

CHARLES GARR sworn and examined. (No. 51.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Sergeant in the D Company, 1st Battalion.
2. What hut did you occupy at Trentham?—I think No. 38, the same as Solomon.
3. What were the conditions of the hut as regards comfort, warmth, room for turning about, and accommodation for eating?—The huts were very crowded for sleeping and eating.
4. Can you say how many men were in the hut when you speak of its being very crowded?—There were over seventy at one time. As the sick went out the number gradually went down, and also on account of the men going on sick-leave. Perhaps two or three were transferred, but not many.
5. You occupied it up to the time you left?—Yes.
6. How many would have been in from the time you left?—I could not say exactly.
7. Was it a warm place?—I had just come back from Samoa, and I felt it very cold.
8. Did you take any means to stop the air coming through into the hut?—For my part I plugged up between the corrugated iron and the wooden portion to stop the draught at my head.
9. That was done afterwards?—I do not remember it being done. It may have been, but it was not at the time I went in. I plugged it myself.
10. Had you had any experience of the tents in Trentham before?—I think about nine days.
11. How did you get on in the tents?—I went into the camp with a cold when I came back from Samoa, and I got rid of it in a tent.
12. Did you get a cold again afterwards?—I had a cold again in the huts, and I was not able to use my voice for two or three days, and it affected my throat. My voice got all right about a week before we left.
13. Had you to do with the bringing-in of the bread?—No, the quartermaster-sergeant.
14. Have you seen the bread brought in?—Yes, occasionally.
15. How was it carried in?—Generally two men would carry it on a ground-sheet.
16. On a ground-sheet which had been used the previous night for sleeping on?—Yes; it would have been used.
17. In contact with the straw?—Generally our men got a palliasse, and it would be in contact with the palliasse.
18. Would the sheet be over the palliasse or underneath?—They can do as they please.
19. Some might put it under the straw and some over the straw?—Yes.
20. Was attention called to this way of carrying the bread by anybody?—I have heard our company sergeant-major say something about it to the quartermaster-sergeant about carrying the bread in a blanket. I never saw that.
21. That would be by your own men, would it not?—Yes.
22. Have you had experience of camp life before?—I had eight months in Samoa.
23. How did they carry the bread there?—I could not say.
24. When you joined did you get your boots?—When going to Samoa we got two pairs of boots issued to us. When I came into camp here I had one pair of boots I was wearing. I got those about November last year. I went into camp with those and the old uniform I had. I had a set of denims and some underclothing issued to me, but no boots. I got a pair of boots issued to me just about a week before leaving Trentham.
25. How is it you did not get two pairs of boots?—They would not issue any from Samoa. They said there was only one issue. I pointed out that they were issued in November last. I had had six months' wear out of my boots, and the new men who came in only had four weeks'. The sole of one of my boots came off. I complained to Lieutenant Cowles, and he told me to go to the quartermaster-sergeant. I went to Captain Simeon, and he put me off, and I really never got the boots at all. I struck him at a time when he was busy, and he put me off, and a sergeant has not much time in a camp to look after himself.
26. You really want more officers?—The N.C.O.s are not all appointed yet.
27. They are running short-handed?—Yes.
28. *Dr. Martin.*] Had the men to sleep under the tables in the hutments?—There were two or three in our huts who slept under the tables.
29. For want of room elsewhere?—Yes.
30. There was no room on the tables for all the men to have their meals?—Yes; at least a dozen for the start had to sit on their bunks or on the floor.
31. *Mr. Ferguson.*] Which of your officers would know they were sleeping under the tables and eating off the floor?—I think all the officers knew there was not enough accommodation.
32. *Dr. Martin.*] There was a scarcity of hot water for washing the dishes?—Yes.
33. We have had it said that two or three men would have to wash in the same water on account of the scarcity?—I believe at the start there was a scarcity, but I never had any difficulty in getting water myself. As far as washing the body was concerned, I used to get leave and go into town and have a bath.
34. Was it discussed amongst the men that the water was scarce?—They were told if they had any grievance they ought to complain, but I had no complaint. When the Public Works men were attending to the water and it was turned off there was a scarcity: that was the only time.
35. Did you get baths there?—We used to go down to the river twice a week. There were shower-baths in camp.
36. Any water in them?—Now and again there was. I went along about five times and they were dry every time.
37. *Mr. Ferguson.*] Have you ever found any unpleasant smell about the hutments you were living in?—There was generally a smell in the mud.