

644. How often was that done in a week?—It was supposed to be done twice a week on my side of the ship.

645. Owing to the bad weather you had, it was not considered advisable to do it oftener?—No, it was not.

646. Would the timber be damp?—When it was properly squeegeed and dried with the mop there was very little dampness remaining. It takes a lot of water to soak through the hard old timber. The decks were dry when the men wanted to go to sleep at night.

647. I presume they were not washed oftener on account of the bad dampish weather?—No, they were not.

648. How did you find the ventilation down in your lower troop-deck?—We had one wind-sail, of course. It was a bit stuffy in one or two corners. I happened myself to be in one of the worst corners, but I came through it all right, and all the rest of the men at the table.

649. Would there have been room to put any more windsails down that hold?—No; I hardly think there was any more room to go down, because there was only one square cut out in the grating to allow the windsail to go down.

650. Were there any other openings which would have enabled a windsail to go down in the troop-deck?—You could have put it down, but you would have had to take the gratings off the hatchway, and I think they would have tied the bottom of it, because the draught would be too severe.

651. Did they tie the end of it?—Yes, at night.

652. Take the whole troop right through, sergeant-major, you do not think there was any cause of complaint?—Well, no. I think the only thing they wanted was some hard work.

653. Could you have done any parade work on the "Britannic"?—Well, she rolled a good deal.

654. Was there sufficient room on the deck?—I hardly think so. We could not get a great number to parade at one time.

655. Could you have taken a company at a time?—If you had divided them, sir.

656. I presume that while you were doing that the rest of the men would have had to stay below?—They could have gone along by the cooks' galley. It was always warm there.

657. Was there enough room for exercise?—They could walk up and down, but not for the number of men. The majority preferred to sit or lie down.

658. Where—down below?—No; up on deck.

659. *Colonel Davies.*] You came back in the "Tagus"?—Yes, sir.

660. Who commanded the troops on the "Tagus"?—You did, sir.

661. How did you find the discipline on the "Tagus" and the "Britannic"?—Very much the same.

662. Did you see any fault with it?—No, sir, I did not.

663. No fault with it anywhere?—No, sir.

664. Were these Australians down in your quarter?—They were in the next hold—with A and B.

665. You were not in the quarters where the Australians were?—No; I was in my own quarters.

666. Your decks were washed twice a week by Colonel Davies's order?—Yes, sir, they were.

667. In your opinion, was the "Britannic" kept as clean as the "Tagus"?—Every bit, sir.

668. Do you consider that she had good lavatory and latrine accommodation?—Well, the latrines got stopped up once or twice, but after that a party was told off to see that they were cleaned.

669. You mean in the afternoon they were in that state?—That was just before you came round on your inspection.

670. They were always clean at my inspection?—Yes, sir.

671. With regard to the ventilation, there was a part of the boat set aside for non-commissioned officers?—Yes, sir.

672. Do you remember that I used to talk to the non-commissioned officers about the ventilation?—Yes, sir.

673. Do you remember what I said at the time?—When you asked about the ventilation, yes. You asked whether they were stuffy down there, or whether they were comfortable.

674. And what did you say?—That there were no complaints, sir.

675. You think that the men who made these complaints about all sorts of things were making them without cause?—I honestly believe that those men who are making the complaints were never better treated in their lives. That is my firm opinion. The older soldiers never complained about it; they were perfectly satisfied.

MONDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1902.

Trooper MURRAY sworn and examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Maurice Murray.

2. What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

3. What squadron?—H.

4. What rank?—Trooper.

5. Were you on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

6. This Commission is sitting to inquire into any grievances which any of the men had against the food or accommodation, or the treatment by the officers or the medical staff, on board the