293. Where did you sleep yourself?—In the centre of the hold, in a hammock when I could get one hung up.
294. Were there any electric fans?—No.
295. Did you report to your orderly sergeant, or the troop-deck sergeant, or to the orderly officer, or to the medical officer about the ventilation on your deck?—Our orderly did.
296. To whom?—They made several reports to the orderly sergeant.
297. Did he take any steps to remedy it?—I could not say ; but if he did we never benefited by it.
298. Did you ever see the mouth of the windsail tied up?—Not tied up, but blocked up.
299. Was that often?—Yes, very often.
300. Did that conduce to the lack of ventilation?—Yes.
301. You think, then, the men were fully as much to blame as anybody else?—Yes.
302. Could you not have prevented that?—No. In nine cases out of ten it was done at night.
303. Do you know, yourself, of any case where the lack of ventilation was reported to the orderly officer, to the medical officer, or to Colonel Abbott?—I could not say ; we reported to the troop sergeants.
304. What did they say?—They said they would do what they could.
305. Were there holes in the deck that could be opened and more windsails put in?—I do not think so.
306. You imagine that you were no worse off on board the "Orient" than all other troops that have travelled by her?—Oh, no.
307. Then, it is not of your officers you complain, but of the ship?—Yes.
308. You say the food was improper in quality and quantity?—Yes.
309. What was wrong with the quality of the meat?—It was of bad quality.

310. What was the matter with it?—It was tainted.
311. Were complaints made to the orderly officer about that?—Yes.
312. Were any steps taken to remedy it?—Yes, at times.
313. Give us a case of a formal complaint having been made and no steps taken to remedy it?—It was with the stew in the morning.
314. Could you tell us the name of the orderly who reported that, and the name of the officer to whom he reported?—I could not say. I only knew two officers in the boat.
315. Did they look after the men?—Well, Mr. Blake looked after the complaints.
316. We want to get at what you yourself know of any case where you complained and there was no remedy given?—That was just before we got to Albany.
317. To whom did you complain?—To the orderly officer.
318. Who was the orderly officer?—I could not say, but next morning Colonel Abbott came round to see.
319. Does that point to the fact that the orderly officer did his duty?—Yes.
320. Did Colonel Abbott express any anxiety to help you?—He was anxious to help us.
321. Then, it was one of those inevitable accidents in which complaint was attended to?—Yes.
322. Tell us of some serious case?—There was one of the fish, which was neither properly cleaned inside nor out.
323. Any complaint made?—Yes.
324. To whom?—To the orderly officer.
325. Did he take any steps to remedy it?—Yes; that was the morning that Colonel Abbott came round.
326. Can you give us another case?—No, sir.
327. How often did you have bad meat?—Off and on, right away from when we left Durban till we landed at Lyttelton.
328. Do you know who inspected the meat before it went to the cooks' galley?—I do not know anything about that.
329. How was the bread?—It was doughy the whole of the voyage.
330. Was it eatable?—We had to eat it.
331. Was it the same as was supplied to the officers' mess?—I could not say.
332. Had you enough of it?—Yes.
333. And biscuits?—Yes.
334. Plenty of them?—Yes.
335. Did you get butter?—Yes.
336. How often?—I think, every morning.
337. And jam?—About once a week.
338. Cheese?—Yes.
339. How often?—About twice a week.
340. Bacon?—No, sir, but bad pork.
341. Sausages?—Yes.
342. How often?—One sausage apiece about three times a week.
343. What did you have for tea?—We had rice and prunes and bread-and-butter.
344. Any meat?—At times we had fish.
345. Never bully beef?—No.
346. Well, with regard to the quality of the tea and coffee, what about that?—It was not good.
347. How was it bad?—I think it was the water which was bad.
348. Was it distilled water?—I could not say.
349. Was there any specially good quality reserved for the officers?—I do not think so.
350. How were your blankets served out to you when you got on board?—Our sergeants drew ours. Some of the men drew their own.
351. How did you get yours?—Our sergeant drew them, and I got them from him.
352. Were your own blankets clean or dirty?—They were dirty.
353. Did they look as if they had been washed since they were used before?—They looked clean to look at.
354. When did you discover that they were lousy?—Before I was on board two hours.
355. Did you report that?—Yes; to the sergeant.
356. Did he take steps to remedy it?—I could not say, but he said he would speak to the officer.
357. Were there many of the men lousy on the veldt?—No, not in our squadron.
358. There were none lousy in your squadron?—Well, I should not like to say that.
359. You feel sure the blankets were lousy before they came on board, and that they were not infected by men coming on board lousy?—Yes.
360. You complain of the lavatories, and say they were bad: in what way were they bad?—There were only from twelve to twenty basins for the crowd of men on board.
361. Take your own regiment: how many basins had you?—About twelve for the whole of the troops.
362. On which side of the ship were you?—I was on the after side.
363. Were there no basins forward?—Not for our battalion.
364. How many men were there in your battalion?—About five hundred.
365. Were they on one side of the ship?—Only on one side.
366. Who had the other side?—There were half a dozen basins there for the non-commissioned officers.
367. Were the non-commissioned officers included in the troops?—They were included.

368. How many non-commissioned officers were there?—I could not say. There were a lot of troops and non-commissioned officers who joined us from other regiments.

369. Were there a hundred non-commissioned officers?—No.

370. Then, about four hundred men would have to wash in twelve basins?—Yes.

371. Did you get water to wash?—Yes; it was on for about an hour and a half or two hours in the morning.

372. Could all the men get a wash?—No.

373. How often did you go without?—I was lucky. I used to get up pretty early.

374. At what time?—About a quarter to 6.

375. Before reveille?—No; that was at half-past 5.

376. How many would be round the basins then?—There would be a crowd.

377. How long would you have to wait for a wash?—Sometimes half an hour, and sometimes longer.

378. You think that if the men got up earlier they would get a wash?—Many of them could not get one.

379. Did many of them try to get a wash in the middle of the day?—No they could not get water.

380. Not with the excuse that they wanted water to drink?—Yes.

381. You think they did not bother their heads about that?—The water was turned off.

382. The drinking-water?—No. A man could get a bucket, of course; but the police were down stairs and you were not supposed to touch that water, but many of us did.

383. With regard to the meat, which was the best, the beef or the mutton?—The mutton.

384. Did you often get that bad?—Yes.

385. Was there a canteen on board?—Yes; a dry canteen.

386. What could you buy there?—Biscuits and fish, and food of that sort.

387. Used you to go there much?—Yes.

388. Did many men use the canteen?—Yes.

389. How many would go for a feed of an evening?—I should say about three hundred.

390. Was there much selling of ship's food by the cooks in the galley?—Yes, there was a great amount done.

391. How many used to go to the galleys about it?—I could not say. All those who had money used to go to the galley to get their food every night.

392. Do you know what they paid for the food?—I myself paid 1s. and 2s.

393. What did they give you for 2s.?—Steak and onions and potato-chips I got.

394. *Mr. McNab.*] Was there much sickness on board?—A good deal by the time we landed in New Zealand.

395. You had no deaths?—No.

396. Do you not think that Colonel Abbott and his officers did fairly well in bringing through such an immense crowd of men without losing one?—Yes, you would think so.

397. Does not that indicate that, whilst you may have had bad meals now and again, and that the ventilation in your deck was not good, it could not have been so very bad as to affect the men's health?—The men were not affected there, because they had no work to do there.

398. Do you think it was a right training for the men not to have done any work in South Africa?—No.

399. Do you think that the fact that they had done nothing in South Africa was a good training for their life on board ship?—I think they were in the best of health and hardy.

400. Had not the majority of them been in camp most of the time in South Africa?—Our last camp was for six weeks.

401. Would not that make the men weaker than if they had been on trek?—I do not see it.

402. Do you not think that men who had been trekking would, to use a colonial expression, get as hard as nails, and be better men to bring on a ship than those who had come out of a camp?—Yes; but the men who were on trek did not get the same food we got in camp.

403. In what way?—We used to get fresh meat and vegetables.

404. Do you not think you were dissatisfied when you got on board ship because you were treated so well in camp?—No.

405. What proportion of your men had been in action in South Africa?—That I could not say. There were a lot of returned troopers on board.

406. That was only a small number out of the whole?—Yes.

407. I suppose, as a rule, you were disappointed at the war closing so soon after you got there?—Yes.

408. Would not all that tend to make you feel the inconveniences of a crowded vessel more than if you had had twelve months in the field?—I do not see why it should.

409. If another contingent were wanted would you go back?—Yes.

410. Then, the inconveniences of the voyage were not sufficient to prevent you going back?—No.

411. *Mr. Millar.*] Have you been in a troopship before?—No.

412. I suppose you do not know what is provided by the transport regulations?—No.

413. You were an Imperial soldier?—Yes.

414. So that if the Imperial transport regulations were carried out on board the "Orient" you had no cause to complain?—I think not.

415. The official return gives 1,234 as the number of men on board—I presume when you left Durban—and the "Orient" is certified to carry 1,250 men, so that you had sixteen men less than the vessel was certified to carry. Therefore although the ship was very crowded there was no

breach of any regulations by the Imperial authorities in sending you away under these conditions?—No; although I know one could not sleep.

416. Did any one ever give you a lesson as to how to hang your hammocks?—No; we hung them ourselves.

417. How did you hang them?—We hung them to two hooks.

418. If you took two hooks to hang a hammock, and the provision is that two hammocks are to hang on three hooks would you still say that there were an insufficient number of hooks?—I could not say.

419. If all the hammocks were hung in that way would there not be sufficient hooks?—I do not think so.

420. You think the ship was not fitted to carry the number of men she was certified to carry?—She was not fit to carry all the hammocks.

421. The number of men are certified to according to the space in the ship, and 16 in. between the hooks are all that is allowed: would not that show that there was space according to the regulations?—I could not say.

422. Was there any discipline on board the ship?—Yes.

423. Was it pretty good?—Yes.

424. Did you have any parades during the trip?—Yes; once or twice.

425. How often were you paraded for inspection?—I do not think we were paraded for inspection at all.

426. Was there ever any inspection as to the personal cleanliness of the men?—I think not.

427. Was there a daily inspection as to the cleanliness of the troop-decks?—Yes.

428. Do you think your officers paid sufficient attention to the comfort and necessities of the men as they should do?—Well, once or twice they might have been more so.

429. What occasions were those?—Just after we started, and when we were swabbing the decks.

430. You think the officers might have seen that the decks were a little cleaner?—It was only once or twice.

431. Is that the only complaint against the officers?—Yes.

432. Did you see any drunkenness on board?—The only time I saw any was when we were lying off the heads at Lyttelton.

433. Was there any during the voyage?—No.

434. Was there any amongst your officers?—No.

435. So that if a statement was made that there was a lot of drunkenness on board you would say it was incorrect?—Yes.

436. How long do you think it takes a man to wash?—I do not know.

437. What time would you take to wash in supposing you went up stripped and ready to wash?—About four or five minutes.

438. Would it take you five minutes?—It would to have a good wash after coming out of the stuffy hold.

439. You think every man would require five minutes to wash in?—I think so.

440. Could a man not have a decent wash in three minutes?—I do not think so.

441. You say the water was on for about two hours?—Yes.

442. And there were twelve basins available: that would allow 480 men to wash?—Yes.

443. And you had about 480 men?—Yes.

444. So that if the men did not take more than three minutes each to wash, there were facilities for every man to have a wash?—Yes; but some of the North Island battalion used to come there and wash also.

445. But you are only giving evidence as to the wash-basins aft?—I am speaking of our deck as well.

446. I understood you to say these basins were provided for five hundred men?—There were more.

447. How many troops were there in the forward end of the ship?—I could not say.

448. You do not know the number of basins forward?—No.

449. *Colonel Abbott.*] You stated that there was no parade for inspection: do you remember parading under Order 19 for medical inspection? I will read the order. [Order read.] Do you remember that parade?—I remember that parade well; it was on the forward deck.

450. With reference to parading, did you not parade every morning on the promenade deck?—Yes; just while inspection was going on.

451. Was the roll called?—The roll was never called when I was there.

452. You used to fall in while the ship was being inspected?—Yes.

Trooper FREDERICK JOHN COATES examined on oath. (No. 85.)

453. *The Chairman.*] Did you belong to one of the contingents?—Yes; to the Ninth.

454. What squadron?—C squadron.

455. What rank?—Trooper.

456. What was your occupation before you joined the contingent?—General station-hand.

457. You volunteered to give evidence with regard to the "Orient." Will you just state what you know yourself, not what other men have told you?—I know that the accommodation on board the "Orient" was not sufficient for the number of men. The food was very poor, and the bedding was in a filthy state when we got on board. The ventilation in our hold was not good. There were two windsails down there and a small air-shoot. That was on No. 3 troop-deck. I do not think the ventilation was sufficient for the size of the hold, and we were not allowed to open the ports. We might have opened them when the sea was calm, but they would not let us.

458. It was No. 3 deck from above?—It was called No. 3 deck, but it was the second deck from the upper deck.

459. What else?—We had fish one night and neither the outside was cleaned nor the inside taken out of it. Very often we were not able to drink the tea. There was no food fit for consumption. The bread was not very bad. I do not know anything to complain of about the bread. I never saw a case of drunkenness on board.

460. Was there any neglect on the part of the officers to look after you?—I think the officers did the best they could for us.

461. What about the washing?—There was no accommodation for washing at all—not enough accommodation, and the water was turned off after half an hour, and the men had to scramble over one another to get a wash at all.

462. How many basins were there?—I could not say.

463. Any fault with the latrines?—No.

464. Was the discipline generally good?—I think it was good as far as I know. There was, I believe, one case of a man refusing to throw water about the deck, but that was all.

465. When you say there was no accommodation what do you mean?—I do not think there was sleeping-accommodation for the men down in the hold.

466. Do you know what the regulations allow a man on board a troopship?—No, I do not.

467. Did you consider yourself an Imperial soldier?—Yes.

468. If you were told that you had more space than an Imperial soldier what would you say?—I suppose if we had the space allowed it was right.

469. How many men were there on board the ship?—I do not know.

470. There were 1,234 men on board, and the accommodation under the transport regulations is for 1,250, so that you were sixteen men under the number which the transport regulations provide for. Under these circumstances, you might say the place was inconvenient, but really you had scarcely ground for complaint?—I do not know, sir. I know the hammocks were about 18 in. apart, and a man could not sleep in that.

471. Do you know the space that a British soldier has?—No.

472. Would it surprise you if I told you it is only 16 in.?—I could not say.

473. Did you sleep in a hammock yourself?—No.

474. Why?—Because if there was a bit of a heavy sea on you were bumped up against another fellow.

475. It was not that you could not hang your hammock?—Most of the fellows did hang their hammocks, and the rest slept on the decks.

476. There were lots of hooks, but the men did not care to hang their hammocks?—Yes.

477. Were there many who did that?—There seemed to be a good few.

478. You say the ship was filthy when you embarked?—When the blankets were issued out to us I know I caught twenty-five lice on one of mine the first time I got them.

479. When was that?—The same day the blankets were issued to us.

480. Who took delivery of your squadron's blankets?—I do not know who took possession of them; I suppose it would be the quartermaster.

481. Did you make a complaint to the quartermaster?—I did not make any complaint.

482. Did the blankets look clean or dirty?—They did not look dirty, nor too clean either.

483. What do you mean by "not too clean"?—As if they had been used before.

484. But as if they had been cleaned and washed and fumigated since being used before?—Yes; I believe they had been.

485. You talk about the ship being filthy and you get only to one blanket?—The majority of the blankets were in the same state.

486. But as to the dirt of the ship herself we want evidence: what have you to say?—I do not know anything else.

487. You say the blankets presented the appearance of having been washed since they were last used?—Yes.

488. How many men had lice on them before they arrived at Durban?—I do not think more than 5 per cent. of them, but when we once got on the boat I think everybody had them.

489. You say the ventilation was bad: how many hatches had your troop-deck?—Two.

490. And windsails?—Two.

491. And an air-shoot?—Yes, one.

492. Any electric fans?—I do not think so.

493. In the ship anywhere?—I could not say. The windsails were not of much use, because they were very seldom put so that the wind could get down them. When the wind changed they were left as they were before and very little draught came down.

494. Whose duty was it to shift them?—I should think it was the ship's crew.

495. Did the men take any steps to have them altered?—I did not.

496. How often did any of the men tie up the bottom of the windsail?—I do not know.

497. Not the air-shoot?—That was not shut up.

498. How many men were there on your deck?—About four hundred.

499. You had two windsails and two hatches and an air-shoot?—Yes.

500. Was there any complaint made or any wish expressed by the men for more windsails?—I believe there was a complaint made.

501. To whom?—I could not say.

502. You do not know anything about a complaint?—No.

503. You did not make a complaint yourself?—No.

504. You say the food was very poor?—Yes.

505. What do you mean by "very poor"?—The potatoes, I think, were pig-potatoes, and if the food was served properly there would not have been half enough.

506. What about the quality of the meat?—It was not bad, but it was very poorly cooked.

507. Which was best, the beef or the mutton?—I could not say.

508. What did you have for breakfast?—We had porridge and molasses every third morning, and a sort of stew.

509. Was that in addition to the porridge and molasses?—No; it was on the alternate mornings.

510. Did you ever have bacon?—I do not remember.

511. Sausages?—Yes, now and again.

512. Any preserved meat?—No, sir, I do not think so.

513. Any bread?—Yes.

514. You have no fault to find with the bread?—I think the bread was good enough.

515. And biscuits?—There were a couple of cases of biscuits brought down into our hold.

516. During the whole voyage?—Yes, during the whole voyage.

517. Then, you very seldom got biscuits?—Very seldom.

518. Did you get butter?—Yes.

519. How often?—I think, every morning.

520. And jam?—I think we had jam once or twice a week.

521. Then, you had bread-and-butter, jam and porridge, molasses, and sometimes stews, for breakfast?—We did not get these on the same morning.

522. You had bread every morning and butter every morning, and if you had not porridge you had stew?—Yes.

523. What did you have for dinner?—We had soup. I do not know whether you would call it soup or not.

524. How do you mean?—It was very thin.

525. Were there any vegetables in it?—I believe there were some, but I never managed to get any.

526. You seem to have been an unfortunate man?—I believe I was, sir.

527. What else did you get besides soup?—Sometimes roast meat, and sometimes boiled meat, and potatoes and vegetables, perhaps greens or carrots or turnips.

528. Any puddings?—Once a week.

529. What used you to get for tea?—We used to get rice and some prunes.

530. Anything else?—Bread-and-butter.

531. Were you able to eat it all or was there more than you could eat?—We could eat twice as much.

532. How much meat was served to the men?—I do not know anything about that, but we always had four or five sick at our table and yet we did not get sufficient.

533. You say the tea was bad: what was the matter with it?—I could not tell you; it had not the taste of tea at all.

534. It was not first-quality tea?—No.

535. You say there was something the matter with the fish one night?—Yes.

536. How often was it wrong?—That is the only time I had fish.

537. You say the quality of the meat was fair, and the bread was fair: what about the butter?—It was not good sometimes.

538. And the biscuits?—Good.

539. The jam?—I think that was right enough.

540. And the sausages?—If we got enough of them they would be all right.

541. Where was the extreme badness?—It was in the way it was cooked. I think the food would be good enough if it was properly cooked.

542. What was wrong with the cooking?—Sometimes the meat was half-raw, and, again, there would be no salt in it.

543. Tell me some occasion when you made a complaint about the breakfast, dinner, or tea?—Whenever the orderly officer came round.

544. Tell me one distinct occasion when you made a complaint yourself directly to the orderly officer, so that we may see which officer neglected his duty?—Well, it was not my business to complain; there was always the mess orderly.

545. Give me a case where there was a formal complaint and no notice taken of it?—I think, every time the orderly officer came round.

546. Tell me one orderly officer to which a complaint was made so that we may see what course was taken in the way of giving you redress?—I believe Colonel Abbott came round once.

547. What did he do?—I could not say.

548. Then, when a complaint was made to Colonel Abbott and he came down to see what was to be done that would tend to show that the orderly officer had done his duty?—Yes.

549. Then, whenever an official complaint was made there was an attempt to remedy it?—Yes.

550. You have made a statement that there was no food fit for consumption and yet you have told us the meat was good, the butter was good, the bread was good, and the rice and stewed prunes were good: how do you back up the assertion that the food was not fit for consumption?—It was in the cooking, and we never got a full ration.

551. You say you think the officers did their best?—Yes.

552. Do you mean they just came down and heard the complaints, or did they take an interest in their men?—I think they had an interest in their men.



553. You do not wish us to understand that the officers neglected the men?—I think they were anxious to do their duty to the men.

554. Did you see much drunkenness on board?—I do not remember seeing any.

555. Did the men get beer?—For a short time they did, but then it was condemned.

556. Were there some confirmed swillers who would get double rations through some of the men not drinking theirs?—No.

557. You say there was no accommodation, or hardly any, for washing: in which part of the ship were you?—I was aft.

558. How many basins were there there?—I could not say.

559. You have said there was no accommodation for washing?—There was very little accommodation.

560. We want to see how far the ship neglected its duty, and how many basins were available for the men to wash in?—There might have been eighteen or nineteen.

561. You think as many as that?—I could not say for certain.

562. Were there a dozen or over a dozen?—I think there would be more than a dozen.

563. How were you supplied with water?—I do not know how we got the water.

564. Was there a fatigue party to pump the water?—Not that I know of.

565. At what hour was it turned on in the morning?—I think at reveille.

566. At what time did reveille go?—At half-past 6.

567. You are sure it was not before that?—It might be on some mornings.

568. How long did the water run?—Not more than half an hour.

569. What time did you get up?—As soon as the reveille went.

570. How often could you not get a wash?—Once or twice; but I washed in salt water.

571. If we have sworn evidence that the water ran for two hours or two hours and a half do you think that is a complete mistake?—I should think it was.

572. You are sure it never ran after 7 o'clock in the morning?—It might have ran till half-past 7, but not later.

573. If reveille went at 6 o'clock and the water was running till half-past 7 how long would that be?—An hour and a half.

574. Is it possible that might be the time it was running?—I do not think so.

575. You still think it only ran for half an hour?—Well, I know it used to take me all my time to get a wash before breakfast.

576. *Mr. Millar.*] You said that the rations were short, in your opinion, and you could eat double the quantity?—Yes.

577. Was any complaint made to the officers as to the shortness?—I think so.

578. Did they rectify it?—I think they tried to do so, but I do not know whether they did or not.

579. Did you never get more?—No, I think not. I know I used to buy some biscuits from the canteen every night, and other things also.

580. Was that because you were hungry or because you desired a change?—Because I was hungry. I ate everthing on the table.

581. Did you purchase anything from the cooks' galley?—Yes.

582. Was there much of that done?—Yes.

583. Did the officers know of that fact?—I could not say.

584. Did you know there was an order against it?—I believe there was.

585. But it went on all the same?—Yes.

586. *The Chairman.*] Were you kept in fair order and discipline on board?—Yes.

587. Were they too tight upon you?—No; I had no reason to complain.

588. *Colonel Abbott.*] About the sufficiency of food: how many men were there at your table?—Sixteen.

589. Were you present at the cooks' galley when they drew the rations?—No; we had orderlies to do that.

590. Do you know that if you had not sufficient meat you could go back to the cooks' galley and get more?—I believe it was said they could, but they did not get it always.

591. In most cases they could get more?—They used to have to go up for it.

592. Do you know of any man going and getting another joint?—Yes.

593. So that if the meat was short the orderlies went and got more?—I think it was very seldom they did.

594. Did they complain?—I think so.

595. You had a mess orderly?—Yes.

596. Did he ever complain that he went back for more and did not get it?—As far as we knew he went back, but I do not know whether he got any more.

597. But it was understood that if they wanted more they could go and get it?—Yes.

598. I suppose that complaint against the cooking was that the meat was underdone?—Yes.

599. And as a rule men do not care for underdone meat?—I do not.

600. Did the men occasionally throw the meat away?—Yes, I believe they did.

601. Were there not always cases of biscuits on the troop-decks for the men to help themselves?—Not always. I only remember two cases being on our troop-deck.

602. Was there always plenty of bread?—Yes.

603. And generally biscuits?—If we made a complaint we got more biscuits.

SATURDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ABBOTT sworn and examined. (No. 86.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—Frederick William Abbott.

2. Your rank?—Lieut.-Colonel of the New Zealand Militia.

3. Were you in command of the troops on board the "Orient"?—Yes, sir; with the rank of major.

4. And have you been in any other contingent?—Yes, sir; I was in the Fifth and Seventh.

5. Which regiment were you in command of on the return?—I was in command of both regiments—the whole of the Ninth Contingent.

6. Where was the contingent enrolled?—They were enrolled in New Zealand. I took command of them in Africa on the 9th May.

7. From whom did you take them over?—From Colonel Porter.

8. What rank did you hold when you took command of the men?—That of major. I had held the rank of major for eleven months when I took them over.

9. You were in the pay and employment of the Imperial Government?—Yes, sir.

10. You considered yourself under Imperial transport regulations and the articles of war?—Yes, sir.

11. What port did you sail from?—Durban.

12. Did you call anywhere *en route* to New Zealand?—We called in at Albany and Melbourne.

13. Where did the men march from when they proceeded on board the "Orient"?—From Newcastle.

14. Do you know how long they had been in Newcastle?—They arrived at Newcastle about the 29th June, and they left on the 7th July.

15. Did the men know they were likely to embark?—Yes.

16. And they had time to prepare themselves for embarkation in cleaning their clothes and that sort of thing?—Yes, sir.

17. Had they any pay at Newcastle?—Yes. The men, I believe, had £5 each, and the non-commissioned officers had more. They had an advance all round.

18. Then, they had an opportunity of buying a change of clothes if they desired so to do?—Yes.

19. How long was the contingent at Durban prior to embarkation?—No time at all. They came right down off the train and went on to the tender, and on to the "Orient."

20. Did they get fresh clothes on embarkation?—No, sir; they did all that at Newcastle.

21. Did they get clean clothes at Newcastle from a Government store?—Yes, sir, they did.

22. There is a regulation, is there not, that the men shall have clean clothes before embarking?—I do not know whether there is or not. We are entitled to draw clothes every six months, but the Ninth had not been in the field six months, and I do not know what amount exactly they did draw.

23. I understand you marched straight on board?—Yes, sir.

24. How long after embarkation did the steamer start?—They embarked on the 9th, and the steamer sailed on the 10th July.

25. Were you twenty-four hours on board?—Yes, about twenty-four hours. We were embarking on the 9th the whole day, and we sailed about 4 o'clock on the 10th.

26. What was the health of the men on embarkation?—It was good. There were no serious cases at all.

27. Did the Imperial authorities at Durban or Newcastle inspect the men prior to embarkation?—I did not see the men going on the tender. I was on the ship when they came.

28. Do you know whether at any period there was an inspection by the embarkation officers as to the men's health?—I do not know.

29. If it was done I suppose you would have known it?—I might not have known it.

30. Have you any idea of the condition of the men as to lice when they left Newcastle?—No; I can only state that in the field all men get lousy.

31. When they got into Newcastle do you imagine that a considerable portion of the men were lousy?—Taking into consideration that they had not been in the field very long, I do not think many were lousy.

32. Do you imagine that many of the men were lousy when they embarked on board the "Orient"?—It is quite possible, because there was not only the Ninth Contingent, but a number of men from the Sixth and Seventh Contingents, and it is quite possible some had lice on them.

33. Had you many details with you?—I had details of the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth, and also indulgence passengers and Australian details.

34. You cannot speak as to their condition, then, prior to their coming on board the "Orient"?—No, sir.

35. What number of troopers were embarked on board the "Orient"?—1,234, including indulgence passengers.

36. That was of all ranks below commissioned officers?—Yes.

37. Do you know what number of men the ship was fitted up for?—According to the specifications, she was fitted up for 1,250 men.

38. What specifications do you allude to?—They were handed to me when I took charge on board by the captain of the ship. It was on the Admiralty form.

39. Then, you received it as an official communication as to the number of men allowed to be on board?—Yes.

40. Does the specification you have show the cubic space there was on board?—No, sir. It merely shows what requirements were fitted for that number of men. The following is a return of the number of officers, nursing sisters, and men on board the "Orient," and also the specifications as to accommodation provided, &c. :—

*Return of Officers, Sisters, and Men on board H.M.T. "Orient," ex Durban, 10th July, 1902.*

	Officers.	Sisters.	Men.	Total.
Ninth New Zealand Contingent ... ..	61	...	1,038	1,099
Nursing sisters ... ..	...	2	...	2
Sixth New Zealand Contingent ... ..	...	...	2	2
Seventh " ... ..	...	...	11	11
Eighth " ... ..	1	...	17	18
Tenth " ... ..	...	...	52	52
Australian details ... ..	21	...	26	47
Free passengers ... ..	...	...	88	88
Total ... ..	83	2	1,234	1,319

*Specifications of H.M. Troopship "Orient."*

Accommodation provided as follows: Officers 75, second class 6, men 1,250; life-belts, 1,470; boats, 17, to carry 722 persons; troop-galley to cook for 1,400 adults; ovens, 4, for 1,400 adults; baker, 1; distilling-apparatus, 5,760 gallons daily; water in tanks, 50,400 gallons; electric light throughout; guard-room fitted for 20 men; cells for 2 men; hammock accommodation, about for 970.

41. Do you imagine that you and the men under your command were provided for under the Imperial transport regulations, or were you entitled to separate treatment?—I took it that we were embarked under the Imperial regulations.

42. On how many decks were the men quartered?—On four decks—two forward and two aft; Nos. 1, 2, and 3 troop-decks were on the same floor as the saloon; No. 4 troop-deck was below No. 3.

43. Were there windsails on board the ship?—Yes.

44. Do you remember how many?—I do not remember how many. I remember there were windsails in Nos. 3 and 4 troop-decks. I do not know with reference to Nos. 1 and 2.

45. Can you remember how many there were or what the ventilation was in No. 3 troop-deck?—No, sir, I do not remember exactly the number of windsails, but the ventilation was very good in No. 3.

46. You do not remember how many windsails were down there?—No, I do not.

47. Do you remember whether there were one or two hatches in No. 3 troop-deck?—There were two—one on either side.

48. Were the hatchways close together?—They were on each side.

49. No. 3 deck was on the same level as the officers' quarters?—Yes, sir.

50. Was complaint ever made to you about the ventilation on board?—Yes, sir; there was about the ventilation on No. 4 troop-deck away aft. On one or two occasions it was a bit stuffy. I mentioned it to the master of the ship, and asked him if he could cut a hole in the deck and put down another windsail. He said he would be only too pleased if he were allowed, but the boat passed the Admiralty regulations so far as ventilation was concerned, and the authorities would not allow him to do that.

51. No. 4 troop-deck was on the lower deck?—Yes. The floor would be, I should say, below the water-line.

52. Then, the ports were never opened?—No, sir.

53. Do you know what windsails there were down there?—I am not sure. I think there were two.

54. Was there a good hatchway?—Yes.

55. Were you ever down there at night yourself?—I went down while the men were at tea, but not at night time.

56. Do you know whether the "Orient" was inspected by the transport officers at Durban before embarkation?—No, sir, I do not.

57. When did you first inspect her?—I went on board with the troops.

58. When did you pay your first visit down to the troop-decks?—We sailed on the 10th, and I am not sure whether we went round on inspection on the 11th or 12th.

59. Do you think there was accommodation to hang hammocks for the 1,234 non-commissioned officers and men?—No, sir, I do not. The hammock accommodation, according to the specifications, was 970. I may say this was taken down roughly by me, and I cannot say that it is correct. But at the same time I would have taken more care in taking a copy of the specifications if I had known I was going to be examined.

60. You think the assertion that there was not enough hammock-space for every man is a true one?—Yes.

61. Where were the men to sleep who had not got hammock accommodation?—They would sleep on the tables and forms, and when the weather was fine some slept up on deck.

62. Can you tell me what the regulations are in connection with men sleeping on tables, or forms, or decks?—I do not know of any regulation against it.

63. You mean that it is left to the discretion of the commanding officer?—Yes, sir.

64. Did your regimental officers bring to your notice the fact that there was no hammock accommodation for all of the men?—Yes.

65. How soon after you left?—It was known practically as soon as we left.

66. Was there much dissatisfaction among the men at the fact that there was not hammock accommodation for them all?—No, there was not. We allowed the men to sleep on deck or in other places so long as they did not interfere with one another, and so long as the ship's officers did not object to it. The men were practically allowed to sleep where they would be comfortable.

67. Did you in the course of conversation, or by any other means, ascertain whether it was customary to send a ship to sea with insufficient accommodation?—No.

68. You do not know whether this occurred to other troopships?—No, sir, I do not.

69. Was it any part of the duty of the surgeon to inspect the ship?—Yes.

70. Who was your senior medical officer?—Surgeon-Captain King.

71. Did he examine the ship on embarkation?—I do not know whether he did or not. He came on board with the troops.

72. Do you think he attended to his duty as to the health of the troops whilst he was on board?—Yes, sir, he did. I am quite satisfied about that.

73. At your first inspection of the ship what impression was left on your mind as to her condition?—At the first inspection I thought she was generally clean.

74. We have an assertion made that not only the blankets but the ship herself was lousy?—I could not say as to that.

75. Should you think it was true or not that the ship herself was lousy?—I should not think it was true.

76. Was any complaint made to you by the quartermaster or by any responsible person as to the dirtiness of the ship on embarkation?—No, sir, no complaints reached me.

77. Do you know anything about the issue of blankets?—Yes; they were issued by the ship's quartermaster to the men.

78. Was he the regimental quartermaster or the brigade quartermaster?—When I say the "ship's" quartermaster I mean my quartermaster.

79. Do you happen to know whether any regimental officers inspected the blankets on issue?—No, sir; I do not know.

80. Did you receive any complaints about the blankets being infected with lice?—Not when they were issued. I heard afterwards that they were lousy, but it did not come in the shape of a complaint.

81. When did you first hear of it?—Speaking from memory, about the middle of the voyage.

82. You do not think you heard of it within two or three days after embarkation?—No, sir, I did not.

83. When did you see the blankets yourself?—I did not personally inspect them at all, but I saw some blankets about on many occasions.

84. Did they present a soiled appearance when you did see them?—The ones that I saw had got wet, and were hung up to dry.

85. What process was employed to keep the troop-decks clean?—The officers of the various squadrons saw that the men cleaned up their quarters ready for the inspection at 11 a.m. each day. During the time the troop-decks were being cleaned all the men not engaged in cleaning up the decks paraded on the promenade deck so as to give the mess orderlies plenty of room to clean the troop-deck.

86. Did you inspect the troop-decks frequently?—Yes; daily, with the exception of when we got into port.

87. Who accompanied you?—The master of the ship, the chief mate, the doctor, Major O'Brien (who commanded one of the regiments), the orderly officer, the officer commanding the South Island regiment, the officer commanding the Australian details, the ship's quartermaster, the purser, and my own adjutant (Captain Clark).

88. Who commanded the South Island regiment?—Captain Nicholson.

89. And you were satisfied on your tour of inspection that the troop-decks were kept properly clean?—Yes, sir. On some occasions we had to draw attention to small matters, which were rectified. They were minor things generally. The decks were kept clean and were in a healthy condition.

90. Did you ever return from South Africa since you first went there?—No, sir.

91. Do you happen to know what the dietary scale of a trooper on board a transport is?—Yes, sir. We had a scale, and I had it posted up in different parts of the ship so that the men could see what they were to get. I had two or three copies taken, and had them posted up on the troop-decks for the men's information.

92. Can you tell us at all what the food supplied to the men was—from memory?—For breakfast they had porridge and bread-and-butter. I am not quite sure whether they did not have some soup occasionally.

93. Did they get any meat for breakfast?—They had soup, I think, but I am not sure whether they had meat or not.

94. Do you mean stew or soup?—I am not sure which. For dinner they had meat and vegetables—roast meat or boiled meat, as the case might be. For tea they had bread, butter, and jam, occasionally cheese, and an extra ration given by the Orient Company, consisting sometimes of sausages, sometimes of fish, and sometimes of cold meat. I understand this was an extra ration given by the Orient Company.

95. Was an officer present at the daily issue of rations?—Yes, always.

96. Who inspected the meat when it was brought up from the refrigerator?—I do not know. The meat was brought out of the hold by a fatigue party supplied by the troops.

97. Was it the duty of the captain of the day, the subaltern, or of any of the medical men, or any veterinary surgeon, to inspect the meat?—I do not know whether my quartermaster did it or not. It is not down in the orders I issued to the captain of the day or the subaltern.

98. You do not know whether the meat was inspected prior to its being issued?—No, sir; but it was got up by our own men from the refrigerator.

99. How often did you have a complaint as to the quality of the meat?—About twice on the voyage.

100. What was the nature of those complaints?—The nature of the complaint was that the meat was not sufficiently cooked, not as to quality.

101. Were there ever complaints about the quality of the meat?—No, not about the quality. There was a complaint as to the quantity.

102. You think there was no complaint about the quality of the meat?—No, sir, not a general complaint.

103. When the complaint about the cooking was brought to you what order did you issue, or what steps did you take?—I saw the purser and the chief steward, and told them that complaints had reached me that the meat was not sufficiently cooked, and they took the necessary steps to see that it was rectified.

104. Did you ever inspect the dinners yourself?—Yes, sir; at the ship's inspection. Part of my inspection was to go to the cooks' galley and to inspect the meat as it was being cooked. The ovens were opened so that we could see the meat.

105. Were you ever at the mess-tables when the men's dinner was on?—No, sir; but I was at the cookhouse-door when the meat was issued for dinner on one or two occasions.

106. Do you imagine that the meat supplied to the officers' table was the same meat as supplied to the men?—Yes.

107. You think there was no difference?—No. A lot of the men's meat was cooked in the saloon galley because there was no room in the other galley.

108. Do you consider that the cooking generally was as good as it ought to have been for the men?—Yes, with the exception of a little irregularity, which was rectified as soon as mentioned.

109. And no complaint came to you except once about the cooking?—No, sir. There was just the one complaint that I took to be a general one.

110. We have heard it stated that the men used to buy to a certain extent from the ship's cooks; do you imagine that to have been the case?—Personally, I saw nothing of that, and no official report reached me that it existed, but I know that on most ships the thing does exist; not exactly meat, but the men buy sweets from the saloon galley.

111. It was not brought officially to your notice?—No.

112. And you issued no order in connection with the matter?—No.

113. Do you consider that the food supplied to the men was so good that it was unnecessary that they should purchase it from the saloon galley or from the canteen?—Well, so far as the meat was concerned it was not necessary; but I understand that on all ships the men purchase sweets, such as cakes, &c.

114. But the essentials?—It was not necessary.

115. You think the ration supplied to the men was sufficient without their being compelled to buy from anybody?—Yes, sir. I may say that once I complained to the captain of the ship, and stated that complaints had reached me that the men were not getting sufficient rations. He immediately sent for the chief steward and the purser, and instructed them in my presence to give them whatever they wanted. He said, even if it cost the Orient Company £300 or £400 in excess of the general transport regulations. I think those orders were carried out.

116. You do not believe that the men were underfed during the voyage?—No, sir, I do not.

117. Do you know what amount of drinking-water was allowed to the men?—There were water-taps in each of the troop-decks, over which were placed sentries to prevent waste. Men could have plenty of water to drink, but none to waste. The specifications state that the distilling-apparatus was capable of supplying 5,760 gallons daily, and they had a reserve of water in the tanks of 50,400 gallons.

118. Was the water of good quality?—It was condensed water; the same as was used throughout the ship.

119. The same water that was supplied to the officers was supplied to the troopers?—Yes, sir, just the same.

120. It has been alleged that there was difficulty in obtaining a wash: can you tell us anything about the lavatories?—Speaking from memory and general observation, I should say there were between thirty and forty basins aft; that would be for about 940 men.

121. There were not less than thirty, at any rate?—There were sixteen forward, for about three hundred men. That would be about forty-six basins in all.

122. You do not think there would be less than forty-six?—I should say not.

123. When was the water turned on for the men to wash?—At 6, at reveille.

124. And did reveille go punctually?—Yes; it went punctually at 6 every morning.

125. Was water available at 6, or had it to be pumped?—There was a tap over each basin, and at 6 the water was on.

126. Could there be any question of water not being available at 6?—I never had any complaint that the water was not on at that time.

127. How long was that water available?—From 6 to 7.30 a.m.

128. Did you have complaints made to you that it was difficult to obtain a wash?—No, sir, no general complaints.

129. Did the men have a salt-water bath?—Yes; there was a canvas bath fixed up. I did not see it, but I was informed there was one.

130. Do you know whether the men availed themselves of the salt-water bath?—I think they did until they got into colder latitudes, and then it was not advisable to do so.

131. Then, you are satisfied that the washing was sufficient for men who were anxious to obtain cleanliness?—I should say so, sir.

132. About the latrines: can you tell us anything about them?—Well, I should say there was accommodation for twelve seats aft; that would be for 940 men, for Nos. 3 and 4 decks.

133. How many others were there?—Forward there were about six.

134. You think there would have been eighteen available for the troopers or for the troopers and non-commissioned officers?—That would include the lot.

135. Eighteen for the whole of the non-commissioned officers and men?—Yes, sir; that is just speaking from memory.

136. Do you know at all what the "Orient" had been employed upon before you went on board her?—No, not officially at all.

137. Have you any idea?—I know they took Boer prisoners to Ceylon or somewhere.

138. And returned from there to Durban?—I do not know when they took the Boer prisoners, but they did at one time.

139. Do you know whether her previous voyage had been from Europe or Ceylon?—No, I do not.

140. Was there ever complaint brought to you that there was not sufficient latrine accommodation?—No, sir.

141. There has been an assertion made that men eased themselves 'tween decks: do you know anything about that?—No, sir, I do not. There may have been an isolated case. From what I heard I should say there may have been about six cases among the whole of the men during the voyage.

142. Was it ever brought to your notice?—No, sir.

143. It has also been stated that a certain portion of this ship was very much used as a urinal?—I do not believe it.

144. In the course of your inspection did you ever come across a place that had a smell as if it had been used as a urinal?—No, sir. There was one case of a man brought before me as having committed a nuisance on the deck. That was the only case. It was not general.

145. When was this case of committing a nuisance?—It was some time about the middle of the voyage—say, about ten days after we left.

146. Were you able to gauge the feeling of the men in connection with such a crime?—Yes, sir.

147. Were the men anxious that it should be detected?—They were anxious that a case like that should be stopped.

148. You think the moral tone of the men revolted at it?—Yes, most decidedly.

149. How many officers were on duty each day?—There was a captain of the day and the subaltern of the day appointed every day.

150. By whom were they appointed?—By my orders.

151. Were there any regimental officers on duty?—Oh, yes; they were looking after their own commands. They had their own interior arrangements.

152. You believe that the officers commanding the regiments had their own details for duties as well as those under your orders?—Yes; at the ship's inspection there would be one or two squadron officers always down with the men.

153. Were there written reports daily from the officers of the day?—No, sir; I did not ask for written reports.

154. Why did you not get a written report?—I did not think it was necessary.

155. Did you know that it was according to the King's regulations?—Well, I did not see any necessity for it at all. The captain of the day reported verbally to myself or to my adjutant.

156. Do you know whether the officers attended at each meal to see if there were any complaints?—Yes; that was partly the orderly officer's duty. The orderly officer would go round with the orderly sergeant and the sergeant-major.

157. How often did you parade the men on the voyage?—Every day. They dressed for parade at 10.30, and paraded at 10.45.

158. Was that a regimental parade?—Yes, sir. One regiment paraded on the port side, and the other on the starboard side. They were paraded daily, and the rolls were called.

159. Do you know whether the officers inspected them as to their cleanliness, or was it simply to call the roll?—It was to enable the officers to speak to the men. If there had been any irregularities the officers could speak about it.

160. Did the officers wear their uniforms during the voyage?—Yes, sir. The orderly officer and the captain of the day always wore their belts also when on duty.

161. Was there any sports committee, or anything of the sort, in order to amuse the men on board?—We had concerts in the evening on one or two occasions; but the men had minor sports amongst themselves.

162. Was there any parade for physical exercise?—No.

163. Why was that not done—some physical drill or some exercise given to them?—That was not done; there was not room. We allowed the men as much latitude as we possibly could so that they would be able to exercise themselves.

164. Do you consider that it was desirable to have exercise parades, or do you think that it would have been injudicious to attempt them?—I should not think they were any good when the troops were coming home.

165. Why not?—I do not see any good in them at all.

166. Do you not think that it tends to keep the men in hand, having to obey promptly?—It is very hard for the officers to detach the men and give them exercise drill; it is not as though they are on the field.

167. You think it was not possible to parade the various squadrons at various hours, and keep them going for half an hour?—It would be possible, but I do not think it would have had a good effect. The men were very quiet always.

168. Were you satisfied with the conduct of your officers on board?—Yes, sir.

169. You think they attended to their duties?—Yes, sir.

170. Do you think they had an interest in looking after the men, or did they perform their duties in a perfunctory manner?—They looked after their men the same as they did on the veldt.

171. Was there much relaxation of discipline consequent on returning home and because the contract was virtually over?—No, sir, not at all. There was no drill or any particular regulations enforced. The men were kept quiet and orderly. There was no occasion to do anything else.

172. Now, how about your non-commissioned officers? How did they become non-commissioned officers: were they men of the Ninth, or did they come from some trained contingents?—They were principally men of the Ninth, and some of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh. Some may have been returned troopers.

173. Were they men with experience in the field, or were they men who had been promoted shortly after enrolment?—I could not say. The officers commanding the regiments would be able to give you that information.

174. Were you satisfied with the way the non-commissioned officers did their duty on board?—Yes, sir. Whatever non-commissioned officers I saw on duty were generally at their posts.

175. Do you think they exercised any moral influence over the men? Do you think they helped to keep good discipline among the men?—I think they did their best. They had to live in the same quarters with the men, and this is not conducive to authority. The non-commissioned officers should not live with the men; but, under the circumstances, there was no provision made for them, and they did their best.

176. Did you feel that it was a strain to maintain discipline, or did discipline go easily and comfortably on board?—Everything went easily. I had no difficulty throughout the voyage.

177. You had no insubordination?—No, sir, nothing but trifling irregularities, which you always get with a large body of men.

178. Do you know how many you had ill when you arrived in Wellington?—No, sir; I do not. The medical officers would know that. We had no dangerous cases.

179. Were you satisfied with the conduct of your medical officers throughout?—Yes, sir; they worked very hard during the whole voyage.

180. And the hospital orderlies: were you satisfied with them?—Yes, sir.

181. How many medical officers had you?—Two.

182. Were they able to do the work?—They were kept busy. They had a lot to do, but they coped with it all right. The hospital accommodation was very good.

183. You inspected the hospital yourself?—Yes; every day at the ship's inspection.

184. Did you have any complaints from the patients?—No.

185. And the hospital was always clean?—Yes.

186. What number of hospital orderlies did you have on board?—I could not say exactly. There were seven or eight to my knowledge. A fatigue party occasionally assisted to clean the quarters out, so as not to put that work on the orderlies.

187. Were there nursing sisters?—Yes, sir.

188. They were not indulgence passengers?—No; they were on duty.

189. With regard to the officers of the steamer, were you satisfied with their conduct?—They gave us every assistance. The master of the ship, the chief mate, the purser, and the chief steward were the ones I was brought in contact with, and they did everything we asked.

190. Now, with regard to your officers, had you any occasion to complain of drunkenness among them on board?—No, sir.

191. They were sober?—Yes, sir.

192. Was there any drunkenness among the men?—I had a case or two brought up in front of me, but I do not know whether it was proved or not. I really had no drunkenness. Drink was issued to the men at 1d. a pint and a pint per day per man.

193. What sort of quality was the beer?—The quality was fair. I did not dislike the beer at all.

194. On arrival in Wellington, at what period did the Health Officers come on board?—We cast anchor off Somes Island about 9 o'clock in the morning on the 8th.

195. And when did the medical officers come on board?—Shortly afterwards; I could not exactly say at what time.

196. And they then decided to place you in quarantine?—Well, it was undecided for a time. I did not understand that we were in quarantine that day.

197. Were people admitted to the ship?—No, no one was admitted to the ship.

198. You got no notice that you were in quarantine on the day of arrival?—I did not understand it. I understood it was possible that we were going into quarantine. The medical men may have understood it, but I did not.

199. You were ordered to go to Somes Island to disembark a fatigue party: was that the case?—That was, I think, on the 9th.

200. Who issued that order?—I think it was from the officer commanding the district, but I am not quite sure.

201. You received orders which you consider were sufficient?—Yes, sir.

202. When did the fatigue party disembark?—On the Monday.

203. Why did it not get ashore before the Monday?—The fatigue party were on the deck ready to go, and I do not know why the boat went away without them.

204. Who was in charge of the fatigue party?—Mr. Neale.

205. Did he report any failure to carry out your order?—I asked him why he had not gone, and he said, "I did not see the boat."

206. There is evidence that the boat was alongside the ship for a certain time, at any rate?—Well, through some mistake the officer did not see the boat. He was very anxious to go, he was there ready waiting for the boat.

207. Then, the impression you wish to convey to us is that if the fatigue party did not land on the Saturday it was purely accidental?—Yes, purely accidental.

208. As far as you know, it was through no laxity of duty on the part of the officer commanding the party?—Mr. Neale, who was in command of the party, was waiting on the deck with the men, and the men had their kits and were all ready to go ashore.

209. Was there great unwillingness on the part of the men to form a fatigue party?—No, sir; but the men were disappointed at not being able to get home, but that did not affect their duty at all.

210. Then, you are certain that it was in no respect an act of insubordination or consequent upon disinclination to obey legitimate orders that the fatigue party was not landed on the Saturday?—No, sir, I could not blame the men for not landing. The men were ready. It was through no fault of the men that they did not go.

211. Was there neglect on the part of the officer in command, do you think?—I do not know whether you could call it "neglect." It is a mistake that might happen. A boat may come alongside and he might not see it.

212. Do you think the officer was warned by the people in charge of the tug-boat that unless he got his men on board they would go?—If some one had come up on the deck to me and asked me where the fatigue party was, I could have sent a man down with a message to tell the officer to go.

213. How long were they paraded on the deck?—I fancy they were waiting a good time.

214. I mean how long were they paraded to go?—Those were details left to the regimental officers. I know the men were ready with their officer to go.

215. Do you know anything about the men after they disembarked on Somes Island?—Yes, sir.

216. There has been an allegation made that men were compelled by a medical officer to bathe in the sea, and that was most injurious to their health: do you know anything about that?—No, sir, I do not.

217. You are unaware whether either of your own medical officers issued such an order?—Yes, sir; I had only one, and I do not know whether he went ashore or not with the men.

218. You yourself never heard of such an order?—No, sir.

219. Now, with regard to allegations that the men were guilty of insolence to their officers by shouting out improper things in their hearing, what have you to say in regard to that: do you think such a thing possible?—No, sir. The best of good feeling existed between the officers and their men.

220. In regard to the allegation, which you yourself heard here yesterday, about the coarse language used when the officers were going in to their luuch, could such a thing as that have occurred except on a special occasion?—It may occur where a big crowd of men are together, and one man at the back might shout out something thoughtlessly, but not to show any disrespect. It would not be appreciated by his fellow-men. It is an isolated case, that might happen with a body of men, but it is no index as to their behaviour.

221. Do you believe that that class of insolence could have happened on many occasions?—No, sir.

222. Do you think the officers would have taken notice of it if it had happened?—Yes, they must; they could not have allowed a thing like that to go ahead.

223. Do you think the non-commissioned officers would have put that down?—They would, sir.

224. Do I understand you to say that, as far as your observation is concerned, such exhibitions as that could only have occurred upon isolated occasions?—That is so, sir—that is, from my own observation; and how men behave generally. If their behaviour generally is bad they show it even in the presence of their commanding officer, and certainly, when I went amongst the men, I never heard any remark of disrespect shown to any officer. Had I done so I would have had to take action.

225. You yourself were not on Somes Island with the men?—Yes, sir, the whole of the time.

226. Are you satisfied with the conduct of the men while they were on Somes Island and while they were in camp?—Yes, sir; they were quiet and orderly.

227. Then, on the whole, you are satisfied with the discipline of the men while on the voyage, whilst in harbour, and whilst on Somes Island?—Yes, sir.

228. Then, can you account at all for the apparent irritation which has occurred between your officers on board the steamer and the Health officers?—I do not know of any, sir. From what I saw we got on well with the Health officers. We were working together.

229. Was that your impression when you heard the evidence given yesterday—that the Health officers thought they got on well?—Well, they looked on it from one point of view, and I looked on it from another. They did not view it from the light of men wanting to get home, which the officers did.

230. Can you tell us about the vaccination incident?—Yes, sir.

231. Did you order the men to be vaccinated?—No.

232. Did the Health officer order the men to be vaccinated?—No.

233. Was it within your power to order them to be vaccinated?—I do not consider it was.

234. Did the men resent compulsory vaccination?—Well, there was no compulsory vaccination. The men were paraded—that was a matter of duty, they had to parade. They were sent down to the medical officer, and if they had had any scruples they could have explained them to the medical officers.



235. Were all the men ordered to parade for vaccination?—They obeyed the order of their officers. In one or two cases the men did not come up to be vaccinated, but the order was sent down for them to parade, which they did. Then the doctor had an opportunity of talking to them, and I saw that every assistance was given to help the Health officers to get the vaccination over. I think all the officers were vaccinated first. No obstacles were thrown in the medical officers' way.

236. Then, you think there was no discourtesy shown by the men to the Health officers?—I never saw any myself. There was no feeling from what I saw. The Health officers went about amongst the men, and there was no bad feeling shown by the men. I do not take any notice of a careless remark that men may make when together. I think it was made without any meaning, and probably the man who made it would be very difficult to get to acknowledge that he did make it even if he was caught in the act.

237. *Mr. McNab.*] You mention in the return you gave in about the number of men taken on board, &c., that there was hammock accommodation for 970 men?—Yes, sir.

238. Was that written on the paper?—It was written on the specifications when I took my notes down. I did not notice it, but my adjutant drew my attention to it, and he said that he read distinctly that there was accommodation for 970, consequently I put it down.

239. The official form shows that the Transport authorities handed over to you a vessel with hammock accommodation for only about 970 men, while they handed over to you 1,234 men?—Yes, sir.

240. I see also under the heading of "Boats" there are seventeen, to carry 722 persons, so that in the event of a serious accident one-half of the troops on board would not have had boats to go in?—I cannot say whether there were rafts or not.

241. But the balance of 597 men and officers, *plus* the crew, must have depended on what rafts there were for accommodation?—I presume so, sir.

242. *Mr. Millar.*] At what time do you consider the Health Department took charge of the "Orient"?—I consider they took charge the moment they boarded the ship, so far as the health of the men is concerned. When a ship comes into port the Health officers come on board, and they either pass the ship as free from contagious diseases or not. I do not speak as an authority upon it.

243. Do you know, yourself, whether the Health Department took charge of the whole of the sick on board the "Orient" from the time of their going on board?—I could not say. I do not know that. I presume they would not interfere with the interior arrangements of the medical officers already in charge.

244. What I want to get at is this: whether they took charge of the whole of the sick—that is, relieved your medical officers from the charge of the sick from the time they went on board the ship?—I could not say, sir.

245. *The Chairman.*] Would you like to add anything further?—I would like to say that during the time I was at *Somes Island* the Health Department did everything they could for the men. There was plenty of food, plenty of warm clothing, and they did everything they could for the comfort of the men. The men were not neglected in any way at all. Doctors *Mason* and *Purdy* worked very hard—I hardly think they went to bed at all. They seemed very anxious over the men, and I have certainly no complaint to make. I do not see either how any of the men could make complaint. I may remark, too, that throughout the voyage the chief points that I considered were as to the cleanliness of the men themselves and their quarters, and the conduct of the men generally. Throughout the voyage the men were very quiet and orderly, and they kept themselves and their quarters clean and in a healthy state. I have no fault to find with the men. Throughout the voyage they were very sober, and the officers were the same, and there was a good healthy feeling throughout all ranks. At *Albany* the ship stopped to coal for two days, and I gave free leave for the men to go ashore one day. They all went, and when I left *Albany* I did not leave a man behind. I had no complaints of a serious nature.

246. Had you any drunkenness at *Albany*?—Not brought to my notice. When I got to *Melbourne* I disembarked the twenty-one Australian officers and between 130 and 140 Australian details and free passengers, and the disembarkation officer and the Health officer who came on board expressed themselves very well pleased with the manner in which they were handed over, and as to how they had been cared for during the voyage. They asked me to express the same to my medical officers, so I issued the following in orders: "The O.C. has much pleasure in announcing to the troops the satisfaction expressed by the disembarkation staff at *Melbourne* at the good order and regularity of the details disembarked to-day. The records, particularly the medical portion, were to their entire satisfaction." This serves to show that throughout the voyage the conduct of all ranks was good. We had no trouble at all with the indulgence passengers. They were not to be placed on duty, but practically they were under martial law. The little delay that happened on disembarking at *Somes Island* was practically caused by a slight misunderstanding. I cannot blame the men. When we arrived in *Wellington* I issued an order the day before that all men who were disembarking here were to hold themselves in readiness to disembark. About three hundred men were to disembark at *Wellington*. They threw away their dirty clothes and cleaned themselves up to come ashore, and were ready with their kits to disembark. They suffered a little inconvenience by having to go on *Somes Island*; having thrown away their dirty clothes, they had to soil the new clothes they had bought. I had no fault of any importance to find or difficulty at all with any one in particular throughout the voyage.

Major O'BRIEN sworn and examined. (No. 87.)

247. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—*Lucius O'Brien*.

248. Your rank?—Major, commanding the North Island regiment of the Ninth Contingent.

249. Did you serve in any other contingent?—No, sir.
250. At what period did you join the Ninth Contingent?—I joined when the regiment was enrolled, about the 1st February, 1902.
251. What steamer did you go to South Africa in?—The "Devon."
252. Was the Ninth on trek at all?—They were for a short time.
253. For how long?—Six days, I think, sir.
254. And then what happened to them after that?—They were in standing camp.
255. Where at?—Veereeniging.
256. When did they get to Newcastle?—On the 28th June.
257. And they embarked when?—On the 9th July.
258. Now, did the men know that they were likely to embark speedily?—Yes, they knew they were going straight on board.
259. Do you imagine that they took steps to clean themselves?—Yes; they bought a lot of clothing out of their own money before going on board.
260. Do you think when they left Newcastle they were clean or lousy?—Yes, sir; they were perfectly clean—seven-eighths of them, at any rate.
261. How did they get the clean clothes at Newcastle: were they supplied to them?—I got an issue of new clothes for my regiment.
262. Had you to apply for the issue, or how did you get it?—I applied for it.
263. Did you get a sufficient supply?—I suppose I got sufficient for about three-quarters of the men. Some of the men preferred to buy some clothes for themselves.
264. It was no fault of the Imperial authorities that all the men did not get clean clothes, then?—No, I do not think it was. We got an issue above the amount we ought to have drawn.
265. What clothes were issued to the men?—Tunics, British-warms, trousers, and a certain amount of underclothing, and overcoats. We got some boots, socks, and a fair amount of woollen singlets, woollen shirts, and woollen drawers.
266. What I want to get at is whether they had a complete change of clothes, so that they could get rid of the lice?—Yes; as far as seven-eighths of the regiment was concerned, they got clean clothes.
267. What did the remaining one-eighth get?—There was not sufficient for all. There was only sufficient clothes issued for three-quarters of the men; the other men purchased clothes on their own account.
268. Did they take their own blankets down with them to Newcastle?—Yes; they left them at Durban.
269. Were they handed over to the authorities?—Yes; they were handed over to the military authorities on the quay.
270. Had any of them their own blankets when they went on board?—A certain number of them had them packed away in their kits.
271. Have you any idea how many would take their own blankets on board?—I should think about 10 per cent.
272. What time did your regiment embark?—They embarked at 9 o'clock in the morning.
273. Do you remember when their blankets were served out?—The blankets and hammocks were served out that day on board.
274. Have you any idea at what time?—I think it was about 5 o'clock in the evening.
275. Do you know whether there were any regimental officers told off to see to the issue of blankets to the men?—I do not remember now, sir, so I could not say.
276. Do you know what responsible officer of your regiment took delivery of the blankets?—The quartermaster.
277. You are sure that he was there?—Yes, sir.
278. Did you go round your men's quarters the day you embarked?—Yes; I went round the troop-deck that my men were on—No. 3. I went round with the adjutant to see to the men's quarters.
279. What did you think of them?—I thought they were clean and comfortable, but overcrowded.
280. With regard, first of all, to the cleanliness?—They were certainly clean.
281. A statement has been made that the ship herself was lousy: do you think that is true?—Well, the lousiness on board the ship came from the blankets that were issued to the men. I am certain that a percentage of the blankets were lousy, but not the whole of them. I am certain that the steaming of the blankets did not kill the lice at all.
282. How do you arrive at that conclusion?—From speaking to the officers of the ship.
283. What did they tell you?—In speaking to them they came to the conclusion that the lice could not be killed by ordinary steam—that the eggs could not be killed by ordinary steam.
284. You believe, then, that a proportion of the blankets were certainly lousy when they were issued to the men?—Yes.
285. And when did the question first come under your observation?—Two or three days after we sailed.
286. Was it reported officially to you?—No; it was simply mentioned in ordinary conversation, in speaking to several of the men and non-commissioned officers. They said that the blankets were unfit for the men to have, and that they would not use them.
287. You think there is no possibility of the blankets that the men took on board contaminating the other blankets?—I do not think so, sir. The men were very particular about keeping their blankets clean.
288. What officers were appointed each day for duty?—The regiments took turn about every day—the North Island one day and the South Island the next day. One captain and one subaltern was appointed every day from the different regiments.

289. Had you a regimental detail, or did you leave it simply to the captain and subaltern of the day?—The officer commanding troops attended to that.

290. Then, the officers on duty each day were the captain of the day and subaltern of the day, and that is all?—No, there were other officers for the duty from each regiment who attended to their own troop-decks.

291. Can you tell us who they were?—Each squadron officer ordered an officer to see that the squadron's quarters were properly cleaned, and he attended there while the inspection of the ship went on.

292. Then, who inspected the men's dinner every day when it was on the table?—That would be the duty of the squadron officer of each squadron. He would inspect them, and make any complaint to the officer commanding the regiment.

293. Do you know whether the squadron officers did attend to that duty?—They did, sir.

294. Had you written reports from any of them?—No; they were all verbal reports.

295. Why did you not insist on written reports?—All written reports were sent to the officer commanding the troops on board. They were taken officially from the captain and subaltern of the day.

296. Did the captain or the subaltern of the day report officially in writing?—That I do not know.

297. Did you yourself ever visit the troop-decks when the meals were on?—Yes, once or twice; not very often.

298. How did they impress you when you were there as to the quality of the food?—I think the quality of the food was good, but I do not think the quantity was sufficient. I thought it was rather poor for colonials.

299. When you say "rather poor for colonials," were your men not Imperial soldiers?—Well, they considered themselves Imperial soldiers.

300. They would be subject to Imperial transport regulations?—Yes, sir.

301. When you thought that the food was insufficient did you take any steps to increase the supply?—I spoke to the officer commanding troops, with other officers, about the quantity, and he spoke to the captain of the ship, and I know the amount was increased afterwards. Whenever any complaints were sent in to the officer commanding troops I know they were attended to.

302. Who used to supervise the meat before it was served out to the cooks?—I do not know, sir.

303. Was it not the duty of the regimental officer, the captain of the day, or subaltern of the day to attend to the issue of meat to the men?—An officer always attended the issue of rations to the men.

304. But before the meat went to the cooks?—I think that was in the province of the ship's doctor or the purser.

305. Who was to check it in the interest of the men?—That I do not know.

306. You do not know whether the quantity of the meat was ever checked by any of the officers on board in the interest of the men?—No, I do not, sir.

307. Have you any idea how much meat was issued?—No, I have no idea at all. The ration-scale was posted up in various parts of the ship, and the attention of the non-commissioned officers was drawn to it, and they would have made complaint if they considered the quantity was not sufficient.

308. Do you imagine that the men did not receive the amount which the transport regulations provide they shall receive?—I think they received the regulation allowance.

309. What do you mean, then, by saying that the men did not get sufficient?—I think the regulation allowance was not enough.

310. Did you ever examine the bread that was issued to the men?—Yes, I saw the bread every day.

311. Was it good?—Yes, it was good.

312. Was it the same quality as was served out to the officers' mess?—No, I do not think it was the same quality.

313. They had a separate baker?—Yes.

314. Do you know what quantity of bread they got?—No, I could not say for certain. I never had any complaint as to their not getting sufficient.

315. About the biscuits: did they get any biscuits?—Yes; there was a case of biscuits on each troop-deck every day.

316. Always available?—Yes, as far as I could see. At inspection it was nearly always half-full.

317. What quality were the biscuits?—The quality was always good.

318. Do you know anything of the other food: did they get vegetables?—Yes; they got potatoes. They were a very small sort of potato. In the colony they would not dream of cooking them for the meals on account of the size of them. The butter was good. I had one complaint about it, but it was frivolous. It was as good as that issued to the saloon. Most of the complaints were in the same way of a frivolous nature. The porridge was complained of one morning, and when we inquired into it we found that the cooks had thrown half a boilerful away. The men could have gone back and got another issue.

319. Did you ever see the porridge?—Yes.

320. Was it of fair quality?—Yes, it was good.

321. How was the tea and coffee?—They always complained about the tea and coffee, but I think it came about through the water being steamed, not because of the quality of the tea and coffee itself.

322. Did it differ from what tea and coffee generally is on board ship?—It was poor.

323. How did it compare with that supplied on the "Devon"?—It was not equal to that at all.

324. And the food generally as compared with the "Devon"?—It was not to be compared at all.

325. Then, do I understand you to mean that the men got the ration that the law compelled, but that there was not a generous dealing with the ration?—Exactly, sir.

326. We have had complaints made about the difficulty in washing: do you know what the orders were about washing?—Yes; the orders about washing were that the water was turned on for an hour and a half every morning, from 6 a.m. to 7.30, when it was cut off. All the men had to wash in that time. Many men would not get up till 7 or 7.30.

327. Plenty of men did not get up in time?—Yes; but had they got up at 6 they could not all have got a wash, because the washing-accommodation was not sufficient.

328. How many basins were there at all?—I think the total number would be forty for the ship.

329. Do you know what the regulations demand for troopers?—No, I cannot say that I do just now.

330. Was any complaint made to the captain of the ship about insufficient accommodation for washing?—I do not remember whether there was. I know a canvas bath was put up for the men to wash in, but they only availed themselves of it on two occasions. The reason was, I think, because we had got into colder latitudes, and the men did not care to take it.

331. Who was your adjutant?—Captain Beale.

332. Was he attentive to his duties?—Yes, sir, as far as is possible on board ship.

333. Is it not possible to attend to duties on board ship?—I do not quite understand you?—What I mean is this: The officer commanding troops had his own adjutant, and he detailed him to do his own work on board. My adjutant had only minor details, as he could not clash with the adjutant of the officer commanding. But he carried out his duties.

334. To your entire satisfaction?—Yes.

335. And your officers: do you think they attended to their duties?—Yes, sir.

336. Do you think they were attentive to the comforts of their men, or were they indifferent?—I think they were attentive to their men.

337. You are quite satisfied with the way they performed their duties?—Yes, sir.

338. Have you had much experience of Volunteering?—Yes, sir; I have been Volunteering for seventeen years.

339. What rank did you hold in the Volunteers?—Major, sir.

340. How were your non-commissioned officers appointed?—The non-commissioned officers were appointed prior to leaving New Zealand. Most of them were men who had served in previous contingents.

341. Who made the appointments?—The appointments rested entirely with myself.

342. In selecting the non-commissioned officers you selected men whom you thought had experience in former contingents, or who had experience as non-commissioned officers?—Certainly.

343. And you are satisfied with the way they did their work?—Quite satisfied, sir.

344. About the discipline: was there any difference between the discipline of the men going over and the men coming back on the "Orient"?—Yes; there was certainly a difference between the two. When the men were going out they were naturally on their best behaviour, but coming back they certainly got a bit lax in the way of discipline. There were not the same inducements to keep them up to the work. Most of the men had not served in Volunteer corps, and discipline was rather irksome to them. They would certainly take the first opportunity of throwing it off if they could. The discipline coming back was not nearly as good as going.

345. Was it not possible to maintain as good discipline coming back?—Not on board ship. I consider that the crowded nature of the ship itself, and the difficulty of the non-commissioned officers to keep proper control when so many men were crowded together, was responsible. Then, again, the non-commissioned officers had to sleep and eat with the men, and this, of course, tends to break up the discipline entirely.

346. Was any attempt made to create a sergeants' mess?—Some of the staff non-commissioned officers had a mess partly in the officers' quarters. There were about half a dozen of them.

347. Supposing you had endeavoured to enforce more discipline than was enforced, what would have been the result?—I do not think it was possible to enforce more, sir.

348. Would the men have rebelled?—No; they probably would not have taken any notice.

349. Supposing they had been ordered to parade for physical drill every day, or on occasions, would they have obeyed that order?—I think so.

350. Do you think it would have been a good thing if there had been such drill on board?—No, I do not think so.

351. Why not?—Well, the men took good care of themselves on board, and we did not want to enforce a lot of unnecessary drill coming back. As long as they behaved themselves there was no occasion to put them to anything of that sort.

352. Do you know that the King's regulations provide that there shall be such work?—That is for Imperial troops.

353. But you were Imperial troops?—Well, there is a difference between them.

354. Then, you mean that it is impossible to enforce proper discipline among colonial troops?—Yes, sir, exactly.

355. And you must not measure colonial military corn in the Imperial bushel?—No, sir.

356. How many men had you in the guard-room, brought up for punishment after landing at Albany, in your regiment?—I should think about three altogether.

357. You are satisfied that there was no more drunkenness among the men than is incidental to troops arriving in a port?—I never heard of it. There was only one charge of drunkenness on the whole voyage.

358. Now, it has been alleged that on one, if not on more than one, occasion men have eased themselves in the troop-decks: did such a question ever come under your observation?—I do not believe it, sir. The feeling of the men themselves would prevent anything of that sort.

359. We have evidence, which is circumstantial, that a great number of the men used to use a part of the deck as a latrine—that is to say, the place stank of urine?—Well, I was round every day, and I do not remember any bad smell of that sort on the ship. I am sure the attention of the officer commanding would have been drawn to it had it existed.

360. You think the attention of the officer commanding and of the regimental officers was sufficient to have observed it?—Yes, sir.

361. Were you ever down at night-time when the men were in their hammocks?—No, sir.

362. Now, coming into Wellington Harbour: You are aware that the question has been raised as to lack of discipline in providing a fatigue party to prepare the camp on Somes Island: was the fatigue party detailed from your regiment?—Yes, sir; the fatigue party was detailed three days running from my regiment to do fatigue work on the island.

363. I understand that on the Saturday after the arrival there was a fatigue party ordered: do you know if that is the case?—Yes; twenty-five men, I think.

364. Was an order issued to that effect?—Yes, sir.

365. At whose request?—It was an order from the officer commanding on board to my regiment to provide the fatigue party—one officer and twenty-five men.

366. And did the fatigue party parade?—Yes; they paraded at 9.30.

367. How long did they remain waiting to disembark?—I suppose they waited until 1 o'clock.

368. They were ready all that time to disembark?—Yes, sir; their kits and everything were ready.

369. Do you know what time the tug-boat came alongside?—I do not know what time it was. About 12 the weather was very rough, and she had great difficulty in getting alongside. I should say she was only alongside for a minute. The officer would not risk keeping her alongside.

370. Why were the men not got on board the instant she got alongside?—I suppose they were waiting for orders to go on board. There seemed to be a great deal of uncertainty as to whether they would go ashore or not.

371. What do you mean by the word "would"?—Uncertain whether they would be required to go on shore or not.

372. Was there anything active or passive on the part of the men which could be construed into a refusal to go on shore?—Nothing at all, sir.

373. You are quite sure there was no such manifested desire to remain on board as to amount to a practical refusal to land?—I am certain of it, sir.

374. Were the Health officers satisfied with all the efforts that were made for the comfort of the men on shore—with the fatigue parties, and so on?—Yes, as far as I know, sir.

375. We have it in evidence that you wrote to the officer commanding the troops specially protesting against the men being landed at Somes Island?—That is so, sir.

376. What made you take that course?—I was on the island with the officer commanding the troops, and at the time we were there it was very boisterous weather—it was very cold and wet—and I considered the health of the men would suffer very much if they were landed on the island.

377. Have you ever studied hygiene, or medical science?—I never studied that; but I know that men would suffer in going under canvas in such a bleak spot. The men had come from a warm climate, and from warm troop-decks, and their health would have suffered I considered.

378. You do not claim any more knowledge than the ordinary layman has?—I think I have more knowledge than the ordinary layman has in a matter of this sort. I have been under canvas from year to year, and know the conditions under which men ought to be under canvas.

379. Now, it has been alleged that the men on board the "Orient," while they were in harbour, were guilty of direct insolence to their officers, and to the Health officers, by calling out filthy language audibly in the presence of those officers: do you believe such a thing as that occurred?—No, sir; I am positive that no such thing occurred. The conduct of the men towards their officers was all that could be desired. They certainly never called out anything that I heard, and had such a thing occurred I would have heard of it. As to what occurred to the Health officers I do not know, but I feel certain they were not guilty of any insolence to the Health officers at all.

380. Had you to do with ordering the men to parade for vaccination?—Yes; I gave the orders to my regiment to be vaccinated. There were only two men in the whole regiment who would not be vaccinated.

381. But when the order was issued to parade, did they all obey?—Yes, they all paraded; there was no demur at all. There may have been a little delay, as they had to pass through the troop-decks, through the saloon, and through the hospital.

382. What day was this?—On the Saturday.

383. About what time?—About 9.30 a.m.

384. What parade was it?—It was a special parade.

385. You are quite sure that the men obeyed properly the order that was issued for medical inspection?—Yes, they all paraded. There was not sufficient time to do them all. Some had to be left till the Monday.

386. But there was no delay in bringing the men before the medical officers?—None whatever.

387. It has been alleged that on shore some order was issued which compelled men to bathe in cold water; it is said to have been done by a medical officer: do you know anything about that at all?—I remember, when the fatigue party landed, that the Health officer, Dr. Mason, said, "Well, the first thing you are to do is to get rid of your dirty clothes."

388. You heard this?—Yes, sir; I was there at the time. He said, "The best thing you can do is to wash." Of course, they were on the beach at the time, and it was the most convenient place to wash. No one objected to it. They threw their old clothes away on the beach, and they were afterwards burnt.

389. You did not hear Dr. Mason order any of the men to bathe?—No, I would not say that.

390. Do you think he issued such an order?—This is what I think: After they got rid of their dirty clothes Dr. Mason certainly wanted the men to be clean before they put on the others. They could only be cleaned by washing. There was no compulsion for them to wash in the salt water. They could have gone up to the middle of the island and washed there.

391. There was no compulsion to make the men go into the sea?—None whatever.

392. You issued no such order?—No.

393. So far as you know, no surgeon on board the "Orient" issued such an order?—No; this was on shore.

394. Do you know a man named Wray that has made a complaint about this?—No, I do not know him.

395. Were you satisfied generally with the discipline whilst you were in Wellington Harbour, and whilst you were on Somes Island?—Yes, sir.

396. Was there any obstruction of the Health officers in any way by the officers or men?—Certainly not by officers, and I certainly do not think there was any by the men either.

397. When there was a communication by the Health officers about the camp, the vaccination, and the fatigue party, did that order go to the men direct, or did the order come through the officer commanding?—The order came through the officer commanding the troops on board the steamer.

398. Were you in communication with the Health officers?—No. The officer commanding the troops would probably be in communication with the Health officers.

399. They made no request or orders through you?—No order was made through me. The order came from the officer commanding the troops.

400. Did Dr. Valentine or Dr. Mason pass their orders through you at any time?—All orders passed through Colonel Abbott, not through me.

401. *Mr. Millar.*] The report of the ship handed in by Colonel Abbott says there was only accommodation for 970 hammocks. Can you tell me whether any of the officers on board the ship took any steps to see that the men were provided with proper sleeping-accommodation: was it seen that the men were all provided with hammocks?—Every man was provided with a hammock, but I may tell you, sir, that fully a third of the men would not sleep in their hammocks. They preferred to sleep on the decks or on the tables.

402. Was there accommodation in the ship to swing all those hammocks that were provided for the men?—I do not think so.

403. Were any steps taken by the officers at any time to show these men how the hammocks should be swung, and to make them sleep in the hammocks?—No; there was no occasion for that. The men were allowed to make themselves as comfortable as they could. They were allowed to sleep either on the tables or decks. A good many slept on the open deck at night-time, and some of them slung their hammocks between the boats.

404. You said the ship was very crowded, did you not?—Yes, sir.

405. Do you think that was conducive to the health of the men that they should be allowed to sleep where and how they liked?—I think it was more conducive to their health to sleep in the open air than on the troop-decks.

406. Was it the duty of any officer to see to the comfort of the men?—It was the duty of all officers to see to the comfort of their men.

407. Was it carried out?—It was carried out as far as they could do so.

408. Can you tell me what steps were taken by an officer to see that his orders were carried out?—If orders were not carried out it would be reported from the non-commissioned officers through whom the orders went. None were reported that they were not carried out, to my knowledge.

409. Would you deny the statement, if it were given on oath, that the non-commissioned officers could not enforce discipline because they were not in touch with the men?—Yes, certainly.

410. I suppose you knew Orderly Sergeant Beasley?—Yes.

411. Will you state that this statement was false that the officers and non-commissioned officers were openly jibed at by the men?—Yes, certainly; I have no hesitation in saying it.

412. Did you ever hear that the men were in the habit of calling out on deck as an officer passed, "Who is a bastard"?—That never was called out on deck. Such a thing might have been called out on the troop-deck below when a non-commissioned officer went past, but the remark was certainly never made to an officer.

413. In reply to the question, "Who is a bastard?" some one would immediately name the officer who was passing at the time: is that statement correct?—No, sir, it is not.

414. You say you are perfectly satisfied with the non-commissioned officers you had on board?—Yes.

415. Who was your sergeant-major?—Sergeant-Major Herbert.

416. Were you satisfied with him?—Yes, I was fairly satisfied with him.

417. If any case of the nature I have described was reported, did punishment take place?—No cases of that sort were reported.

418. What cases were reported to you during the voyage: for what cases was punishment inflicted by you?—I cannot say from memory. There were two or three cases brought before me.

419. Were they for refusing orders?—No, certainly not for that.

420. As far as your regiment is concerned, there was no punishment for direct disobedience of orders?—No, sir.

421. Then, any punishment for direct disobedience of orders must have been in the South Island regiment?—There were details of the Sixth, Seventh, and Tenth Contingents on board also.

422. As far as your regiment was concerned, you had none?—There were no cases of disobedience of orders.

423. Were there any regimental officers appointed at all, or was the whole ship worked practically as a brigade?—Regimental officers were appointed in my regiment right through. The officer commanding troops worked the whole of the troops on board, but then our regimental officers were not interfered with at all.

424. Was that duty carried out?—Yes, sir; it was carried out.

425. Did they do anything else than simply go round with the inspecting officer in the mornings?—The regimental officers on duty attended the inspection.

426. Did they do anything else beyond that?—They saw the orders carried out that were issued.

427. We have it on distinct evidence that there were no officers on duty except the captain of the day and the subaltern: is that correct?—No, sir, that is not correct.

428. Did the regimental officers go among the men at all?—Yes; there was a squadron officer detailed every day. Each squadron had its own officer who attended on the troop-decks.

429. Had your sergeant-major any experience in military work prior to being appointed in the Ninth—Sergeant-Major Herbert—had he ever been with any previous contingent?—No; he had not been on active service previously. He was a Volunteer non-commissioned officer.

430. You were fairly well satisfied with him?—Yes, I was quite satisfied with him.

431. *Mr. McNab.*] I suppose, major, you are fairly well satisfied with Volunteer non-commissioned officers in carrying out their work?—Yes, sir; I was always satisfied with the way Volunteer non-commissioned officers worked.

432. Did you find that non-commissioned officers who had had fairly lengthy experience in Volunteering took to their work more rapidly than men who had not been Volunteering?—I found they made the best officers and non-coms.

433. In regard to the appointment of officers in carrying out the duties on the ship, the officer commanding the troops appointed his officers from day to day, and the officer commanding the squadron also appointed an officer for the squadron, did they not?—Yes, sir, that is right.

434. But, in regard to the separate regiments, was there any captain of the day or lieutenant of the day appointed for the regiments outside of these appointments?—No; there was no occasion for it.

## EXHIBITS.

## EXHIBIT A.

REPORT of the MILITARY COMMANDING OFFICER on the DISEMBARKATION OF TROOPS (Voyage Report) from the Hired Ship "Britannic" on its Voyage from Durban to Wellington.

1st. What troops are embarked, viz.:—Regiment or corps—1st and 2nd Regiments 8th N.Z.M.R., details 9th and 10th N.Z.M.R., details 1st A.C.H., 2nd A.C.H., 4th A.C.H., 6th A.C.H., and 8th A.C.H., details R.P.R., T.M.I., J.M.R., Q.T.B., 2nd Bedford, and Scottish Horse; number of officers, 83; ladies, 3; warrant officers, 4; men (including male servants), 995.

2nd. What portion of them have now disembarked, viz.:—Number of officers—3 A.M.C., 4 1st A.C.H., 2 2nd A.C.H., 12 4th A.C.H., 12 6th A.C.H., 4 8th A.C.H., 1 (indulgence) Bedford Regiment; ladies, 2 A.M.C. (A.N.S.R.), 1 indulgence; men (including male servants), 14 8th N.Z.M.R., 1 10th N.Z.M.R., 2 A.M.C., 4 1st A.C.H., 3 2nd A.C.H., 3 4th A.C.H., 12 6th A.C.H., 1 8th A.C.H., 3 (indulgence) Scottish Horse.

3rd. Embarkation—Port, Durban; date of embarkation, 5th July, 1902; date of sailing, 6th July, 1902. Arrival at and sailing from other ports—Date of arrival at Albany, 20th July, 1902; at Melbourne, 27th July, 1902; date of sailing from Albany, 22nd July, 1902; from Melbourne, 27th July, 1902. Disembarkation—Port, Wellington; date, 1st August. Number of days on the voyage, 26.

4th. Has there been any unnecessary delay in making the passage?—No.

5th. Has the ship been properly fitted and kept in a clean state?—Yes.

6th. Has the master discharged his duty to the troops in a proper and satisfactory manner, and afforded every care and attention to the women and children on board?—Yes.

7th. Have the conditions of the charter-party been carried out?—Yes.

8th. Has the officers' mess been properly kept and satisfactorily provided under the established regulations?—Yes.

9th. Has there been any cause of complaint of the provisions or medical comforts, either as regards quantity or quality, or any inattention in their issue?—There have been one or two minor complaints *re* issue of rations, but they have been attended to and put right at once.

10th. Has the distilling-apparatus been in operation during the voyage; has it worked well; and have the troops been properly supplied with good water?—Yes.

11th. Has fresh bread, of good quality, been baked and issued four days in each week to the troops, and daily to the women?—Yes.

12th. Was the cooking-apparatus provided for the troops sufficient?—No; this is insufficient, and the above complaints have arisen on this account.

13th. Has any sickness been prevalent among the troops or other persons on board; and, if so, to what cause can it be attributed?—Measles, contracted in Africa; pneumonia, due to the difference of living in the open air and a warm hold.

14th. Have the regulations interdicting smoking below been attended to?—Yes.

15th. Name and address of owners of the ship—Messrs. Ismay, Imrie, and Co., 30, James Street, Liverpool. Name of master of the ship—Bertram F. Hayes, Lieutenant R.N.R.

R. H. DAVIES, Colonel,  
Officer commanding the troops on board H.M.T. "Britannic."

GENERAL REMARKS of the TRANSPORT OFFICER, or of the Master of the Ship if there be no Transport Officer on board.

Everything satisfactory.

BERTRAM F. HAYES, Lieutenant R.N.R.,  
Master.



## EXHIBIT B.

LIST of MEN IN HOSPITAL on Troopship "Britannic" on Friday Morning, 1st August, 1902.

No.	Name.	Disease.	No.	Name.	Disease.
5646	Tpr. A. Driscoll ..	Acute rheumatism.	5679	Tpr. Murphy ..	Measles.
6227	Tpr. J. H. Thomas ..	Continued pyrexia.	5806	Tpr. Lunn ..	Measles.
8892	Tpr. Webster ..	Tonsilitis.	5758	Tpr. Alsop ..	Measles.
5649	Tpr. Dukes ..	Enteric.	6106	Tpr. Sebelin ..	Measles.
5395	Tpr. Tonks ..	Pneumonia.	5692	Tpr. Purvis ..	Measles.
5234	Tpr. Nelson ..	Pneumonia.	5689	Tpr. Nicholson ..	Measles.
5080	Sergt. Larsen ..	Pneumonia.	5954	Tpr. Macalister ..	Measles.
8758	Sergt. Tasker ..	Pneumonia and measles.	5793	Tpr. Hursthouse ..	Measles.
8908	Sergt. Deighton ..	Pneumonia.	9019	Tpr. Tuohy ..	Measles.
5756	Fr. Corpl. Blissart ..	Pneumonia.	5084	Tpr. Lucas ..	Diarrhoea.
5020	Sergt.-Maj. Pender ..	Pneumonia.	6334	Tpr. Fleetwood ..	Measles.
5815	Tpr. Meherry ..	Pneumonia.	5381	Tpr. Page ..	Measles.
8935	Sergt. Crichton ..	Pneumonia.	6333	Tpr. Fitzgerald ..	Measles.
6075	Tpr. Laughton ..	Measles.	5302	Sergt. Best ..	Measles.
9054	Tpr. Dawson ..	Measles.	5341	Tpr. Eustace ..	Measles.
6023	Tpr. Cameron ..	Measles.	9050	Sergt.-Maj. Cowell ..	Measles.
6392	Tpr. Gower ..	Measles.	8903	Tpr. Hooper ..	Measles.
5457	Tpr. Brown ..	Measles.	9820	Tpr. Lyie ..	Measles.
5336	Tpr. Dean ..	Measles.	5341	Tpr. Easton ..	Measles.
5183	Tpr. W. Allan ..	Measles.	5384	Tpr. Pye ..	Measles.
5444	Tpr. Corry ..	Measles.	6019	Sergt. McAnally ..	Measles.
5523	Tpr. Ryan ..	Measles.	5940	Tpr. Maude ..	Measles.
5458	Tpr. Bennett ..	Measles.	9657	Tpr. Johnson ..	Measles.
5475	Tpr. Eivers ..	Measles.	6051	Tpr. Droon ..	Measles.
5315	Tpr. Atkins ..	Measles.	8993	Tpr. Nicholson ..	Measles.
9073	Tpr. Mousted ..	Measles.			

	Cases.
Measles ... ..	37
Measles and pneumonia ... ..	1
Pneumonia ... ..	8
Acute rheumatism ... ..	1
Pyrexia ... ..	1
Tonsilitis ... ..	1
Enteric ... ..	1
Diarrhoea ... ..	1
Total ... ..	51

WALTER R. PEARLESS, P.M.O.,  
Major, 8th N.Z.M.R.

## EXHIBIT C.

REPORT and ANSWERS to QUESTIONS as to the Present and Previous State of the Health of the Passengers and Crew on board the Undermentioned Vessel, by \_\_\_\_\_, Master [acting as Master or Surgeon] of the said Vessel.

Name of vessel: "Britannic."

Tonnage: 3,152.

Port of departure or loading: Durban, Natal.

Places at which vessel has touched: Albany and Melbourne.

Duration of voyage: Twenty-seven days.

Number of persons now on board: Passengers, 1,017 (troops); crew, 158.

Health of passengers and crew during the voyage: Crew in good health during voyage.

Number of deaths which occurred during the voyage: Passengers, 3 (troops); crew, nil.

Causes of death in each instance: Pneumonia in each instance.

Question No. 1: Did any contagious or infectious disease prevail at the port from which you sailed? If so, what was the nature of such disease?—Answer: No.

Question No. 2: Have you had any communication with any infected port or vessel during the voyage? If so, when and where, and what was the nature of the disease infecting such port or vessel?—Answer: No.

Question No. 3: Have you any sickness on board at present? If so, what is that sickness, and what number of cases have you under treatment?—Answer: Measles, 30 cases; pneumonia, 8 cases.

Question No. 4: Has any case of small-pox, or any other form of eruptive skin-disease, fever, scarlatina, plague, cholera, or other infectious or contagious disease, or has any case of any other kind of sickness or disease, occurred on board during the voyage? If so, state the number of cases, and the dates of attack and convalescence or termination of the first and last cases of the disease?—Answer: Measles.

Question No. 5: Have the clothes and bedding used by those persons who have suffered from infectious or contagious disease during the voyage been either destroyed or properly disinfected?—Answer: No.

Question No. 6: What means, if any, have been adopted for preventing the spread of any infectious or contagious disease which has occurred during the voyage for the person or persons affected amongst the other persons on board?—Answer: Isolation as far as possible under circumstances.  
S. M. DICKSON, S.M.O., Surgeon.



5365	Lorange	...	2	Measles, septic pneumonia	...	...	...	Died 7th August, 1902.
5888	Ferrar	"	2	Septic pneumonia	...	...	...	" 8th August, 1902.
8754	Thorburn	"	2	Measles, pneumonia	...	...	August 15	Convalescent.
6319	Craig	"	2	Measles, septic pneumonia	...	...	...	Died 11th August, 1902.
6885	Robinson	"	2	Measles	...	...	August 11	Convalescent.
5398	Turner	Scott's boardinghouse	2	Septic pneumonia	...	...	...	Died 12th August, 1902.
5925	Johnston, W. A.	...	...	Temporary suppression of urine, and pleurisy	...	...	August 20	...
...	Fitzherbert	City Buffet	3	Measles	...	...	...	...
...	Runceman	"	4	Measles	...	...	...	...
...	Boyle	Trocadero	6	Measles	...	...	...	...
...	McLaren	Masonic Hotel	6	Measles	...	...	...	...
5362	Lund	White Swan Hotel	6	Tonsillitis	...	...	...	...
6370	Ramsay	"	6	Measles and tonsillitis	...	...	...	...
5391	Smith	"	6	Measles, pneumonia	...	...	...	...
5353	Gosling	Railway Hotel, Hutt	6	Malaria	...	...	...	...
...	McAlpine	Nairn Street	6	Influenza	...	...	August 12	...
...	Rodgers	25, Hill Street	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	Hogg	Boulcott Street	...	...	...	...	...	...
5448	Peterson, J.	Hospital	2	Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...
5973	Scott, W.	"	2	Measles and pneumonia	...	...	...	...
6074	Lewis	"	...	Inflamed throat	...	...	...	...
...	Rusden	8, Tonks Grove	20	Laryngitis and prurigo	...	...	...	...
7224	Retter	Care of Mrs. Stephenson, Murphy Street	20	Effects of vaccination	...	...	...	...
5078	Johnston, G. A.	Hospital	...	...	...	...	August 23	Convalescent.
6365	Pevreal	Somes Island	7	Measles	...	...	19	"
4269	Cooper	"	9	Measles	...	...	14	"
9054	Dawson	"	...	...	...	...	15	"
5484	Gomez	Auckland Hospital	14	...	...	...	...	Died.
5037	Neilson, farrier	95, Riddiford Street	22	Enteric fever	...	...	...	...
5018	Ross, farrier	41, Tasman Street	22	Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...
5020	Pender, A.	Wellington Hospital	2	Pneumonia	...	...	...	...
6019	McAnally	"	2	Pneumonia	...	...	August 12	Convalescent.
5649	Duke, E.	"	2	Tonsillitis	...	...	14	"
5756	Blissett	"	2	Enteric fever	...	...	12	"
5395	Tonks, A.	"	2	Scarlet fever and measles, broncho-pneumonia	...	...	...	Died 14th August, 1902.
8935	Churton, R.	"	2	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...
5234	Nelson, H.	"	2	Enteric fever	...	...	August 18	Convalescent.
5815	McHarry, J.	"	2	Otitis	...	...	...	...
5336	Dean, D.	"	2	Measles and pneumonia	...	...	...	...
6227	Thomas, J.	"	2	Pneumonia	...	...	...	...
6102	Reay, W.	"	2	Pneumonia	...	...	August 18	Died 4th August, 1902.
5994	O'Brien, D.	"	2	Broncho-pneumonia	...	...	18	...
...	Hutchinson	Christchurch	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	Henry	"	...	...	...	...	...	...

[1902.

Sent to Hospital on the 16th August,

Dr. Martin afterwards attended this

case; patient died 21st August.

Convalescent.

"

## (2.) CASES OF PNEUMONIA TREATED ON MAINLAND.

*Treated in Wellington Hospital.*

1. Scott (recovered). 2. Larsen (recovered). 3. Pender (recovered). 4. Tonks (died). 5. Dean (recovered). 6. Thomas (died). 7. Reay (recovered). 8. O'Brien (recovered). Mortality in Wellington Hospital, 25 per cent.

*In Auckland Hospital.*

9. Gometz (died). 10. Smith (died), private hospital, Wellington; medical attendant, Dr. Martin. 11. Turner (died), Tonks's boardinghouse, Wellington; Drs. Pollen and Collins.

## (3.) FROM DR. EWART'S REPORT, 7TH AUGUST, 1902.

*Troopship "Britannic."*

6th August, 1902.

THE following troopers were sent to Wellington Hospital from troopship "Britannic" on Saturday morning:—5018. Larsen, Hans, pneumonia (convalescent). 5020. Pender, A., pneumonia (convalescent). 6091. McAnally, S., tonsillitis (convalescent). 5649. Duke, E., enteric (convalescent). 5756. Blissitt, Isaac, enteric (?) (convalescent). 5395. Tonks, Albert, scarlet fever and measles, very serious (subsequently died of pneumonia). 8935. Chirton, R., enteric fever and mastoid disease (convalescent). 5234. Nelson, H., enteric fever (?) (convalescent.) 5815. McHarry, Jas., chest-affection (not serious). 5336. Dean, D., measles and pneumonia (very serious). 5448. Peterson, J., scarlet fever (serious). 5973. Scott, W., measles and pneumonia (serious). 5994. O'Brien, Don., pneumonia (serious). 6102. Reay, Wm., pneumonia (serious). 6074. Lewis, E., inflamed throat (not serious). Thomas was admitted to the Hospital subsequently suffering from pneumonia, from which he died.

## "BRITANNIC" STATISTICS.

Where treated.	Cases.	Deaths.	Mortality per 100.
Treated on mainland ... ..	31	5	16.1
" Somes Island ... ..	52	13	25
<i>Pneumonia.</i>			
Treated on mainland ... ..	11	5	45.4
" Somes Island ... ..	33	13	39.3
Total cases treated in hospitals—			
Wellington, 16 ... ..	18	4	22.2
Auckland, 1 ... ..			
Private, 1 ... ..			

Of the 31 cases treated on shore, it must be remembered that some of the patients were only suffering from ailments of a comparatively minor nature, as the following list will show: (1) McAnally, tonsillitis; (2) McHarry, otitis; (3) McAlpine, influenza; (4) Rodgers, catarrh; (5) Hogg, catarrh; (6) Lewin, pharyngitis; (7) Rusden, skin-disease; (8) Lund, tonsillitis; (9) Gosling, malaria; (10) Duke, (11) Blissitt, and (12) Nelson were recovering from typhoid fever; (13) Churton was suffering from bronchitis.

SIR,—

Wellington Hospital, 7th August, 1902.

Fifteen troopers from the s.s. "Britannic" are now under treatment in the above institution. They are:—No. 5018. Hans Larsen, said to have been suffering from pneumonia, but now convalescent; not confined to bed. No. 5020. A. Pender, pneumonia; convalescent. No. 6019. S. McAnally, tonsillitis; convalescent. Nos. 5649 and 5759. Ernest Duke and Isaac Blissitt, said to have had enteric fever, but now convalescent; Blissitt has still some bronchitis, but not serious. No. 5395. Albert Tonks, peeling from scarlet fever on admission; has also measles and ear-disease; condition serious, but is improving; delirious. No. 8935. Robert Chirton, gives history of having had enteric fever; at present time has ear-disease and bronchitis; condition not so well to-day—bronchitis extending, temperature 100° Fahr.; will probably recover. No. 5234. Henry Nelson, gives history of enteric fever, but is well advanced in convalescence. No. 5815. James McHarry is suffering from chest-affection and otitis; making satisfactory progress. No. 5236. David Draw, suffering from measles and pneumonia; improving, but still delirious; condition very serious. No. 5448. J. Petersen, scarlet fever; much better to-day. No. 5973. W. Scott, measles and pneumonia; improving, but not yet out of danger. No. 5994. Dan. O'Brien, broncho-pneumonia; condition serious, although slightly improved. No. 6102. W. Reay, pneumonia; considerably improved. No. 6074. Edgar Lewis, inflamed throat; not serious.

I am, &amp;c.,

J. EWART, M.D.

The Chief Health Officer.

## EXHIBIT E.

## BEER-ISSUE.

## A Squad.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.		
July 8,	110 pints	...	0	9	2	July 22,	20 pints	...	0	1	8
" 9,	80 "	...	0	6	8	" 23,	50 "	...	0	4	2
" 11,	50 "	...	0	4	2	" 24,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 12,	50 "	...	0	4	2	" 25,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 13,	50 "	...	0	4	2	" 26,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 14,	60 "	...	0	5	0	" 27,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 15,	40 "	...	0	3	4	" 28,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 16,	40 "	...	0	3	4	" 29,	60 "	...	0	5	0
" 17,	40 "	...	0	3	4	" 30,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 18,	40 "	...	0	3	4	" 31,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 19,	40 "	...	0	3	4						
" 20,	52 "	...	0	4	4						
" 21,	40 "	...	0	3	4						
								£4	11	10	

## B Squad.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.		
July 8,	130 pints	...	0	10	10	July 22,	50 pints	...	0	4	2
" 9,	66 "	...	0	5	6	" 23,	102 "	...	0	8	6
" 10,	42 "	...	0	3	6	" 24,	78 "	...	0	6	6
" 11,	32 "	...	0	2	8	" 25,	121 "	...	0	10	1
" 12,	56 "	...	0	4	8	" 26,	91 "	...	0	7	7
" 13,	74 "	...	0	6	2	" 27,	91 "	...	0	7	7
" 14,	67 "	...	0	5	7	" 28,	103 "	...	0	8	7
" 15,	78 "	...	0	6	6	" 29,	103 "	...	0	8	7
" 16,	65 "	...	0	5	5	" 30,	103 "	...	0	8	7
" 17,	58 "	...	0	4	10	" 31,	103 "	...	0	8	7
" 18,	70 "	...	0	5	10						
" 19,	73 "	...	0	6	1						
" 20,	78 "	...	0	6	6						
" 21,	74 "	...	0	6	2						
								£7	19	0	

## C Squad.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.		
July 8,	119 pints	...	0	9	11	July 22,	10 pints	...	0	0	10
" 9,	60 "	...	0	5	0	" 23,	44 "	...	0	3	8
" 11,	75 "	...	0	6	3	" 24,	50 "	...	0	4	2
" 12,	30 "	...	0	2	6	" 25,	38 "	...	0	3	2
" 13,	35 "	...	0	2	11	" 26,	40 "	...	0	3	4
" 14,	45 "	...	0	3	9	" 27,	44 "	...	0	3	8
" 15,	54 "	...	0	4	6	" 28,	44 "	...	0	3	8
" 16,	67 "	...	0	5	7	" 29,	65 "	...	0	5	5
" 17,	64 "	...	0	5	4	" 30,	68 "	...	0	5	8
" 18,	33 "	...	0	2	9	" 31,	68 "	...	0	5	8
" 19,	39 "	...	0	3	3						
" 20,	38 "	...	0	3	2						
" 21,	40 "	...	0	3	4						
								£4	17	6	

## D Squad.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.		
July 8,	116 pints	...	0	9	8	July 22,	18 pints	...	0	1	6
" 9,	112 "	...	0	9	4	" 23,	76 "	...	0	6	4
" 10,	82 "	...	0	6	10	" 24,	75 "	...	0	6	3
" 11,	80 "	...	0	6	8	" 25,	71 "	...	0	5	11
" 12,	91 "	...	0	7	7	" 26,	60 "	...	0	5	0
" 13,	95 "	...	0	7	11	" 27,	76 "	...	0	6	4
" 14,	105 "	...	0	8	9	" 28,	86 "	...	0	7	2
" 15,	51 "	...	0	4	3	" 29,	80 "	...	0	6	8
" 16,	69 "	...	0	5	9	" 30,	80 "	...	0	6	8
" 17,	65 "	...	0	5	5	" 31,	80 "	...	0	6	8
" 18,	56 "	...	0	4	8						
" 19,	56 "	...	0	4	8						
" 20,	64 "	...	0	5	4						
" 21,	68 "	...	0	5	8						
								£7	11	0	



*Hospital.*

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
July 8,	10 pints	0	0	10	July 18,	5 pints	0	0	5
" 9,	10 "	0	0	10	" 19,	5 "	0	0	5
" 10,	10 "	0	0	10	" 20,	5 "	0	0	5
" 11,	10 "	0	0	10					
" 15,	5 "	0	0	5			£0	5	5
" 16,	5 "	0	0	5					

## SUMMARY.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
A Squad	...	4	11	10	H Squad	...	5	11	5
B "	...	7	19	0	Tenth Detachment	...	5	16	11
C "	...	4	17	6	Hospital	...	0	5	5
D "	...	7	11	0					
E "	...	8	2	9			£55	19	3
F "	...	7	7	0					
G "	...	3	16	5					

H.M.T. "Britannic," 31st July, 1902.

RECEIVED from Captain Lewin, S.Q.M., the sum of fifty-five pounds nineteen shillings and three-pence (£55 19s. 3d.) on account of beer sold to troops by order.

R. S. MATTHEWS, Captain,  
Brigade-Major, VIII. N.Z.M.R.

## EXHIBIT F.

## AGREEMENT.—NINTH NEW ZEALAND CONTINGENT FOR SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

TERMS and conditions under which the undersigned agree to enlist for general service with the Imperial troops in South Africa:—

1. The volunteer shall embark with others at Wellington or other New Zealand port on such date as he may be directed and proceed on active service to South Africa to such port or place as he may be required by any military authority on behalf of the King, and shall thereafter continue to serve with such corps, either alone or as part of the King's regular forces, in any part of South Africa, as hereinafter specified, during the continuance of the war: Provided that the total period of service hereunder shall not exceed a period of twelve months from the date of signing this agreement, or for a shorter period if war ended.

2. On arrival in South Africa the volunteer will be posted to the regular Imperial army as may be directed by the Imperial authorities.

3. While so employed in such service in South Africa or elsewhere the volunteer shall be subject in all respects to the terms and provisions of the Act of the Imperial Parliament known as "The Army Act, 1881," or any Act continuing or amending the same, and the Articles of War for the time being in force made under the authority thereof respectively.

4. The volunteer shall from the date of enrolment in the contingent and up to the date of embarkation inclusive for South Africa receive pay in accordance with the scale set forth in the First Schedule hereto, and thereafter at the rate of pay set forth in the Second Schedule hereto.

5. The discharge of each volunteer after completion of his service under this agreement will only be granted in New Zealand, unless permission for discharge elsewhere be obtained from the Minister of Defence of the Colony of New Zealand on application made to him through the general commanding in South Africa, or the officer commanding the contingent in South Africa.

6. Without prejudice to any of the provisions hereinbefore set forth, in case the volunteer shall before arrival in South Africa be guilty of any breach of discipline or military law which renders it undesirable that the volunteer should continue to serve under this agreement, the officer for the time being commanding the corps may discharge the volunteer from service.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1902.

## FIRST SCHEDULE.

*Rates of Pay.*

	£	s.	d.	
Lieutenant-colonel	1	1	6	per diem.
Major	0	15	0	"
Captain	0	13	0	"
Lieutenant	0	7	8	"
Adjutant (in addition to pay of captain or lieutenant)	0	5	0	"
Quartermaster	0	10	6	"
Veterinary officers, medical officers, and paymasters receive the pay of regimental rank to which they are appointed.				
Regimental sergeant-major	0	5	4	"
Squadron or company sergeant-majors	0	4	4	"
Squadron or company quartermaster-sergeants	0	3	4	"

	£	s.	d.	
Sergeants ... ..	0	2	8	per diem.
Corporals ... ..	0	2	0	"
Shoing-smith corporal ... ..	0	2	2	"
Saddler-sergeant or corporal ... ..	0	3	8	"
Farrier-sergeant or corporal ... ..	0	2	10	"
Trumpeter ... ..	0	1	4	"
Private ... ..	0	1	2	"

## SECOND SCHEDULE.

*Schedule of Pay as in force in South Africa from 1st May, 1901. (From Lines of Communication Orders, Colonial Forces.—Pay and Allowances.)*

	£	s.	d.	
Lieutenant-colonels ... ..	1	5	0	per diem.
Majors ... ..	1	3	0	"
Captains ... ..	1	1	0	"
Lieutenants ... ..	0	15	0	"
Adjutants ... ..	1	1	0	"
Quartermasters, paymasters, transport officer, veterinary surgeons, and chaplains receive the pay of regimental rank to which they are appointed. Medical men appointed by the P.M.O. lines of communication receive £1 1s. per diem.				
Riding-master ... ..				
Staff-sergeants (warrant officers and regimental quartermaster-sergeants) ... ..	0	8	6	"
Squadron or company sergeant-majors ... ..	0	8	0	"
Squadron or company quartermaster-sergeants ... ..	0	8	0	"
Sergeants ... ..	0	7	0	"
Corporals ... ..	0	6	0	"
Farrier-sergeants ... ..	0	8	0	"
Saddler-sergeants ... ..	0	8	0	"
Sergeant-armourer ... ..	0	8	0	"
Shoing-smiths ... ..	0	6	0	"
Saddler-corporals ... ..	0	6	0	"
Trumpeters ... ..	0	5	0	"
Privates ... ..	0	5	0	"
Paymaster's clerk ... ..	0	8	0	"
Orderly-room clerk ... ..	0	7	0	"
Corporal trumpeter ... ..	0	6	0	"
Saddler ... ..	0	6	0	"

*Allowances in the Field in South Africa.*

	£	s.	d.	
Ration allowance* ... ..	0	2	6	per diem.
Forage allowance (per horse allowed) ... ..	0	2	6	"
Servant (where sanctioned), per servant ... ..	0	1	6	"

*Field Allowance at Army Rates according to Class, viz. :—*

	£	s.	d.	
Lieutenant-colonel (Class 8) ... ..	0	4	0	per diem.
Majors (Class 10) ... ..	0	4	0	"
Captains (Class 12) ... ..	0	3	0	"
Subalterns (Class 14) ... ..	0	2	6	"
Colonial allowance 1s. 6d. per diem for Imperial officers only.				

\* Only allowed under very special circumstances. (See South African Army Orders, No. 317, (5), (d). 18/4/01.)

We agree to serve under the foregoing conditions and subject to the foregoing rates of pay.

Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (in Full).	Signature.	Signature of Witness, Address, and Date.

Signed by the abovenamed , in the presence of ,

*Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (2,000 copies), £280.*

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1902.