

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1898.

(Mr. MEREDITH, Chairman.)

*The Chairman* : I will ask the clerk to read the petition. [Petition and correspondence read.]

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, as you presented the petition, is it your desire to give evidence?

*Mr. G. Hutchison* : It is.

*The Chairman* : The Committee have decided that the evidence shall be taken down in shorthand?—Yes.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, are you ready to proceed?

*Mr. G. Hutchison* : I would ask that the evidence be taken on oath.

*The Chairman* : Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the evidence be taken on oath?—Yes.

*Mr. Wrigg* : Mr. Chairman, before the Committee proceeds, I should like to make a request to be allowed to be represented by counsel.

*The Chairman* : Then I will ask the witnesses to retire while the Committee consider your request, Mr. Wrigg.

All witnesses then retired. The Committee then considered the request, and resolved that Mr. Wrigg should be allowed to be represented by counsel, after which an adjournment was made until the morning of the 29th instant, to allow counsel to be present on behalf of Mr. Wrigg.

THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1898.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, will you proceed?

*Mr. Hutchison* : I shall ask to put in the Order in Council, 11th March, 1869, instituting the decoration of the New Zealand Cross. I think it will be convenient for the Committee to have that before it [Order in Council put in—Exhibit No. 1], and also copy of the *Gazette* notice notifying the bestowal of the decoration on Mr. Wrigg [Gazette notice put in—Exhibit No. 2]

*Mr. Hutchison* : I will now call Mr. Wrigg.

MR. HARRY CHARLES WILLIAM WRIGG sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Hutchison*.] What is your full name, Mr. Wrigg?—Harry Charles William Wrigg.
2. You are now residing in Auckland, are you not?—Yes.
3. In 1867 you were at Opotiki?—Yes.
4. A surveyor?—I was a surveyor's assistant there.
5. You remember the formation of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry?—Yes.
6. Can you mention the date of its formation?—No.
7. Have you ever seen that book before? [Book produced.] It is a minute-book of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Corps?—I recognise the book.
8. It is a minute-book of the corps?—Yes.
9. It will indicate the date when the corps was formed?—Yes.
10. You had a rank of cornet in the corps?—Yes.
11. Who was captain?—Captain Gwynneth.
12. Was he a resident at Opotiki?—Yes; and I was his clerk, or an assistant surveyor.
13. You remember the murder of Bennett White and the mailman being known in Opotiki?—Yes.
14. What date was that?—I could not remember that.
15. Do you remember the report coming in?—Yes.
16. Was it in the evening, or morning, or when?—As far as I can recollect, it was in the morning.
17. What was done then—did the Cavalry turn out?—Yes.
18. And other Volunteers, I suppose?—I do not know anything about that, only the Cavalry.
19. Did they go along the beach to the supposed scene of the murders?—I went out along the beach where Bennett White was murdered.
20. Do you remember the force going out along the beach?—Yes.
21. Were you with them?—No, I followed them.
22. Why did you not go with the troop?—I was engaged on official business. As soon as they went out I followed them.
23. Would you say two or three went out?—As far as I know, half a dozen went out.
24. Did you go out afterwards?—Yes.
25. Alone?—Yes, alone; after the others; and met them coming back.
26. Where did you meet them?—I suppose, at the half-way distance-house. As far as my recollection goes, they had the man's head in a handkerchief.
27. Between Opotiki and Ohiwa?—Between Opotiki and Ohiwa.
28. One of them had a head in a handkerchief?—Yes, as far as I remember.
29. Can you mention the names of any of the troopers coming back?—No.
30. Did you return with them to Opotiki?—Yes.
31. What next happened—was the corps turned out after your return?—Yes.
32. What time of the day was that, evening or morning?—I cannot tell you that.
33. Did anything happen on parade?—Yes.

1—I. 2B.