

150. There is another statement he made. He said, "It is considered very wrong for the men to sleep on the floor, the reason being that the blankets get contaminated with the mud and dust from the boots and other germs on the floor. The blankets get overlapping the straw." What is the practice with regard to sleeping on the floor so far as your experience has gone?—In a tent?

151. No, in a hut. Do you generally have a floor to sleep on if you have a hut?—If the hut is boarded you sleep on the floor. If it is ground floor you sleep on a waterproof sheet, which you use the same as you would in a tent.

152. But I am asking you if it is the practice when huts are used to use the floor for beds?—No.

153. There is usually a bunk?—A stretcher.

154. Why were they not got in this case?—Well, I did not think they were necessary from my personal view. You have got a mattress and straw and a waterproof sheet. Stretchers are preferable in a way—they are more comfortable, and raise you off the ground; but, personally, I did not think they were necessary for the time the men were remaining there.

155. You say you saw the tents in position: can you say what is the space between each tent in point of feet or inches?—No. The passages are about 10 ft., sufficient for the right-of-ways between the companies. It is usual that the pegs should be approaching each other at a workable distance. From pole to pole they would be roughly about 24 ft.

156. But the space between each row would be about 10 ft. from the outer side of one to the outer side of the other?—It would run from 8 ft. to 10 ft. The outside pegs are almost meeting.

157. Is that the usual distance to put tents apart?—It is a fair distance. They are very often interlocked, the tent-pegs being over the others.

158. That is where you are pushed for room, but you would not suggest that in the case of a continuous camp?—Oh, no.

159. It was suggested the tents were too close together: what have you to say to that?—I do not think they were. We had to consider also the conserving of space for parade-grounds, and when you have a large number of men the further you spread your camp the more complaints you have of the food reaching the tents cold, and I think the space between the tents was quite suited to the climate and the position.

160. The point was to concentrate the men as much as possible?—Yes.

161. You have had experience elsewhere: have you seen semi-permanent camps where the tents used were as close together as they were at Trentham?—Yes.

162. You have seen that in South Africa, possibly?—We seldom had tents all the year round there; but if you went down to the Territorial training-camps at Aldershot you would find them very close—closer together than they are at Trentham.

163. But they would only be there for a short period?—They occupied the ground and camp-stands for a considerable time, because fresh batches of men are going in.

164. Then it is suggested that the site of the tents was not changed frequently. Is it the practice in camps to change the site of the tents at intervals?—Oh, yes.

165. Do you know whether that was done at Trentham?—No: it would not be done for the early ones because there would not be the space to do it. There was a shift took place in which the ground opposite was occupied as new ground which had not been occupied by tents.

166. What I mean is not shifting the whole camp to new ground, but shifting the tents into the adjoining space which had previously been a passage. Was anything of that sort done at Trentham?—I could not say.

167. At any rate, you did not order anything of that kind to be done?—No.

168. May we also take it that there was no shifting of the area occupied by the tents—of the whole collective body of tents to new ground except on the one occasion?—That is the only shift I remember.

169. Why was that shift made?—Well, I think it was more to separate the unit than as a matter of necessity.

170. Not for sanitary purposes?—It might have been, but I could not say, except I know it was to separate the units.

171. Who would have the ordering of a matter of that sort?—The Camp Commandant.

172. Not you?—No.

173. Is it the practice in military camps where the accommodation is tents to shift the collective body of tents on to new ground from time to time?—Yes.

174. How often do you think the whole area should be shifted in that way?—Well, it would be left purely to the discretion of the officer commanding the camp.

175. It would not come under your supervision?—No. The officer commanding the camp, in conference with his medical and sanitary authorities, would have to decide that. It would be obviously a nuisance to everybody if the camp was to be shifted every second day.

176. But why should nuisance enter into the question if it was the right thing?—Well, if it was not necessary to shift it, one would not think of shifting it at all just because it was laid down that it should be shifted. No general would listen to it if it was not necessary. Shifting seven thousand men is a difficulty.

177. *Mr. Ferguson.* You might shift a camp from dry ground to muddy ground?—Yes. I would never dream of it, and no Medical Officer would insist on my shifting in wet, dirty, muddy weather to a new site which was just as wet though not so muddy. A tent makes its own safe piece of ground which might have mud outside around it ankle-deep at times. Trentham was an instance, and other camps also; but to merely shift tents because there is mud about outside would be almost suicidal while you have dry ground inside.