

food was served. They nearly all referred to Wynberg Hospital. The tendency of the officers' complaints was that there was a want of management. Things, in his opinion, were distinctly rough, and not such as they might reasonably expect in a place like Cape Town. There seemed, for instance, to be a scarcity of knives, and there was generally a sort of scramble for them. As regards food, etc., there was ample. He did not impute neglect to the medical men, because they had more work than they could do, and ought not to be expected to look after the housekeeper's work as well. There were no complaints that the sick and wounded were not looked after in essential matters. That the patients had not as much comfort as they might was due to the defects of the present system. He strongly favoured the appointment of a manager or steward to look after the equipment and the business and housekeeping details of the hospital, as is done in civil hospitals in England, leaving the doctors free to attend to their purely professional duties.

Colonel Harry Cooper, Commandant of the troops in the Cape Peninsula, said he had constantly visited the base hospitals. When he first came out the hospitals were admirably managed, but subsequently, when the rush of enteric patients set in, the accommodation was inadequate, and the same high standard was not maintained. Witness certainly thought the P.M.O.'s were overburdened with administrative details, and was strongly impressed with the desirability of having this work entrusted to a layman who would be responsible for the entire control and the exercise of discipline. The administrator might be a soldier or even a doctor, but he would have nothing to do with the medical part of the work. At present a great deal of the time of some of their best men was taken up with secretarial and administrative duties. He would place military hospitals on exactly the same footing as civil hospitals at home. Personally, he would like to see the whole of the nursing done by women wherever they could be properly housed.

Lieut.-Colonel O'Connor, R.A.M.C., secretary to the principal medical officer at the base, stated that during the war he had selected 166 nurses for transports and 79 for military hospitals, and as regards the whole of these they had only one trivial and two serious complaints. On one or two occasions they had to accept of the services of untrained ladies for transports and some of them did very good work, no complaint being made concerning any of them. He interviewed

every nurse and every doctor personally. With regard to the doctors he did not think they had a single complaint. In nine or ten months they had only three complaints—for intemperance. One of the men concerned was the ordinary ship's surgeon employed on a vessel used as a transport. It had struck him that the Army Medical Corps was very much undermanned, even in times of peace, alike as regards medical men, orderlies, and nurses. They used as many trained female nurses as they could get.

Recently the Commission has been visiting the hospitals in Natal and taking evidence there. The official view seems to be general satisfaction with most things, but Dr. Max Blieden, formerly civil surgeon in Fort Napier Hospital, described the condition of the wards as scandalous as to cleanliness and the prevalence of insect pests. One enteric patient in delirium ran away. He said he could not stand the bugs. There was an insufficiency of fresh milk and a chronic deficiency of clean linen. Orderlies stole stimulants which had been ordered for patients. He described the red-tapeism as ridiculous.

Colonel Stoneham, Chief Audit Officer to the Natal Field Force, mentioned complaints which had been made as to the hospital during the siege of Ladysmith. He conducted an enquiry during December and found there was a deficiency in bedsteads, bedding, tents and utensils. Sir George White did everything possible in the circumstances. The delay in obtaining stores was due to the unwieldy methods of official procedure. Owing to the faulty construction of the ditches round the tents the water entered the latter. Comforts intended for the patients were stolen, and two warrant officers were now in prison for this crime.

Colonel Johnston, P.H.O., Pietermaritzburg, corroborated the evidence regarding vermin, but stated that no other suitable buildings were available.

A staff sergeant of the Medical Corps, who refused his name, complained that the orderlies were reduced by being taken as servants to officers. He declared that, although patients died for want of stimulants and nourishment, a large quantity of food as well as stimulants were found, after the siege, locked away by a medical officer. He also alleged that hospital milk was sold to refugees.

The Commission sat at Durban on September 20th. Mr. Edmonds, Secretary of the Durban

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