

259. Do you see any objection yourself to the men sleeping on the floor?—No, I do not see any objection.

260. *The Chairman.*] Practically a straw mattress?—Yes, you have a mattress.

261. *Mr. Gray.*] You yourself, I suppose, have slept in tents?—Yes, and on the floors; and I have been three nights on a muddy track, and it was considered lucky to have, along with two other officers, a sheet of galvanized iron to put on top of the mud as a mattress.

262. You slept soundly, did you?—Yes.

263. Do you consider from what you have heard that putting fifty men in a hut would be putting too many men in a hut of that description?—My personal opinion is that it is not the huts. I still think they can take fifty men, and have their meals in them too.

264. We have heard something about removing the tents from time to time, and Dr. de Lautour gave some evidence upon the subject. Did he communicate with you at all?—I have not had any communication with Dr. de Lautour for years.

265. You have been to Aldershot?—Yes.

266. And also seen the large military camps in South Africa?—Yes.

267. Was the practice at Aldershot or South Africa to put the tents as close as they were at Trentham?—Quite.

268. *The Chairman.*] How many men in a tent at Aldershot, as a rule?—They ran up to twelve.

269. You had eight at Trentham?—Yes; a military tent for sleeping-accommodation will find accommodation for eighteen. I have slept in a tent with nineteen. An Indian pattern service tent, of which we are shortly to have some, is 16 by 20. It is for sixteen men on service, and for eight men in peace-time and warm weather.

270. That is in a hot climate?—Yes.

271. *Mr. Gray.*] It has been suggested that the proper practice is to shift the whole area of the tents on to new ground. In your experience have you found that the practice was to shift every tent on to a new piece of ground periodically?—No, I have not. When we have small camps they shift them about, but it is generally with a view to operations.

272. You said, I think, that it would be suicidal to shift tents at Trentham from their dry site to other ground in wet weather?—Yes.

273. Then the shifting would be more for dry weather than for winter weather?—Yes; no one would dream of shifting from one place to another in wet weather.

274. Have you seen the diggers' tents in Otago?—Yes.

275. Do they ever shift their tents?—Not unless they were flooded out with the river rising. You have only to consider the railway tents and huts, in which wives and families are brought up.

276. You do not hear of any outbreaks of disease amongst the diggers?—No; they seem to keep that and bring it to Trentham when they come from those places.

277. You spoke as if you were and still are short-handed?—Yes.

278. The best men and the most trained men, I suppose, go with the earliest reinforcements?—We have still got excellent men, the best available men, who have to go in turn of selection.

279. And that involves the process of training others to come on to fill their places?—Yes.

280. Do you think proper allowance has been made by the public for the new conditions?—The public have not given any allowance for those things.

281. You are working under new conditions?—Yes; and I have often been inclined to wonder why there are so many people in New Zealand and so many people in influential positions in Wellington who do not seem to appreciate that we are under a war emergency. They seem to think that everything is going on as it was before. They do not seem to have the slightest idea of the work and energy that is entailed night and day by the manufacturers—not alone those confined to the military and medical work, but all the manufacturers have been touched—the shipping people, the transport people, and every one coming in touch with this emergency have to work night and day.

282. I understand that all persons connected with the war operations, such as supplies, are working at high pressure?—They are.

283. And under a condition of things of which we have had no previous experience?—No, no previous experience whatever, and no fault or blame attachable to any one or any Administration in the past. It catches us at a time when we are what you may call half-way through with the reorganizing and working-out of the military Forces of New Zealand. In order to carry the Defence Forces of this country to the stage it is in—to be able to do what has been done, not with the object of meeting this emergency, but to be able in the event of an emergency arising that we would be able to defend this country, we had really to neglect an important side of army administration or army-making, and that is what is called the ordnance and medical side. We had to devote our energies to bringing trained officers for the actual field training and placing the men in the firing-line and maintaining them in supply. That includes the Army Service Corps. We had trained officers that we brought from Home for that purpose, and all our available votes have been to meet that, and quite rightly so in a way, for the medical service and ordnance service for home defence until we are quite capable of meeting it. Then we had to face an emergency which calls for us to send a division of troops and more—because that is what it amounts to now, as there are something like twenty-five thousand we have here training and those away—to go abroad, and we found the want of the same amount of attention and experienced organization being brought to bear upon those two other sides, and most important sides. By “*ordnance*” I mean production of armaments and equipment, everything that goes to keep an army on the field, and with that department the arrangements with manufacturing concerns for the supply of all those things. This emergency found us semi-prepared in that respect.