# GENERAL MILES TALKS.

As Appears Before the War Investigation Committee at Washington.

EXPERIMENTS IN "EMBALMED BEEF."

General Merritt Indulges in Words of Praise for the Volunteer Soldier Lads of the Philippines.

Washington, Dec. 12.—Gen. Nelson A. Miles, commanding the United States army, and Gen. Wesley Merritt, commander of the American forces at the capture of Manila, were the principal witnesses before the war investigation commission today. Gen. Miles responded to the summons of the commission only after several days' consideration. He was accompanied by his own stenographer. His examination was conducted by Senator Proctor, and was extensive, brief and void of bitterness as to the "embalmed beef" and the canned beef furnished the army in the field. The latter he characterized as an experiment for which "some one in Washington" was responsible. He said that while the facilities of the Santiago expedition were inadequate, and that the men were short of rations and medicines and might have been better protected from the rain, he found no fault with the management of the Philippine expedition. Gen. Merritt said the commission that he recorded the Philippine expedition as a decided success, and added that when he left on the 7th there if he had it to do over. He spoke in high terms of the troops under him, and said the army was well supplied with medicines and food.

Gen. Miles was fortified with a large package of papers and had his own stenographer. He gave his evidence in a clear, unhesitating way, and went into details regarding both the Santiago and Porto Rico expeditions.

He opened by describing the national encampments at Chickamauga and Tampa, pointed to the lack of good water at the former place, the absence of sanitary conveniences there, and said that the men were sent home as far as Columbia, S. C.

He said when the troops were landed it was found impossible to get more than a few days' rations on board, and they were scattered as well as possible under the circumstances. It was one of the worst transports and food was another. If they had encountered a severe storm, the loss of life or the suffering would have been very great.

As it was with fair weather, the men were crowded in with the mules, and the sanitary conditions of the ship would have been impossible otherwise.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES SHORT.

The commissary stores taken, he said, were sufficient, but the medical supplies were inadequate. He had left the landing, except for general directions, to his medical officers, but, finding, on his return, that there were a number of persons in the hospital who were suffering from fever which was not yellow fever, he had ordered that they be sent to Fortress Monroe and to Washington. As it was a fair weather, the men were crowded in with the mules, and the sanitary conditions of the ship would have been impossible otherwise.

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"The expedition," he continued, "should have been furnished with muslin, napkins or steam, or cans for having barges from the ships to the shore. We relied largely on the skill of our officers and the efficient department for them.

"The second expedition to Porto Rico there were furnished, but they arrived a little late to render assistance."

Gen. Merritt said the Spanish killed themselves. Tropic estimates had been sufficiently made of the number of boxes to be furnished the troops, and they were to be furnished by the navy exclusively. The most careful examination, he added, had been promised on the part of the navy. Mr. Sampson would be very sorry if tonnage and food was very limited.

Were the medical supplies at the time sufficient for the needs of the commands?" was asked.

In reply he read a statement from Gen. Shafter on August 6th, which referred to a "chronic scarcity of medicines," and that there had been a great deficiency of medicine. There was at no time, said Gen. Miles, sufficient means for the transportation of the sick. Having one train for the sick is a

Iron rain with an covering over it, suggested.

Gen. Merritt—From what you learned and observed while there, do you think there was at any time a sufficient medical supply?

Gen. Miles—Of medical men and nurses, certainly.

Gen. Hoover—Yes.

Gen. Miles—No, sir.

The witness stated that the hospital arrangements were chiefly of a temporary character. He said that the shelter was bad. The shelter tents did not afford protection to the officers and men, and the facilities for transporting the wounded, he said that they were taken in wagons.

Gen. Hoover—Do you know if any of the wounded were lying exposed to the rain?

Gen. Miles—Some were exposed in being sent down to the hospitals. I saw one train of wounded men driving through the rain, unprotected with tents, to shorter them. I took some personally to correct matters, and on July 12th telegraphed for a large number of tents of brushes and pier builders, and the ordered pieces hurried.

Gen. Miles said transportation facilities were used to carry at one time to the rear the wounded and sick.

"This was not exposed," he answered in reply to a question, "because I had confidence enough to keep the men out of the French building of every character, and to keep the men away from the interior. Had he been done so he did, the army would have been much better supplied."

EXPERIMENTS IN BEEF.

The army in Porto Rico, he said, had been supplied in a way with quartermaster's stores, and the men were in the best way. At Porto Rico he had asked that fixed rations be sent, but instead they were sent down to him in bulk, without invoices or bills of lading, and in many instances stores were found to be sold and thrown away. This caused great embarrassment and loss of stores and deprived troops of food. He reported that the experiment of sending supplies without invoices or bills of lading caused the distress of the troops. He had advised against the shipping of beef to Porto Rico in bulk, as there was abundance of it on the island, as well as because of its kind that it was defective.

He thought, he said, the refrigerator beef, of which there was 227 tons sent, was "embalmed beef," and said he attended to this beef, of which 100,000 pounds had been shipped there, and he was informed by officers whose commands he visited.

Who fixed that beef as an army ration?

"You'd have to ask some one here in Washington. You had better ask the secretary of war or the commissary general. It was sent on contract, but did not know that they would have had to go longer. If they had sent fly-warrior down there as I asked, we could have bought food, but they did not do either," Gen. Miles answered that the beef was sent in its usual army order because of an experiment.

He had suggested, he said, in the first place that fresh beef should be brought to Porto Rico for a once a week American money, and he suggested that it might be interesting to compare the men of the refrigerator beef, together with the rest of transportation. He said he did not know that the commissary used in treating the beef was responsible for the fatal sickness in the American army. Inspectors had reported concerning it were to the effect that the beef had an odor like an embalmed dead body.

Gen. Hoover—Were those reports ever brought to the attention of the commissary general?

Gen. Miles—Reports were frequently sent in to him. But he seemed to indicate that he did not like them.

Gen. Hoover—Was the matter ever brought to the attention of the secretary of war?

Gen. Miles—I requested that no more of it be sent. It is simply of it would be a reflection on the men in this country. I would question their use of it. I am having an investigation now of the matter. I thought you gentlemen would go on to it.

He said he had never complained to the secretary of war in his report in regard to the quality of beef, and had asked that the supply be stopped.

NAVAL PROBLEM.

Gen. Miles stated the first plans for sending troops to Cuba were not his, as was supposed, but arose from troops until Cervera's fleet was found. The question as the extent was a naval problem, and the disposal of troops in his judgment, then in Miami, which he does should have been over. If the Spanish had destroyed the United States fleet the troops in Miami would have found it a number of years, and had had a force in Cuba as would have been impossible to get it back home. He was opposed, also, to sending a force to Porto Rico, Hayana or Matanzas, because of the large proportion of yellow fever deaths there.

He said the destruction of Cervera's fleet settled that problem. He said he would have sent 40,000 men to Porto Rico against the Spanish forces by harassing them during the early season, adding that Ponce and San Juan were among the first of his own plans. He gave at great length his views regarding the Porto Rico expedition, saying that as a base of operations.

Gen. Miles gave details of the Porto Rican conditions, organization and objects.

Concluding with his outline of camp rules, Gen. Miles said the choice of the selection of Camp Alger Va., the most objectionable camp, in his mind, was when the regiments began marching there. As to Chickamauga, he had recommended mobilizing the regulars there, but he never anticipated that men would be sent there and when he found it unreasonable he had recommended abandonment of the forces among other localities.

GEN. MERRITT'S STORY.

Gen. Wesley M. Merritt was the first witness of the afternoon. He began his examination by a description of the operations around Manila prior to the capture. Owing to the smallness of the force he said the army was compelled to operate alone the sea front in cooperation with the navy. Had there been a large American force on land the city could have been taken from the high ground inland, but this was impossible without moving the entire army base at the mercy of both Spaniards and insurgents. The city's defenses were good. The Spaniards had excellent lines and plenty of ammunition. All they lacked was "nuts." The unprepared fated not only the men in the trenches and had taken other steps, but the supply of both sorts of ammunition was inadequate.

"The expedition," he continued, "should have been furnished with muslin, napkins or steam, or cans for having barges from the ships to the shore. We relied largely on the skill of our officers and the efficient department for them.

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