

362. From whom did you receive the despatch?—From a man named McDonald, a trooper of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry.

363. Was that an official communication from Major St. John, commanding the Opotiki district?—Yes.

364. Had you a military rank in the district?—Yes. My position was I had my present military rank, but I had several duties to perform as well, which naturally occupied the most of my time; and I was also adviser in Native matters to Major St. John—that is to say, while he could do all things necessary for the defence of the district, he could not move any men out of the district without my approval—that is, for the purpose of making war; and in his absence from the district I was in command.

365. You were second in command?—Yes.

366. Of the district which included Opotiki?—Yes.

367. Did it include Tauranga?—No, the district of Opotiki.

368. What were its boundaries?—I think Matata was the boundary. I have a note here of the 8th June: "Put in orders to command the district in St. John's absence."

369. Was that a district order?—Yes.

370. Where was it published?—It would be noted in the records of the orderly-room.

371. At what place?—At Opotiki.

372. I suppose all Volunteers, or most, on duty would know of it?—I should think so.

373. Was it a public notification of the district orders of the day?—Yes.

374. Coming back to this Sunday night at Maketu, when you got the despatch from Major St. John, did you see any one in company with Trooper McDonald?—No; I have no recollection of any one else in connection with those letters than Trooper McDonald.

375. Is it possible that if there were an officer on duty carrying despatches he would not have reported himself to you?—Well, I cannot call to mind an instance of an officer carrying despatches in circumstances of that kind. Troopers and orderlies always carried despatches.

376. Supposing there had been an officer on duty with the trooper, would it not have been his duty to have reported himself to you?—Certainly.

377. No officer did report himself to you?—No.

378. Did you know a Mr. Wrigg before the 30th June?—No.

379. Did you know of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry having been raised?—Yes.

380. Who was in command?—At that time Captain Gwynneth was in command.

381. You knew of him being in command?—Yes; I knew him very well.

382. I suppose this despatch was an official intimation to you of the murders?—Yes.

383. And I suppose for the purpose of steps being taken for the peace of the district?—It was simply announcing the fact of these murders.

384. Did you keep the despatch?—I may have it amongst my papers in Auckland.

385. You got a despatch from Major St. John intimating the murder of Bennett White?—I will read what I have to say about it here: "What took place on Sunday: Kati, he was a Native sergeant stationed at Matata. Kati arrived from Matata with the news that Bennett White and Wi Popata had been murdered at Waiotahi by the Hauhaus on Wednesday, the 26th June. Mr. Henry Clark, Civil Commissioner, Mr. Richard Gill, now of the Native Land Purchase Department, and I started at 1 o'clock for Maketu; met letters from St. John."

386. Do you remember if McDonald was on horseback?—I met him at the ferry crossing. I could not speak for certain as to his being on horseback, but to the best of my recollection I met him on the beach, having crossed the river to Maketu.

387. There were not two Trooper McDonalds?—No.

388. Was Trooper McDonald in uniform?—I suppose he would be, but I cannot speak as to that. I knew the man very well.

389. You have no doubt it was from Trooper McDonald's hands you got the despatch?—Not the slightest.

390. Not any despatch from any one else?—No.

391. You were second in command under Major St. John at the time?—Yes.

392. You continued your journey. The next morning, Monday, the 1st July, you went on to traverse the very road that McDonald had passed over, and on which the murders had been committed?—Yes.

393. Had you any escort?—No; I went alone.

394. In travelling you had to study the tides?—A good deal of the track lay along the sand. From my note of that day, "I started at 11 o'clock from Maketu, halted to lunch at Matata, where I got letters from Wepiha, a Native chief who lived at Whakatane, to the effect that the bodies of White and the mailman had been washed up by the sea at Ohope. Got to Whakatane at dark, and to Ohope at 7.30. It is just to the eastward of Whakatane. I remained there that night. The next day was the 2nd July. A boat party of Whakatohea—that was the name of the Native tribe that lived at Opotiki—came up for the bodies of Bennett White and the mailman. They took White's body only. At 1 o'clock met St. John and some troopers at Ohiwa." Then I have a note: "St. John returned yesterday from an unsuccessful expedition up the Waioeka Gorge." That was an expedition that had set out to try and intercept the murderers retiring. They lost one man by drowning, and another was burned after they came in. There was a drunken spree, and one man was burned to death.

395. Did you arrive on the 2nd July at Opotiki?—Yes. We got to camp at 5 o'clock, St. John living in my house. This is all the note for that day.

397. Can you say what occurred on the 3rd?—Yes; I heard that Moore and Beggs had been murdered. I had better explain, perhaps, here that these two men had so far been reported as missing, and in the interval on the 5th June I heard they were still alive in the hands of the