

The social hospitality, both public and private, extended to the Colonial troops during their stay in England was most splendid and generous. The invitations received by the Colonial troops were so numerous that it was impossible for them to avail themselves of all. Facilities were afforded them for seeing all public places of interest. The theatres were nearly all free to them, and there seemed to be a general desire on the part of the people in London and other parts of England to make the stay of the Colonial troops most thoroughly enjoyable and happy. I feel sure that the Colonial troops will ever gratefully remember the kindness of the English people to them.

One of the most enjoyable treats the New Zealand Contingent had was a river picnic on the Thames, to beyond Henley, given them by the Hon. W. P. Reeves, the Agent-General for New Zealand.

A number of the Colonial troops were invited to visit Scarborough, and went, including twenty-eight of the New Zealand Contingent. These Colonial troops were met by the Mayor and Corporation there, and liberally entertained. The trip, which occupied three days, was greatly enjoyed. A representative number of each of the Colonial contingents visited Croydon by invitation. They were received by the Mayor and Corporation there, and had a most enjoyable time.

Another great treat provided for the Colonial troops was a second visit to Portsmouth, a few days after the naval review, when they were shown all over the dockyard, taken on board some of the fleet, and had a really good day.

They were also invited to and attended the dinner at the Hotel Cecil promoted by gentlemen in London interested in the trade of New Zealand.

The members of the New Zealand Contingent attended divine service at St. Paul's Cathedral, by invitation of the Archdeacon of London, on the evening of Sunday, the 4th July, seats being specially reserved for the officers and men. The Most Reverend the Primate of New Zealand preached the sermon.

I have mentioned above only a few out of the very great many invitations given to the New Zealand Contingent in common with the other Colonial troops.

All the Colonial troops seemed to suffer very much from severe colds during their stay in London. There was a very sudden and great fall in the temperature shortly after our arrival in London, and the Contingent suffered from colds in consequence. During our stay there were generally from three to five men of the Contingent in hospital in Chelsea Barracks.

The Right Hon. Mr. Seddon took great interest in the New Zealand Contingent during their stay in London. He visited them at Chelsea Barracks several times, and was in frequent communication with me as to their welfare and entertainment. With Mrs. Seddon he saw the Contingent off from Fenchurch Street Station, where he was pleased to express to the Contingent, on behalf of the Government of New Zealand, great satisfaction with the manner in which the Contingent had performed their work and conducted themselves in England. He also complimented them upon the good impression they had made there.

I desire to add that the Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, also attended at Fenchurch Street Station to say farewell to the Contingent. Both the Agent-General and his officials were most attentive to whatever was required in connection with the Contingent, and were most anxious and ready to do whatever they could.

The New Zealand Contingent left Chelsea Barracks at 9.30 a.m. on the 22nd July last on their return journey to New Zealand. Prior to their departure they were addressed by Colonel Ivor Herbert, of the Grenadier Guards, who expressed the pleasure it had been to have had the New Zealand Contingent in England, and wishing them a safe and pleasant voyage home. Headed by the drums and fifes of the Grenadier Guards, the Contingent left Chelsea Barracks for Sloan Square, and thence proceeded by underground railway to Mark Lane. The drums and fifes played them to Fenchurch Street Station, where a large crowd of people had assembled, who loudly cheered the Contingent on departure. The band played "Auld Lang Syne" as the train moved off. The Contingent embarked on the R.M.S. "Ruahine" at Gravesend, and sailed for New Zealand, *via* Plymouth, about 2 p.m. on the 22nd July.

I have much pleasure in reporting that the Agent-General for New Zealand made arrangements with the New Zealand Shipping Company whereby the Contingent have been victualled on the return voyage according to second-class passengers' scale, with improved attendance. Owing to there being fourteen men less in number than on the homeward voyage, there has been more room in the Contingent's quarters, the berths being differently arranged, and altogether the arrangements have been most satisfactory.

The captain and officers and surgeon of the "Ruahine," both on the homeward and outward voyages, were most attentive, doing all they could for the wants and comfort of the Contingent.

On the outward voyage the "Ruahine" called at Santa Cruz, Capetown, and Hobart. The voyage was a pleasant one, and nothing of any particular moment happened at sea. The Contingent were drilled once daily, and attended church parade on Sundays between Plymouth and Capetown. Since then, owing to rough and cold weather, they only paraded on Sundays, and for kit inspection. Drill was had each day, and church parade on Sunday, between Hobart and New Zealand.

At Hobart the staff officers of the Southern Tasmanian Volunteers met the R.M.S. "Ruahine" some distance from the wharf in a steam-launch. At the wharf the Commandant of the Tasmanian Volunteer Force came on board and welcomed the Contingent to Hobart. At my request he inspected the Contingent, and expressed himself as very much pleased with their smart appearance and physique. Headed by the Volunteer band, the Contingent marched to the Town Hall, where they were welcomed by his Worship the Mayor of Hobart and the City Councillors, the Acting-Premier of Tasmania and the Hon. the Minister of Lands being also present. After some refreshment to the Contingent the Mayor invited them to a smoke concert in the Town Hall at 8 p.m., which they attended, and which was a great success. The Contingent were most kindly entertained at Hobart, which port was left at 6.30 a.m. on Saturday, the 4th instant.