

80. Did you never hear, that you remember, the names of the parties who rode this ride carrying the despatches?—I cannot say that I do remember that.

81. You say positively that you never heard the names of anybody who rode that ride?—I must have heard the names then, but I do not remember them now.

82. Were you communicated with by Mr. Wrigg to give evidence on this Committee? You are one of the petitioners, are you not?—Yes.

83. What is your grievance?—The only grievance I have is, I think it is a shame to give the Cross if it is not deserved: it is not deserved for that ride. Any one would have gone on that ride.

84. Then you would be surprised to hear, I suppose, that out of the thirty-six men called on parade only one volunteered to go?—I would be very much surprised.

85. Would you be prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg and Captain Bower if they said so?—I am not prepared to contradict them.

86. Captain Bower has said so in his communications, dated the 26th August, 1897. I suppose you would consider Captain Bower as a man of cool judgment?—Yes.

87. And a man whose honesty and opinion would not be questioned?—No.

88. Will you say that Captain Bower is writing that which is incorrect when he says that he recommends Harry Wrigg to be the recipient of the highly coveted distinction to which, in his opinion, Mr. Wrigg is fully entitled for his act of bravery in voluntarily carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga and returning through a country swarming with hostile Natives along a route when only the day before they had murdered two old settlers, and at a time when the rivers were in high flood and exceedingly dangerous to cross?—There was no danger if he passed Whakatane. He was amongst the friendly Natives.

89. You think it is a great shame Mr Wrigg should get the Cross?—I do for that.

90. Do you think you ought to have got it?—No; but since I have been asked that question, Mr. Chairman, I should like you to read this paper. [Certificate of character, dated 28th December, 1867, read and put in—Exhibit No. 25.]

91. That is your certificate of character?—Yes.

92. Will you swear that Captain Simpson was not in Opotiki at the time of this ride?—I will not swear that he was not in Opotiki, but I believe he was surveying on the Waimana Plains.

93. This was in the month of June?—Yes; I may assume it was June.

94. I suppose your belief is based upon your supposed recollection?—Yes. Captain Simpson was a friend of mine, and I am almost sure to have known if he was there.

95. But he was there frequently?—Yes.

96. Will you swear whether he was in Opotiki the month after or the month before?—No. Probably he was.

97. How is it your recollection of belief seems to fix this particular month as the time that he was away. How do you account for it?—The day that Bennett White was killed I was going to Whakatane to start farming on my own land, but my horse got away during the night, as we had no paddocks then, and I did not go.

98. Was Whakatane in the district where the friendly tribes were?—Yes; a few miles beyond Ohiwa.

99. About ten miles beyond?—Whakatane was about ten miles, and Ohiwa was about half-way between Whakatane and Opotiki.

100. You knew Captain Percival?—Yes.

101. Do you know of his having been there or not?—I do not know. He was paymaster. I do not think he was there.

102. You do not think he was there. Why do you not think so?—Because he used to pay the men, and I should recollect getting my cheque.

103. Why?—We had to wait a long time for our cheques.

104. Did you get paid in June?—Captain Percival did not always come down to pay us. We were paid by several different officers.

105. It is perfectly within the bounds of possibility that he was there?—Yes.

106. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What were the indications, Mr. Haselden? Was there an absence of the enemy at Ohiwa when you went down on this expedition?—The men searched for the bodies that night and only found a head, and in the morning they were sent out scouting. They went to the top of the range and came back and reported that there were no tracks or sight of the Natives in the vicinity.

107. What was the conclusion that was arrived at?—Major St. John concluded they had gone right back to the ranges.

108. What was the conclusion of your mind and the minds of the men?—We all concluded that they had retired back to the ranges.

109. At that time the indications were they had gone back?—Yes.

110. All the indications point to that?—Of course, they might not have gone back.

111. *Mr. Wilford.*] Mr. Haselden, you have had some experience in the Maori War?—I have.

112. You have given us an idea of what Captain Bower's description is of the alleged danger?—Perhaps I was too hasty in saying that. Still I meant what I said.

113. You meant it was principally largely imaginary?—I did not say it was imaginary, but good-nature of Captain Bower's.

114. It should not be taken too seriously?—No.

115. In a certificate that Captain Percival gave, he says the country between Opotiki and Tauranga was swarming with the enemy in June. What about that?—We could not find the enemy. We were always looking for them.