

Experts' report.

108. The foregoing views are confirmed by the report which, towards the conclusion of the inquiry, we learnt the Government had obtained on the 13th July from a body of medical experts as to the propriety of bringing men back to Trentham. The experts referred to were Professor Champtaloup, Drs. Herbert, Truby King, Harrison, Frengley, and Valintine, and Mr. Hurley, Government Bacteriologist. On learning of the existence of this report we telegraphed on the 10th August to Professor Champtaloup as follows:—

“Trentham Camp: Referring to experts' conjoint report, in which you concurred, and having regard to history since, particularly in view of your subsequent experience cerebro-spinal meningitis or carriers, do you still adhere to the report? We ask this of you as if you were called as a witness, as we desire to report on the fitness of the camp for the return of men for occupation.”

His reply was as follows:—

“Still adhere to report of Medical Board on which I sat *re* Trentham site, provided all conditions laid down by Board are given effect to.”

We also subpoenaed Dr. Hector, and he attended as a witness and confirmed the report in the same manner as Professor Champtaloup. We do not refer in detail to the report, but select the following as immediately relevant to our inquiry. The Board, having first answered a question as to bringing in 2,000 men, were asked “whether the camp would be available for occupation by a larger number of men than the 2,000 already mentioned by the beginning of September, or by such time as the Seventh Reinforcements may be free from infection in the outlying camps and ready to undergo further training in Trentham.”

The Board decided that there was no objection to the camp being occupied by 4,000 men, provided that the following important details were attended to:—

- (a.) The thorough disinfection of the whole camp:
- (b.) No more than thirty men should be allotted to each half-hut:
- (c.) The provision of messing-accommodation:
- (d.) The provision of stretchers:
- (e.) The improvement of the huts as regards the exclusion of draughts, &c.
- (f.) The improvement of the roads:
- (g.) The improvement of the surface drainage:
- (h.) The improvement of the sanitary arrangements, &c.

The Board specially recommended that if possible each man be allotted 600 cubic feet or its equivalent.

We may add that prior to learning the terms of this report we had arrived substantially at the same conclusions as to the conditions of continued occupation.

CHARGES OR COMPLAINTS.

109. We now advert to the various complaints or charges that in the course of the inquiry have been made against the camp and its military and medical administration “so far as such administration” (to use the words of our Commission) “relates in any manner to the health, comfort, feeding, clothing, treatment, and accommodation of the troops.”

(a.) *Overcrowded Tent Accommodation.*

Heads of criticism.

110. The charges with regard to this matter were that the tents were pitched too close together for health, that each tent was not after a time shifted to the space adjoining, and that the whole of the tents were not from time to time removed to an entirely new site. These points were especially emphasized by Dr. De Lautour on the strength of military manuals and other authorities cited by him. He estimated there were 648 men camped to the acre. Colonel Purdy contends that there were about 400 to the acre. He admits that in one line the tents were rather crowded owing to the conformation of the ground.

An engineer of the Public Works Department ascertained by measurement in different parts of the camp that there were in certain parts at the rate of eighty tents to the acre.