

426. What would you understand by camp orders?—The orders applying simply to the camp.

427. And what was the camp at that time in Opotiki: did it embrace more than one corps?—It consisted of the Militia—that is, a wing of the 1st Waikato Regiment: military settlers they might then be called. A number of these men had formed a cavalry corps, and they were called out on emergencies and placed on pay. In this case the 1st Waikatos were military settlers who for their services, in addition to some remuneration, got small grants of land.

428. The cavalry were settlers or storekeepers who had come forward to serve voluntarily?—Many men of this Militia had gone off pay with a view to settling on their land, and then they formed a Volunteer cavalry corps.

429. Can you say whether any of the Volunteer corps were on pay in June, 1867?—In all probability, directly the news came in of the murders, the officer commanding the district would put them on pay, or a portion of them.

430. Captain Gwynneth was commanding the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps?—Yes.

431. Would it be his province to issue camp orders?—No.

432. Look at this document, which has been put in as signed by Captain John Gwynneth: how does that strike you?—It strikes me as being very irregular. Such an order may have been issued by Captain Gwynneth. There is one feature about it, and that is about the taking rations. It was not the practice of a man to be called upon to carry rations when travelling through such a country, especially when they had hotels as they had on the road to Tauranga, and house-accommodation, and friendly Native settlements along the coast.

433. It purports also to be an "extract" from camp orders, as if Captain Gwynneth had issued other orders besides that one: would such orders be within his province?—No; neither would he have the power to send men out of the district.

434. The Opotiki district you said you thought extended to Matata and not to Tauranga?—Yes.

435. Look at the back of that document described as "extract from camp orders": you do not recognise the handwriting, I suppose?—No.

436. It says, "Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald volunteered for the service of carrying despatches": would that be a usual occurrence to ask for volunteers to carry despatches?—I never knew of an instance of the kind, except that men sometimes were very glad to get a chance of going up to Tauranga. As a rule, men were very glad to get the opportunity of going there. All the Opotiki men had come from Tauranga originally.

437. Then it goes on to say, "At a time of great danger, as the Natives were known to be in force in the vicinity": were hostile Natives known to be in force in the vicinity at the time to your knowledge?—No, the Natives were never seen at all. It was not known in what force they were. They had retired. The country was scoured by the troops.

438. Was that a customary practice of the Natives, coming down from inland and, after making a raid, going back?—Yes.

439. Was the object of the expedition that you spoke of, as going up Waioeka Gorge, to cut off the retreat of the murderers?—Yes.

440. The expedition was not successful?—No.

441. It goes on to say, "The road they had to travel was that upon which Bennett White and the mailman had been murdered only the day previously, and abounding with every facility for ambuscades"?—The road lay along the beach, high cliffs for the most part on one hand.

442. We have been told the danger, if any, was between Opotiki and Ohiwa, a distance of seven or eight miles?—Yes, that is so.

443. The document goes on to say, "On the evening immediately after their return from this duty—which was performed with credit to themselves—and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in a search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs." Do you remember the hour your expedition started out to the redoubt where the skirmish took place?—Ensign Lawson went out in the morning. It was about midday I went out.

444. You had to overtake them?—Yes.

445. Would it be correct to say the expedition for the bodies of Moore and Begg started in the evening?—I should say the firing between Gray and Lawson started about 10 o'clock a.m.

446. When were the bodies found?—They were found in the middle of the day, and brought in in the afternoon to Opotiki, and put into the church.

447. You think this reference in the document could not be correct: it must have been a mistake on the part of Captain Gwynneth referring to the expedition going out in the evening?—Decidedly.

448. It goes on to say, "And had been dragged from their dwelling into the bush and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp": what have you to say to that?—I will go back again to these four men—Moore, Beggs, Wilkinson, and Livingstone. They built a hut, and on the 21st May it was a rainy day, and they were playing cards in this hut because they could not go out to work. And one of them—I am, of course, speaking now of my recollection of the occurrence as it was described to me at the time—looking through a window saw a party of armed Natives, and they snatched up their rifles and got out of the back of the hut, and ran along under cover of an old Maori fence, and struck up a ridge; and the Natives saw them, followed them, and Wilkinson and Livingstone managed to make good their escape. They came into camp and reported what had happened. Parties went out several days in succession, but the bodies of the others could not be found, and it was not until the 3rd July they were found. From the accounts that had been given to me afterwards, they had been shot on this ridge and then dragged down into a wooded gully. That accounted for the long delay in finding them.

449. Mr. Wrigg, in support of the application made on his behalf for the Cross to the department, got a number of letters and testimonials from various officers—twenty-two in number I think