

excitement of the actual collision between persecution and resistance.

"On Saturday morning, June 21st, we were mustered into the barrack room, and the lieutenant addressed us. Having explained that there was not a great deal of ordinary work to do on the island, he stated that when that ended he would want us to clean guns, etc., but he would not compel us to do this if it was against our principles, as he wished to treat us like men, and he also said, 'Of course, I shall not be so mean as to put you on short rations when the work runs out, but will have to lock you up in the barrack room during working hours if you do not care to clean armaments.' Little knowing what was to follow, these remarks pleased us immensely.

"For a week everything went on smoothly. Shortly after 1 o'clock on Monday, June 30th, the door of the barrack room was unlocked, and Bombardier Moir, who was the senior officer on the island at the time, came in, accompanied by three soldiers. He explained that the work had run out, and now he must ask us to clean the guns. We were asked individually if we were prepared to do this work, and for answer he received an emphatic 'No.' The man, who was evidently acting under telephoned instructions from Lieutenant Macdonald on the other side of the harbour, pleaded hard with us, and left the room saying, 'Well, boys, I can't help it.'

HUNGER STRIKE AND SICKNESS.

"We knew now that the crisis had arrived, and we discussed hurriedly what course was best to take. A hunger strike was suggested, and put to the vote; eight voted for it, four against, and one did not vote. This decided the matter.

"At about 3.15 p.m., Bombardier Moir and the other soldiers again came in, and this time we were asked if we would drill and learn semaphore signalling. Again a negative answer was given. An attempt was going to be made to force us to drill, but we were determined that it should fail. Force would have no more effect upon us than coaxing had previously. We had been offered a forty-eight hours holiday in Christchurch if we would drill. We had refused. Now we were going to be slowly starved into submission on half rations, but we would beat them; we would starve ourselves, and so bring about a climax quickly.

"As there were only seven separate cells in which to confine us, two were put in each of six of them, and Williams was put alone in the seventh. Hooper and Robson were

confined in the next compartment, and they were able to talk through the wall.

"That night at tea-time, ten out of our party of thirteen refused the miserable half-rations that were brought to us. It was bitterly cold, and our bedding was not brought to us until about seven o'clock, and was taken away next morning.

"On the morning of July 1st, the Lieutenant came to the island and interviewed each of us. He said that he was going to make us clean the guns, and furthermore, 'he was not going to be satisfied with work alone, but was going to get drill out of us as well this time.' This decided us. We would stick to our principles to the last.

"We refused dinner when it was brought round, and it was shortly after this that Robson collapsed in his cell. He was soon vomiting, bringing up bile and blood. Hooper and Williams banged on their doors until help arrived. Robson could hardly stand, and had to be supported by two soldiers. He shook hands with Hooper before he went, saying, 'Stick to your principles, Wally.' J. and R. McTaggart also fell sick. The three were taken to the office in front of a fire, while the officers rang up for a doctor. While they were in the office, W. Robson was shaking, groaning and spitting blood. Bob McTaggart was suffering from the intense cold, having nothing to sit down or lie upon except the iron bedstead with which his cell was fitted. The doctor prescribed for Robson, and declared that he was suffering from chill and bronchitis. The doctor also condemned the cells, as there was no ventilation, all the windows being barred or screwed tight down. At his orders the bars were removed and all the windows opened. The cells were about eight feet by eight.

"After spending a restless and painful night, we refused breakfast again on Wednesday morning, July 2nd. By this time most of the boys were down, and Robson was in a semi-conscious state, and the groans of agony and pangs of hunger were enough to make a person cry.

A STRANGE LAW COURT.

"At about 11.30 the launch arrived, and we were surprised at the passengers it disgorged. Besides one or two soldiers, there was Lieut. Macdonald, a sergeant of police, T. A. B. Bailey, stipendiary magistrate, two doctors, a Court clerk, and two reporters. Weak, haggard, and looking considerably worse for our forty-eight hours fast in this cold place, twelve of us were filed into the room. Sergeant-Major Conley