

P.M.O.
authorized
this.

123. The Camp Commandant states that he had the authority of the then P.M.O. to put in the extra men, although beyond the number they were designed to carry. That P.M.O. is now at the front.

Responsibility

124. We are of opinion that the Headquarters Staff is primarily responsible for bringing men into camp before sufficient accommodation had been provided; but we think the medical service ought to have drawn the attention of the Camp Commandant to the risks attendant on the overcrowding which prevailed and was permitted. Whilst recognizing that the Headquarters Staff have been continuously working at high pressure, we think that as soon as it was known that tents were to be sent with the Expeditionary Force, and that the stock would be thereby depleted, some action should have been taken at once to provide a scheme for other accommodation, and that two or three months might have been saved. It is not proved that the District Office of the Public Works Department could have acted more promptly than it did in carrying out the instructions given to it.

The pressure leading to the overcrowding was no doubt regarded as temporary, and the exigencies of the moment may have left no other course open; but without doubt the overcrowding was due to the fact that the accommodation was not there by the date the extra men were appointed to come into camp.

(e.) *Food, Cooking, &c.*

125. The cookhouses and system of cooking, the stores for meat and perishable food, were satisfactory. Exception might be taken to the absence of special stores for holding vegetables.

Complaints.

The evidence adduced shows that the food both in quality and quantity was good. With slight exceptions the cooking was good. Complaints were made as to the quality of the tea served out. The fault, which was a slight one in connection with the boiling of the water, was discovered and remedied. Some complaints were made of a deficiency in the amount of vegetables provided, but in this respect the ration is greater than that laid down in the British Army Service Corps Regulations, although it may have been less than that to which the men had been accustomed in civil life.

The cookhouses appear to be well arranged, but there is an absence of cover for the food orderlies when waiting to be served with the rations for their men.

It is also in evidence that extra accommodation for the cooking of vegetables would be an advantage.

Several witnesses complained of lack of hot water for the washing-up of utensils after meals. This is a matter that can be easily remedied.

Other witnesses referred to the fact that no means were provided for the carriage of the bread from the issue store to their quarters, and that some of the men had met this difficulty by the use of a ground-sheet or a blanket, although this was contrary to camp regulations. The difficulty having been drawn attention to, it will no doubt now be remedied by the military authorities, if that has not already been done.

(f.) *Incinerators.*

126. Incinerators were constructed at the outset. These have been criticized, but we find they are according to an approved Army plan, and Captain Simson gave it in evidence that the like kind were in use in Egypt and on Salisbury Plain. We are informed by the Engineer-in-Chief that a destructor is now to be constructed to deal with camp-refuse. Proper arrangements were in force for the removal of vegetable and cook-shop refuse by carters, to be used for pigs' food.

(g.) *Boots.*

Practice as to
issue.

127. Much complaint was made during the wet weather of May, June, and July of wet boots. The practice had been to issue to a man as soon as possible after coming into camp one pair of military boots. The boots that he came in with were probably in many cases of a light character, and the wearing of them for camp-work was not encouraged so that they might have a change.