

92. What was the condition with regard to mud in the camp, on the flat?—The day I had to parade with the battalion, to meet Colonel Penton, I went by a circuitous path with a view of keeping myself clean, but when I got down I had to say good-bye to cleanliness. I was not fit to be seen afterwards.

93. What is your opinion of Newtown Park as a camp for mounted men at that time of the year?—That it is absolutely unfit for it. If the horses had been put on the hills and the men camped on the flat it would have been a great deal better; but even then I do not think it would be a fit place for men to sleep in. After the companies had gone to Christchurch, I told the remaining officers and men that they could all go off the flat on to the hills, as there were plenty of picket-lines, but to my surprise only about half of them did so. The others remained there because they were too lazy to move, and I considered it a shame to allow the horses to remain there. With regard to the forage, one day it was reported to me that there was none in camp except six bags of bran. I did not know who the contractor for the forage was, so I went to the telephone-tent and rang up the Defence Storekeeper, Mr. O'Sullivan, and asked him to ring up the contractor and tell him to send out hay, oats, and chaff for a hundred and fifty horses, to last from that day (Friday) until the Sunday morning. I told him to ring me up in ten minutes to let me know what he had done. That forage was ordered at about 10 o'clock in the morning, but it did not arrive until it was getting dark that day—about half-past 4 o'clock—and one of the officers in camp went out and bought forage and sent it out to his company.

94. Are you aware whether many of the men had their meals out of camp?—On the day I mentioned as having had some bread and butter in one of the men's tents there were only two men there, and there were very few men in any of the tents of the company. I think the rest of the company were out of camp. The men I had my food with were table orderlies.

95. You have been in a good many camps?—Yes, over the last sixteen years.

96. Looking back at the Newtown Park Camp, how does it compare with others for comfort and the feeding of officers and men?—So far as the officers were concerned I do not think there was anything to complain about, except inconvenience on account of the mud both inside and outside of the tent. The officers' mess was arranged by Colonel Sommerville, and was as good as we could have expected. The food was cooked well. I could not complain myself. I was up on the dry part of the ground.

97. Had Captain Winter anything to do with it?—I do not know.

98. What about the men?—I do not think anything I have heard about Newtown Park has been exaggerated at all. It was a shameful place to put men in during that weather.

99. You said that there was no use in breaking camp before, because there was no other place where the men could be put under cover in Wellington at the time. Could not provision have been made in the Drillshed or the Skating Rink: those places would hold a good number of men, would they not?—I suppose so.

100. Were you at the Feilding Camp?—Yes.

101. Did not the men go into the churches there?—I believe they did. The mounted men remained in camp, but I believe the infantry went into the schools and churches. I believe that Mr. Bond, who has a school near Newtown Park, offered to put his school at the disposal of the men; but it was no good the men going there if they had to go through the mud in the camp for their food. Nor could they go away and leave their horses in camp.

Private PATRICK SHEEHAN examined. (No. 39.)

102. *The Chairman.*] What corps do you belong to?—The Wairoa Mounted Rifles.

103. Were you in camp with your corps at Newtown Park in June last?—Yes.

104. What day did you go in?—On the Thursday or Friday. I could not say exactly, but I went in with the rest of the company.

105. Captain Howie is your commander?—Yes.

106. Had you plenty of tent room?—There were eight men in some tents; the rest had nine men.

107. Where were you camped?—On the flat until it got too muddy, and then we shifted.

108. When did you shift?—The evening before we left for Christchurch, or the evening before that; I would not be certain.

109. You left for Christchurch on the Thursday?—I am not certain myself.

110. Had you plenty of straw in your tents?—It was not bad until it got wet, when we started putting it out, and there was not much left at the finish.

111. Was there much mud in your tent?—No, not much.

112. Had you any water there?—Yes, we had water.

113. Had you any waterproof sheets?—We had none in our tent.

114. What were your rations like? What about the meat?—It would have been right enough if properly cooked, but we generally got it about raw.

115. On how many days did that happen?—I never had any that was good all the time I was there. I had more than half of my food in town. I used to ask for leave to do so.

116. When did you start to do that?—The day after we came in I went out for dinner. We got into camp at about half-past 11, and a lot of us asked for leave to go out for dinner.

117. Had you most of your meals out of camp?—I think I had two-thirds of my meals out.

118. Did you sleep in camp?—Yes, all the time.

119. What was the bread that you had like?—Sometimes it was all right, but it was sometimes stale.

120. How about the butter?—That was all right.

121. Had you any vegetables?—We had potatoes, but they were a bit hard at times.

122. What is your occupation?—Farmer.