

577. Was the ventilation good on the troop-decks?—On account of the rough weather the ventilation was bad; they could not open the ports.

578. If they had been able to open the ports on the upper troop-deck you think she would have been fairly comfortable?—Yes, I think so, as far as the upper deck was concerned.

579. Have you any complaint to make against the treatment of any of the men by the officers?—No complaint at all.

580. You think the officers did their duty by the men both from a military point of view and from the point of view of looking after their interests?—Yes, certainly I do.

581. Do you know anything about the hospital arrangements?—I was there a few times.

582. Were you in the hospital?—I was never ill. I think the hospital was big enough until the last couple of days, when the place had to be extended.

583. You had an epidemic, then?—Yes, sir.

584. Up to that time you consider the arrangements were all right?—I reckon they were good.

585. So that the whole of your objections seem to be that you believe she was overcrowded?—Yes, overcrowded.

586. Was the cooking of the food all right?—I do not think it was the best from what I know about cooking. If the food had been cooked a little more it would have been better.

587. It was the fault of the ship's cooks?—Yes.

588. Have you any other thing you desire to say?—There is nothing further for me to say, except that what we have read in the papers, I reckon, has exaggerated things a lot.

589. Statements appearing in the Press are exaggerated?—Yes.

590. You do not think the men were warranted in making the statements they have done?—No.

591. *Mr. McNab.*] If it had not been that an inquiry was sitting inquiring into the matter you would not have considered there was sufficient ground for complaint for any one to have asked for an inquiry into it at all?—No, I do not think there are sufficient grounds.

592. There being an inquiry, you just came to state what you knew about it?—Certainly.

593. Have you ever been on a vessel with a large number of passengers before?—Only going to South Africa in the "Cornwall."

594. How, on the whole, does it compare with your trip in the "Cornwall"?—It was not nearly as good.

595. You had not so many men?—No; there was not half the number of men.

596. When you set out you would not expect that you were going to get such a trip as you had in the "Cornwall"?—That did not strike me.

597. Coming to give evidence, you would not now expect that things would be as comfortable as on board the "Cornwall"?—I reckon they ought to be on a par with each other, both being troopships.

598. On the whole, how did the food on the "Britannic" compare with that on the "Cornwall"?—I reckon the food on the "Cornwall" was far superior.

599. Were you obliged to buy food on board the "Britannic"?—You were not obliged to—you could if you liked.

600. Did you yourself buy food?—I did a few times.

601. Did you see any drink sold on board?—There was an issue of beer.

602. Any whisky, any spirits of any kind?—No, I never saw anything of that kind.

603. *Colonel Davies.*] You said you bought food once or twice?—Yes, sir.

604. You did not mean you had to buy it because you were hungry?—It was bought at night-time—just as one would buy a bun for supper.

605. You did not buy it because you did not get enough to eat?—Oh, no, sir.

Sergeant-Major WALTER HENRY DENBY sworn and examined. (No. 36.)

606. *Mr. McNab.*] What is your name in full?—Walter Henry Denby.

607. Your rank?—Sergeant-major.

608. What troop?—D squadron, 1st New Zealand Regiment.

609. You desire to give evidence before the Commission regarding the food and transport accommodation on board the "Britannic." If you have any statement to make the Commission will be pleased to hear it?—I would sooner answer questions, sir.

610. Have you any complaints to make against the food and accommodation?—No, there were none.

611. Taking the food specifically, you say you had no complaints to make yourself?—No, sir, none whatever.

612. Did you ever see any tainted meat supplied from the cooks' galley to the men?—Yes, I did on one or two occasions; and when that meat was shown they could always go to the cook-house and get a fresh piece, or if they could not get fresh meat there was always bully-beef and preserves supplied.

613. Was it before you got to Albany, or after, that you saw tainted meat given out of the cook-house?—It was before we reached Albany.

614. When questionable meat was supplied to the men and complaint was made, was there something in the nature of bully-beef given out to take its place?—I heard Colonel Davies say that if there was any complaint amongst the men that the meat or anything like that was not good there was always bully-beef to be given.

615. You never heard of the ship refusing?—No, they never refused.

616. What was the nature of the tea?—The tea was very much like you would get on every ship—that is, it is not the best. The only thing that I think is that the men did not get enough work. If they had been out with the Fourth and Fifth, and had had fourteen or fifteen months' trekking and hardships, they would have been quite satisfied.