

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.