

585. I think one man has been referred to as "Mad-Acts-of-Gallantry O'Connor." Do you remember O'Connor?—No; I do not know him.

586. There were heroic acts done by individuals on certain occasions?—Yes.

587. I suppose when these acts were done they were a seven-days wonder—they would be talked about and discussed?—Yes.

588. Some fresh one would crop up and the old one be forgotten?—Probably.

589. Is Captain Bower a respectable, honourable man, as far as you know?—Yes.

590. A conscientious man too?—I should think so.

591. You have got nothing in your diary to suggest that he was not there on the 26th June except the fact that he came back on the 18th August?—No.

592. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Can you remember, Major Mair, whether the despatch that you received from Trooper McDonald was addressed to you at Tauranga or elsewhere?—No, I cannot remember how it was addressed. I remember when I met Major St. John at Ohiwa on the Monday he said he wondered where I was, and sometimes I would receive letters from him addressed "on the road."

593. Apart from that, is it at all reasonable to suppose Trooper McDonald would have despatches addressed to you and Colonel Harington, and that another man in his company would also have despatches for Colonel Harington?—No.

594. Is it reasonable to suppose Trooper McDonald would have a despatch for you, and another man in his company would have despatches for Colonel Harington?—No.

595. Would not the one man carry all the despatches on the road?—Yes.

596. You are clear if an officer was on duty with despatches it was his duty to report himself to you, and that no one did report himself on the occasion referred to?—Yes.

597. *Mr. Wilford.*] The order that Mr. Wrigg has produced is an order from his troop to him (Wrigg)?—Yes.

598. Is it likely that order to Wrigg would be handed over to you?—No.

599. You would not expect to see that order?—No. I would expect if any officer met me on the road he would report himself.

600. *Mr. Morrison.*] You have said, Major, you left Opotiki on the 17th June?—Yes.

601. In fact, you left Tauranga on the 30th June for Opotiki?—Yes.

602. When did you arrive at Opotiki?—I arrived at Opotiki on the 2nd July.

603. From the 17th to the 2nd you were absent from Opotiki?—Yes.

603A. It was during this period this murder took place?—Yes.

604. You have also stated in evidence that on your return journey from Tauranga you met Trooper McDonald, to the best of your recollection, on the beach?—At the ferry, the crossing of the river, I met him there.

605. You received certain despatches from him?—Yes.

606. Do you remember the circumstances concerning the receiving of those despatches, as regards the locality, the particular place where you received them?—In approaching Maketu, which is on a river coming from Tauranga, you have to cross that river to the settlement of Maketu, and to the best of my recollection it was there on the beach when I had crossed that I met him.

607. You are perfectly certain that it was Trooper McDonald that gave you the despatches?—Yes.

608. You have also stated you are not certain whether Trooper McDonald was in uniform or on horseback or not?—I cannot say whether he was mounted. The inference would be he would see me coming across the river and hurry out to deliver his despatches, because the settlement was right on the bank of the river.

609. Is it not somewhat strange that you are so decided on one point? Your recollection does not seem too clear in the matter of McDonald being on horseback or not?—I could not swear he was in uniform, but the probability is he would be in cord trousers and serge tunic, the regular uniform of his corps.

610. You said you were in command of the district of Opotiki?—Yes.

611. You knew Captain Gwynneth very well?—Yes.

612. On intimate terms?—Yes.

613. Was he a good man and honest, and a thoroughly reliable man?—I cannot speak as to his general character. He was head-surveyor there at the time, and when this company was formed he was elected by the men as their captain, and commanded them for about a year.

614. You have said you knew him. Will you kindly give the Committee your opinion about him as a soldier?—I never saw him in action. He never had any experience.

615. As a citizen or settler, what is your opinion of him?—I do not pretend to know anything about his private character.

616. You know that Captain Gwynneth issued a camp order?—I have seen it.

617. You have seen this camp order issued by Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.

618. Is it not customary in camps for the captain of a company or the captain of a troop to issue what may be termed a company or a troop order asking for volunteers to perform certain duties without it coming from the district officers at all?—I know of no parallel case.

619. The Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry was the only mounted corps that was on parade at the time?—Yes.

620. Is it not reasonable to suppose that Major St. John or District Adjutant Bower, having an important duty to perform like forwarding despatches with a certain amount of speed to Tauranga, would communicate with Captain Gwynneth's troop asking him to get a couple of his men to volunteer or order them to proceed to Tauranga with despatches?—The captain of the company might be asked to recommend mounted men for duty of the kind, but the order should emanate from the district officer, and should bear the signature of the district adjutant or the officer commanding the district.