

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.