

Sir Archibald Williamson
Commander Wedgwood: It greatly surprises you to hear
 that this officer should have been exonerated.

Wheeler Smeel

a yes
Commander Wedgwood
 & without your being called

a yes, and ~~with~~ many other witnesses, I would not
 like the Commission to think it was only the
 Leicestershire Regiment or officers or men of
 that Brigade who made complaints. Personally
 in writing, I have referred to them mostly because
 I lived ^{with} that actual Brigade ^{not} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~the~~ ^{the}
 Black Watch, the Seaforths, the First ~~and~~ Fifth
 Buffs and other Regiments that complained
 just as bitterly. I ~~do not~~ think none
 complained more bitterly than the First Fifth Buffs.
 I did not know the men's names and officers' names
 in the way I knew ^{those of} the Leicestershire Regiment ~~at~~
 with whom I had been since the beginning of
 the campaign

2589

Sir Archibald Williamson; You said that the weather
 at the time of the battle of the 8th March was fine.
 a We had wet days. It rained a little on the morning
 of the 7th but we had a very fine night march;
 it was very hot all through the 8th and quite fine
 on our march back on the 9th

2590

2 There was nothing to prevent motor transport being
 used at that time

a I should not ~~say~~ ^{no} have said so

2591

General Sir Neville Lyttelton; ^{are} Mosquitoes bad

all the year round in the winter and in the summer

a No. I was not very worried with them.

2592

2 The absence of mosquito nets at the front was not
 much felt at the beginning

a No; the flies were getting very bad in the middle
 of March in the front line, we had been

work

working ^{up} digging trenches from January 21st
to the Turkish Lines, ^{with regards to} ~~and~~ what I say about the
Armistice we were covering the ground where many
of our dead lay and naturally the smell and
the flies got worse

2593

2 Were there mosquito nets without ~~and~~ poles
as I never saw them

2594

2 You never saw mosquito nets all
a No. I left on the 6th April

2595

2 From a private letter I see there were acres or
a good deal of mosquito netting but no poles
a That I do not know

2596

2 On the first page of your report you say that you
had a conversation with the doctor and said
"We do not want the wounded to suffer again as
they did ^{after} at Ctesiphon". This was January 3rd
and Ctesiphon was November 22nd

a Yes

2597

2 ^{They} ~~you~~ ought to have ^{known that they} ~~It~~ had already miscalculated
the number of wounded at Ctesiphon and were
liable to do it again and ^{to have taken} ~~took~~ the lesson to heart

a I should have thought so. From an ordinary
common sense point of view you would have
thought so and that is the reason why I put
that in

8 2598

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: I have from the evidence
a variety of cases in which there were no arrangements
for the wounded and the officers of the Indian
Regiments complained that they could get no food and
the latrine arrangements were nil. I have a
variety of cases in which there was nothing;
there were practically no stretchers for bad
cases; there were no orderlies; there were no
hot drinks; there was no food and certainly

none suitable for wounded men. There were two British cooks who ~~containingly~~ knew little of cooking. At the camp there were no sanitary arrangements and there was ^{practically} no food. Now I want to ask you this question: Even if there had been only the ~~normal~~ ^{normal} number of casualties, would the appliances have been sufficient to deal with them

Q May I ask what you mean by the normal number, about what number would you say was normal?

2599 2 I want to distinguish between cases. I have three instances where ^{it is said} ~~you say~~ that the number of casualties was very much greater than was anticipated

A Yes

2600 2 One medical officer ~~was provided for 400 and~~ had 2500 patients

A Yes

2601 2 One of the officers' ~~statements~~ whose statement is attached to ~~your statement~~ says they were expecting 500 and they had between 2000 and 3000

A Yes

2602 2 Now ^{if they had had} ~~it is said that~~ ~~at that time~~ the normal establishment drugs, instruments, stretchers, dressings and the various other necessities and proper food for the wounded it might be said that there was ^{preparation in these circumstances} sufficient but I have many cases in which ~~you~~ ^{it is said} ~~say~~ there was nothing. If they had had even nothing like that abnormal number of wounded, could they have dealt with them properly

A I do not think so, not in January

2603 2 What it is desirable to come at is this: - whether the supply of all these necessaries was sufficient for dealing with even a small number of casualties

A Yes

a Yes they were sufficient to deal with a small number. They had enough to deal with a very small number of casualties

2604

2 I ask the question because in so many instances ^{it is said} there was no food, no stretchers and no latrine arrangements

a When they got back the medical officers had ^{enough} ~~only~~ ^{enough} dressings to deal with a small number of casualties but they had not enough to deal with the great number that came in

2605

2 How ^{does} that ~~in accord~~ ^{reconcile} with the ^{statement} facts that there were no arrangements

a I do not say that there were no dressings

2606

2 No. I do not specify dressings you say that there ~~and~~ were no arrangements for treating the wounded and that they could get no food

a I do not know where they were supposed to draw the food from, but I wish to point out that owing to the very great shortage of personnel there was nobody to bring the people food, even if it could have been drawn off the barges closely

2607

2 However small the number of casualties might have been

a If they were anything above 450 I do not think they could have dealt with them

2608

Sir Archibald Williamson: 450 was the expectation. a Yes they could have just about dealt with those, and that is all

2609

Chairman You mean that independent of exceptional strain owing to there ~~having~~ being exceptional casualties, the arrangements are characterised by lack of foresight and deficiencies

a Yes

10 2610

Lord Hugh Cecil And there were great deficiencies

a Yes

a Yes, I do not know whether you would allow me to ~~2 I do not~~ amplify my evidence with regard to one or two points, my Lord

Chairman Certainly

2611 Admiral Sir Copman Bridge you say that you were informed by a Staff Officer that the cries of the wounded were heart rending and you say you heard one medical officer (~~now wounded~~) apologise ^{to the wounded} that he was unable to attend to their ^{wounds} ~~needs~~ as he had no more dressings. He attributed the shortage to the niggardliness of the Government of India. Was that niggardliness of the Government of India generally believed to be a fact in the Army

a Yes

2612 2 And did it tend rather to depress their spirits - the belief that the government which was looking after the campaign was stinting the supplies

a I will not say that the men's spirits suffered from that but the officers ^{certainly} complained bitterly of the shortage and they attributed it to the Government of India

2613 I was it ~~the~~ generally ^{known} ~~known~~ in the Army that the Government of India had nothing to do with the cost of the Expedition

a Certainly it was not known

2614 Chairman: The arrangement being that whilst the Indian Government ^{bore} ~~paid~~ the normal expenditure of the ~~troops~~ ^{establishment} and the extra expenditure was borne by the Imperial Government. ~~That was~~

~~not known~~
That was not known -
a Certainly not

2615 Lord Hugh Cecil: ^{It was not known that} All supplies were in the hand of the Indian Government but were paid for by the Imperial Government

a No

18
2616

General Sir Neville Liffelton I see when you got to Bombay you expressed an unfavourable opinion of the way in which the wounded were treated there That is on page 9

a Yes. I only summarise the complaints made by officers in the Hospital to me. I have tried to add nothing in the way of hearsay evidence

2617

2 These ~~fact~~ instances you were told by the officers themselves

a Yes by the officers. with regard to the enteric cases I hear now from one of the enteric cases whom I met quite casually that there were three enteric cases in the ward and not one only; — he said it was absolutely awful ^{to see} the way in which if a sufferer from enteric wanted drink they washed off the mark on the mug and gave it to another patient not knowing

how far it ^{would cause} ~~would bring~~ infection

2618

2 You stand by your statement
a I stand by my statement

2619

Sir Archibald Williamson: You state on the next page that there was a shortage of X-ray apparatus and that what there was in Bombay was inefficient

a Yes. I only ~~said~~ ^{state} my own experience in regard to the X-ray there

2620

Chairman were these Government Hospitals
a The St George's Hospital, Bombay, my Lord ^{is} ~~was~~ a civil hospital - a government civil hospital

12 2621

2 They took in officers; they put aside two wards
a at the very top for officers & they also took in ^{the} civilian officials

2622

2 So that ^{in what was really I understand} in a government Hospital there ~~were~~ ^{was}

amongst

there was 181
amongst officers suffering from wounds in the
same ward there was a man suffering from
~~enteric~~ cancer,

a There was.

Q I decided on the morning I left

2623 Sir Archibald Williamson: Was it not the case that
the ~~the~~ civil hospitals in Bombay were all
requisitioned by the government at this time

a ~~Yes~~ It always is under the government of India

2624 Q Shall I say requisitioned by the military authorities

a St. George's ^{Hospital} Bombay was not. That is just the point -

that it was not under military control at all

2625 Chairman It was an official hospital

a It was an official hospital; but they ~~had~~ put
aside these two wards

2626 Sir Archibald Williamson: If there had been no X
ray apparatus in the hospital, it would have
fallen on the Director General of Medical Services
in India to supply it?

a I presume so

2627 Q ~~And~~ as a matter of fact, an X ray apparatus
is one of the most important things in connection
with wounds that are required in medical
equipment

a So I have always understood

2628 Chairman Were there any private hospitals run ^{in Bombay} as
the Voluntary Aid hospitals here ^{are} ~~are~~ in Bombay.

a Not that I know of, my Lord

2629 Q Had Lady ^{Willingdon} Wellington a hospital

a As far as I know there is the big Singapore Hospital
where I went to be X rayed ~~and then~~ one

for Indians, and then the big Harding's one
that ~~has~~ just been opened and then a new
one

one the Freeman Thomas ^{was} just opened and while I was there they were getting ready to ventilate ^{the Victoria} one and the Taj Mahal was turned into a hospital.

19
2630

General Sir Neville Lytton; And the Bircullah Club ^{that is mostly for convalescents} and the members ^{very kindly} set aside so many rooms for officers there and nothing could have been nicer ^{than} for the treatment ^{that} of officers received there

2631

Sir Archibald Williamson told me the case that officers were hurried out of the hospitals in Bombay and ordered to go up country to make room for more, before they were ready to go. I can only speak from hearsay and I do not wish to do that if you do not mind. I do not think it fair for me to do so

2632

Earl of Donoughmore You do not know of cases yourself a no; I have heard of ^{cases} ~~some~~; that is all

2633

Lord Hugh Cecil: with regard to the X-ray apparatus I do not quite understand your statement. Do you mean that various radiographs were taken with inefficient apparatus and so were failures, or ~~had they~~ merely that the ~~operations~~ operations consequent on them were unsuccessful.

a When I came back with my plates at one of the ~~many~~ places I went to, the doctor said to me, "Is it inside the pelvis or outside?" and I said "I cannot tell you", and he said; "nor can I"

W
14 2634

2 I was ~~then~~ ^{found} in contemplation Park Lane. a ~~There~~ ^{It was found} immediately I was operated on under the X-rays, ~~which~~ ^{It} was an extraordinarily good operation. If they had had a ~~dozen~~ ^{decent} plates in Bombay where they could have attended to me

I should have been ~~about~~ back ^{at} duty by now

2635

Chairman: ^{the} statement is here made: "Officers ^{were} put to a great deal of trouble if they were being invalidated home, by having to apply for leave etc" Does that mean that after an officer has been passed by a medical authority as in a condition to be invalidated home, he has to apply to the Quarters for leave

a ~~The Medical Board sends to the A.D.M.S. Bombay~~ and before any officer leaves India he has to have the special sanction of the Commander in Chief and we get this paper down (Handing a paper to the Committee) ^(see appendix) and we have to submit our applications for leave

2636

Sir Archibald Williamson: It looks as if they were using a peace form for war
a Yes. The amount of trouble that we were put to was too ridiculous really

2637

Chairman I understand that after a man has been invalidated home by the medical authority he has to apply to the military authority in Bombay who sends his application to Simla, where it has to be passed by the Commander in Chief himself before the man can leave, a yes that is so

2638

General Sir Neville Cytelton ^{By} the Commander in Chief himself

a I know that I was told that no one could leave India until after the Commander in Chief had actually ^{had} seen his name before him and people were held up for some considerable number of days owing to that

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2639

Chairman Did any serious consequences ensue to any invalidated officer to your knowledge

by

by reason

~~in consequence~~ of his being so detained
I would not like to say that, my Lord
2 But great delay occurred

2640

Q Yes in certain cases. As regards my own case and
the officers of whom I speak, we were ordered of
the Hospital there that we got the command in
Chief's sanction ^{but did not} to wait for the sanction of
the G.O.C. at Poonah. We came off in the boat

2641

2 How long ^{was it in} ~~were~~ your case
Q After I was boarded about seven days. We had
another form to fill up which I have never used
till this day. It says at the top (see appendix)

Insert
A.B.
2642

The form was handed in ~~and is as follows~~

2 Chairman did any of the officers with whom
you came in contact complain of a lack of
supplies for which they had applied

Q Yes they could not get up to the front what
they wanted I know but who was responsible
for holding ^{them} up I do not know. With regard
to the granting of six months' leave I would
like to say that ~~all~~ officers ^{are} boarded out
there ^{and} are given six months' leave and the
^{moment} ~~morning~~ they come to England they are told

11

^{that} it is no use

2643

Earl of Donoughmore; And they are boarded again
Q They are boarded again and a lot of them
are not getting the six months, and are ~~not~~
returning to duty immediately

2644

Chairman: Why?
Q I do not know what the real reason is.
They are told that the Indian Board does
not count

16

2645

Earl of Donoughmore: The final decision is with
the Board at home not with the Board out
in

in India

A Yes

2646

Sir Archibald Williamson (an the Board at home extend leave given in India

2647

a I presume so if the officer is too ill for duty Chairman Is there anything you wish to supplement or correct?

With regard to the wounded at Hishk at the top of page 5 I would like to say this: I say there was a great shortage of blankets my Lord. Since I wrote that I have seen the Transport Officer of the Second ^{Leicester} ~~Lope~~ Regiment who is now at home wounded. He tells me that on that particular day 200 blankets were provided by the Quartermaster of the Second Leicestershire Regiment. There were no palliasses; the men were crowded in tents and he found a dead Soldier lying among the living, and the men said ^{that} he had been there for some time. On the 7th and 8th January the regimental cooks supplied the food and the hot drinks. Captain Swatue said that there were no medical comforts at all and the C.O. & ~~the~~ said that he had no orderlies to deal with the dead. Now with regard to the treatment of wounded at Wadi in the next paragraph 50 blankets were again provided by the regiment, and as the men lay on the ground small bivouacs were placed over them by the regiment. The men had carried the bivouacs with them

Wheeler

2648

Lord Hugh Cecil: What is a bivouac

A One of these little tents

2649

Chairman A sort of gipsy tent

A Yes. You can just crawl in

2650

Is there anything else you wish to say

A At

Hagan & Snell

At the top of page 7 I say "Provided hot drinks and some food for the British troops" those words "some food" I wish to amplify. The men in the camp to which the wounded of the "Julena" had been taken told the C.O. of the second Leicestershire Regiment that they had no food and he sent to the Brigade asking them to sanction their regimental reservations being issued to the wounded. This was granted by the orders of the G.O.C. 28th Brigade and carried out. It was a very cold night. They went round with blankets and made up so that every man had two blankets for the night. I only point that out to show that it was really one regiment that was doing it out of what had been issued to them. In the same way as had been done when the ~~with tents~~, if the Second Leicestershire ^{Regiment had not} by General Aylmer's orders received tents at Ali Sharba — there would have been ^{in many cases} no tents for the wounded at all because we had to go and take them off the boats

2651 Sir Archibald Williamson. This is nothing to do with transport but it is interesting as showing the state of affairs. A Rab is why I mention it. This particular regiment arrived at Ali Sharba on December the 13th nearly three weeks before the rest of us who were shoved up without. Take for instance the ~~2nd~~ ^{2nd} Black Watch who arrived at Ali Sharba the same morning as I did. ~~and~~ They had to march off the very next day straight into battle. The 2nd Leicestershire Regiment was sent on from Marseilles at the beginning of November and they managed to get supplies which other regiments did not get and they were fitted out better with transport than other regiments which ~~it~~ ^{it} was taken from them afterwards.

2652 General Sir Neville Lytton. They had regimental transports. A They had regimental transports.

Lord

21/2653 Lord Hugh Cecil: How do you mean "Taken away from them afterwards"?

2654 Commander Wedgwood: all the transport was pooled

A Yes, it was always being done. You never knew from one day to another whether you were going to keep your own transport, and it gave a tremendous amount of trouble to transport officers and others. The food for the press and the tea and everything on that occasion was provided by the regiment and the regimental medical officer used all the dressings that he possibly could get

~~Chaplain~~ ~~He with regard to~~
* Then with regard to chaplains I would like to say that the ^{2nd} Leicestershire Regiment ~~had~~ had no service ^{at} Christmas ^{Day} except what was read by the commanding officer of the regiment, and the last service they had had before that was in October ⁹ and held it before they left France, and they did not have another until they had gone through the first two battles; not until the Sunday after the 14th January, ^{then} I held ^{a service} it at Wadi for them. It was very much the same with the other British regiments. There is one other thing ^{swogled like to say} I cannot understand personally why there should have been ^{great} a shortage of beds. The Indian ~~of a charpoy~~ ^{is a very cheap thing and could have been very easily brought up ^{got} and ^{there good} fitted up ~~there~~}

2655 Lord Hugh Cecil: What is a charpoy

A A sort of string bed with four posts. One has often lain on them oneself in India. They certainly would have brought ^{been} considerable comfort to the wounded if they ^{had had them}

2656 Earl of Donoughmore They take up very little room

A Yes. I do not profess to know anything about ammunition but I should like to bring your notice ^{the} fact

fact that Mark 6
 the 2nd Leicester Regiment had ~~marked~~ ammunition served
 to them and their rifles were sighted for Mark 7 ammunition.
 They had to sit to work to train the ^{N. C. O's and the} men ^{to remember} ~~only~~ ^{only}
 the difference when they attacked the enemy, ~~a new sight~~
^{stake} that because the C.O. of the 2nd Leicestershire Regiment
 so emphatically impressed upon me here after time what
 a tremendous amount of trouble ~~that~~ ^{it} gave him in
 training his men as soon as they got ~~the~~ ^{to} ali ~~glady~~
 to get ready for this new ammunition, and I know that
 officers of the Indian regiments complain bitterly of the
 same thing. They found it even more difficult with the
 Indian soldier ^{to} explaining the difference in the sighting
 They had to refer to a little pamphlet and ~~very~~ ^{very} few
 people had got this pamphlet. Then just to corroborate ~~that~~
^{what has been said about} ~~locking~~ ^{the} medical arrangements ~~was~~, I would
 like to say ^{what} ~~that~~ ^{when} one General said to me on January
 the 10th. He said "Well padre if I am hit very seriously
 I am going to shoot myself rather than have to go through
 all this suffering here". He was hit ~~eventually~~ afterwards
 and he was very ill indeed and he eventually died when
 he was taken down the river. The extraordinary part is the
 number of men who seemed fairly well when they left
 us at the front who died after they got down

- 2657 Chairman: Slightly wounded?
 A. Well they may have been more seriously wounded than
 what the average person thought. They wrote back to their
 regiments repeatedly and said "Getting on all right". The
 next thing we got was a telegram up from Amara
 or Basra "So and so is dead"
 2658 Q. They were in stationary hospitals
 A. Yes, on the way down
 2659 Sir Archibald Williamson: The mortality amongst the wounded
 was high?
 A. I should certainly say so from what one can
 judge

2660 22/ Chairman Judge

I thank you; is there anything more that you wish to say. I went to correct one thing ^{on page 19} it was General Douglas and ~~page 10~~, and not General Hudson in the ^{passage} paragraph referring to the armistice. There is a misprint there. Just to show that there was no exaggeration about the postage I would like to say I got ~~the~~ a letter dated December 18th from the Commander in Chief in India on March 30th and another from the Bishop of Lucknow dated December 24th reached me on the same date. If I may ^{represent} ~~be~~ a grievance felt ~~by~~ widows ^{by} my husband, certain widows whose husbands have died of sickness, who were not killed ^{by wounds,} but who died ^{for instance} entirely from cholera, some of them

they are not getting the gratuity which they otherwise would have got

2661 Chairman. Otherwise?

A If their husbands had died from a wound they would get £ 600 down in the case of Lieutenant Colonels, ~~wounded~~ but they have not got that at all nor have they got the gratuity for their children, and they are only getting an intermediate pension instead of the full pension

~~Chairman~~ ^{a man} ~~that you~~ If ~~you~~ dies from ~~a~~ ^{cholera or} disease ^{his widow} your wife will not get ^{as big a pension as if you} he died from a wound

2662 A No. Lord Hugh Cecil Is that peculiar to the Indian Army? or is it so throughout the ^{armies} operations in France and Mesopotamia?

21 A I am not sure, but it is more especially ^{so} with regard to those ~~_____~~ out there. There is not death to the same extent from cholera elsewhere

2663 Chairman Were our troops inoculated

A

2664 A. I never remember any ~~people~~ being inoculated
Lord Hugh Cecil: Neither for enteric nor cholera

2665 A I never heard of those parades at all
Chairman: ^{I thought} Although they were all inoculated in India
A In India but I was speaking of the front

2666 Sir Archibald Williamson: Were the troops with which you
were associated ^{with} when you went ^{with} on this expedition to Mesopotamia inoculated against cholera

A Not as far as I know
2667 Earl of Donoughmore: You were not inoculated yourself?

A No.
2668 O For enteric
A Not when I went to Mesopotamia

2669 O You had ^{you} already been done
A Three years ago in India

Lord Hugh Cecil: Three years ago did you say?
A Yes

2670 Sir Archibald Williamson: Is it not the case that it
only lasts ^{for} two years and you require to be inoculated again
A I am not well enough up in medical matters to
answer that

2671 Q. You have never been inoculated against cholera?
A No. Then ^{I would like to say} ^{the} ^{had} mattering which it was reported ^{at} arrived certainly
was not there in any large quantity long after the
dates ~~I did the administration as well~~ when it was reported
in this country that ~~it~~ had got up to the front

2672 Lord Hugh Cecil: What mattering is that?
A Mattering to go over the tents

Commander Wedgwood: To keep the sand ~~down~~ out

2673 Chairman: Did you hear any remarks made as regards
replies ^{given} made in the House of Commons or the state
ments published in connection with ~~the~~ Mesopotamian
~~force~~ affairs

A Yes, I heard many criticisms.

2674 Q What was the nature of ^{the} criticisms
 A That they thought that the people at home were not being informed truthfully about the real state of affairs

2675 Sir Archibald Williamson: Have you any knowledge of the present condition there

A Only from letters

2676 Q How old would they be

A I have one here from ^a general written in June

The Chairman ~~those~~ ^{that is rather} are far back

2677 Commander Wedgwood Have you anything later than that?

A No, not with me. I have only heard things

2678 Q Would it be advisable that we should hear any complaints mentioned in these later letters

A I do not think that the ^{writers} ~~officers~~ would wish me to bring them forward

Chairman Thank you very much
The witness withdrew

Adjourned for a short time