

still further cut down, but in the advance from Bloemfontein on to Pretoria he was unable to get all the field hospitals and bearer companies on, and some were left standing in the streets, as the transport was not there.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, the Earl of Elgin, "Were these difficulties brought before the former Royal Commission?" Sir William Wilson said, "They were, but I do not think they saw it; they asked me question and answer, and they stuck to the charges that were made against us. You can see in my evidence, and also in the evidence of my secretary, Major Bedford—who was one of the most important witnesses—that all this was brought out."

"It was all brought out?" "Yes; he brought it out, but I do not think the Commission ever saw the significance of it."

Continuing, the witness said the framework of the regular service, upon which he had to build a system to look after an army of more than 200,000 men, was simply out of all proportion too small. The transport on the Cape side was also too small, out of all proportion. He thought the finding of the former Commission, that "The Royal Army Medical Corps was wholly insufficient in staff and equipment for such a war, and it was not so constituted as to have the means provided by which its staff could be very materially enlarged or its deficiencies promptly made good," was correct.

There was no deficiency of medical supplies; there was enough of everything in the country if it could be moved, but this was extremely difficult. It took No. 2 hospital, for instance, over two months to go to Pretoria. The equipment was in the trucks all the time. The truckage was short, but the engines were worse.

In regard to the bearer companies, they were not useful when attached to a hospital, and did as little as ever they could, but they were very good in the field. They failed in connection with any kind of work about a hospital camp. A certain number of the Royal Army Medical Corps were required to carry on the organisation of the hospitals. "The civil profession," said Sir William Wilson, "rather swamped me, especially with so many untrained orderlies. You see I got up the number of orderlies I wanted by the St. John Ambulance, and so on, and by regimental orderlies. I had my numbers, but there is no use saying they were trained, as they were not trained. I got my numbers, but except my own men these had all to be trained in South Africa during the war."

The field hospitals, said Sir William Wilson, would require a good deal of alteration. On being asked in what respect, he replied, "I think that one of the field hospitals—that is, the third field hospital—ought to have some light pattern beds. The third field hospital is what we call a divisional

hospital, and I think it might be a slower-moving hospital than the other two that are with the brigades; it should be better equipped, and I think it might have beds, and, of course, they all ought to have pyjamas. When a man comes in at present there are no clothes for him, although he may be deluged with blood, but according to the regulation there are no clothes to put him into. I remedied that very early by calling on the Red Cross to give me pyjamas, and they used to supply every one of these field hospitals with generally 100 pairs.

After a short time, the Ordnance did it for me as well; but in the first instance the Red Cross did it. I called on the Red Cross to give all the field hospitals pyjamas, and it was absolutely necessary. The men came in wounded—"dirty" was no name for them when they came in, as they were covered with lice; they had only one suit of clothes, and, never getting out of it, they were covered with lice picked up on the veldt, and it was absolutely impossible to do anything for these men lying in their own clothes. I called on the Red Cross very early in the campaign to send me pyjamas, and the Red Cross complied."

In regard to ambulances, the witness thought that the wagon called Mark V. was the best of any. They could not always be got forward. In the first advance on the Modder they were cut down from ten wagon bearer companies to two, on account of transport. That was an Army Order and all right. At Bloemfontein he could not get the wagons round in time to accompany the Army. At Pretoria he got a very useful thing which he believed saved the situation—namely, a lot of tongas from India, presented by an Indian gentleman, who sent ponies with them. They were two-wheeled, which was an objection, but the objection was more theoretical than practical. Later the witness expressed the opinion that it was impossible to make a good wagon to carry wounded men; he did not think such a thing would ever be made. The hospital trains were capital; they carried about ninety wounded men, two medical officers, nurses, cook, kitchen, and used to bring down all the serious cases from the front. They were often brought away from the battlefield in trains. As to nurses, there were any number. Of attendants the mass were not trained; it was a mistake to say they were. They were trained in the hospital out there. It was a new departure employing trained nurses in large numbers. Directly he got to the Cape Sir William Wilson said he found he must have them. He started them on his own initiative, and engaged every certificated nurse he could get out there as soon as he could get accommodation for her. One of the greatest difficulties was to get servants for them, and that was a thing which would have to be considered in the future.

The regulation lays down that each general hos-

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