

ing the hospital and discharged. What I meant to say in my evidence was this: that it was impossible for an officer like myself stationed at the kiosk to keep a continuous list of all men admitted and discharged with the idea of following up their letters; but the papers conveyed quite a different meaning, making the public think that there was no actual record kept of the patients who were admitted and discharged from the hospital. I pointed out that these letters should have been followed up by the platoon corporal. I may say that the question of delivery of letters at Trentham was at one time in a very grave condition, amounting almost to a scandal. There were hundreds of letters undelivered, and it was found necessary to establish a post-office in the centre of the racecourse buildings.

12. Was that in your time?—Yes, sir.

13. How long did that continue—that non-delivery of letters?—It continued during the first week I was there.

14. That was with regard to the patients' letters?—Yes. I would like you to remember that at that time we were receiving every day something like a hundred fresh patients. Then there were a certain number of discharges: some we sent to Kaiwarra and some to other places, and the task was stupendous to trace them. Had those letters been kept by the platoon corporal, and not handed over to any one except temporarily, it would have been better. He could have come up and inquired whether Thomson, or Brown, or Smith was in the kiosk, and if the man was not with us the platoon corporal would have been told to try the grandstand and retain the letters; but, as a matter of fact, they were handed over to the record-office, and the result was that the letters became piled up there until some one called for them. The system adopted a little later was a decided improvement. One of the marquees in the centre of the racecourse, opposite the main door where Colonel Morice's office was, was converted into a regular post-office, under Postal officials, and patients could call there for their letters. All the letters were under the sole charge of Postal officials. I pointed out to the Commission the difficulty of getting telegrams away, and that was due largely to the funk which had set in in entailing an enormous number of wires coming from all parts of the Dominion inquiring after the men. The result was that telegrams simply piled up, and it was impossible to get them away. They had to be bundled up together and sent to Wellington per train. I would like to state here that on one occasion I had to go down to the lines one evening, and it struck me then that I would like to make some inquiries as to how this epidemic was being continued. In the course of my inquiries I went into a concert which was being held in the Salvation Army hall. I found hundreds of men there assembled. I stood at the door for about twenty minutes, and watched men coming out and going in. I was surprised to find the number of men who entered that hall with wet boots and no overcoats on, but simply dungaree coats and trousers. I spoke to one or two of the men. I said, "Is there any necessity for you to have those wet boots?" They said, "No." There was no necessity; and while I was inquiring I found Major Stout standing at the back of me. I would like to say this: that I am strongly of opinion that those concerts should have been discontinued, and that it was a mistake to have allowed them to go on in the face of such an epidemic. A great many men were sitting upon extempore scantlings kicking their heels against the walls. At this concert every singer, it appeared, was entitled to an encore, as the result of which there was a great deal of dust floating about. On one or two occasions visitors came through the hospital, and I distinctly remember hearing Colonel Valintine say to Mr. Parr, M.P. for Auckland, and several others, "Go among the men, unguided, unaccompanied by anybody, and make any inquiries you like." Mr. Parr took advantage of that, and I understand that the sum total of the complaints made to him was about a second pair of boots being needed. Mr. Massey had that told to him, and that there were no other complaints to make. The men were given every opportunity to make complaints to visitors as to the administration and anything affecting their treatment in the hospital. I have had considerable experience in living in hutments in South Africa, Australia, and in New Zealand, and there is one thing I would like to suggest to the Commission, and that is that a test be made, at a time which would not be given, of the air in a tent and the air in one of the hutments. I would like to point out in regard to South Africa, where there were hutments, that the difference between the temperature in the daytime and the temperature at night is very great.

15. *Mr. Skerrett.*] This seems to be in the nature of a speech rather than evidence?—I give that as a practical man who has lived in hutments in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

16. *The Chairman.*] That question of air-space in hutments and tents is all laid down in the military book?—But some of the men say that the tents are warmer than the hutments. That is admitted; but is the air in the tents as good as it is in the hutments, and is the living in the hutments as good a training for the men, who will have to spend the next few months in open-air work?

17. We have that point before us?—You know that a simple test for carbonic-acid gas can easily be made of the air in the tents and that in the hutments. I would like to point out that at Trentham there is not that difference of temperature which there was in South Africa between the midday temperature and the night temperature. You could also take two places in New South Wales where the same conditions would not apply. I refer to Sydney and Lithgow. Lithgow is 3,000 ft. above the sea-level, and in the daytime it would be very warm, but at night very cold.

18. We have the same comparison between Rotorua and Wellington: the mornings at Rotorua would be much colder?—In South Africa the hutments were not so successful because of that fact—the altitude. Instead of what may be called radiation, in Trentham there was a tendency for the temperature in the huts to condense the vapour and make it run down the walls.

19. *Mr. Ferguson.*] You have seen that yourself?—I have seen that.

20. Have you slept in a hutment?—Not at Trentham.