

Mesopotamian Commission

Thursday 28th September 1916

Eighth Day

Members present

The Right Hon Lord George Francis Hamilton G.C.S.I.
in the Chair

The Right Hon the Earl of Donoughmore K.P.
General the Right Hon Sir Neville Gerald Lytton,
G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

Admiral Sir Cyprian Arthur George Bridge G.C.B.
Lord Hugh Cecil M.P.

Sir Archibald Williamson Bart M.P.

~~Mr. John Hodge M.P.~~

Commander Josiah C. Wedgwood M.P.

Mr. Rly. Duff, Secretary

Prevet Colonel Skipton ^{Will Chimo} ~~Chimo~~ K.C.S.I. sworn and examined

Chairman Is your rank that of General or Colonel
A I reverted to Prevet Colonel

I We have got your statement which you have prepared,
and we will take it as your evidence in chief
A If you please

[Insert Paper A.]

48-54

1

9.6.3 1916

37
8.9.16.



p.!

MESOPOTAMIA COMMISSION.



STATEMENT BY BREVET-COLONEL S. H. CLIMO, C.B., D.S.O.

48-54
10 1/2
18 1/2

109A

wounded remained till about noon 23rd November. We were then moved back about 1 mile and after dark reached a point behind the "High Wall." Here we remained night of 23rd and 24th. At 7 a.m. we started towards the ships, which were reached at 12 noon on the 24th November. From 2 p.m., 22nd November, to 12 noon 24th November I obtained from the F.A. a few mouthfuls of tinned milk twice, once at 5 p.m. on 22nd and again at 9 p.m. on 23rd, otherwise I obtained no food or treatment from the F.A. The journey on the ships from Lajj to Amara occupied from 25th November to 5th December. My wounds were dressed on 27th November for the first time, the first field dressing being then removed.

8. *Transport*.—There were some 16 steamers capable of towing barges. Of these some six or seven could not proceed above Kut on account of draught.

There were no hospital river steamers.

The lack of river transports had the following results:—

- (i) Overcrowding, which was especially trying in the hot weather and undoubtedly caused sickness and loss of efficiency.
- (ii) After a serious action river transports were used to evacuate wounded. Sooner or later this withdrawal of transports from the fighting troops was bound to render the question of subsisting the force a precarious one. Deprived of this, their only form of transport, the troops must also be deprived of their liberty to manoeuvre, as they can only carry food and ammunition for a given period.
- (iii) The absence of properly equipped hospital river steamers rendered the evacuation of wounded a comfortless proceeding. The attention and comforts which are so essential in the early stages of the wounded to ensure a speedy cure, were conspicuously wanting.

9. *Supplies, &c.*—No wire-cutters were issued to the battalion under my command, though repeatedly indented for. At the Battle of Ctesiphon the men of the brigade had to break their way through the barbed wire 40 yards from the hostile trenches as best they could.

The battalion under my command was equipped with the old-fashioned leather case for carriage of machine-gun belts. The defects of this system were pointed out and a remedy asked for by the issue of the latest pattern belt box, but without avail. The danger and defects of these leather cases are undoubted; in the present narrow trench system the leather case is useless. I was forced to get boxes made up regimentally, as it was recognised that our guns were practically useless in the field if fed from anything but the new pattern box.

10. Potatoes were unobtainable from June to November. Rations were otherwise satisfactory, except in January, 1916, when biscuits and bully beef and tea were practically the only articles one could depend on getting.

The biscuits made in Indian biscuit factories have, I should think, the minimum of sustaining power.

4155 Chairman: From your statement it appears that you were in Mesopotamia from the 8th April 1915 to the 7th February 1916 when you were invalided to India

A Yes
4156 Q And you were engaged in most of the heavy fighting during that time

A Yes, that is correct
4157 Q The general purport of your evidence I think is to the effect that the force which had to advance up the Tigris was, to use the general expression, not well found

A No, it was not well found
4158 Q The general machine-gun equipment I suppose was the equipment as laid down for India

A Yes; it was being gradually replaced by the boxes I refer to; some units had already received the belt boxes and others had not. For instance in the Brigade in which I served one regiment had the boxes and the other three battalions were equipped with the old fashioned leather carriers

4159 Q I gather from your decorations that you have seen a good deal of service; have you been on many frontier expeditions

A A good many, - three
4160 Q Should I be right in saying that the equipment was the general equipment that would be provided for a frontier expedition

A It was the equipment that had always been provided on frontier expeditions.

4161 Lord Hugh Cecil It was not larger or on a greater or more improved scale than you have been accustomed to on Frontier Expeditions

A It was exactly the same as regards the machine gun equipment

4162 Chairman The Combatant equipment generally
 A The whole Combatant equipment was exactly the same as that prescribed in the Field Service regulations for many preceding years

4163 Q You had no wire cutters though

A No, wire cutters were not part of our equipment

4164 Q I suppose the Arab Tribes have not got to wire entanglements yet

A We certainly did not know very much about them

4165 Q I do not think we need take you through the fighting part of the Expedition; we have had full evidence on that. Now as regards medical provision you had no mosquito nets

A We were ^{equipped} ~~not~~ ^{issued} with a small net which simply covered the head. It was shaped like a cone with a point at the top which was about a yard in height and possibly a yard in diameter at the base. These were in some cases taken over from British Regiments who were then reequipped with the large mosquito equipment; but that mosquito equipment was absolutely useless

4166 General Sir Neville Lytton Had it any poles

A We simply tied it up to anything; we probably cut a branch, a frond of a palm tree and stuck it in the ground at an angle and suspended the ~~cow~~ ^{cow} from the top of the stick, that was the usual method or else we tied it to a portion of the tent

4167 Q If there was a tent

A If one happened to be in a tent otherwise we used the fronds from palm trees

4168 Q It was not complete in itself

A I think it was never supposed to have a pole of any sort. I think the idea was

that

2
4169 that it was used in tents and it was tied up possibly on the tabs or tapes that exist in some tents, not in all

Chairman: And in consequence you think there was malaria which might have been prevented. I have no hesitation in saying so. I speak as a layman but one knows a good deal about malaria.

4170 Q And the mosquito nets were supplied when the fever season was over.

A When it was practically over. I have made a note that they were supplied at the end of August and the beginning of September.

4171 Commander Wedgwood The proper ones?

A The correct ones, but the fever season in Mesopotamia really commences in the middle of May and is worst in June and July.

4172 Lord Hugh Cecil What are what you call the correct ones?

A They are a square or rather an oblong net about 4 ^{feet} high 6 foot ~~in length~~ off the ground 6 ^{feet} in length and about 2 to 2 1/2 feet broad; they are perfectly oblong.

4173 Q Are they rigid?

A As regards that we furnished our own poles by again the fronds of palm trees which we could always cut down.

4174 Q Are they like a glass case rigid?

A No, they roll up into next to nothing, and in a corner you stick four poles and that braces them.

4175 Chairman Then as regards Medical equipment, would the medical equipment be below that prescribed, say for a Field Force on the North-West Frontier.

A I expect it was exactly the same. I cannot speak to that absolutely on oath, but I heard of no change from the Army Tables as they existed in India

4176 Q But the proportion of casualties to the combatant force was very much in excess in the more recent battles than it would be in fighting on the North-West Frontier

A I suppose something like twenty times greater

4177 Q As much as that

A I should think so

4178 Q Therefore the provision which might have been sufficient for a field force on the North-West Frontier was absolutely insufficient when you came to an advance up the Tigris

A Certainly

4179 Q Then apparently, - at least it is alleged - ~~that~~ there was a deficiency in every branch of medical equipment

A I can only talk as a Regimental Officer chiefly. The points that came under my own immediate notice were deficiency in mosquito nets and deficiency of quinine, and the field ambulances were overcrowded. As regards quinine the lack of ~~the former~~ ^{it} prevented our taking prophylactic measures, and with a corresponding inefficiency resulting to the force. As regards field ambulances they often accommodated from two to two-and-a-half times the number of patients they are supposed to accommodate

4180 Q What we have had in evidence is that the field ambulances were called upon to supply not only ^{the} clearing hospitals but the base or station hospital

3/ 4181 A. ~~No~~ The general hospitals

Q And you go so far as to say that because you were able to deal regimentally with a considerable number of cases instead of transferring them to the field ambulances the proportion of rifles fit for action was bigger in your regiment than in other units in the Brigade

A Yes that is so. I am referring there to the battle of Nasiriyeh which occurred at the end or almost at the end of the fever season

4182
 2 ~~Chairman~~ we have had in evidence before that ice was
 not available in river transports or hospital steamers
 a The only occasion on which I saw ice was at the battle of
 Kerona on the 31st May
 4183
 General Sir Neville Lyttelton In any quantity
 a The field ambulances had sufficient. It certainly did
 not carry the force up to Amara but we had no casualties
 from the 31st May; we only had them on that date
 4184
 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. Kerona is less than 140 miles from
 Basra

4185
 a. Yes, that of course is the reason
 Chairman: In the earliest battles both at Shiba and in the
 vicinity of the Kharkeh River the wounded were evacuated
 expeditiously and although they were not having all the comforts
 and conveniences one could have wished, they did not seriously
 suffer.

a. No, they did not.

4186 2. You were in those engagements

a. I was in the engagement at Shiba and I was on the Kharkeh
 River

4187 Lord Hugh Cecil: On the Kerona Karun

a. No, the Kharkeh River; it is beyond the ~~Kerona~~ Karun River

4188 2. It is part of that same expedition

a. Yes

4189 2. Those battles were in April and May

a. And the Shiba in April and the Kharkeh ^{River} in May

4190
 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Shiba is near Basra

a. Yes, 7 miles from Basra

4191 Chairman: Then the casualties in Ctesiphon were far in excess
 of preparation or anticipation, but as a military performance
 the evacuation of the wounded, considering the machinery
 available, was a creditable performance

a I think every thing that was done by the subordinates in
 Mesopotamia was creditable to them. They did the very best
 they

4192 Q They could with the material at hand
2 But after Otephon it was necessary to evacuate the wounded
very quickly and they had to be put into any transport

A Yes, otherwise they would have been captured
4193 2. And possibly tortured by the Arabs

A Yes
4194 2. And as a mere military or physical performance the evacuation
was creditable although the wounded suffered very much
A. They suffered very much. The evacuation was ^{very} creditable as
carried out by those on the spot with the material at hand

4195 2 In your own experience how many days elapsed before your
wounds were dressed

A Five days before they were re-dressed
4196 Lord Hugh Cecil: You were wounded on the 22nd

A Yes
4197 2. And your wounds were not dressed till the 27th

A My wounds were re-dressed on the 27th
4198 2. You did not have any medical dressing by a Medical Officer
before the 27th

A. I had my first field dressings put on on the field by comrades
on the 22nd and they were removed on the 27th by the Officers
in Charge of the Clearing Hospital on board the river steamer

4199 Commander Woodford: Where were you shot
A Through the right foot and the left leg, and a graze on my cheek

4200 Chrismann: You gave evidence I think before the Vincent-Bingley
Commission

A No, I was not in Mesopotamia. I had left before they had arrived there
4201 2 But you put in a written statement
A Yes I did

4202 2 And your written statement is in accordance with your ~~written~~
statement that ^{here} the lower medical officials and so on did all that
was possible under the very difficult circumstances with which
they had to contend and the general ^{or} inefficiency of supplies
A Yes that is so

4

4203 Q. In the evidence given before the Vincent Bingley Commission there is a statement made by Colonel Donovan
A. Yes I know him

4204 Q. What was Colonel Donovan's position
A. Colonel Donovan was Commander of the ^{1st} Field Ambulance, I think No 1 Field Ambulance; he was in the 6th Division, and I was in the 12th but he served under me on two occasions, that is how I came to know him. He was commanding No 1 Field Ambulance.

4205 Q. And you gave him an order that he need not obey the Assistant Director of Medical Services if he thought the orders given were inappropriate and unsuitable, and you would hold him harmless.
A. I would take the responsibility. I cannot recollect exactly on what point it was, but I do recollect saying to him that if any orders he received from the Assistant Director of Medical Services might conflict with the situation, he was to act on his own initiative and I would take all responsibility

4206 Q. And you did that because you found him a capable man
A. I found him a very willing and a very able man, a rather notable man but ^{otherwise} always out to do his very best for the wounded. That was his one chief thought

4207 Q. I have come across his statement. Am I right in supposing that amongst the higher Medical officials there was a good deal of red tape
A. On oath I could not swear to that because I should like to point out as explanatory, that I commanded the 17th Brigade during the operations from Kurna up to Amara only for about 10 days. I was put there just for the operations; and I practically knew nothing of the administrative services of the Division; so that I could not speak as to what class of men they were; whether they were for practical work or whether they were for sticking too closely to the letter of the law and the regulations. I know that was Colonel Donovan's feeling, but you can hardly take that as evidence from me

4208

General Sir Neville Lytton: He carried out your wishes

A. He carried out my wishes exactly

4209 2. On your responsibility

A. Yes

4210 2. He did not hesitate to do so

A. No

4211 Chairman: I might just read this. This is from the diary of Colonel Donovick "June 2. 10 am. Received orders from ~~A~~ D.M.S to get sick and equipment into bellums and bring them across to right bank. It was impossible to comply with this order as there were but few bellums available, and ~~they~~ a cross passage with overloaded bellums with a 5 mile tide running would in all probability have resulted in many being drowned. As a ~~showman~~ ^{Skunnaal} (a gale of wind) was blowing at the time I had to refuse to obey his order. 10.45 ~~the~~ Brigade Commander Brigadier General Hill Clinio came to see me relative to the condition of affairs. He told me as regards further orders of the A.D.M.S. I was to obey them or not just as I considered ~~it~~ advisable. If I did not consider them to be for the benefit of ~~the~~ sick and efficiency I had his authority to refuse to obey them in his name"

A. I certainly gave him instructions that he was to act on his own and I should always uphold him if his action was wise and certainly at ~~the~~ Ezra's Tomb it was a very dangerous proceeding crossing the river in anything like a crowded ~~line~~ bellums

4212 2. Was there more than one Assistant Director of Medical Services

A. Yes, there would be one in each Division. The Assistant Director of the 6th Division was a Prisoner of War. I saw in the paper the other day that he had been exchanged. He is the Assistant Director referred to

4213 2. Then as regards rations you have no special complaint to make, the food was not good, but it was not worse than you anticipated, I think

A. No. Up to the battle of Oesiphon I thought the rations were
 for

for India rather good, but then we do with a very moderate ^{fairly} standard. In January during the operations by the Tigris Army Corps under General ~~Almes~~ ^{Agnes} I certainly thought the rations ^{were} rather inadequate for the great efforts that were being asked of the troops, that is to say bully beef biscuit and tea were about the only things that were available in full quantities. Jam and bacon and sugar had at times to be reduced, sometimes considerably.

4214 2. Is sugar part of the ration of the native

A. Yes; sugar is issued with tea

4215 2. And I suppose they depend a good deal on sugar

A. Yes, especially the Indian ^{he} is very fond of it; all troops clamour for it in cold weather



wint

4216

Q There was the ration that they got the full ordinary ration or was it less at this particular time

A It was reduced in some particulars during the operations in the month of January 1916

F. B. 3 Brigham

4217

Q That was the necessary consequence I suppose of the shortage of transport

A Yes

4218

Q Really shortage of transport covers the bulk of the criticisms that you make

A It is the ~~crux~~ ^{crux} of the whole thing

4219

Q you saw a good deal of fighting during the year you were there; did the enemy fight better as you got further north; were they a better class of troops

A Their guns were hardly recognisable as regards improvement

4220

Lord Hugh Cecil The improvement was so great

A The improvement was enormous. It must be remembered that we offered a moving target in the open, which is a very different thing from the task our guns had to carry out, firing at invisible trenches; but there is no doubt that their guns were wonderfully handled, whether by accident or by design it is impossible to say, but I should say that it must have been by design because they seemed to be able to pick up troops at any moment and they caused a great many casualties beginning with the battle of Nasiriyah on July 25; from that date onwards they improved every day

4221

Chairman Were they a different class of men as fighting men that you got up at Ctesiphon from what you had down in the Delta

A At Ctesiphon I was rather surprised at them, because we knew what they were from the corpses, and I saw there a whole Turkish Division get up out of its trenches and bolt from the remnants of my Brigade, I should think 5,000 men bolted from the remnant of 600 or 700 ~~men~~ ^{of mine}, a sight that I do not suppose will ever be seen again in war; it was absolute panic. We got in behind them that is like the Turk, if his flank is turned he will not remain, but if he is only attacked in front he is not to be turned out of any position hardly.

4222 Q You had very awkward climatic conditions to contend with going up the Tigris in the subsequent fighting

A In January we had dreadful conditions

4223 Q And that I suppose necessitated frontal attacks you could not attack otherwise

A Of course at no price would I have undertaken it myself, no matter what the object was at the other end. I know the Turk ^{him} so well - that you cannot turn ~~them~~ out. It is possible to turn his flanks; it would take some time but still it is better. The results of the battle in January were some of the worst results obtained in any theatre of war. I should think the troops were dreadfully knocked about and the Turks were untouched. Certainly, if I had had anything to do with it I should myself have gone round the flank. I do not care what the physical exhaustion of the troops would have been - I should have got them

4224 Commander Wedgwood You mean in January

A Yes in the ^{early} ~~earlier~~ portion, once he had got back to the ~~marshes~~ Marshes, with his left flank resting on the Marsh and his right on ours

4225 Q Lord Hugh Cecil Which base are you speaking of?

A The Tigris Army Corps in January 1916

4226 Q From the 16th to the 21st

A From the 6th of January onwards

4227 Q At what stage did they get into that position with their flanks protected

A They began digging their trenches there on about the 15th January having offered resistance at two points previously to that, once South East of Shaik Saad and then at what is known as the ^{Wady} ~~Wady~~ position.

Memo of testimony

4228

Commander Wedgwood: This position which you call Umm-el-Hannah is the Sannayat is it not?
 A The Sannayat position is a little further back really. I have been up there twice once on the first advance. ~~Or else~~ if you cannot ^{out-}manoeuvre by movement of the Turk or any enemy you have got to outflank him by fire, which is feasible. It is not ~~probably~~ ^{perhaps} evidence, but I suggested to General Lake in January that he should get shields for all his machine guns 8 feet long by 6 feet high and walk his machine guns right up to the Turks. ~~and then shells came and knocked out one.~~ We had done the same at the battle of Kurma. We used the germ of the "tank" actually at Kurma on the 31st May when we had 12 machine guns.

Writ from Fuller

4229

Q In a perfectly flat terrain.
 A Over water; 12 machine guns with iron shields weighing ~~over~~ a little over a ton ^{for} ~~with~~ each gun, and we had 2 casualties. We ran them straight up to ~~within~~ 500 yards of the Turks and let fly across open water. That would have done it.

from Mr Hodgson

4230

Chairman: The heaviest losses were at Es Sinn on the 8th and 9th March.

A That was after I left. I understand they were very heavy.

4231

Q ^{and} There was a heavy loss at Umm-el-Hannah
 A Yes, in taking those trenches.

4232

Q And then a frontal attack was made with

with artillery against us, which was superior to our artillery. The Turkish artillery was superior to ^{us} on every occasion during 1915, but in 1916 I should have hoped that we were always superior ^{to them}. I was not in the country at the time but I know a good deal about what our force of artillery was. Of course they were superior to us at Ctesiphon in artillery

4233 General Sir Keble Lytton They had better guns and more of them
 Q They were reputed to have a quick firing mountain gun which fused up to 5000 yards and we had ~~not~~ none - new guns - and they had quick firing field guns but we had ~~no~~ ^{none}

4234 2 You had the 18 ~~inch~~ pound quick fire
 A Yes that was as good as ever and probably better

4235 Chairman Had you any machine guns
 A We had two per battery when we started and they were increased to four and five

4236 Earl of Broughmore You said ~~they were~~ ^{it would} in your statement and in your evidence just now about nations, I gather that at ~~that time~~ in Mesopotamia, judged by the Indian standard, the nations were good.

A. At times, judged by the Indian standard, they were good

4237 2 And at times you had deficiencies
 A At times

4238 2 Is the Indian scale of British ratings to speak different from the home scale
 A. I believe the scales are supposed to be the same approximately

4239 2. Were they all native troops
 A. I commanded at first a battalion of ^{Indian} native infantry. I belong to the Indian Army. I believe that so far as conditions allow the scales are supposed to be identical according to Army Tables; the Army Tables for the British Army

Army are not raised by India

4240 2 In the course of your experience of ~~the~~ fighting have you any complaint to make from this point of view? were you kept fully alive to the plans of your superior officers.
 A. Up to the battle of Ctesiphon very fully. General Townshend was especially careful on that point and General Fogg was above the average. &

4241 2 Therefore you felt no anxiety from ^{the} ~~the~~ ignorance of your Chief's intentions

A. None up to Ctesiphon

4242 2. In the fighting of January

A. In the fighting of January I did not take an active part. I was still suffering from wounds but I joined the Army Corps and I know that the troops did not know what was going on

4243 2. They were not so happy in that respect

A. Very much on the contrary

4244 2 were you ever anxious about the supply of ammunition while you were actually fighting

A. We were very often. At the battle of Sharba we had some difficulty in supply, but you always will in open country like that. On the 14th July we ran out of ammunition on one occasion but that of course might happen

4245 2. Was it just a short stoppage or did it seriously interfere with the flow of the battle so to speak

A. Any stoppage of course will ^{always} interfere; you are delayed in making further progress

4246 2 Was it a delay of some days

A. Oh dear no; only a delay of an hour or half an hour

4247 2 But otherwise so to speak although individual battles may have been checked, the campaign was not much interfered with

A. No, we had an ample supply

4248 Lord Hugh Cecil: In respect of mosquito curtains you were saying they were right after August. You do not complain of what

happened after August
 Q No, I do not complain, because practically we stopped using them. The necessity to use them ceases about the end of September; in fact many people stop using them before that

4249

2 In respect of the battle of Masriyat I gather that you were not satisfied with the way in which the wounded were evacuated

A Certainly was not satisfied. But again I should like to say that I do not put the blame on the people in Mesopotamia

4250

2. You think the medical officers did well

A. They did well. The conditions of course were very difficult. There was behind us the lake that was going down very fast in depth the result of which was that ^{our} steamers could not get across

4251

2 But there was a deficiency of accommodation in the field ambulances

A Yes, they were supposed to take a certain number and they had to take 2 or 2 1/2 times that number

4252

2 Was there also a deficiency of personnel to deal with the sick

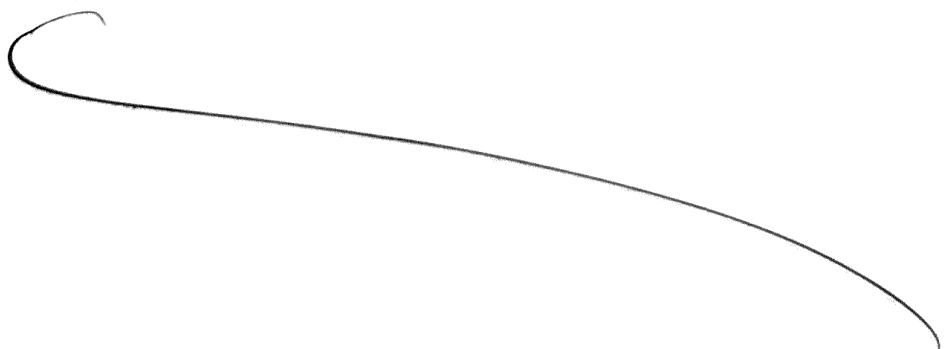
A. Naturally, there were ^{more} more wounded and sick and no change of personnel

4253

2. Was there more than an avoidable deficiency of boat traffic ^{to any port}

A. There ^{you} have to go straight back to the root of the whole thing. There was deficiency ^{where} of every thing at all times. Whether it could have been avoided is another question; we think it could by larger preparations and looking at the thing with a larger view

Wint



4254 Q

When you say that the evacuation of the wounded at ~~the~~ Nasiriyah was unsatisfactory, would it be true to go so far as to say that the wounded suffered ~~a good deal~~ ^{acutely and} without necessity

7C.3 Fuller

A They ^{certainly} suffered ~~acutely~~

4255 Q

These defects were not mere defects of form but they made a very substantial difference to the comfort and well-being of the wounded

A They made a very substantial difference

4256 Q

Would your observation that the officers did their best apply all through ~~this~~ ^{your} evidence generally

A You mean to high and low?

4257 Q

A Yes

A Again on oath I cannot speak as to what steps were or were not taken by officers in the higher administrative appointments and the higher executive appointments, but I speak for the executive officers that a Regiment or Brigade would be likely to have to deal with; that is the lower executive and the lower administrative people such as Supply Officers and Brigade and Regimental Medical Officers. Those did everything that could possibly be expected of them

4258 Q

And so far as their work was had it was had either because there were not enough of them or because they had not enough supplies to handle

A Yes

4259 Q

In respect of transport, in your judgment was the defect entirely a defect of numbers of steamers, the quantity of boats available, or was ~~there~~ also a deficiency of ⁱⁿ organisation in using the boats that there were

A I should say that the whole crux of the thing was the deficiency in boats, so far as

organisation went, that I cannot speak to because I started at Basra and I cannot speak as to what the organisation or method or system was there, but what we felt was the want of sufficient boats, - the want of boats of sufficient draught

4260 Q You had no experience of supplies being misdirected or sent in a confused manner so that they were not immediately available
A No

4261 Q And in the course of your experience was there any improvement or the contrary of improvement ^{in the supply} either of Medical or general supply
A Of course the actions became bigger and the task of the various Departments with probably not much increase of material or personnel, became all the more difficult question

4262 Q The supply ~~was~~ was worse at Ctesiphon than it had been before?
A The supply at Ctesiphon I thought was rather good up to the time we had to go back

4263 Q Then when do you think the supply became worse - ~~in January~~ in January
A In January I thought it was the worst I had seen out there

4264 Q And that extends both to ordinary supply and medical supply
A Yes it extends to both

4265 Q But at a very early period you ~~was~~ noticed a deficiency in drugs
A I noticed that at the very beginning, from ^{May} ~~the~~ ~~commencement~~ ^{onwards,} in 1915

4266 Q And did that deficiency of drugs continue throughout your experience or was that an isolated case

A ~~The demand for quinine ceased.~~ Up to the ^{very} last up to the very end of the fever season, it was practically impossible to issue quinine except as a cure, not as a ~~preventive~~ ^{protective}. After the fever season was over I do not know whether larger quantities became available or not

9

4267

Chaviman On that point is there what I may call an ^{establishment} ~~equipment~~ of quinine per regiment

A On field service a Regiment practically carries a very small quantity of drugs which are laid down and carried in the field panniers and in the medical companion - various things of that sort - It is a very small amount

4268

Q I mean regimentally

A It is all laid down exactly. In peace time, in cantonments a certain amount is allowed to each ~~Battal~~ Battalion. If it is exceeded you can get an order to exceed your issue; and on service your Companions ^{that is} ~~with~~ regimental medical field panniers have got certain things in them - so many cases of this and that. You start with that and replenish it from time to time

4269

Q Is not quinine in a malarious country almost an essential

A It is absolutely ~~essenti~~ essential

4270

Q Was the establishment provision of quinine in your judgment sufficient for the ^{Meso-potamia} ~~Meso-potamia~~ Campaign

A Certainly not, ~~beyond~~ what we carried in our regimental panniers; it was only sufficient for occasional cases as a cure; it was not sufficient for ~~preventive~~ ^{preventive} cases. My Regi-
-mental doctor, a far-seeing person ^{changed} ~~brought~~ a large amount of quinine from India which we

we used prophylactically and it lasted out about half the fever season. That I think, combined with keeping the sick under my own hand resulted in our being a good deal better than other Brigades

Unit 3 Soldiers

4271

Q Was that supply of quinine which this regimental doctor had collected one which he had collected on his own responsibility?

A He collected it probably in India by not using a great quantity one year and storing it up - saving it over for various years; Of course it keeps a long time

4272

Q There was no special provision of quinine sent out A. not to the regiment. ~~The~~ General hospitals or field ambulances may have had it specially. If so they ran out of it

4273

Q Lord Hugh Cecil: Was there any deficiency of ice throughout your experience in Basra
A We looked upon ice as a luxury. There was an ice machine

4274

Q. ~~was the~~ And you say there was an ice machine for a time, for a fortnight, at Basra?
A Yes, during my last fortnight there, there was a machine, or perhaps not so long;

4275

Q. But there was no ice up the river, up the Tigris
A. There was no ice so far as I know until about September 12th because I myself took over the Command at Amara. ~~and~~ I arrived there two days before the Army Commanded, and I got a wire from the Army Commanded or from his Staff asking if my ice machine was working. It was not working, and I got a wire back to say I must have it working by the time the Army ^{Commanded} arrived, in ~~an~~ ^{no} ~~day~~ ^{day} time. So we took the whole machine down and I put ~~the~~ ^{an} ~~admiral~~ ^{Colonel} of Staff in charge and said "You have got to get this machine going by the time the Army ^{Commanded} is here". He did not. He got it working two days after he arrived

4276

Q That ~~was~~ ^{was} in September 1915th
A September the 12th is the exact date when the machine started working. Whether it had been working before and had ~~gone~~ ^{gone} out of order I do not know

4277

Q. At what place was that
A. Amara
Q. And that was the first time there was at Amara.
A. I say I do not know whether the machine had been working and had then broken down

2. When

- 4276 Q When you were wounded was there ~~any~~ ^{no} provision of ice for people suffering from heat stroke
- A Ice was unnecessary at Ctesiphon; it was cold weather
- 4280 Q The need of ice is only acutely felt in what may be called the summer months
- A Yes, from the middle of April to the end of September
- 4281 Q As to the quality of the troops did you notice any marked superiority in the Turkish troops that you first met at Ctesiphon ~~above~~ ^{to that of} the troops previously encountered
- A I thought the best troops that we met at Shaiba ~~and~~ ^{were} ~~ready~~. Actually it was only a small portion of them; because here we had the Turkish Higher Brigade opposed to us, and they are very much like what we consider our Guards Brigade in the English Army. Then at Ctesiphon they were considerably better than they were at Kurna or at Amara or ~~in Syria~~ ^{nasiriyeh}
- 4282 Q Or at Kut in the first attack.
- A At Kut they were the same men fighting again, reinforced
- 4283 Q I don't mean after the battle of Ctesiphon; I mean when Kut was first ~~attacked~~ taken
- A Yes, I was there too. I should think they were very much the same at Kut and at Ctesiphon
- 4284 Q But this is the importance of the question. There was no such difference between the troops met at Ctesiphon and the troops encountered earlier as to upset reasonable calculations about the prospect of victory
- A That is a point that I never heard discussed. Beyond that, certainly at Es-Sinn, the troops were much better than the troops which opposed us at Kurna, or on the advance to ~~Amara~~ Amara

4285 Commander Wedgwood By Es-Sinn you mean the first battle of Kut

4286 Lord Hugh Cecil. After ^{Ctesiphon} ~~Kut~~ it was not said that we failed because the Turkish ^{troops} were much better than we expected

A No, we failed because we were greatly outnumbered and out-gunned - that was the reason

4287 I There is no doubt about it that strictly it was a question of numbers

A That is so. You must of course remember that in giving that opinion I am greatly affected by what I ~~say~~ saw, a whole division getting up and bolting at Ctesiphon - a most marvellous sight, you could throw stones at them they were so close

4288 Chairman. We won a victory but it was ephemeral.

A It was a great tactical victory and a strategic defeat

4289 Lord Hugh Cecil. Was there a sufficient supply of stretcher bearers at Ctesiphon

A Certainly not.

4290 I There was a great deficiency

A A great deficiency

4291 I Did you direct your attention at all to land transport

A My own attention as a senior officer, do you mean?

4292 I Could you give evidence as to whether the land transport was adequate or not? You speak of the river transport being inadequate; did you consider at all whether there were enough carts or whether land transport might have been more largely used.

A Motor vehicles might have been much more largely used during the months of September, October, November and December. The whole

Country is available for cars to run over.

4293 Q. It is flat country

A. Perfectly flat; they can run over a new track

4294 Q. There would be no difficulty in using motors except from the point of view of wet

A. Only during the ~~wet season~~, the flood season, during rains and floods, ^{unless you put a stop to} the use of motor traffic ^{there is no difficulty} entirely; during September, October, November and December. We had a few motors running, as I dare say you heard; we had some motor ambulances running and motor machine guns.

4295 Q. When did you first get motor ambulances.

A. I first saw them running by the Kharkeh river, in May 1915 there were two

4296 Q. General Sir Cyprian Bridge: Were they Indian Government motors

A. I could not say. I should not think they were. I should think some one presented them.

4297 Q. Lord Hugh Cecil: How far were these carts and waggons available

A. The only carts we had were Army transport carts; there were none really available, or very few, with ~~but~~ field ambulances, regimental transport was called in to help

4298 Q. You mean that there was practically no medical transport, no ambulance transport

A. A certain number of Army transport carts were always told off, but they were always inadequate; the regiments had to hand over their own

4299 Q. Were they ammunition carts

A. Yes, they were used for ammunition - used for stores, used for baggage, - they had got no springs

4300 Q. Were there any roads available

AN6

A No, there were no roads at all. There is an old track that runs from Baghdad, a thousand years old; you cannot call it a road; it is worse than going along over the desert really.

12
4301 Commander Wedgwood: Referring to the time up to the first battle of Kut about the 25th of September, the time before that, during that period you have already told us that you had no wire cutters, inefficient mosquito nets and insufficient quinine. I want to find out about a great many other articles of equipment, to find out whether you had them at all during that period or whether you came out with them from India. In the first place take machine guns, did you have maxims or Vickers

A Maxims

4302 Q Weighing 80 lbs filled

A Heavy guns, very heavy guns, several loads, -
~~there is the barrel~~

4303 Q They were pack transport

A Yes

4304 Q Which mark of tripod did you use - have

A My battalion had the old one. I am not quite sure what mark it is, it is the old form

4305 Q Mark 2

A Yes, very obsolete

4306 Q Did you get Mark 4 at all while you were out there

A No

4307 Q Had you any condensers

A No, certainly not

4308 Q Or clinometers for indirect fire

A No

4309 Q You had of course no armoured cars

A Not regimentally

4310 Q You fitted these up on boats

A There

Q: There were ^{two} armoured cars fitted up under the orders of the Army Commander, he started a section

4311
29/2

A: And when they were started I gave the personnel ^{and} of them, and the guns. I took the guns from the Army and handed them over to the Army Commander and gave ~~my~~ the officers to run them; they were organised on about September 10th and they came into action first at the battle of Kut on September 28th.

4312 Q They were on motor bodies

A Yes
4313 Q These were practically fitted up in Mesopotamia but not sent from India

A They were fitted up in Mesopotamia wholly
4314 Q And the armour was not hardened steel -

just ordinary steel

A The armour was either iron or ordinary steel
4315 Q Did your machine guns fire Mark 6 or Mark 7 ammunition

A We had no Mark 7

4316 Q Or Mark 6

A Yes

272

Walter Hodgson

2. No

4317
Chapter 3
Snell

Mr. Woodman
Full name

15
4317 Q What was the position with regard to the ~~only~~ Mark 7 ammunition
A ~~The~~ Indian Army Corps that went to France ~~must~~ had it Mark 7 ammunition?
A ~~It went~~ without rifles to France and there got mark 7

4318 Q When it was at Mesopotamia ~~they~~ had it Mark 7 rifles.
A Presumably, I could not swear

4319 Q Were the machine guns marked 7 too
A They ~~were~~ ^{were} Vickers Maxim

4320 Q You had ~~Mark 6~~ ^{they} ~~air~~ for ~~some~~ Mark 7
A ~~Yes~~ That again I cannot swear to
Q You have ~~from that~~
A No

4321 Q Did you ~~send~~ ^{so} out without flares
A We had no flares ~~when starting from India.~~ ^{when starting from India.} ~~They light the foreground~~

4322 Q Had you them at any time in that country
A We made them for ourselves

4323 Q Had you Vêry pistols
A We had no Vêry pistols. We taught our
Q ~~They do not shoot them again men improvised~~
A ~~No method of lighting the foreground~~

~~and impossible to fire. We thought our men~~
~~of lighting the foreground~~

4324 Q You had no rockets
A No

4325 Q ~~Has~~ ^{you} ~~had~~ ^{not} wire cutters
A No

4326 Q No barbed wire
A Barbed wire could always be obtained from the Field Park

4327 Q Did you never require barbed wire while you were there
A Yes I used it largely ^{at} the battle of Kut

4328 Q The first battle of Kut
A ~~The~~ Yes. I had to protect the left flank. I had a half of brigade which I placed in ~~front~~

~~the~~ redoubts and I surrounded the whole with
barbed wire from the Field Park

4329

Q But you could not draw wire cutters

A No

4330

Q How could you fix up barbed wire without
wire cutters were in the Park. All the
implements for making ^{high} wire and low wire
~~were~~ ^{we} ~~you~~ could get

4331

Q Stand grenades

A Stand grenades were ~~got~~ in August 1915 -

Q ~~From India. They were a cylinder of tin.~~

~~At all. They~~ Do you know the receipt sort?

4332

Q I do not know ~~what~~ the sort. They were
not the ones with the ^{brown handle} ~~rust~~ handle

A They were improved; they were made up locally
and kept at the Field Park

4333

Q ~~From the~~ Meropataunia

A Yes I think so

4334

Q You did not get the ordinary pear shaped hand
grenade that you throw

A No

4335

Q Rifle grenades

A We never had them. I believe that they had a
certain number in the Field Parks

4336

Q Loophole plates

A None

4337

Q ~~Tap~~-head plates

A None

4338

Q You had no steel helmets of course

A None

4339

Q Could you use steel helmets in that country

A Yes, in the winter

4340

Q What were your maps like; what scale

A There were various scales. The headquarters

of Divisions sent out issued the ordinary duplicated things that they lithographed of various scales, ~~from~~ one mile to an inch and sometimes 6 inches to a mile

4341

2 They were fairly good; as good as you had for the frontier

4342

A Better than we had for the frontier. ~~Each one~~
2 You had the systems of marking ~~marked A B C D~~
in squares [We did that ourselves]

4343

A 2 You did not start with that

1 We got full instructions as to how they were to be lined out

4344

2 Up to the first battle of Kut you had no motor transport except the two ambulances you saw

1 The two ambulances I saw on the Kharkoh River in May

4345

2 You had no motor transport at all or saw none

1 I saw none

4346

2 Did not the Generals even have touring cars

A The only general who had a touring car was the Army Commander

4347

2 And yet the country, particularly in the dry season, is quite suitable for motoring over

A Quite suitable for motoring over in many parts. I would not say that you could take long journeys. You would put a car on a barge, carry it to a certain point, one of your advanced posts, and from there you could motor everywhere

4348

2 You had two armoured cars at Kut, you said

A That was the first time they were used

4349

2 They were manœuvring presumably in the open field off the track

1 Everywhere

4350

2 ~~An~~ ^{could an} ordinary touring car ^{have} could have been used much more

more easily

4351
 A Probably, because the weight would be less
 Q Did you see any portable railways at all behind the lines, or discuss them

A None. I heard it discussed. I understood that a line was sanctioned from Basra to Nasiriyah

4352
 Q I meant rather ~~the~~ light~~er~~ railways ~~over~~ ^{from} the lines to the different parts of the trenches & how at all

4353
 Lord Hugh Cecil when did you hear of ~~that~~ ^a railway being sanctioned

A ~~Although~~ ^{I thought} a line was ^{to} being built from Basra through ~~to~~ through Nathailah

4354
 Q Was that while you were there

A I think I heard ^{so} have you heard it

4355
 Q Did you hear it out there or since you came back

A When I was out there - I think when I was at Nasiriyah in August 1915. That was up the Euphrates, not up the Tigris

4356
 Commander Wedgwood during the winter. Did you put up any hutments for the troops at Amara or at Kut

A No none

4357
 Q Was there material for building them

A I would like to point out that it was under consideration to do so

4358
 Q But you could not get the material up river
 A Well the battle of Ctesiphon upset matters to such an extent that the whole of the fighting troops with whom I had any part were ^{seized} ~~upset~~, and the new troops coming up had to scramble up the best they could to endeavour to relieve Kut, so that hutting and anything ~~of~~ of the sort went to the winds

4359
 Q Had the material come from India

A I

15

- 1 I doubt it:
 2 I ~~had~~ heard nothing of any
- 2 In the first six months of the expedition was nothing done for hunting ~~between November and~~
- Q During the summer of 1915 you mean?
 2 Yes
- Q That in the second six months. I had no experience of the winter of 1914
- 2 Nothing was done during that winter
- Q At Barua probably ~~and~~ a good deal was done during that winter
- 2 Not further up
- Q Nothing except that a great number of British troops were billeted in ~~the~~ Arab houses - houses belonging to the inhabitants of the country
- 2 Did you ^{have} ~~use~~ home telescopic sights
- Q No
- 2 None
- 1 You mean our machine guns?
- 2 The artillery
- Q The artillery must have had
- 2 And Clinometers I suppose
- 1 Certainly they would be fully equipped
- 2 We have heard that there were 21-lb tents single fly and we have heard of 160 lb tents single fly
- Q The troops use 160 lb and 80 lb tents single fly. That is normal
- 2 How many were in a tent
- Q Native troops 16 to a 160 lb tent and 20 followers
- 2 ~~20~~ 20 followers ^{combatants}
- Q 16 to 20 ~~combatants~~ and 20 to 25 ^{followers} ~~combatants~~
- 2 How about white troops
- Q I cannot speak as to white troops. I think it

4361

4362

4363

4364

4365

4366

4367

4368

4369

4370

4371

5

it is 16 ^{British} ~~men~~ to a tent, 20 Indians to a tent and 25 followers

4372

Q These were single fly tents

A Yes

4373

Q You could not sit in the tent without a helmet

A No; you cannot sit in a double fly tent there without a helmet or unless in the shade

4374

Q Not an E.P. tent

A Not without some risk

4375

Q It is not as hot as East Africa

A It is the hottest place in the world. I would not do it - You run a risk of getting sunstroke

4376

Q You ~~saw~~ ^{saw} that one ice machine

A I know there must have been one at Basra. I cannot say that I saw it. There may have been more. One was ^{to be} started by General Gortoise at Maximyah if he could get it fixed up after the ^{occupation} ~~operation~~

4377

Q These were for the use of the hospitals I suppose

A Chiefly for the use of the hospitals. They had always first call on the ice and after that various people in priority

4378

Q French mortars - did you come out with any of those

A No

4379

Q Did you put up any of those yawmachines

A None while I was in the country

4380

Q Had you ~~telescopes~~ periscopes

A I had some sent out to me privately from England

4381

Q ~~Was~~ ^{None} ~~any~~ ^{officially} supplied from India

A I never heard of any

4382

Q Were the officers well fitted out with telescopes

A They had their own field glasses

4383

2

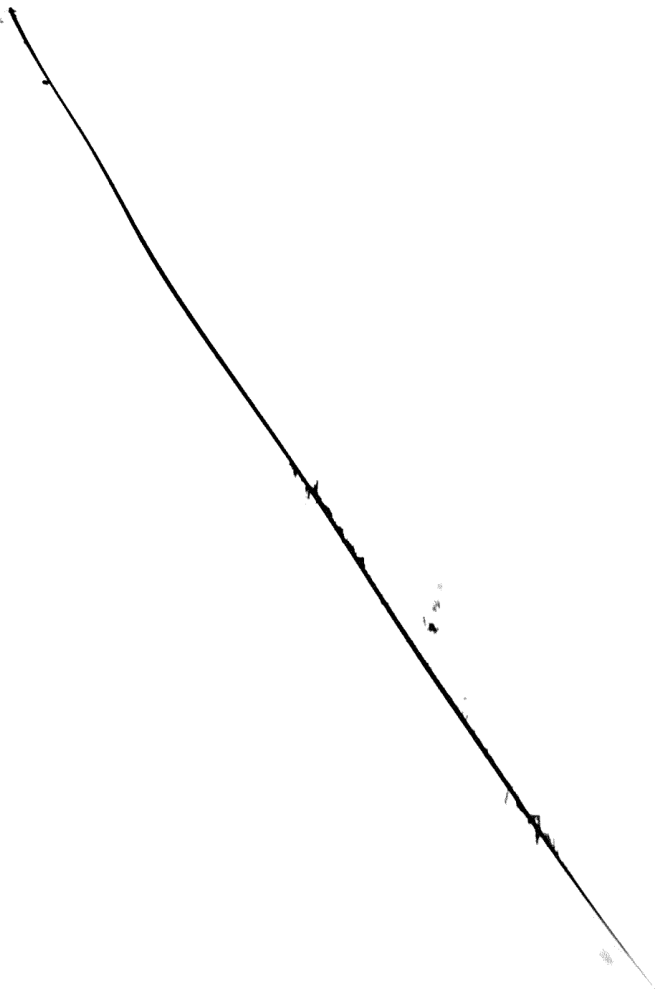
No telescopes

a Few only telescopes issued regiminally to

an Indian battalion are issued to signallers.

I think that two are allowed to a

signal section



2 Part

Chapter

4384

Q. But none for the head quarter staff of a Brigade or a Division

A. None for the head quarter staff of a Brigade that I have ever seen

4385

Q. The Indian officer generally is a very poor man. What sort of binoculars had he got

A. I should say that he had the ordinary old fashioned non prism glass, you know that kind

4386

Q. Yes

A. Costing anything from 35/- to 50/-

4387

Q. That is not a very efficient glass is it

A. Anyhow they looked all right. The Government did not issue it; the men had to buy it themselves

4388

Q. Did the officers carry no prismatic compasses

A. No The British Officers you mean

4389

Q. Yes

A. Not the ^{Native} ~~British~~ officers. ^{The} All officers have their own ~~right~~ compasses; they provide their own prismatic compasses

4390

Q. Would there be the best pattern

A. ~~Yes~~ It would be according to what the ^{officer} paid for. If he wanted the best he would have it and if he wanted to do it cheaply he would not buy the best

4391

Q. How many Inspectors of Ordnance Machinery did you have with all this artillery in the country

A. We call them in India ~~district~~ ^{district} ~~commission~~ ^{commission} officers. Now they call them ^{I believe} Inspectors of Ordnance Machinery. You had better ask an Artillery officer how many

4392

Q. Were the rifles kept in good order

A. Regimentally

4393

Q. And the machine guns

A. Regimentally

4394

Q. Only regimentally. They were not inspected by experts

A. No not during the time I was there. When rifles went

Garden St. Sued

4395

wrong we took them to the Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Supplies - the Divisional ^{than} ~~base~~

4396

Q: And he had sergeants who could put them right -

A: ~~And he had~~ (Armourer sergeants) They had ~~established~~ ^{no} these ~~factories~~ ^{factories} ~~with native armourers~~ ^{in India} and people of that sort

4397

Q: Was the high explosive efficient

A: I cannot speak to what the quantity was. There again I had better not try to

4398

Q: Did you ever hear of any sort of Council being held before the expedition was sent out between the R.M.F. and the A. G. S. Department and the ^{Medical} ~~General~~ Department and the A. O. D. Department as to what sort of equipment there should be

A: None. I was not in India. I went to Egypt first

4399

Q: ^{with regard to} About the drafts that came up, ~~it~~ ~~Indian troops~~ ^{it} has been said that the Reserve ^{system} Brigade in India broke down completely

A: Yes

4400

Q: The drafts were more or less raw recruits

A: 2/3 ^{youngsters} raw recruits

4401

Q: What is the reserve system normally

A: Normally it is an ^{established} ~~equipment~~ ^{strength} of between 300 and about 384 in a battalion. They varied in India according to the amount of money available. You would be told how many men you would have, ~~from~~ ^{from} every month you had a telegram from Army Headquarters ^{that you must} saying ~~sometimes~~ ^{sometimes} reduce your reserve or increase it. Men were allowed to transfer to the reserve on completion of 5 years service, or if they had taken their discharge before 5 years service, they could also transfer. They were then allowed to serve for a pension up to 25 complete years service with the colours and with the reserve. I do not think

that there was any age limit. Take it in this way - that a man enlisted at 19 and served for 4 years; he would then be 23, ^{that} and if he then went to his home for 5 years ^{when} he would be 28. If he then joined the reserve he must go on serving for another 22 years before ^{evening} pension which would make him 50 years of age at the time that he had earned his reserve pension

4402

Q It is not necessary for the man to join the reserve immediately on leaving the regiment

A: No; it is purely voluntary

4403

Q: Is there a large waiting list to get on to the reserve. ~~In there is a large waiting~~

A: At ~~that~~ times there ^{was} is a fairly large waiting list

4404

Q: ~~They are~~ ^{are people men} put on ^{to the reserve} in rotation

A: They are put on in rotation practically. It is rather a plum

4405

Q: The older man gets on to the reserve, not the younger man

A: Yes, men of ~~long~~ long service, good shots and of good character. In my own battalion we would not let men go who were too old because they would ^{be} ~~have~~ no use

4406

Q: It has been ~~and~~ called a sort of ^{pensioners'} ~~list~~ list

A: It was very much like that. It was a plum as ^{I said} ~~it~~ ^{was not so much} ~~it~~ ^{to get} efficient reserves ^{as that you} ~~would get~~ ^{from} people all over the country ^{who were} loyal to the Government. It was probably exploited largely for that purpose.

4407 2

Q They ^{often} broke down, they did not come back to the colours or if they did come back to the colours they were not efficient

A: They were ^{often} very unfit. They were put on trains.