

62. *Mr. Ferguson.*] What distance is there between the huts?—I have never measured: I suppose it is one and a half times the height.

63. About 10 ft. 6 in. ?—Yes, more than that. I should say, about 12 ft.

*Dr. Frengley:* It is 20 ft., sir. The height up to the ridge is 13 ft. 6 in. One and a half times that would be 20 ft.

*Witness:* It would not leave 20 ft. clear in between the iron, because the roof-iron projects over the walls about 18 in. on each side: that would take off 3 ft.

64. *Mr. Skerrett.*] You know these huts are built double—that is to say, there is a partition dividing the hut into two?—Yes.

65. What have you to say with regard to that?—I do not think it is a very good plan. I think it would have been far better if they had been single, with the ventilation in the gables, instead of through an open space at both sides.

66. I gather from what you have said that you would have ventilated these huts by louvres in the gables?—Yes, sir; that would have taken up all the bad air.

67. About conveniences: where did you carpenters wash?—Just outside the shed. We had a temporary place, and paraffin-tins. I think there were about a dozen paraffin-tins cut in half.

68. How many of you were there?—There were about a hundred and twenty men engaged on the work.

69. When the troops arrived, what happened to your washing-places?—At our end of the encampment they had no place to wash, and the result was that I suppose over a thousand men were rushing for our tins to wash in of a morning. Not only that, but these tins were used at night by the carpenters very often. I have seen it myself. Most men want to keep themselves clean, and they washed their bodies in the dark, and in the morning they were used by the men for washing their faces in. Then when the troops came up they rushed for these tins and used them for washing. This was only for a few days. Then after that they came out after breakfast-time and washed their plates and cups in the same tins, without hot water. It was not very sweet. I have seen these tins being used at night-time by the men for washing their feet. For three or four days it was very nasty with two or three hundred men scrambling for these tins to wash their plates and things in.

70. Were any urinals arranged for the men that you saw?—At our end we had a urinal erected just for Public Works men. I suppose it would accommodate about four men. After the 29th, when these men came in, they used it, just the same as they did the tins. There were hundreds of them trying to scramble in early in the morning. When they got up it was dark, and they all had to scramble out to get to physical drill, and they all made a rush for this. I have seen hundreds of them round there when they were rushing out in the morning.

71. You cannot say from your personal observation as to whether more than fifty men were put into each compartment?—There must have been a lot more than that. There were three tables, and they are supposed to take, I believe, fifty men. There used to be a lot more sitting about on the floor. I have heard the men who have come into our hut at night-time speak about being overcrowded. I have heard of as many as seventy men being put into the huts. I do not say that that lasted for long.

72. I suppose a very large quantity of timber was required for the erection of these hutments?—Yes.

73. Do you know where the Government purchased it from?—I have no idea.

74. You do not know whether they put up a special mill for the purpose of getting it?—That I could not say. They had a small saw on the job—a saw for cutting collar ties and so on.

75. How was this timber delivered on the ground: did they have a railway-siding?—No. I do not know why they did not. I think it would have been the making of the place if they had put a siding in first of all—right into the camp. It would have saved everything—sickness too, I believe. It would have prevented the mud; they could have brought in ballast from Belmont. They have even a crusher a few miles down the line; they have every facility for bringing in train-loads of ballast. They could have put that down first of all. Then they could have brought in the timber and put on the clean ballast, and it would have been a different job altogether.

76. *Mr. Gray.*] You were some five weeks there?—Yes.

77. You left before the huts were finished—they are not finished yet: why did you leave?—Because I was told to go.

78. Who told you?—The foreman.

79. What is his name?—Wilton.

80. What reason did he give for discharging you?—None at all. I know the reason why.

81. But he did not give any reason to you?—No.

82. He discharged you?—Yes.

83. When was that?—I think, on the 15th or 16th June.

84. Who was in charge of the construction of the huts?—There were two men out there.

85. Was Mr. Louch?—No. I do not know him personally. Mr. Seddon was the overseer there.

86. Whose duty was it to pass the timber?—That I could not say.

87. Do you not know?—Pass it in what way?

88. To approve of it—to see it was suitable?—That I could not say.

89. You say very distinctly that the timber was as green as possible?—Yes, not seasoned at all.

90. All the carpenters and those who had to do with the erection of the huts could see that themselves, I suppose?—Yes. You very seldom do put seasoned timber in—

91. But this was as green as possible?—Damp.

92. What do you think is the size of these buildings?—142 ft. long, I think, by something like 22 ft. span.

93. The draught, in your opinion, was excessive?—Yes.