

there were four or five dogs on the deck, who simply walked over it and made water on it. As for the potatoes, they were mostly in cases. They took them out and put them in the boiler and never washed them or peeled them. I might also say I saw rice and apples served out to the North Island mess, and they were swarming with maggots. The meat we got was mostly boiled mutton. It was put into the water, but was not boiled properly, and most of it was thrown away into the sea. That was apparently because the men refused to eat it. As for the tea, it was boiled in the same boiler as the meat. The meat was just taken out and the boiler filled up again and the tea boiled in it. As for complaints, I do not think there was a day there was not a complaint about the meals until the last, when the men got fairly disgusted and gave up complaining. I think that is all I have to say.

734. Have you any complaint to make about the water?—I have to complain that the water was dealt out in the morning for about two hours—from 6 to 8 o'clock, I think. I know that on several days men could not wash, and we could never get any water until two or three days before we landed.

735. Was it only served out between 6 and 8 o'clock?—I will not say exactly the time. It might be between half-past 5 and half-past 8. There were several mornings when it was turned off before the men could wash. There were five hundred men to wash in three wash-houses, and about eight or twelve bowls in each place; but as for washing clothes we never got any water until two or three days before we landed.

736. Anything about the accommodation?—As for the accommodation, I may say that in the place where we of the South Island Battalion were there were a hundred and fifty men too many. It was very rough weather coming over, and the men had to stop below, and they could not open the portholes. They were the chief part of the day there, and had their meals there. There was no deck to go up on. The consequence was we were very nearly suffocated. I do not think there were many men who went to sleep before an early hour in the morning. A lot of men slept on the floor. There was no room to hang the hammocks. The consequence was the men who were in hammocks were spitting on the men below. I believe there would not have been so much sickness if there was room to take exercise. If you went on deck you had to stand generally in one place. It was very cold weather, and the men had no room to go about. Non-commissioned officers had a part of the officers' promenade deck. I do not know exactly how long it was, but it was only a little corner of it. I think the officers might have made it a lot more convenient for the men if they had given one side to the men. It was from 30 to 40 yards along the ship, and they might have given the men one side. On one particular night there was a trooper sleeping down below, and he did not feel well, and he went to the non-commissioned officers' deck, and the consequence was he was taken into the guard-room.

737. About the latrines?—As a rule, the latrines were kept pretty clean, but during one afternoon they were disgraceful. Besides that, there were men on board suffering from diseases which should have caused them to have latrines of their own, but they used ours.

738. Do you mean venereal diseases?—Yes. There was a sergeant in charge of the latrines, and I must say he did his work very well. As for the blankets, they were in a very filthy state when we got them.

739. When you say the cooking was disgraceful, what was the quality of the meat before it was cooked?—I saw meat come out of the hold black. It was mostly stew we got, and they cut it up and put it into a tin-lined basket on deck, and I picked a piece out, and others picked pieces out, and showed them to the men, and it was rotten. I happened to be passing and saw this on the deck.

740. That is one particular occasion, but generally was the meat fair or bad?—You could not call it fair. The meat was not fit for consumption.

741. Was it frozen meat?—Yes.

742. In what way was it unfit for consumption?—Well, it might have been improperly frozen; it was rotten.

743. All?—There were some of the sheep which were right enough, but as a rule the meat was black. They were in muslin bags, and if you cut the bag you could see the inside was black and mouldy.

744. And the beef?—I think it was fairly good; it looked fairly good.

745. Was this reported to the quartermaster?—When the meat came down there was a complaint nearly every day. I do not think that the meat was reported on when it came out of the hold.

746. Who took the meat from the ship's officer?—It was the ship's quartermaster who took it out of the hold; then it was taken to the butcher's shop, and from that sent to the cook's galley after it had been cut up.

747. No orderlies or others to supervise the work?—Any time I saw it it was taken out of the hold and there was a fatigue party which took it to the cook.

748. Was not the meat passed by an officer?—Not as far as I saw. Of course, it might have been passed in the butcher's shop.

749. Was not the quartermaster or the quartermaster-sergeant present at the issue of the meat?—I think the quartermaster was present when they got the meat out of the hold, and when the men went along with it he went to the galley-door.

750. Was the officer of the day there?—Yes.

751. Was not the surgeon there?—I never saw him.

752. The veterinary surgeon?—No. When the meat came up from the hold it went to the butcher's shop. The butcher's shop was about 30 yards off, and it was taken along there. It was not passed before I saw it.