

Sipica

3718 Lieutenant. G. D. Nelson. R.N. V. R; R.N.A.S sworn
Chairman: You have put in a statement which I will take as

Q. Your evidence in Chief
A. Messing [except statement marked X]
The following statement was handed in

3719 Chairman: You were in Mesopotamia from Sep^r 15th 1915 to May 30th 1916

Q. A. Yes

3720 Q. I understand you went up with General Townshend to
Ctesiphon, and that you were also with General Aylmer
in the Relief Expedition
A. Yes

3721 Q. You are a flying man
A. Yes; I am attached to the Naval Air Service

3722 Q. You have no fault to find with the original equipment of the
Air Service
A. No.

3723 Q. But there was a difficulty about repairs was there not
A. Yes occasionally by lack of transport and distance from
our base

3724 Q. But our machines ~~of~~ a good deal affected by the climatic
conditions
A. Yes. The climatic conditions were very bad for machines

3725 Q. The wood warped
A. Yes - ^{from} exceeding dryness and variation in temperature.
The wood enters largely into the construction of aeroplanes
and it gets out of shape and the tension of the fabric varies
greatly and spoils the angles of the various parts of the machine

3726 Q. Was that a considerable difficulty
A. I would not like to say that. It shortens the useful life of
a machine

3727 Q. You were sometimes on half rations and sometimes on
^{half} quarter rations. That was when you were up on these
expeditions I suppose

A. Yes

Statement

46
18.9.16. 48



~~STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE TO BE GIVEN BY THE DEFENDANT~~

I was in Mesopotamia, mostly at the front, from Sept. 15 to May 30, 1916. I went up with General Townshend to Ctesiphon and subsequently with General Aylmer on Relief Expedition.

1. The equipment and personnel of the Air Service was up-to-date and excellent, but sometimes they were unable to fly owing to lack of transport, which meant delay in repairs; this especially the case after

We were Ctesiphon.

3. Sometimes without rations, or on half or quarter rations; we had to buy ~~them~~ ^{our} own necessaries at exorbitant prices, because ^{there was} no caulk at Basra.

4. I was attacked with enteric at Ctesiphon; came down in barge with wounded, very little medical attention, no emetine injection; no proper medical attention until Hout (5 days from Ctesiphon); ~~can~~ ^{can} tell of officers ill with dysentery being fed on beef in hospital in Hout.

5. I was in hospital at Basra for a fortnight and well treated; hospital well equipped.

6. I was ill with fever at the Rawalpindi Hospital at Amarah; nursing good; no proper medical examination; medical treatment generally defective.

7. Transport: On leaving Basrah on way up River, Sept 1915, no proper transport, machines and men put on cable boat in unsanitary and sinking condition; machines and gear eventually almost lost through sinking of the boat. On arrival at Sannayatt no tents or accommodation provided, had to live in hole in sand bank temperature 123 degrees in the shade.

~~Is unable to write a Statement, but would answer questions on above points. Is under order to return to Active Service.~~

~~He did not personally discover the two Turkish divisions after Ctesiphon.~~

3728 Q. You do not make much complaint of that I suppose
A. No

3729 Q. You take that as ^{is he} ordinary course

A. You almost expect that

3730 Q. There was no canteen at Bassa and you had to buy at very high prices there

A. Yes; we were robbed hands down

3731 Q. Was there a good deal of grumbling about that; I suppose there was

A. Yes, considerable

3732 Q. You came down from Aesophon with the wounded by barge

A. Yes

3733 Q. There was very little medical personnel on board ~~the~~ ^{the} barge

A. Yes very few. Not only were they short of doctors; they were not so much short of doctors as of remedies and bandages and the ^{necessaries} medical stores

3734 Q. You were all bundled away how into a transport and barges to get you down

A. Yes

3735 Q. The idea being that if you were left behind the Arabs would maltreat you

A. Yes; we should have been captured, if not by Arabs, by the Turks

3736 Q. I suppose it was very uncomfortable coming down

A. Yes, exceedingly so. The barge had a number of wounded aboard. It was impossible to attend to them; they were lying on the decks and in many cases calling for somebody to attend to them in order that they might go to the rear, and ^{that} it was impossible ^{for you} to do that

3737 Q. ~~Was~~ ^{The journey took} five days did it not

A. About five days to Kuf el Amara and then another two or three days ^{from there - say} probably three days

3738 Q. When you got down to Bassa you were in hospital, and have no complaint to make of your treatment

A. No, they treated me well there. I made a permanent recovery from

3739 Q. from a bad attack of dysentery
A. were you fighting ^{flying} at the time that ^{of the action} I ~~acted~~ at ~~Clont~~ Clont Cleiphon

A. Yes; I took two or three flights. I am an engineer and I fly in the machines in order to see that they are in perfect condition, and ^{by way of the} that the engines are of good behaviour ^{of the engine}

3740 Q. Did you ^{the appearance of} see any ~~advance~~ in the Turkish Divisions
A. No, I did not

3741 Q. Did the men who were with you fly them spot them
A. Not in the actual machine that I was in

3742 Q. It is true is it not that two divisions came rather suddenly
A. Yes, they did, and they

3743 Q. And they forced a retreat
A. Yes; I believe the retreat was decided on immediately they made their appearance

3744 Q. And how when you left Bassaf on going up river you to Cleiphon you were put in a cattle boat
A. Yes; we call it a Mahailah there; it is like a dhow, a native boat

3745 Q. In very bad condition
A. Yes; it had been used for the transport of cattle and never cleaned out

3746 Q. That upset your ^{machines} patients did it
A. The machines, ~~the two~~ ^{sea} aeroplanes that we took up ^{were} on a barge full of horse fodder on the other side of the steamer. The aeroplane ^{stores,} ^{tools and} ^{gaffins and} ^{bullets of} ^{ammunition} 20 or 22 men, were in the Mahailah which was in a sinking condition and we had great trouble to keep it afloat at all

3747 Q. Was she ~~now~~ sinking when you started
A. Yes, leaking very badly

3748 Q. When you arrived at Sannayatt there were no tents or accommodation
A. None at all

3749 Q. You had to live in holes in the sand
A. We made a dugout on the banks of the river and there was

25

no shade of any sort - ^{there were} no trees. we used two hammocks to make as much shade as we could. we had to lie head on to get our heads in the shade

3750 2. This was the Force going up to Kut
A. Yes

3751 2. Your statement generally is that you were well accommodated ^{located.} at Basra. Both going up and down the river the accommodation was very insufficient

A. Very bad. On the final trip down ^{fever} after I had ~~gone~~ down after about February. In ^{Anara} I was sent down to our base at Basra and I ~~described~~ ^{describe} the transport and the final insult. I came down on one of the paddle boats filled with wounded and I had great difficulty to find a ^{corner of the} ~~the~~ ^{best} ship where I could put my bed. I finally did get one near the engine room. The ship was in an exceedingly dirty condition. There were natives sick aboard. There was a young medical officer on the ship. The conditions were very trying, and I had only just got over this attack of fever and there was no attempt at looking after one and keeping one free from insect bites or anything like that.

3752 2. What date was this

A. I could not give you the exact date at the moment

3753 2. It was after you had come from Kut

A. Yes, it was after the capitulation of Kut

3754 2. Was the vessel supposed to be a ^{hospital} ~~useful~~ vessel

A. No; it was not a proper hospital boat

3755 2. But was it supposed to be one

A. Yes it was used for that purpose

3756 2. You were ^{all} more or less sick

A. Yes; I was convalescent; I had only just come out of hospital

3757 Sir Archibald Williamson. Did you ~~was~~ come down in April or May of this year and come ~~be~~ after the Vincent Report

A. Yes; it would be May of this year

3758 Chairman: The boat you say was not fitted at all for a hospital boat

- 3759 A. No, not at all
 2. Could you get food
 A. We brought down rations with us, and I had a ~~servant~~, a black servant, with me
- 3760 2. Did they cook the rations on board
 A. The servant was able to prepare me such meals as I required. At the time, I was not eating very much
- 3761 2. Was the vessel packed very close
 A. Yes, it was exceedingly close. As I say I had great difficulty to find room on the deck to put out a camp bed to lie in
- 3762 Lord Hugh Cecil: And the deck was in a dirty condition
 A. Yes, very dirty. The presence of so many natives aboard rather tended to that
- 3763 2. Was there any proper latrine accommodation
 A. Yes
- 3764 2. There was no dirt on that account.
 A. No
- 3765 Chairman: There was no special ~~flying~~ ^{fighting} going on at the time
 A. No, not at the time. We were well behind the line. That was in between Amasa and Basra
- 3766 2. You were not undergoing these hardships ^{throughout} during the emergency.
 A. No
- 3767 2. Were other vessels in the same condition which were used as transports, do you know
 A. Yes, that was the general method of going up and down stream
- 3768 Lord Hugh Cecil: Even for the sick and wounded
 A. Yes
- 3769 Sir Archibald Williamson: Had the officers to mix with the natives
 A. on the deck ^{well,} ~~while~~ you got a corner of ~~ship~~ the ship ~~as far away from them as possible~~ ^{These were officers quarters on the upper deck but they were already full and there was no room for me up there}
- 3770 Chairman: What is the exact date ^{you} ~~you~~ left Mesopotamia ~~on May~~
 30th

26 ~~Who that resurched I left Basra. I left Basra for Bombay on~~
May 30th (after referring) On Sunday 14th May I left Amara
for Basra

3771 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: You were working ~~scap~~^{sea} planes

A. Scaplanes as well as land machines

3772 2. In ~~scap~~^{high winds} were you able to use these scaplanes

A. ~~for~~ These are certain difficulties. If the wind happened to
be across stream we had to tack down to a position where
the course of the ~~river~~^{wind} was ~~an~~ up or down ~~one~~^{stream}. It did not
present any great difficulty. The river is so ~~equated~~^{sinuous} that
you can always find a place that is ~~up or down~~^{suitable} wind

3773 2. The scaplanes have been done away with

A. We brought them all away ~~probably~~ after Kut

3774 2. Were you present when Lieut. Howless was killed

Howless

A. Yes

3775 2. ~~At that time~~^{was being} the German Monoplane used by the Turks. ~~was it~~
~~as high time~~^{much faster}

A. Yes; I should say there was at least 2 ~~oknot~~^{advantage on their}

3776 2. It was superior altogether

A. Yes

3777 2. The Turks had managed to get it to Mesopotamia, ~~and had not~~^{but we}
managed to have anything at Mesopotamia like that?

A. We did not have a machine of that type - Those machines are of
a different type ~~altogether~~ from what we fly. They ~~will~~^{will} only fly for
a very short time. They are light machines and carry very little
petrol and do not take a passenger.

3778 2. Did they answer the purpose of the enemy

A. Yes; I take it they did in this case but they would not be able to
carry out a long reconnaissance or do any gun spotting, ~~but~~^{15 types}
~~our~~^{our} ~~scaps~~^{machines} were mainly used for

3779 Lord Robert Cecil: What types of machines had you these

A. We had scaplanes, 225 horse power short scaplanes, and 150
horse power short scaplanes, and a Voise 150 ~~h.p.~~^{h.p.} engine, a
French machine and a Henry-Farman which is of the type

also
look

~~also which they are made outside France. That with c?~~
engines and a ^{B.C.2} ~~Vorse 2~~. with the Royal Aircraft ^{factory} engine unit
had the long and the short Morris.

3780 Admiral Sir Cybrian Bridge: You said just now that our engines
were not as fast

A. No, they were not as fast

3781 2. Were they unable to get up sufficiently high to cross the lines
with safety

A. They were able to do it ^{last of 1918} for a long time. They did not climb so
quickly as these light machines. You say "with safety" Sir.
That is rather an elastic expression because even at very high
altitudes you are not safe

3782 2. With reasonable safety I mean

A. Yes.

3783 2. Do I take it that the result of your answer is that the enemy were
better supplied with aircraft than we ~~were~~ were

A. No, I would not like to say that. In the latter part of the campaign
during the attempted relief of Kut they only had I think two
machines, but they were of the fighting or scout type that could
make turns round our machines. There were never more than two.
I would not like to say that they were better equipped altogether as
regards aircraft

3784 2. ~~At another stage~~ ^{had nearly a side} any marked superiority over
the other in aircraft

A. Well, undoubtedly they had a very great advantage over us in
having these light quick machines that can generally ~~travel~~
attain a considerable altitude quickly and so more quickly
than our machines and get underneath ^{the} tail and shoot
you down. We were in that direction ^{at} ~~anyhow~~ ^{rate} labouring under
a very great disadvantage

3785 2. Would that prevent our machines from making accurate observations?

A. ~~It would interfere~~ ^{would interfere}. If you are harassed with a machine like that
you cannot keep on your course as you would wish to

3786 General Sir Neville Robt. Lytton The nature ^{of} and the ^{campaign} ~~country~~
really

really made their aeroplanes so much superior to ours ^{as long} distance flying was not so necessary

Q) A. No, not just at that part of the campaign, because the forces were close together

3787 Q. The obvious thing would have been to have had two sorts
A. Yes, I suppose so

3788 Q. How many aeroplanes had you altogether, - never mind the exact number

A. We had about 10. That was the Naval Air Service. The military wing had more than that. I do not know how many they had

3789 Q. You had 20 altogether

A. Yes. They were not all in action at the same time

3790 Q. At the time of the attempted relief of Kut what was the number of the machines actually flying.

A. We had 5 machines

3791 Q. And the enemy had two

3792 ^{A. Yes} Lord Robert Cecil: What had the military wing?

A. They would have about 4 or 5

3793 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: he had superiority in number

A. Yes

3794 Q. But ^{were} very inferior in regard to speed and fighting power

A. Yes

3795 Sir Archibald Williamson: You I think have been in a good many parts of the world

A. Yes.

3796 Q. Have you ^{before} been in South America

A. Yes

3797 Q. You took part in the destruction of the "Koenigsburg" in ~~South~~ ^{East} Africa

A. Yes

3798 Q. So you have been accustomed to ^{rough it} race with them

A. Yes

3799 Q. And you are not likely to exaggerate the conditions of discomf^{ort}

A. No, not at all

3800 Q. During the advance towards Baghdad what was the

expectation?

A. You must have heard the general talk of course

3801 Q. What was the expectation of the ~~they~~ ^{force} did they anticipate no difficulty in taking Baghdad

A. He did not anticipate any great difficulty at all

3802 Q. Was anything said amongst the officers about the ~~question of~~ ^{surprise} reinforcements in large numbers coming up

A. No, I do not believe there was any idea that we would be met with that difficulty; ^{in fact} I am certain of it

3803 Q. As far as you heard it was quite unexpected

A. Quite unexpected

3804 Q. Was anything said among the officers about its being a hazardous expedition

A. No; I cannot say that we considered it ^{so} at all. The attitude of mind of the other officers as far as I can gather, was certainly not that, because we had got the old Turk on the run and we had got him out of Kut-el-amara with very heavy losses on his side and he had retreated ~~from Kut~~. ~~On coming to~~ ~~action~~ My idea is that they were certainly under the impression that we were going to walk into Baghdad. Several of the officers had sent down to Basra for their new uniforms

3805 Q. One morning I think you flew over Baghdad yourself

A. Yes, testing one of the machines

3806 Q. Was that the day after the battle of Ctesiphon

A. The battle of Ctesiphon lasted about 5 days. We were actually ²⁴ in action 4 days anyhow

3807 Q. The 22nd November is the date fixed

A. Yes

3808 Q. The next ~~they say~~ ^{was} day ~~was~~ ^{that} the next day after you flew over Baghdad

A. No; it was the day actually preceding the ^{morning} of the first engagement that I flew over Baghdad

3809 Q. During the battle there was no great amount of movement of location; you pretty much fought where you were.

A. Yes

- 3810 Q. Was it that same day that another aeroplane went up and discovered the Turkish Divisions
 A. No. I think it was the fourth day after the action had been fought. We had fought and won it and got the ^{discovery} out of the vital point
- 3811 Q. Was it some one you knew who made this
 A. Yes
- 3812 Q. What was the report
 A. I only saw him fall out of the machine and rush down to Headquarters. I did not actually hear the report
- 3813 Q. What happened shortly after that
 A. Well, there was considerable activity in the way of getting away
- 3814 Q. There was an immediate order to go
 A. Yes, apparently yes. I do not know exactly, but ^{apparently go} ~~away~~ because steps were taken immediately for getting down stream
- 3815 Q. Do you know what was the report. What was seen
 A. I believe that two divisions were seen on the way coming out of Baghdad. One part of the report was interesting. A ^{message} ~~message~~ had been sent up in one of our machines to be dropped ^{wrapped} ~~at one of our eyes~~. The ~~machine~~ machine came down ^{to} about 200 feet. ~~to~~ He drops the message - a pack with a long streamer tied on to it like a parachute. On approaching they were fired at ^{hastily and} they opened the engine out and got away. That was an enemy patrol in a place where they did not expect it to be. I think ~~that~~ the report as regards the main force ^{was} of two divisions ^{came, they see} ~~you have~~ ~~one~~
- 3816 Q. Were our airmen beyond Baghdad at all. ~~you have~~ ~~one~~ troops arriving at Baghdad
 A. No, they did not see ~~the~~ troops arriving
- 3817 Q. I suppose that there is a good deal of dust
 A. Yes. It is very difficult to see which way a dust cloud is moving even because there ^{may} ~~is~~ ^{be} windage ^{blowing it in the} ~~floating out in~~ opposite direction from ^{that is} which it is moving
- 3818 Q. After the garrison was beset in Kut, did a flying machine go to them and land amongst them

A. no, we never landed, but we dropped 18,000 lbs of food into Kut within 10 days ^{different} of the attempted relief

3819 2. no machines landed

A. no machines landed

3820 2. you would have been within ^{enemy's fire} the ^{suppose}

A. yes. There was a stretch of ground where the food was dropped, ^{of which} ~~it~~ could have been very well raked ~~up~~ by the enemy if the machines had attempted to land

3821 2 You say that you can tell us of officers ill ^{with dysentery} ~~at Alexandria~~ being fed with beef in the hospital at Kut. Give us your description of what took place there. They were two officers belonging to the

A Naval Air Service. They had been sick on the small stretch of sand ~~that we occupied in the Tigris at~~ Kut-el-amara as our Naval Air Service Base. A doctor, ~~a native surgeon~~, an Indian surgeon, was sent down to see them. He gave them some remedies. I don't know what he gave them, ^{but it was} ~~he gave them~~ some kind of medicine. They were not better, and they were advised to go to hospital. There was a temporary field hospital put down at the back of a date palm grove on the outskirts of Kut right alongside of it. They went up there and only stayed there two days. ~~the day before coming down to the bank of the river~~ They said that they had had no treatment and the hospital was absolutely unequipped with what was ^{necessary} ~~needed~~. I ^{should} ~~was~~ not there myself ^{in person}

A We gave them petrol tins to ^{use as} ~~make out~~ ^{utensils} and for use in the hospital. They both told me that they were left absolutely alone at the hospital with no bed pans ^{which are} ~~absolutely~~ essential in the case of dysentery. ~~It should not have to get~~ ^{let patient} out of bed at all. ~~They had to get out~~ ^{but they} nothing was done at all. On the second day a plate of beef was brought in for each of them. They were young chaps very hungry and they ate it and were very much worse. Eventually they both had to go back to Bombay. One of them did not recover at all ^{there} he had to go back home.

3822 Q. Was this ^{on} the advance up the river

A. Yes on the advance up the river

3823 Q. You yourself were ill with enteric while at Ctesiphon

A. Yes; It was just when we started the street

3824 Q. You could not go sick I suppose then

A. No, I did not go sick then

3825 Q. You collapsed afterwards

A. Yes; I was very much worse by the time I got down to Kut. Fortunately a naval doctor ^{aboard} ~~came~~ and he managed to ~~find~~ ^{dig} out some remedies from somewhere and gave me a couple of injections

3826 Commander Wedgwood: Do you remember the battle of January 8th

A. No, I was down in Basra then. ^{service}

3827 Q. You did not hear any complaint of the air ^{reconnaissance} then

A. No I did not

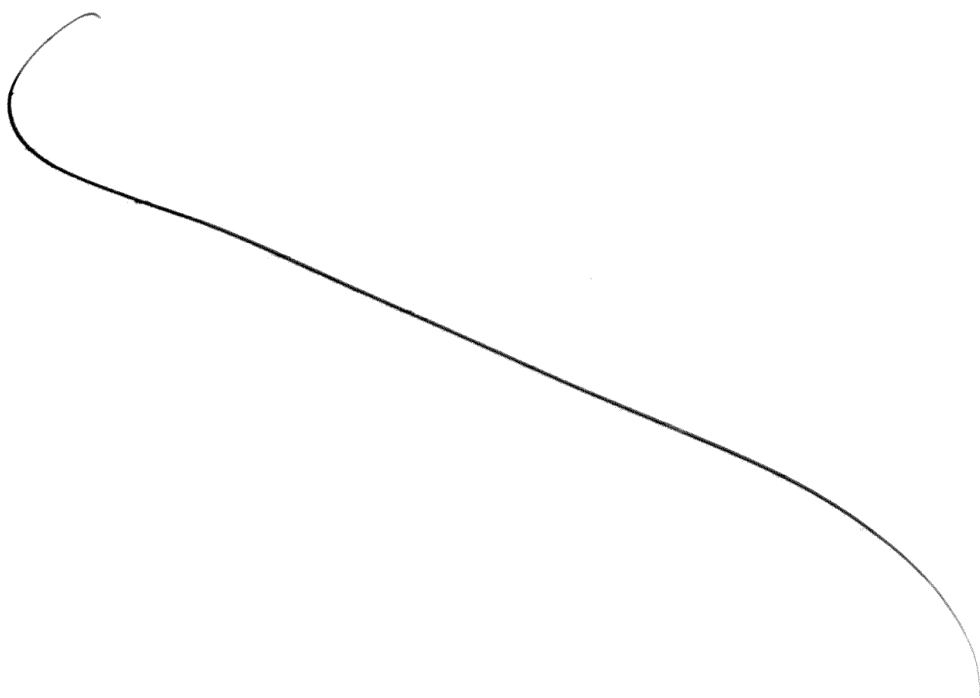
3828 Lord Robert Cecil: ^{might} Am I right in saying that the fastest machine you had was B2C?

A. No; the ^{Maurice} ~~Morris~~ ~~Tarnan~~ was the fastest

3829 Q. What engine

A. A 150 H.P.

Wint



Chapter 3 Imell

3830

2 Had you any ~~Martensydes~~ Martensydes
A Yes ~~about~~ at least two. They ~~had~~ belonged to the military wing. We had at least two before Ctesiphon

3831

2 Were they unable to cope with the Fokker
A They were both lost. Major Riley was lost with one

3832

2 How did that happen
A ~~He~~ ^{He} was the C.O. of the military wing at the time. He went to make a reconnaissance over Baghdad on the day preceding the battle at Ctesiphon and did not return; his engine failed I suppose. He is in Mosul.

3833

Q He is in prison - not killed - ~~returned~~ ~~captured~~
A He is interned - ^{captured} ~~captured~~ ~~out~~
They had a Fokker ~~up~~ there. I do not think that their speed would have been up to those

3834

2 What engine had they
A 80 horse power

3835

2 Was the Hurry Tammam a fast machine or not
A Yes but not as fast as the German machine

3836

2 Did you have no scouting machine except the Martensydes ~~which~~ ^{which} were lost

A No. They were in Mesopotamia when we arrived there in September. I do not know how long they had had them there before

3837

2 Did not they send out some more ~~there~~ ^{there} you were there till May. I believe some Martensydes ^{came} ~~came~~ out just about the time I ~~arrived~~ ^{left} but I did not see them

3838

2 How long a ~~flight~~ ^{flight} could you make with any of these machines - how many hours
A About four hours

3839

2 You could have flown far beyond Baghdad ~~and~~ ^{and} if you had ~~been~~ ^{been} asked
A Yes

3840

2 There would have been no difficulty in making
 a reconnaissance beyond Baghdad from Chirpkan
 + No. We did what we were ordered as
 regards reconnaissance; We were under the orders
 of the military

3841

2 It was not suggested that long reconnoissances
 should be made such as are made
 on the French front for instance
 + No; I take it that it was not. I
 think that one long flight was made by Captain
 White ~~the Secretary~~ to some ^{Cable}
 Line to the West of Baghdad. He never came
 back. He was lost.

3842

2 About what height did you get to when flying
 over the Turkish lines. You were asked about
 the danger
 + 6000 feet

3843

2 Not higher than that
 + No, we did not go higher than that, I do
 not say it was ~~not~~ because we could
 not get higher.

3844

2 You say that they were sometimes unable to fly
 owing to the lack of transport ^{was there} ~~of~~ ~~the~~ lack
 of petrol
 + No; we were never actually ^{short} ~~out~~ of petrol
 but the fighting capacity of a machine you see
 depends on its perfection of alignment,
 and the repair that ^{it is kept in.} ~~it is kept in.~~ if we had had jolly
 good transport we ~~should~~ ^{could} have packed ^{the} ~~the~~ machine
 down to our base had it turned up and
 everything put right and brought up again
 while going on with other machines but we could
 not do that

3845

2 ~~If~~ Were not you able to tune it up on the spot?

Had you not mechanics with you
+ We had mechanics with us. You want to
put the machine ~~away~~ in a tent and stay
down on the job perhaps for a fortnight but
the conditions under which ^{we} were living pre-

cluded ~~that~~ ^{that possibility} ~~that~~ ^{they} sometimes put the aeroplanes ^{out} ~~away~~
3846 Q ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~of action~~ altogether.

A Yes

3847 Q In some of the papers before us it is said
they could not fly sometimes because there was
a hurricane. That would mean a storm
of rain as well as of wind.

A Yes

3848 Q You were not prevented from flying merely by
wind when it was dry weather.

A No but occasionally we were. It was made
very difficult by the wind and also the dust in
suspension. Shamal they call it or these

3849 Commander Wedgwood Was it ^{very} ^{bumpy} ~~rough~~ with
pockets of air

A Yes very ~~bad~~ bumpy, bad

3850 Q Owing to ^{the} heating

A Yes

3851 Q In the middle of the day not in the morning
and evening I suppose

A I do not know that I could say there
was very much difference. It is perhaps a
little ~~more~~ ^{worse} in the middle of the day

3852 Lord Trenchard Cecil: It was not too bumpy to fly

A No and we did fly

3853 Q You did not feel the bumps when you got high
up perhaps

A No. Above the 14000 feet level you do not

3854

where there so much
 Carl of Donoughmore With regard to your experience
 at the hospital in Amara you say that the
 nursing was good?

A Yes

3855

Q But otherwise you were not very favourably
 impressed.

A No. I went in there and they simply
 said "Stalls, how are you; what is the
 matter ^{with you!} We will put ^{you} on a ^{light} diet". ~~It~~
~~was~~ I had ^{had} a very bad attack. ~~It was~~
~~not~~ fever. It was ^{it} periodic fever; ~~they~~ had not any special
 period. My temperature went up every night.
 They would take it at about 4 in the
 afternoon when it was perhaps only a degree
 above normal. They would say "You are much
 better" ^{but} about 10 o'clock ^{high} I would have
 light delirium and a very ^{high} temperature.
 No medical examination bacteriologically or otherwise
 was made of me at all

3856

Q Was the hospital working at high pressure
 and very full.

A No It was not very full. I should say
 there was ample staff for the number of patients

3857

Q It was a hospital that dealt with surgical as
 well as medical cases and all sorts of cases

A I presume so. I was a medical case ^{and} I was
 taken in there. The boss man was a surgeon
 not a medical man so. but there was a
 medical man attached to it

3858

Q About what time was this.

A ~~I~~ Was flying fighting going on at the front at
 the time. It was after the capitulation of Kut

3859

Q Therefore presumably they were not working at ^{high} pressure
 A No we are much obliged to you.
 The witness withdrew

MR

5-3 64
21.9.16.

MESOPOTAMIA COMMISSION.

STATEMENT BY A. P. CHALKLEY, ESQ.

) Pg 147
1800

1. I was at Basra from early in June until the beginning of August this year, as Engineer-in-Charge of Red Cross Motor Ambulance Launches, and also in making arrangements for the reconstruction of a 150-ft. river hospital ship, built by the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John. I did not go more than ten miles above Basra, and I visited Mohammerah and Abadan.

Description of Port.

2. At Basra the river Shatt-el-Arab is half a mile wide, and the town is built practically wholly on the right bank. This is, however, not the real city of Basra, which is 2 miles up one of the creeks.

Most of the buildings, relatively few of which are of a permanent nature, are along the banks of the river, or up the creeks. There are about half a dozen of these creeks extending right along, and between the two largest creeks is the village of Ashar. The hospitals are erected along the river banks, or on the sides of the creeks, and at Basra, or in the vicinity, there are 8 or 10 hospitals. These are mostly single-storied structures, although part of the British General Hospital is a permanent building, formerly a residence.

At Basra the river is deep enough for ocean-going steamers drawing 20 feet to anchor, but they all anchor in the middle of the river. There is a bar at the mouth of the river, which is 60 miles from Basra, and steamers of 20 feet draught have to wait for the tide before getting over this bar. There is another bar at Mohammerah.

Presumably owing to the difficulties of unloading, there are always numerous ships in the river at Basra, the line generally extending from about 2 miles below Basra to about 2 miles above. About 2 miles above Basra is Magil, where a large proportion of the stores, &c., are landed, and this is the starting point for the river steamers going up to the front. There is no room at Basra for stores, &c., as practically all the available ground is occupied by hospitals.

Discharge of Cargo.

3. There are no landing stages or quays at Basra for the discharge of cargo, where ocean-going ships can come alongside, although there may be one now at Magil. Ships therefore discharge in the river, into local vessels (known as mahelas) or barges, and these distribute the cargo or take it up the river. Some of the ocean-going ships remain a considerable time, presumably owing to the difficulty in unloading, and some discharge part of their cargo at Abadan, and then proceed up to Basra to unload the rest.

These mahelas carry up to 70 tons, and have to be towed, although some of them can sail up; but this is a very slow proceeding.

There is a certain number of motor lighters on the river, but they suffer from having no real repair yard.

Transport of Stores, &c., up-river from Basra.

4. There are about 50 river steamers at present in service of various types, but this number does not seem to be nearly sufficient for the purpose. The journey up to the front by means of these boats occupies a week or more.

As showing the lack of transport, it may be mentioned that the Red Cross Society found it very difficult to get any of their stores taken up from Basra to Amara.

Repairs Facilities.

5. There is a repair yard for steamers only at Basra, with a shop equipped with a few tools, but apparently not sufficient for all the work in hand, particularly as there was a great deal of sickness among the skilled workmen during the hot weather. In view of the increase in the number of river steamers in the future, a new repair yard seems quite essential, also a slipway or dock where ship repairs can be carried out. A dock has been partly dug out at the dockyard, but when I was at Basrah work had been stopped.

There is a smaller dockyard for motor boat repairs, but in this there are absolutely no machine tools, and any repairs on motor boats which necessitate the smallest amount of machining have to be sent to the larger dockyard, where they are invariably delayed. The motor boat dockyard is situated on Ashar creek, which is liable to dry up in the hot weather, and it would have been much better to build it on the river front with very good repair shops, equipped with proper tools. Motor boats are very important at Basra, and with a well-fitted dockyard and repair shop, intended only for motor craft, much good work could be carried out, and, moreover, all the necessary repairs on the motor lighters could be affected, this now being done on the opposite bank of the river, where there are practically no facilities at all.

The Transport of the Sick and Wounded.

6. All the sick and wounded are brought down from the front by boat. There are four hospital ships in the river, but apparently only one, the "Sikkim," was at all in regular service, owing to frequent breakdowns of the others. The result is that during the hot weather it is estimated about 80 per cent. of the sick and wounded have to be brought down the river on river tugs, or barges attached to these tugs. The journey occupies three days and nights, or more, as the boats always tie up at night, and there is obviously very little special accommodation for either sick or wounded men on these craft. In my opinion more hospital river vessels are required very urgently.

The river boats unload the men at a jetty opposite the British General Hospital No. 3, and they are distributed to the various hospitals at Basra. When a hospital ship comes in from Bombay to take the sick and wounded back to India, this ship moors alongside the jetty, and the men are loaded on to it direct from the bank. As several of

the hospitals are some distance away, and up the narrow and shallow creeks, motor boats are necessary for bringing down the men, and for this purpose the motor ambulance launches of the joint societies are employed.

They are, in fact, the only ones used for the purpose, although there is a steam tug supplied by the medical service which is also utilised.

Patients have to be frequently moved from hospital to hospital in Basra, and there is continual movement necessary, not only of the sick and wounded, but also for carrying the hospital stores, &c., so that ambulance craft are very essential. As showing the necessity for these boats, it may be mentioned that one of the Red Cross Ambulance Launches carried 15,000 men between January and June, 1916, besides several hundred tons of stores. In some instances, owing to urgency Red Cross Ambulance Boats have carried cholera patients, although usually infectious cases are placed in mahelas, and towed by motor boats.

Lack of Roads.

7. There are practically no roads that can be used for vehicular traffic, and particularly for motor cars, at Basra. Hence nearly all communication is by water, and there is no doubt that far larger numbers of motor boats would be of great value, not only in connection with the hospital work, but also for general use. For instance, a service of motor boats running continuously from one end of Basra to another, calling at all the small boat landing stations, would be of much use in facilitating

movements of officers and men, who, even when on urgent business, have to rely mainly on slow local "bellums," poled by the natives. In any case it is essential that proper repair facilities should be provided. Whilst I was at Basra the number of motor boats for all purposes was probably about 75, but little more than 60 per cent. of these could be reckoned on for service at the same time, and many of them were unreliable.

Red Cross Hospital Ship.

8. The British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John have constructed a hospital ship, suitable for bringing the sick and wounded down from the front to Basra, and this ship is properly equipped with all the necessary medical appliances and accommodation. It has been built in this country, and arrangements were made for it to be re-erected at Mohammerah (18 miles below Basra) by a Bombay firm, who would supply all the necessary labour and tools from Bombay. After arrangements had been completed, however, the War Office in London refused permission for the work to be carried out at Mohammerah, and gave instructions that the boat should be re-erected at Bombay, and sent up to Basra under its own power. At a later date the War Office reversed this decision, and gave the necessary permission; but it is now probably too late to make the preparations for the workshops, &c., at Mohammerah, so that the boat will no doubt have to be rebuilt at Bombay, and sent up to the Persian Gulf under its own power.

spies

Mr A. P. Chalkley swears

Chairman You have put in a statement which we will take as your evidence in chief

A Certainly

~~The following statement was introduced in~~
Insert Statement marked C

In said statement

marked C

Chairman I saw that statement I gather that you were at Basra ^{from} early in June till the beginning of August this year

3861

A Yes

Q And you were engineer in charge of the Red Cross Motor Ambulance Launches and you also went to make arrangements for the reconstruction of a 150 feet inner hospital ship built by the British Red Cross Society and Order of St John

3862

A Yes

Q We have had a description of ~~that~~ the port of Basra so I hardly need put many questions on that point to you. There is no wharfage at Basra I understood. There is no wharfage at all for unloading cargo. There is only one jetty where hospital ships moor. There is a certain amount of wharfage three miles further up at Maggill

3863

A

Q You are a mechanical engineer

3864

A Yes

Q Have you ~~got~~ ^{gone} through the ordinary course of engineering

3865

A Yes

Q Do you think there would be much difficulty in improving the wharfage at Basra

3866

A Yes, but at Maggill I think a great deal may be done because there is deep water fairly close in towards the shore

3867

Q Could the accommodation be very considerably increased there

A Yes

3868

Q Yes I think so

A Now as regards the launches; were there any ^{motor} ambulance launches other than the Red Cross
Q I think there were no other ambulance launches at all except one steam tug which was used for towing barges which carried the sick and wounded men ambulance

3869

Q All the motor launches were provided by private ~~enterprise~~ effort.

3870

Q Yes I think every one

Q How many had you left
A We had 15 to 20 - ^{20 when I returned} I think and 15 when I ^{arrived} left. That is the approximate number would

3871

Q Without these launches I assume there ~~would~~ be very great difficulty in moving the wounded
A Yes; they were employed locally. The main transport is as you know by river hospital ships

3872

Q Did the motor ambulance not go up the river
A No Not to take sick and wounded the whole distance from the front to the hospital at Basra. They were used as feeders to the hospitals and river hospital ships and to the ~~steamer~~ ^{steamer} going to Basra

3873

Q ^{Could they have} ~~you have~~ done that journey

A No; it is too big a journey

3874

Q There is a ^{repair} shop at Basra but that you think is insufficient for the purpose

A Yes. There are two workshops at Basra, ^{one} for ~~small~~ steamers and one for small launches
I think that both are insufficient

3875

Q How long had that shop been established
A I think about a year

Q You

3876

Q You consider a new repair yard quite essential
A Yes a big one

3877

Q Why was the dock which was begun stopped
A I do not know. I only heard that it was afterwards decided to have a slipway instead of a dock for hauling up the ships

3878

Q There is no well fitted dockyard or repair shop for motor boats

3879

A None whatever
Q If the repairing got beyond certain dimensions under ~~present~~ ^{present} conditions what then?
A ~~It~~ ^{They} would have to be done by the big dock yards as best ~~to~~ ^{they} could

3880

Q Where is the big dockyard
A At Basra there is a small one for motor launchers and a bigger one for minesweepers. It is called the big dockyard but there is no dock there. It is a misnomer. The dock has been started but not finished. ~~It has~~ ^{There is} a fairly big workshop with machine tools in it

3881

Q How long has that workshop been there
A I think 6 to 9 months. It is just one big workshop ^{the shafting being} driven by a steam engine and ~~there are~~ a number of lathes and drilling machines

3882

Q Was it a government workshop or private
A It has been fed up since the war. It is an R. A. M. workshop.

~~Annual Sir Cyril's Bridge. Can you see the tide for big vessels?~~

~~A No. They have done it with motor lighters but not with big boats. It is not safe. It has been done in case of necessity.~~

3883

Q Guantanamo There are four hospital ships on the river

river but only one in regular work I understand.

3884

Q ~~A large~~⁸⁰ per centage of sick and wounded have to be brought down the river on traps or barges

A Yes. The estimate was given me by the hospital people they suffer

3885

Q Do you think that in consequence of this necessarily

A Yes

3886

Q You have no doubt in your own mind about that

A I have no doubt in my own mind about that

3887

Q If it had not been for private agency it would have been very difficult to distribute the wounded coming down in these boats and barges.

A Yes I think ~~it~~^{that} can safely be said

3888

Q You estimate that the Red Cross ambulance launches ^{carried} got 15 000 men between January and June

A No. That is merely to show what has been done by one particular launch

3889

Q One particular launch carried 15 000

A Yes

3890

Q Sir Michael Williamson: From the shore to the ship I suppose?

A It is up the creeks to the various hospitals and down the river. The hospitals are distributed over a fairly large area and they have to be ~~fed~~^{fed} and fed continually. Sick men have to be taken to the hospital and taken from the hospital to the hospital ship to be transhipped to Bombay

3891

Q ~~Is it~~^{the} custom when a hospital ship comes down the river to tranship the sick men

were into motor boats and distribute them in the motor boats to the different hospitals. They mainly in the first instance go direct into the British or Indian General Hospital alongside the jetty where they arrive but afterwards they are transferred. If cholera cases develop for instance they have to go to the cholera camp

3892

2 They are all landed first of all
A Practically all are landed first of all, Cholera cases ^{being} ~~soon~~ ~~be~~ transhipped into motor boats and taken straight down to the cholera camp

3893

Common why are they landed first of all
A I suppose because the British and Indian General Hospitals are right alongside the landing stage

3894

2 The great majority of them when landed are carried ~~by water~~ ^{or walk} straight to the hospital
Yes; they are carried ^{or walk} ~~and~~ ~~altogether~~ straight to the hospital

3895

2 There are no roads from Bassein and therefore there is great need for ambulance motor boats
Yes

Chaplin

- 3897 Q What happened to the most hospital vessel.
 A She has ~~been~~^{to be} rebuilt at Bombay, the material has now been sent out for rebuilding her.
- 3898 Q Could you build her at Bassara, do you think.
 A Not at Bassara but at Mocha or mera.
- 3899 Q She could be put together.
 A Yes with sufficient time for preparation there is no doubt about it.
- 3900 Q Is there a good workshop there.
 A No, that has to be established, & that is where it is necessary to have some time for the purpose.
- 3901 Q I suppose that there has been a great delay in consequence of the state of affairs.
 A Yes, there has certainly been delay in consequence.
- 3902 Q Did you ever visit the hospitals at Bassara.
 A I went into them merely casually to see people whom I knew there, not otherwise.
- 3903 Q Had they got electric fans.
 A Very few of them had. Most of them were temporary buildings with no electrical arrangements at all. In the permanent buildings, such as the British General Hospital, they had electric fans.
- 3904 Q In all the wards.
 A I think not in all the wards.
- 3905 Q Were there sufficient ice-making machines.
 A No. I think that there was distinctly an insufficiency of ice there.
- 3906 Q Had you done any Red Cross work, or had you only done engineering work in

in connection with this.

3906 Q Only engineering work, except that the general organisation of the service was under my control.

2 Really it comes to this, that if it had not been for private endeavour there would have been very great difficulty in removing the wounded & distributing them to the different hospitals.

A Yes.

3907 Q The Earl of Donoughmore: Could you shortly describe to the Commission what these hospital launches look like. Will they take stretcher cases.

A Yes they will take fifteen stretcher cases, & they will take up to 75 sitting cases. We have had 75 in the boats.

3908 Q What is their horse power.

A 30 H.P., and they are 140 feet long.

3909 Q What it comes to is this that they are doing the Hospital transport work at the base.

A Yes, and also at the front. Several have been sent up to the front for carrying men to the Casualty Clearing Station, - to the river head.

3910 Q They are doing the work which here at home would be done by motor ambulances?

A Yes.

3911 Q There are no roads.

A No. They carry medical stores just as motor lorries do here.

3912 Q Lord Hugh Cecil: With regard to the fifty river steamers, about what is their carrying capacity.

3 35

Q In tonnage do you mean? They carry tonnage or troops or anything.

Q What number of tons of supplies could they carry.

A I should think that the average would be perhaps about 100 tons as an absolute maximum.

3914

Q And about how many men.

A I think about 400. The usual method of carrying men is to tow barges up, the men being on the barges.

3915

Q I merely wanted to get an idea. Do you know at all why the War Office refused permission in the first instance to put this boat together at Mohambara.

A I think that it was because they wished to have the whole question of the workshops entirely under them, and not to have any auxiliaries as ours would have been. The whole matter of dock repair facilities & so on being taken in hand by the War Office I presume they considered that there should be no outside workshop at all.

3916

Q Was that from fear of competition for labour or what.

A It was so that we should not interfere in any way with their labour market from India or with the machinery or anything else. They did not realise that we should be quite separate and would not take their labour at all.

3917

Q Where you getting labour from the district.

A We were getting it from Bombay.

4
3918 I can no satisfactory labour be obtained
round about.

A Not skilled labour. The Coolie labour
is not so good as the Indian Coolie labour,
and that is not very good.

3919 I Can you get unskilled labour.
A Yes.

3920 I Can steamers be put together at the existing
repair yards.

A Yes at Bas~~ra~~^{ra}. At ~~the~~ ^{fields} Abadan the
re-~~use~~ of the oil ~~industry~~ ^{fields} it can be done,
but it is a rather slow job.

3921 I Would it be possible to send boats out in
pieces as I understand was done in
Egypt, and put them together at Abadan?

A That was our proposal, and it was
done in one or two cases.

3922 I You contemplated a special repair shop for
the purpose?

A Yes, as we knew that we could not avoid
ourselves of the facilities existing there, or
we should be interfering with government
work.

3923 I As things stand some were actually put
together at Abadan.

A Yes, some monitors were put together at
Abadan I believe.

3924 I When did that become possible.

A I should think about a year ago.

3925 I That is last September.

A Yes.

3926 W. Hodge: Did the military commandees any
of your launches

A Well they took them over.

3927 Q That would handicap you in your work.
 A Our work has to be done in conjunction with the military.

3928 Q Did they use your launches for anything other than the sick and wounded?
 A No certainly not as far as I know.

3929 Q The Earl of Donoughmore: They are marked with the Red Cross. I suppose.
 A They are all marked with the Red Cross.

3930 Q Chairman: Did they take the Red Cross off?
 A No, not that I am aware of.

3931 Q Mr Hodge: In your experience the facilities for dealing with the wounded and the sick were very inefficient. deficient?
 A Do you mean from a transport point of view?

3932 Q Yes.
 A Yes. They could be very much improved by the employment of more properly fitted hospital ships. That is the main point.

3933 Q Were there plenty of surgical bandages, dressings, etc.

3934 Q A At Basra there was a plentiful supply. But beyond ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~where~~ the transport broke ~~down~~ ^{brought} down.

A I was not further up the river, but I think that there were not sufficient ^{medical} supplies further up solely because there was not sufficient transport to take them up.

3935 Q You were not above Basra
 A No.

3936 Q And therefore you cannot speak from personal knowledge.

A No.

6

3937

Lord Hugh Cecil: Do you know anything about the navigation of the channel between Casimra and Kurra. I forgot to ask you that question before.

3938

A Yes, I know that it is extremely difficult. Q How near can ocean going steamers go to Kurra - have you any knowledge.

A No. As big vessels as you like can go up to Naghill.

3939

Commander Wedgwood: You have spoken about a dock; do you mean a dry dock.

A At the dockyard a dry dock was partially dug out, but it was never completed, so that it could not be used.

3940

Q How much money was spent on it.

A I could not say.

3941

Q Is it half done.

A It is quite half done I should think.

3942

Q It is excavated but not cemented.

A Yes it is excavated to practically the required depth I should say.

3943

Q What length of boat would it take.

A 200 or 250 feet perhaps.

3944

Q You do not know why it was abandoned.

A No. I was only told that a slipway was to be built instead.

3945

Q Have they started the slipway.

A They had not when I was here.

3946

Q How do they repair and paint the bottoms of the river steamers.

A They do not do it as a rule. At Abadan I think there are facilities, & sometimes they take them down to there, but repairs are very unusual.

3947 Q Does it strike you as a Civil Engineer that great improvements could be made at Basra or at Magill for unloading cargo.

A Yes, I think at Magill very efficient arrangements could be made by putting proper wharves and jetties

3948 Q You could get deep water alongside?

A Yes I think so without going but very far.

3949 Q What cranes have they there

A I cannot say. I do not remember any.

3950 Q By what means do they unload the cargo

A They unload by ships' cranes into the local mahelars which come alongside.

3951 Q Is there is no railway line at Magill - it does not come to there.

A To where do you mean?

3952 Q To the dumps for stores.

A There is a little local track. The present method is not efficient. The proper method would be to have wharves.

3953 Q Is there a wharf at Magill.

A It is not exactly a wharf. Ships cannot come alongside it. They have to have a local mahela in between.

3954 Q They could not possibly unload into trucks anywhere?

A No, not at present, but there is no reason why that should not be provided for.

3955 Q Would not a certain amount of drapery be required.

A Yes, but I think not very much.

3956 Q Sir Archibald Williamson: What boats have the Red Cross got in Mesopotamia where does your organisation have its boats.

A There

- Q There is a Red Cross headquarters at Basra along the river front. We have a Commissioner here who has charge of all Red Cross concerns, including ambulance launches and Red Cross stores. We also have a place for stores ~~in~~ at a camp which is up one of the creeks where Red Cross stores are kept and distributed as they are required.
- 3957 Q Does the Red Cross confine itself to the bringing in of stores & the handing of them over to the military.
- A Yes, and the provision of ambulance launches for anything else for the sick & wounded.
- 3958 Q Is there no Red Cross ambulance at Amara.
- A Yes.
- 3959 Q Anywhere else.
- A There was a question of providing one at ~~Basra~~ ^{Basra} ~~Basra~~, but when I left there was not one.
- ~~Q Have you been to Amara.~~
- ~~A No.~~
- 3960 Q You found difficulty in getting stores from Basra.
- A Yes.
- 3961 Q Did you attempt to send them up by your own boats.
- 39 Q Five new boats arrived when I was there and we intended to use these as a service straight up to Amara to carry our stores from Basra to Amara, but immediately they arrived the Director of Medical Services said they were required at the front for carrying the sick and wounded, and so
- we

we sent them immediately up to the front.

They were taken from you.

A Yes, but they are still doing Red Cross work, or rather work for the sick and wounded.

Our proposed service had to be abandoned. We ~~have~~ ^{are sending} ~~sent~~ out more now, and if they are not all taken away we shall carry on that service.

Q Did you hear of the Red Cross being removed from any of the boats, and of the boats being used for other purposes than Red Cross work.

A I heard of one boat having its cross painted off, but I know nothing about it personally.

Q In your statement you say: "Whilst I was at Basra the number of motor boats for all purposes was probably about 75, but little more than 60 per cent of these could be reckoned on for service at the same time". Will you explain the relation between that statement and your statement that there were fifteen when you arrived and twenty when you left?

A The 75 means for all purposes, Army, Navy, and Red Cross purposes. The 15 or 20 were solely for Red Cross purposes.

Q The Red Cross did not supply all the motor boats on the river.

A No, only for medical services. We must not touch other services.

Chairman: The motor boats were all supplied by voluntary efforts, were they not?

Q Those for Army purposes for carrying officers about and carrying arms stores had naturally nothing to do with the Red Cross.

3967 Q Did the Government provide a number for other purposes.

A They provided a certain number for other purposes.

3968 Q Lord Hugh Cecil: Not for medical purposes?

A Not for medical purposes.

3969 Q Sir Archibald Williamson: The others were more or less runabouts.

A Yes.

3970 Q ~~These~~ ^{There} were larger boats?

A Yes, there were one or two that could be used for carrying stores.

3971 Q Most of the others were little boats for personal purposes.

A Yes.

3972 Q What is the rise of tide at Resera?

A It may go up to 4 feet or more. It varies so much that I hesitate to give any figure as the river is so extraordinary.

3973 Q If there is a 4 feet rise and fall, and I assume that it would be more at spring tides, the draught of the vessels used in the river as a rule being less than 4 feet, the ~~previous~~ ^{previous} question will do quite well.

A It ~~may~~ ^{might}, but there are certain parts of the year when there is practically no rise. The rise and fall are not consistent.

3974 Q There is a difference in the level of the river at different times of the year.

A Yes.