

325. Mr. Haselden has said in evidence that at the time of this occurrence there were four or five hundred men encamped at Opotiki, and that Major St. John was in command?—Yes.

327. And has also said the Bay of Plenty Cavalry, as far as he can recollect, was from thirty to fifty men?—Yes.

328. If a despatch were sent at that time would it not be sent by the commanding officer to Tauranga, or would it be sent by an officer of the troop?—The commanding officer.

329. And he would give the necessary orders?—Yes.

330. And the necessary directions relating to it would be signed by him or his adjutant?—By the adjutant or commanding officer.

331. As far as you are aware, the officer commanding the troop would have no authority for sending out despatches?—The officer commanding the district would send out the despatches.

Mr. F. H. HASELDEN re-examined.

332. Mr. Hutchison.] Do you know, Mr. Haselden, whether the Volunteers in June, at the time of Bennett White's murder, were on regular pay?—The bulk of them were. I myself was off pay, but the position was that at that time we were waiting for our land—some of them had got their land, and received 10s. 6d. a week for ration-money. After the alarm sounded we were supposed to turn out, and on the occasion of going down for Bennett White's body I think the alarm went, and the men assembled on parade. About a hundred men accompanied Major St. John.

333. Mr. Morrison.] The reply you have given to Mr. Hutchison's question simply refers to the Waikato Expeditionary Force?—Yes.

334. You know nothing at all about the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—No.

335. Mr. Lewis.] By whom was the discovery of the murder of Bennett White made, and who brought the intelligence into camp?—I understood a Maori brought the intelligence in. I was not in my hut at the time. I was some distance from the parade-ground, and when I got on the ground the men told me news had come in by a Maori that Bennett White had been killed, and Major St. John came, and we fell in, about a hundred of us.

336. Were the Maoris in the camp in the immediate neighbourhood friendly?—Yes.

337. Mr. Hutchison.] Was Bennett White, of Opotiki, well known?—He kept a store at Whakatane and at Opotiki, and used to ride backwards and forwards.

Major WILLIAM GILBERT MAIR sworn and examined.

338. Mr. Hutchison.] Your name is William Gilbert Mair, is it not?—Yes.

339. You are a Judge of the Native Land Court?—Yes.

340. In 1867 were you in the public service?—Yes.

341. What rank and office did you hold then?—At that time I held a majority in the New Zealand Militia, and I was Resident Magistrate of the Opotiki district.

342. Where were your headquarters?—At Opotiki.

343. You travelled sometimes, no doubt, from there up the coast and down?—Yes, very often: from there to Tauranga.

344. Certain events occurred towards the end of the month of June, 1867. I refer especially to the murder of Bennett White and the mailman on the beach near Opotiki. Can you say where you were towards the end of June, 1867?—I left Opotiki on the 17th June to go to Tauranga. I have a slip of paper here. Mr. Chairman, with some dates written on it.

Mr. Wilford: I must object to that as evidence, Mr. Chairman.

345. Mr. Hutchison.] Are those contemporary notes?—Yes.

346. The Chairman.] Have you got your diary with you, Major Mair?—Yes.

347. Will you produce the diary?—Yes. [Diary produced.]

Major Mair [referring to his diary]: On the 16th June I left Opotiki to go to Maketu, really to attend the compensation Court that was to sit there.

347A. Mr. Hutchison.] Maketu: where is that?—It is on the coast on the way to Tauranga. From there I went on to Tauranga.

348. On what date did you arrive at Tauranga?—On the 22nd.

349. Before you left Opotiki had news been received there of any murders?—Two men named Moore and Beggs had been murdered during the month of May. At least, they were missing at that time—it was not known whether they had been killed.

350. When you left on the 17th did you know the fate of these men?—No.

351. You reached Tauranga on the 22nd, and you had business officially there to transact, I suppose?—Yes.

352. When did you start back?—On Sunday, the 30th June.

353. From where?—From Tauranga.

354. Coming along the beach?—Travelling by the beach. I went to Maketu that night.

355. That was a Sunday, was it not?—Yes.

356. You got to Maketu that night?—Yes.

357. Did you start on the next morning?—Yes, towards Opotiki, on the 1st July.

358. When did you hear any news of a serious occurrence?—Before leaving Tauranga on the Sunday, about noon a Native brought up the news of the murder of Bennett White and the Maori mailman.

359. Then you started to travel on to Opotiki along the road on which those murders had been committed?—Yes, immediately on receipt of that news.

360. On the Sunday night you reached Maketu?—Yes.

361. And went on next morning?—Yes. That evening at Maketu I received a despatch from Major St. John giving an account of these murders.