

478. The extract from camp orders appears to be signed by John Gwynneth on the face of the document, and also on the back?—Yes.

479. Captain Gwynneth was captain of the cavalry corps?—Yes.

480. Are you familiar with his handwriting?—No.

481. You cannot say anything about the writing of the indorsement?—No.

482. *Mr. Morrison.*] You said, Captain Bower, that you were district adjutant at the time this act of bravery was performed at Opotiki?—Yes.

483. You knew Mr. Wrigg then personally?—Yes.

484. Were you present on the particular occasion when volunteers were asked for to carry these despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Six months ago I would have sworn I was, but I do not know what to tell you now, because it has been shown to me that I was not there.

485. Your impressions were, up to six months ago, that you were present at Opotiki on that particular date?—Certainly.

486. Since then, by having a certain conversation with a gentleman named Major Mair, you are somewhat shaken in your opinion?—It is after the conversation. It is a diary which he kept.

487. I suppose, personally, you do not know whether that diary is correct or not?—No.

488. Is your name mentioned there?—Yes, as my having gone to Tauranga a few days before-hand.

489. Your belief in your presence is only by Major Mair's diary, not by conversation with your old comrades?—Is it only within the last fortnight or so I have had any doubts that I was actually there or not.

490. You said in the letter to Captain Preece that "I am to blame *re* Mr. Wrigg's Cross." I suppose if Captain Preece had sent you a letter commending you for the action you had taken on the behalf of Mr. Wrigg, your recollections would have been a good deal stronger than they are to-day as regards your presence at Opotiki?—I have tried hard to explain really and truly what passed there to my mind. Neither Captain Preece nor any one have had any influence on my memory, as far as that is concerned, until I had been shown an extract from a diary, which I have every reason to believe to be correct, and which showed that a few days before this occurred I had been ordered up to Tauranga.

491. Your present impression is, then, after reading this extract from that diary, you could not have been there?—There is no proof that I was not there. After this lapse of time it is impossible for me to remember the circumstances of the case, but I had no wish in any way to disparage Mr. Wrigg when I was writing to Captain Preece. The unfortunate suggestion of the mention of this man "Paul-up-a-Tree's" name, as I think I spoke to Mr. Wilford about just now—it never entered my head; it was in answer to a quotation of Captain Preece's, in which he asked me if I remembered this fellow at Wairoa. Mr. Wrigg's courage or cowardship was never called into question with regard to this man.

492. What are your present impressions with regard to whether you were present or not. Have you got any opinion?—My impression is that I was there.

493. You also said here your recollection had been so rubbed up in opposition to the certificate that you regretted recommending Mr. Wrigg for the Cross, and that if you were asked to give that certificate now you would not give it?—Yes, to this extent. When I was written to about the Cross, amongst other things it was mentioned to me that there was no danger at the time, because troopers were sent out on escort. They were accompanied by a detachment of seventy men under an officer.

494. Who wrote to you drawing your attention to that?—I forget.

495. One of your old comrades?—Yes.

496. Can you give us his name?—No, I have not got the letter. I brought down Mr. Wrigg's letters only with me.

497. You cannot on the spur of the moment remember the name of the writer?—I am not quite sure whether it was written or whether it was verbal.

498. You are thoroughly acquainted with this country from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Yes, I ought to be.

499. You have ridden over it hundreds of times?—Yes, I dare say I have.

500. You are thoroughly acquainted with every inch of the country?—Yes.

501. In your opinion, would there be any great danger in carrying despatches from Opotiki to Ohiwa?—Yes, there would be considerable danger.

502. You also state in reference to a reply from Mr. Hutchison, I believe, that you had travelled this distance hundreds of times, and he asked you the distance from Opotiki to Ohiwa, and you were unable to give the distance?—I do not know now.

503. Do you not think that is slightly inconsistent with the statement that you have travelled over this country hundreds of times, and yet you cannot tell us whether it is ten, twenty, or thirty miles?—I will say it is ten miles from Opotiki to Ohiwa.

504. You said you had no personal or written communication with Mr. Wrigg for a period of some thirty years, from 1867 up to June, 1897?—I do not know.

505. When you received a letter from him, as regards Colonel St. John, who had offered to recommend Mr. Wrigg for the Cross, it was asking if you would be kind enough to assist him?—Yes.

506. You had no reason to doubt the statements in the letter made by Mr. Wrigg?—No.

507. They were perfectly correct as far as your knowledge is concerned?—Yes.

508. *Mr. O'Meara.*] Do you think Mr. Wrigg is entitled to this Cross or not, Captain Bower?—Yes.

509. Do you think that in this particular ride he showed a great amount of heroism—that is, he is worthy of the Cross? I understood you were present when volunteers were asked for for the conveying of those despatches?—I have already explained to the Committee generally what my