

SATURDAY, 31ST JULY, 1915.

JOHN CONNOR sworn and examined. (No. 63.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you ?—A private in the "A" Company, 2nd Battalion, Trentham Regiment.

2. When did you come in ?—On the 29th May.

3. And you have been here ever since ?—Except when I was in the hospital.

4. What were you before you came into camp ?—I was in the Railways.

5. What is the history since you have been in camp ?—I came into camp on the 29th May, arriving about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

6. Was it a wet or fine day ?—It had been raining very heavily, and was very muddy. Towards the night the weather cleared and it commenced to freeze. After being sorted out I was placed first of all in the 1st Battalion, and we were brought into camp to get our kits from the Camp Quartermaster. From what I could see they did not seem to be prepared for us. We marched round once and the Major asked us where we were from. Several different names were called out—such as Manawatu, Wanganui, Palmerston, and so forth—and then we were told to march back somewhere else. After having tea we went round to get our kits. I waited somewhere in the vicinity of three hours, and the officers drummed into us thoroughly to be sure to get this and that—two shirts, two singlets, two pairs of underpants, one pair of boots, two pairs of socks, and other items which I forget.

7. You had that drummed into you before you went to get the things ?—Yes.

8. You knew what you ought to receive ?—Yes, and on getting round there was evidently insufficient underclothing. We were only supplied with one set. I do not know whether it was regular to give two for the start or not, but about three weeks afterwards we got the second set from our company quartermaster. In getting our clothes the Quartermaster could see us pretty well pushed, and I did not have much time to examine mine. I believe if I had stopped I would have been fired out. Every one was waiting, and several complained that they had missed this and missed that. We could not very well expect anything else in the confusion.

9. How was the place lit—with a hurricane-lamp ?—I did not notice. I managed to scramble all my things together.

10. About 11 o'clock you got your things ?—Yes. I was one of the last of our body to get my clothes, and then I found my hut and went into it.

11. What number ?—I could not tell you.

12. The point is that the Quartermaster and his staff did not seem to prepare for you on arrival, and you think there was an undue length of time occupied in giving out the supplies ?—Yes.

13. You personally did not suffer any inconvenience—you got what you ought to have got ?—Except my second issue of underclothing. I do not know whether we were to get it then. Evidently there was a shortage that night, and they only supplied the one. I also bought a palliasse for 2s.

14. You were given straw ?—Yes.

15. *Mr. Ferguson.*] From whom did you buy the scrim for the palliasse ?—I could not say whom it was bought from.

16. Was it in the same building you paid the money for it ?—Yes in the same building; it appeared to be near the Camp Quartermaster's stores.

17. Was that at the canteen ?—I do not know whether it was the canteen then. The place was strange to me.

18. *The Chairman.*] You bought it where everybody else bought it ?—Yes.

19. Was it from a man in uniform that you bought it ?—I could not say; I did not notice. Then for a week we did nothing but fatigue work—laying down roads. The weather was happily fine, and gave us a good start, and the place dried up very well. We were able to get on laying down the roads, and consequently when it did rain again it was not so bad.

20. The week's work had made an improvement ?—Yes. In our hutment we were overcrowded, but not while I was in the 1st Battalion.

21. How many had you in it ?—I could not say exactly, but I do not think there were more than fifty; but that was only in one.

22. You mean others had more than fifty ?—Yes.

23. You know that of your own knowledge ?—Yes. When I went over to the 2nd Battalion the whole platoon was there, and that is seventy-odd men. That was hut No. 69.

24. When you speak of hut 69, you know they are divided into two: you mean one division was occupied by seventy men ?—Yes; each division is numbered.

25. Each end has got a different number ?—Yes.

26. You were in one division with seventy men ?—In the first place I was not overcrowded, but after being separated from my mates I put in to be transferred to the 2nd Battalion. I was shifted over there, and it was very much overcrowded; and in many of the huts I noticed they were not finished—there were no doors and no windows.

27. And were they occupied ?—Yes. I shifted into hut No. 69, and they had just had the doors and windows put in when I shifted over. That was about a fortnight after. The shelves were not put up then; but that did not matter, because, as far as I could see, we were never allowed to put anything on them.

28. What were they put there for ?—I do not know. When we got the web equipment we were able to put them on.

29. You put boots and all sorts of things on them now ?—But that was not the case then. I had my brass-polish, and I was never allowed to put that on. I had to hide it at the back of my palliasse.

30. What was the reason of not occupying the shelves ?—I do not know of any reason.