

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.