

27. *The Chairman.*] How did they ventilate the hutments you built at Simon's Town and Cape Town?—There was louver ventilation in the gables at both ends.

28. Were the sides of the buildings in South Africa of galvanized iron?—Yes, sir.

29. What sort of floors—tongued and grooved?—The construction was different altogether. The huts I put up were not built on piles at all. The climate there, of course, is different from what it is here. The ground was simply levelled off, and the frame stood right on the ground. The bottom plate rested on the ground: it was not nailed or fastened in any way. Then, instead of the flooring being put in solid throughout, it was put in in sections— in 10 ft. squares. The flooring was nailed on to the joists, and was put in in sections and fitted together. That was done, I think, for cleanliness, because the floor used to be lifted out after the men had slept, and taken outside and scrubbed and dried, and then put back into the hut.

30. Like lifting the hatches off a ship?—Yes.

31. *Mr. Ferguson.*] What sized flooring-boards had you to make these sections of?—It would be just the ordinary flooring— 6 in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in., tongued and grooved.

32. What sized doors?—Double doors—sliding doors. I think the opening was over 12 ft. It was very wide, to let in plenty of air.

33. These sections must have been very heavy. It would need a number of men to shift a 10 ft. section?—Four men would do it; a section is quite light.

34. It would be like a large mortar-board?—Exactly; the same as you see used for concreting.

35. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Did you have any actual experience of the draughtiness of these huts at Trentham?—Yes.

36. Just tell the Commission what it was?—I slept there for four weeks—over four weeks.

37. *The Chairman.*] Which—was it No. 38?—I could not tell you the number. I slept in the end one. It perhaps got a little more wind than some of the others.

38. *Mr. Skerrett.*] What was your experience?—We could not burn a candle at all some nights. There were three hanging lamps in this hut that we were sleeping in, and on windy nights the wind got at the light and the glass became so smoky that we could not see. A candle would burn, but it would burn away so quickly that it was nearly useless. When the draught is as bad as that I think it is too much to sleep in.

39. What was the nature of the timber of which the huts were built: was it seasoned or unseasoned?—As green as possible.

40. You are satisfied about that?—Yes, absolutely.

41. Does that apply to the flooring?—Some of the first of the flooring, I suppose, when they had a choice, was fairly dry; but after that a lot of it was not.

42. What was the nature of the construction of the roof at Trentham?—I think the construction was very bad.

43. *Mr. Ferguson.*] How was it bad?—From a builder's point of view it is a very weak roof. For one thing, there is a collar-tie high up: instead of having a proper tie-beam they have a collar-tie higher up.

44. *Mr. Skerrett.*] I understand that your complaint as to the roof relates really to the stability of its construction?—Quite so.

45. Have you heard of anything which suggests that the roof of the hutments proved, in point of fact, to be unsuitable or insufficient?—They have not had time to show.

46. What do you say about the wall-height?—It is far too low.

47. What are they?—7 ft. high on the outside. Then the ventilation part brings it up to about 7 ft. 10 in.

48. You think that too low?—Yes.

49. *The Chairman.*] What were the South African hutments in height?—The walls were 10 ft.

50. *Mr. Skerrett.*] We know that the Trentham Regiment came into camp on Saturday, the 29th May?—Yes.

51. Were you there then?—Yes, I was working on the Saturday afternoon when they came in.

52. How many huts had been completed then?—Three rows—forty-two; but they were not finished.

53. Forty-two hutments were partly erected?—I think one line had only thirteen: that would make forty-one.

54. Had the majority of these forty-one hutments their windows in?—Yes, the majority. There were about seven that had not, on that Saturday.

55. Did you have the frames and sashes on the job?—Yes.

56. But they had not been fitted?—No. There were, I think, two thousand men came in on the Saturday afternoon.

57. *Mr. Ferguson.*] We had it that there were sixteen hundred came in on the first day?—There were a number put into huts that had no windows at all. These frames and sashes had been on the job, to my knowledge, for over a week, and why they were not fitted in I do not know.

58. *Mr. Skerrett.*] In your opinion, are these hutments too close together, or is there any objection to their position relative to one another?—I think they would have been all right if they had been put further apart. There is a tremendous lot of roof-space, and in wet weather the water pours down there in between the huts: it never was dry. It was all wet ground, and the water never got away. There was no drainage at all.

59. *Mr. Ferguson.*] There was not enough space for it to filter away?—No.

60. *The Chairman.*] Have these huts gutters round them?—No.

61. The rain simply streams on to the ground?—It just goes on to the ground on each side in the narrow space. If it went the other way there, where there is plenty of room, it would not matter so much; but with the way they have them arranged, with this small alleyway between, the roof-water simply runs into the narrow space.