

4. *Medical Attention and Drugs*.—There were two Medical Officers on board, and fortunately a third joined the ship *en voyage*. The two ship's Medical Officers went down almost at once, but resumed duty at the earliest possible moment, and appear to have done everything possible. The third doctor, the nurses, and the orderlies appear to have done splendid work. The quantity of drugs on board was equal to the ordinary supply, but was not sufficient to meet the exigencies of an epidemic.

5. For the information of the public the Committee incorporates in this report the finding of the Court of Inquiry held in England. If further evidence is required it would need to be taken on the return of the men and the ship to New Zealand.

The Committee desires especially to thank Mrs. J. R. Gibbons for the trouble she has taken in collecting the evidence, and for the lucid, concise, and capable manner in which she submitted same to the Committee. The Committee desires to express its sincere sympathy with those who lost relatives.

A. S. MALCOLM, Chairman.

24th December, 1918.

FINDING OF COURT OF INQUIRY HELD IN ENGLAND.

THE Court find—

1. That the health of the troops was very good until their arrival at Sierra Leone. It is apparent that every effort was made to keep the men fit by frequent parades in the fresh air.

2. *Food*.—That the food supplied up to this date was of good quality (with the exception noted below), well cooked, well served, and that proper and sufficient arrangements were made as to its distribution. There were complaints as to the quality of the meat taken on board at Cape Town for the use of the troops, and the Officer Commanding Troops has pointed out in his report that the bread occasionally had a tendency to turn sour. It is not considered that these two matters in any way affected the health of the troops or their power of resistance to any disease, as it is apparent from the evidence that there was an abundance of other foods to supplement the bread and meat on the occasions on which they were not satisfactory.

3. *Accommodation of Troops*.—The men were quartered as follows:—

In hammocks—

Forward, 'tween-decks	..	..	..	..	..	320
Midships, main decks	..	..	..	..	..	170
Aft, 'tween decks	..	..	..	..	..	280
Sergeants', aft main deck	..	..	..	..	..	50
						— 820

In bunks—

Lower deck	..	..	..	..	..	162
Main deck	..	..	..	..	..	60
Boat deck	..	..	..	..	..	45
						— 267

1,087

The ventilation in the troop-decks containing hammocks was satisfactory during the times that the ports were opened, but was not satisfactory when the ports were closed during rough weather, at night-time, and during the period when the ships were passing through the danger-zone. The Officer Commanding Troops considered that the placing of the hammocks 16 in. apart led to overcrowding. The only ventilation supplied was by means of port-holes and windsails, the latter being quite effective in certain weather and when the ports are closed. It is recommended that electric blowers or some other recognized form of artificial ventilation be placed on all troop-decks.

The conditions of the men quartered in cabins was not satisfactory, and it is recommended that if this ship is again used for troops that these cabins be removed and hammock fittings be substituted.

It is abundantly clear from the evidence that the ship was kept clean and that every facility was given to the men to sleep on deck during the hot weather, thus materially assisting the maintenance of proper sanitation on troop-decks.

4. *Nature of Epidemic*.—The epidemic was one of purulent bronchitis, a disease with a mortality far higher than that of pneumonia, due in this instance to the symbiosis of two microbe organisms—*influenza bacilli* and *Streptococcus longus*.

5. *Origin of Epidemic*.—The infection gained entrance at Sierra Leone from contact with an epidemic there.

6. *Cause of High Mortality*.—This was due to the virulent nature of the infection, which affected a large number of men massed together on a ship where the ventilation was defective owing to the enforced closing of the ports and the absence of any form of recognized artificial ventilation. It is considered in this connection that the vaccination of the men on board, taking place as it did so soon before the epidemic arose, would have had the effect of further reducing their resisting-power, and it is recommended with reference to future drafts that the men should be vaccinated sufficiently long before embarkation to ensure them embarking in a normal state of health.

7. *Inhalation-chamber*.—The evidence shows that no attempt was made to use the inhalation-chamber. The S.M.O. in his voyage shows that one gargle parade was held on the 27th August, 1918, the second day of the epidemic. Although there is some difference of opinion as to the effectiveness of this measure as adduced by the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel McDonald and Captain Eagleton respectively, it is considered that free use should have been made of this chamber. It is recommended that full use be made of this chamber on all subsequent voyages, particularly after leaving port.