

also suggest it is obviously an injustice that one-sided statements should be handed to the Committee when the witnesses could be called and subjected to cross-examination, this being the only means by which the real true test and value of evidence can be assessed.

*Mr. Hutchison* : Mr. Wilford's contention is untenable. These deponents are not hearsay witnesses. They are witnesses who speak from personal knowledge, but are living at a great distance, and it would cost something like £100 to bring them here. I ask that these declarations be taken for what they are worth. They are original statements by people who were actually on the scene of the occurrences that have been referred to.

*Mr. Wilford* : It is generally understood that hearsay evidence is evidence setting out facts which, if these witnesses were called, they could give themselves. The evidence is irrelevant.

*Mr. Hutchison* : The alternative would be to adjourn the Committee for three weeks, and have the witnesses brought to Wellington at a very considerable cost.

*The Chairman* : As to the evidence Mr. Hutchison is about to put in, I rule it is the best evidence procurable under the circumstances. Of course, there is this, Mr. Wilford : if you protest against it, and consider that it is necessary in the interest of Mr. Wrigg that these witnesses be summoned, you can put in a request to that effect, and the Committee will consider it.

The statutory declarations of Messrs. A. S. Ford, dated 23rd September, Albert Wood, dated 23rd September, John Forsyth Connelly, dated 26th September, and Benjamin F. J. Edwards, dated 29th September, were then read and put in.

*Mr. Hutchison* : In connection with Mr. Connelly's affidavit there is an exhibit—the minute-book marked "A." I would like that certain extracts in it which refer to Cornet Wrigg and Captain Gwynneth be referred to. One is on the 10th August, 1867, as follows : "Proposed by Corporal Dette, seconded by Trooper Kirwin, That the commanding officer be requested to recommend the Government to cancel the commission of Cornet Wrigg, in the event of his not sending in his resignation to the corps within one month from this date.—Carried." The second one is on the 6th July, which reads thus : "Proposed by Trooper Dempster, seconded by Trooper Creed, That Cornet Wrigg, Sergeant Hughes, Troopers Kirwin and the seconder form a Committee to aid the commanding officer in the management of the finances for the present year.—Carried."

*The Chairman* : Was that minute confirmed?—Yes; by Captain Gwynneth.

*Mr. Hutchison* : Then on the 16th May, 1868, there is the following entry : "Proposed by Trooper W. Kelly, and seconded by Trooper McFarlane, That a letter be sent through the commanding officer of this district requesting Captain Gwynneth to hand over all funds belonging to the corps before the Government accepts his resignation."

*The Chairman* : That last resolution refers to Captain Gwynneth?—Yes. Minutes were then confirmed by the captains.

*The Chairman* : Do you know if the Mr. Kelly there referred to is the Hon. William Kelly?

*Mr. Hutchison* : I have no doubt of it.

*Mr. Wilford* : I wish to say, with regard to the putting-in of the extracts from the minute-book, of course I do not object to those. But it seems to me advisable to have these witnesses. One witness, B. F. J. Edwards, states that Wrigg never carried Major St. John's despatches to Tauranga. We never said he did. We said he carried Captain Gwynneth's, which was a troop order. We suggest that it was a despatch camp order by Captain Gwynneth. The man Connolly swears George Leaning was never a member of the troop. That requires some cross-examination. A. S. Ford says Major St. John would have reported the ride had it occurred. He does say Major St. John never reported the ride. Then Wood suggests there was no honour or danger in the matter, and that nothing had been done to deserve it (the Cross). Taking into consideration the evidence given by Captain Turner as to the danger and difficulties on the road, it is quite right that those witnesses should be cross-examined and their statements put together.

*The Chairman* : I would suggest, Mr. Wilford, that between this and the luncheon adjournment you should consider the question of summoning these witnesses, and the Committee can then decide if it is necessary to summon them.

*The Chairman* : Is that all the evidence you intend calling?

*Mr. Hutchison* : All but the evidence of Sir Arthur Douglas.

Sir ARTHUR DOUGLAS sworn and examined.

147. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Sir Arthur Douglas is your name?—Yes.

148. Are you Under-Secretary for Defence?—Yes.

149. Have you got with you the certificates of Captain Bower, Captain Leonard Simpson, Captain Percival, and Mr. Leaning?—Yes. [Certificates produced.]

150. Have you been able to find the despatches for the period between June and September, 1867?—No. Despatches are a thing that take a considerable time to look up. We have got to hunt up old records.

*Mr. Hutchison* : The despatches up to the 12th June, 1867, from Opotiki, are published in the Appendices of the Journals of the House for 1867 as A.—No. 20—that is, a few days before the murder of Bennett White. There is then an interval in the despatches of about three months; that is within the time these occurrences took place. I ask that they be produced, and Sir Arthur Douglas could be questioned on them by-and-by.

*The Chairman* : I understand from Sir Arthur Douglas's statement the officers of the department are now making a search for these documents?

*Sir Arthur Douglas* : Yes.

151. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Have you looked into the records of your department with a view to being able to tell us if there is any recommendation by Colonel St. John for the bestowal of the Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—Well, I should like to say something to the Chairman on that. As the Chairman knows, I am only a custodian of the papers for the Minister, and, of course, some of