

151. Were you aware of the state of the rivers at that particular date when these troopers rode over?—I think they were fairly high, and that it had been raining.

152. I suppose with regard to these acts of heroism your name was specially mentioned in despatches as being foremost in that attack in a certain place?—I suppose so.

153. I suppose if a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry said, "Well, look here, Mr. Haselden, I was on parade at that particular time, and I do not remember your name appearing in despatches," would not that show that it never took place?—No.

154. Supposing Mr. Wrigg was a member of the Bay of Plenty corps and said, "I do not remember anything of your name being mentioned"?—I do not think it would matter.

155. You also said that you do not recollect Captain Percival being there. Captain Percival seemed to belong to this expedition or corps, and was paymaster?—I do not think Captain Percival ever came with us, he simply used to come backwards and forwards to pay the men. I do not think he was ever stationed in Opotiki when I was there.

156. Are you prepared to swear that he was not at Opotiki on this particular date?—No.

157. You also said you went by yourself along the beach and there was no great danger?—I did not think there was any great danger.

158. Could you give us an idea of the time?—It could easily be proved if you have the old order-books, because I went on duty.

159. Was it before or after?—Some weeks before.

160. You know the habits of the Natives in connection with these murders fairly well?—Yes.

161. You know they would make a dash for a certain place, and after they had succeeded they generally retired to the hills?—Yes.

162. Is it not quite possible that at the time you rode along the road you did not happen to strike one of these periods?—Quite likely.

163. You do not know if it was a fact that a large number of Natives came down to the beach at the time McDonald and Wrigg carried these despatches: you assume they were there?—They were there when they murdered Bennett White, but I do not say they were there when the despatches were carried.

164. They had been down the day previous?—Yes. Then they appear to have retired.

165. You admit the Natives were down and the despatches were sent the following day?—Yes.

166. *Mr. Lewis.*] Mr. Haselden, you said it was a characteristic of the Natives to make a dash and immediately retire to the hills?—They used to do that sometimes.

167. When they made an attack on a few unprotected whites was it the custom to remain about the scene?—No.

168. About these rivers, were they wide?—They were not bad rivers to ford.

169. You had to ford them? There were no other means of getting across?—I have gone over some of them in a Maori canoe, and a Maori has towed the horse behind.

170. *The Chairman.*] Are you referring to the Whakatane?—I have crossed it sometimes with a canoe. You could generally ford them at low tide.

171. *Mr. Field.*] Were the rivers you had to cross on the routes from Opotiki to Tauranga regarded as dangerous rivers by you at that time?—I do not think so. They would be dangerous to a man who could not swim, but most men swam at that time.

172. Do you regard them as dangerous, or were they generally regarded by your people as dangerous?—No.

173. The majority of men who travelled that coast were used to these rivers?—Yes.

174. Have you a recollection of two men taking despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—I recollect two men had gone with despatches to Tauranga.

175. Was that before or after you came to Ohiwa?—As far as my belief goes, it was the next day.

176. After your company had scouted the hills in search of Natives?—Yes.

177. What was the character of the beach between Opotiki and Ohiwa? Was it flat and broad?—Fairly wide when the tide was out. It was a good large beach.

178. Was it a good beach to travel on?—Fairly good. Some parts were soft, but the bulk of it was good.

179. Was the ridge fringed with sandhills, or did the bush come down to the water?—From Opotiki to Ohiwa it was sandhills.

180. What width of sandhills is there between the beach and what you call the bush?—As far as I recollect, the bush was a long way back. You went off the sand into the fern-hills.

181. Was it anything like a common thing for men to go along in ones and twos?—It was continually done before Bennett White's murder. After that there was a check.

182. I suppose the despatches were still carried after Bennett White's murder?—Yes.

183. By a troop of men or a few?—I believe they were carried in the ordinary way, one or two would go. Generally two after the murder.

184. Nothing in the shape of a large escort?—I never heard of an escort going.

185. You said, Mr. Haselden, there were four or five hundred men camped at Opotiki about that time?—Yes, I believe that would be about the number.

186. Major St. John was in command?—Yes.

187. Would not despatches in the ordinary course be sent and signed by the commanding officer rather than by an officer of the troop?—That was my impression. I could not speak authoritatively. I was never an officer myself.

188. *Mr. Holland.*] You say that the morning that Bennett White was murdered you were going to Whakatane?—Yes.

189. You say that your horse got away?—Yes, he broke the tether-rope.

190. Do you not think it a curious coincidence that your horse should get away that morning?—Yes. I think it was very fortunate, but there was nothing unusual for a horse to get away, as we had no paddocks at that time.