

228. You swear that positively?—Yes.

229. When you wrote did you write anonymously?—I wrote anonymously.

230. What was the *nom de plume*?—My letter was not published in the form of a letter. It was published as a portion of a leading article. I wrote after the presentation of the Cross to Mr. Wrigg by the Mayor of Auckland—not by the commanding officer—and the *Herald*, which I wrote to, declined to print it, as it was likely to come before Parliament. I afterwards wrote to another newspaper, the *Post*, and it published not my letter, but an article based on my letter.

231. What name did you sign to your letter?—"Degraded Cross."

232. You did not put your own name to it?—No.

233. You were not in Opotiki in 1867?—No.

234. You know nothing about the condition of affairs at that period, in the month of June, 1867, of your own knowledge?—Of my own knowledge I know nothing of the conditions of affairs at that time.

235. Of the condition of the country?—I knew a good deal about the condition of the country. I knew the whole of the officers of the Force.

236. In the month of June, 1867, can you tell us anything of the condition of the road from Opotiki to Tauranga as far as danger was concerned?—I know the country was occupied from Ohiwa to Tauranga by the Ngatiawa-Whakatane Tribe and the Arawa. There were friendly Natives between Ohiwa and Whakatane.

237. Are you aware that Mr. Wrigg volunteered to carry despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga, and he was the only man out of the company that did volunteer when volunteers were called for?—I am not aware of that.

238. Are you aware that a day or two before the ride Mr. Bennett White and the mailman were murdered?—Yes.

239. You are aware that occurred a day or two before that ride. Did you know there was a ride?—The murder just occurred a day or two before.

240. You told me just now, Captain Preece, you are aware Bennett White was murdered a day or two before?—It was alleged that there was a ride.

241. You have sworn to us a day or two before the ride Bennett White was murdered?—You say so.

242. You were asked whether a day or two before the ride Bennett White was murdered, and you said Yes?—Mr. Wilford assumes that there was a ride, and asks am I aware of two days before the ride. He says Mr. Wrigg went, when Bennett White and the mailman were killed. I was not there to see it.

243. Were the officer friends you spoke of in the mounted troop or foot corps. Did you know of any officers in the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—Not at that time.

244. Consequently we take it you were not in connection with any of the officers of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—No.

245. You heard nothing of this particular ride?—No.

246. For all you know it might have occurred?—Yes, it might have occurred.

247. Do you know those rivers running between Opotiki and Tauranga?—Yes.

248. Are you aware they are dangerous to cross in flood-time?—Yes.

249. The one immediately at Opotiki and the one at Waioeka were dangerous?—Yes. The Waioeka at Opotiki was; the Waiotahi in times of very high floods. I have swum both rivers on horseback.

250. And this would especially happen in winter-time?—Yes.

251. In winter-time they were more likely to be flooded than any other time?—Yes.

252. A man could not protect himself if there were any skirmishing if he was fording one of these rivers?—It is one of the things he would have to look after.

253. It was a risk?—A certain amount of risk. There is a risk in riding down the beach at any time when a river is flooded.

254. Do you know anything of the state of the part of the road which has been described by one of the witnesses as the bluff?—Yes, the bluff at Ohiwa.

255. That is a dangerous part of the road?—Yes; that would be practically the most dangerous part of the road.

256. There is no way of getting to Tauranga except by passing it?—That is the ordinary route.

257. There would be no protection, I presume, supposing there were men in ambush for a man riding past?—There is no protection. That is one of the things you would have to look out for. In carrying despatches you have to look out for ambuscades.

258. Will you tell me in what possible way you could guard against a danger like that?—You have got to run the risk. If there was a risk.

259. You know the beach between Opotiki and Whakatane?—Yes.

260. It appears to be a very rough, broken country?—No. Between Whakatane and Ohiwa is one of the best beaches in the colony.

261. The beach is right, but the country rough and broken. Do they have to cross the mouth of that harbour?—By ferry.

262. How would a man carrying despatches cross it?—He would have to get into a canoe, and have his horse taken across.

263. If there were no canoe, to swim it?—That is rarely done.

264. What is the width?—It is half a mile wide.

265. Would that be called a friendly or unfriendly side?—Between the two.

266. Possibly a man might find no ferry-boat there?—If he found no ferry-boat there he could not get across.