

TUESDAY, 20TH JULY, 1915.

WILLIAM HOBARD MORTON sworn and examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are the Engineer to the Wellington City Corporation?—Yes.
2. You were a member of the Advisory Board in connection with certain matters at Trentham Camp?—That is so.
3. Will you tell us, please, what you have had to do and what you did in connection with the camp?—In a letter from the Hon. the Minister of Defence I was asked to confer with Dr. Frengley and Mr. Campbell, Government Architect, regarding the construction of the hutments.
4. And what did you do?—We had two or three meetings, and considered plans which had been prepared by the military authorities.
5. You did not adopt those plans in their entirety?—That is so.
6. Will you tell us about those plans, and then say what consideration led you to depart from them?—Their plans were for corrugated-iron buildings, unlined. They had no floors other than the earth. The provision for ventilation was very similar to what has been adopted. The amount of window-space as shown on the plans was very considerably increased by us.
7. You enlarged the size of the huts?—We lowered them in height. The original huts were to provide accommodation for fifty men. After going into the matter the result of our careful consideration was that we came to the conclusion that there was no necessity to limit them to accommodating fifty men, and we considered that each hut might be made to accommodate a hundred men, with a division in the centre.
8. Just an ordinary partition?—Yes, a partition right across.
9. No communication between the two?—There was air communication.
10. No doorway?—No doorway. Instead of having merely raised platforms for sleeping on we decided that in view of the fact that the huts would only be occupied by the men for sleeping and eating it would be much better to put wooden floors over the whole area. That was one of the essential features of the alteration which we recommended.
11. Was the question of bunks discussed?—Yes.
12. And you did not adopt them?—No.
13. Why were they rejected?—One reason was the difficulty of cleaning about the bunks, and the difficulty also in connection with the access of air.
14. To the whole contents of the building?—Yes.
15. And then, I suppose, bunks would have interfered with the area available for eating?—Yes, and for lighting. Of course, they might have been placed transversely. But we considered it advisable that the huts should be so made that the whole of the room might be thoroughly cleansed, both by ordinary cleansing and the admission of air into all parts of the room.
16. The sanitary point of view was a vital factor in the matter?—Yes, sir.
17. Did you take into consideration the number of huts that had to be erected, and the area of ground upon which they were to be erected?—Well, the number of huts to be erected, I think, was given to us as huts sufficient to hold, exclusive of officers, 3,500 men: that was at the time we were considering the matter. The officers' accommodation was to be additional.
18. Were you given a certain area of ground on which the huts were to be placed, or had you to consider that point at all?—The only order of reference, if I remember aright, was the plan which had been prepared by the military authorities showing the location of the huts.
19. That showed the total number spread over a particular area?—Yes.
20. It did not specify the area?—No.
21. So that they might have occupied 1 acre or 10?—No; they indicated the space they considered ample for the huts, after, I take it, considering the question of overcrowding, and also from the point of view of the ground available for a parade-ground. We went into the matter closely, and decided, after full consideration, that these huts would be quite satisfactory if placed at a distance apart of one and a half times their height.
22. That is with a view to sunlight and air?—Yes.
23. And that was the view acted upon?—I believe that was acted upon, but I have not seen them since.
24. You had nothing to do with the construction of the huts afterwards?—No.
25. Then, had you anything to do with respect to the sanitary provision for the hutments?—Do you mean the drainage?
26. Yes: did you simply approve of the form of the huts, or did you go further and deal with the question of the sanitation of the buildings?—We considered the question of the disposal of the polluted water. We did not deal with the question of surface drainage. Although we did provide for the disposal of polluted water I do not remember that we were asked to do so. I have not the letter by me which I received from the Minister in connection with the matter. My recollection is that what we were to go into was simply the question of the huts as indicated on the plans submitted by the military authorities.
27. Could you find that letter?—I have been looking for it but cannot see it. I take it there should be a copy available. I may say that when we visited the camp the question of drainage was immediately shown to be a very prominent matter for consideration. We gave it consideration although there was some difficulty in getting a proper fall. A system was adopted for gathering up the polluted water, and a drain laid conveying it to a point, roughly, 15 chains away from the camp. The total length of the drain would be about 24 chains. There was only one direction in which the fall could be obtained without considerable excavation. I ascertained that by taking levels. A difficulty existed in connection with the ultimate disposal of the water. Before this work was done all the dirty water was thrown into soak-pits about the camp. I considered that very unsatisfactory, because the ground would become polluted in time, and these