

ceedings were taken by the officer in charge. The first was in regard to the coal strike. Several boys refused to carry coal on particular days. We understood the regulations of the Defence Act prescribed that any person committing a breach of discipline in the barracks should be brought before a Magistrate, and, if committed, punished by a Magistrate; but we were taken one at a time to Lieutenant MacDonald's office, where he sat at a table; he asked us whether we would carry the coal, and we said No. He said, I do not care if you carry a little bit at a time. He said to me, "I sentence you to two days' solitary confinement, with half-rations." These were the words he actually used. In the next breath he told us he had no power to punish us, and if we persisted we would be brought before a Magistrate. We were taken to separate cells; most of us were taken into the little rooms off the barrack-room, and then I myself was taken away from the other boys and shut up in a little room which measured about 9 by 7. It was about the smallest single room. There were two bunks on one side and one on the other. The door of this room was locked, and the window was shut up tight and screwed up tight, and it was sealed up so that it could not be opened. Lieutenant MacDonald ordered that my windows should be whitened. If anything was solitary confinement, that was. Lieutenant MacDonald came round to us on Wednesday morning. We were kept in there three days. This was the first breach of regulations. We should not have been punished in this manner by the Government. The next thing was the matter of being asked to drill and clean guns. We were told by the lieutenant that when the ordinary work on the island ran out—such work as cleaning up—that we should be required to clean guns, &c. Two or three of us had each day been acting as orderlies, another boy had been cleaning out the lavatories, &c., and another boy had been helping the cook. This work was quite satisfactory. We believe in exercise, and there was nothing in this that we objected to—no military principle attached to this. Then the lieutenant came to us and said, "Now, I want to treat you as men; I am not going to ask you to do any work to which you on principle object, but if the ordinary work runs out I shall be compelled to ask you to clean guns. Of course, if you object to such work on principle I shall simply have to shut you up in the barrack-room, and I shall not be mean enough to reduce your rations." The rations were these: the regulations provide that we shall be allowed 2s. worth of food a day. This food was divided up between us and the soldiers. All the food was brought over from the mainland, and the cost of it reckoned up and divided up. The Permanent Artillery had to pay for the food they had. It has been said in Lieutenant MacDonald's report that when we arrived in the island the soldiers were having 2s. worth of food per day, and when we had been on the island a short time the standard of living had gone up to 2s. 6d.; but actually before our arrival it was about 1s. 2d., and afterwards about 1s. 10d., so that we were not having anywhere near the amount of rations laid down allowed us. The only punishment laid down by the Act was that we could be inflicted with a further term of detention. What actually took place was that the food was reduced. For breakfast a slice of bread and for tea a slice of bread; for dinner a small piece of meat and two or three potatoes, and with each meal a half-pint mug of tea. This was in the middle of winter, and the ground was white with frost. We were released for exercise half an hour in the morning and half an hour at night, and were made to exercise separately in the yard. On the second occasion we understood from Lieutenant MacDonald that we should not be asked to drill or clean guns. On Monday, the 30th June, Lieutenant MacDonald was not on the island, but had given instructions to another soldier to ask us to drill, and we said No, and we would not clean the guns. We were then taken and put into cells. I was again taken and put back into the same cell I was in previously. Well, we had decided between us that if the rations were reduced and that if we were given half-rations (I notice that the Minister of Defence has been trying to make out that we hunger-struck before—that is not the case) we would go on hunger strike. At tea-time on Monday we were given half a slice of bread; we told the soldiers to take it back. Our conditions were that we should have all the food we required. Tuesday morning breakfast was refused, dinner was refused; ten of us refused this. These meals were sometimes brought and left in the cell. This went on till Wednesday morning; but I will go back to Tuesday. Lieutenant MacDonald stated that he informed us we were to be brought before a Magistrate. He did not; beyond his threatening attitude we could not determine what he said. What I mean by "threatening attitude" is things such as this: Lieutenant MacDonald said, "You know there are other men on the island besides you, my men; they will knock the pudding out of you if you make a noise." At any rate, when we were put into these cells he came to us on Tuesday morning. He had always talked to us in this manner. He told us another day when the coal strike was on that he would have to bring us before a Magistrate. On Tuesday morning he came to my cell and said, "Well, if you persist I shall have to bring you before a Magistrate." This was on Tuesday morning at 12 o'clock. On Wednesday morning when the launch arrived, about 11 o'clock, I could just see out of a corner of the window where the whitening had been rubbed off that Lieutenant MacDonald and Mr. Bailey were coming. Five minutes after we were taken into the officers' kitchen and in this place we were tried. We were charged with having refused to drill and disobeying orders on the 30th. Worrall asked for an adjournment so that we could have legal advice. Mr. Bailey said, "No, you are guilty, you have no case." When we still persisted, afterwards he said, "You can get a lawyer if you write for one." That was after we had been sentenced. With regard to the barring of the windows, these windows were barred at the time of the coal strike, on the 18th. On that afternoon another boy who did not object to any work on the island assisted the soldiers in putting up the bars to the windows. Some of the cells had these partitions. In them there was a passage—a cell on one side and a cell on the other. No ventilation at all could get into these rooms; the doors were locked and the windows barred up—no ventilation. When Worrall complained to the doctor about the cells he condemned them. He said these bars must be taken out. If the cells had been passed by a medical officer they were passed before the bars were put up. That is the position as far as I know it. These things have been done illegally. He had no power at all to put us in these cells.