

378. That is dated the 31st August, 1897. The enclosures from Mr. Wrigg, I suppose, you sent on with the application?—I fancy that it is the type-written document. It is an additional statement by Mr. Wrigg, dated the 27th August, 1897, referring to an enclosure.

379. You forwarded that on also?—Yes; I have no doubt that it is the enclosure.

380. Have you a telegram there about this time, from Mr. Wrigg to you, in September of last year, indicating there was a difficulty owing to the great lapse of time between the event and the application?—No.

381. Have you a letter there, of the 30th September, *re* the Cross?—Yes. [Letter, dated the 30th September, put in—Exhibit No. 18.] There are two dated the 30th September.

382. Let us see one of them?—Here it is.

383. Look at that letter: do you see any reference there to a letter declining the Cross—do you not remember that some intimation reached you from the department declining the application that you had forwarded?—I never received it. I never had the slightest communication from the Defence Department from the day I sent in the application until now.

384. Have you a letter from Mr. Wrigg of the 9th January of the present year?—Yes.

385. Let us see it?—I appear to have scratched out most of it. It is about another matter altogether, I think.

386. You got a letter of that date in which Mr. Wrigg said he was urging the matter on as hard as he could?—Yes.

387. There are two telegrams you have not marked confidential—the 26th January and 27th June, 1898. Have you got them?—Yes. [Telegrams produced and read: “26th January, 1898.—Captain Bower, Napier.—Defence Minister picks up Carroll at Gisborne, proceeds to Napier, then Wellington without delay by ‘Westralia’; advise interview Carroll.” (Exhibit No. 19). “27th June, 1898.—Captain Bower, Napier. Parliamentary gossip to-night’s *Star* says New Zealand Cross likely to be warmly debated. It is stated that Captain Bower, who recommended Cross, has recently admitted in a letter to Captain Preece that he regretted his action. Reply paid.” (Exhibit No. 20.)] Is it a fact that you did write a letter to Captain Preece?—Hardly. I wrote a private letter in reply to one which I received from Captain Preece, an extract of which only has been published.

388. Have you any objection to the whole of the letter being put in?—No.

389. Have you got a memorandum there pinned on to the front of a letter of the 17th January, 1898, that you received?—There is a letter of the 9th January, 1898. [Letter put in—Exhibit No. 21.]

390. There is another letter, dated the 17th January, 1898?—Yes. [Letter, dated the 17th January, 1898, put in—Exhibit No. 22.]

391. You did not happen to see the Hon. Mr. Carroll?—No, I missed him.

392. *Mr. Wilford.*] You have been practically in correspondence, Captain Bower, with Mr. Wrigg for a little over a year?—Yes.

393. A telegram has been put in which was received from you, and which you acknowledge to be your own?—Yes.

394. That is to say, you have seen this before?—Yes.

395. As late as the 28th June, 1898, you are referred to by Mr. Wrigg in these terms: “Surely your letter did not imply that I did not earn the Cross”?—Yes.

396. And you replied to that?—Certainly not.

397. Can you say on your oath that your letter to Captain Preece did not imply that he had not earned the Cross?—So you will find if the letter is read *in extenso*.

*Mr. Hutchison:* We had better have the letter now that Captain George Preece is here.

Captain GEORGE PREECE called.

398. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You are called in, Captain Preece, to produce a letter that you received from Captain Bower?—I have not got it. I think I gave it to Mr. Lingard.

*The Chairman:* That will do, Captain Preece.

399. *Mr. Wilford.*] When you replied, “Certainly not,” Captain Bower, in answer to Mr. Wrigg’s telegram, you meant by that “Certainly not” that you did not imply in the letter that Mr. Wrigg had not earned the Cross?—Quite so. I may explain the matter: My letter to Captain Preece was in reply to his own to me.

*Captain Preece:* Here is the letter from Mr. Lingard. [Letter produced.]

400. *Mr. Wilford.*] Before I refer to this letter I should like to ask Captain Bower if he has Captain Preece’s letter in reply to him?—I have not. I have not been able to find it amongst my papers.

401. You have kept every other letter?—Yes. I was under the impression that this letter of Captain Preece’s was here amongst the other papers.

402. Was the letter a protest against the conferring of the Cross on Mr. Wrigg?

403. *The Chairman.*] Captain Preece, are you in possession of a Press copy of a letter which you wrote to Captain Bower, which conveyed the reply?—No, I have not a copy of it.

404. *Mr. Wilford.*] Will you tell us as nearly as you can the contents of this document? Was it an indignant protest?—No.

405. What was it?—He asked me questions: whether I interviewed and had been instrumental in obtaining the Cross for Mr. Wrigg. Then he went on in a joking manner to state that a Native we knew at Wairoa—

406. It had nothing to do with the matter?—No; but it comes in in this way: When I was replying to him, I replied, in fact, to all his questions, and the matter about this Native called Paora Apatu came in. When I replied “Certainly not” to Mr. Wrigg I meant there was nothing in my letter that imputed anything. I was imputing no comparison with him and Paora Apatu