

these papers I have produced are simply the originals of the documents placed before the House. I would rather the Chairman would look at these papers. [Sir Arthur Douglas's papers handed to the Chairman.]

The Chairman : Inasmuch as the information is available for the Chairman it is available for the Committee. If there are any portions of the departmental papers strictly confidential I think the Minister at the head of the department should appear here before the Committee.

Mr. Hutchison : I am not asking any information as to matters that might be considered confidential. Despatches would not be considered confidential.

152. You do not produce the documents voluntarily, you produced them as a witness?—
Yes.

153. *The Chairman*.] Any papers that are not strictly confidential I shall ask you to produce?—Yes.

154. *Mr. Hutchison*.] The question was, Sir Arthur Douglas, whether you could find in any despatch from Colonel St. John a recommendation with reference to any conspicuous act of bravery by Cornet Wrigg?—None whatever.

155. Have you found any reference or any communication whatever from Colonel St. John in reference to Cornet Wrigg?—No, I have not seen any reference at all.

156. I suppose you are aware that Colonel St. John was the officer commanding the Opotiki district in June, 1867?—Yes.

157. And for some little time after?—Yes.

158. In June and July?—Yes, he must have been, for I have seen letters for June and July.

159. Who were the officers second in command of that district in June and July, 1867?—I really have not looked the subject up sufficiently.

160. You might do so, and let us know who was next in command—in short, give us the rota for June and July, 1867, in the Opotiki district?—Yes, I will endeavour to do that.

161. Do you know it to be a fact that Colonel St. John did recommend one Volunteer for the New Zealand Cross, and one person got it?—I do not say it is not the case, but I may say I have not looked into the subject.

162. I would like you to do so. Angus Smith was recommended for the Cross, and he got it. Can you say that there have been recommendations by commanding officers of districts for the bestowal of the decoration which have not been acceded to?—Well, there have been cases where the New Zealand Cross has been brought up which have not been acceded to, but I cannot recollect whether they were on the recommendations of the officers commanding the districts.

163. Any of them?—I have not really looked through.

164. Will you look—recommendations which have not been acceded to?—I will look it up.

165. I want you to look up whether a statement was made by the office some time ago that the bestowal of them was closed?—I think we have already produced that letter. I think it was definitely stated in that letter that the list was closed.

166. Prior to then?—I do not remember anything prior to then.

167. I want you also to produce a copy of a letter dated the 2nd September, 1895, in reference to an application of Mr. George Johnston Small, of Wanganui?—I will look for that.

168. You have put in a letter in reference to Mr. Wrigg's case declining it in December, 1897?—Yes.

169. I would like you to produce a copy of the communication by which it had been acceded to?—Yes.

170. In one of the letters put in in the course of this inquiry from Mr. Wrigg he speaks of you as having met him on a previous occasion: do you recall that?—No. I may say that the first day this Committee opened Mr. Wrigg met me in the passage, and he said, "How do you do, Sir Arthur Douglas." I said, of course, "How do you do." He then said—I think the words were to this effect: "I do not know whether you have anything against me with reference to this on account of something that happened years ago." I said, "Mr. Wrigg, you must be labouring under some mistake. To my knowledge I never saw you before in my life until I saw you sitting in this room just now." He said, "Oh, yes; you brought down a tracing to my rooms some years ago, and you were very angry about it." I can only say that to my knowledge I never saw him in my life before this.

171. *Mr. Hutchison*.] You have no feeling whatever in this matter?—Absolutely none.

172. Any suggestion contained in a letter or conversation to that effect would be incorrect?—Yes, absolutely.

173. Are you aware that the first-named petitioner, William James Raven, holds the New Zealand Cross?—I can look at the roll when I get back.

The Chairman : Does that close your case, Mr. Hutchison?

Mr. Hutchison : All but the documents which Sir Arthur Douglas will put in.

The Chairman : Mr. Wilford, have you any evidence?

Mr. Wilford : I wrote a letter to you, Mr. Chairman, during the luncheon hour.

The Chairman : I will ask the Clerk to read it. [Letter from Mr. Wilford to the Chairman read.]

Mr. Wilford : In reference to that letter, if I could have an opportunity of going through this matter, and seeing what the effect of these statutory declarations are, probably I might come to the conclusion, after considering the expense that it would be to bring these witnesses here, that it would be best to leave the matter as it is, and leave the Committee to come to their decision. I do not mean to suggest to the Committee, but the matter is unusual as far as such evidence is concerned. Would you allow me to go through that evidence and consider it?

The Chairman : The opportunity will be given you, Mr. Wilford.

Mr. Wilford : The first witness that I wish to call, is Mr. Leslie.