

Mr. WILLIAM GEORGE RUTHERFORD sworn and examined.

210. *Mr. Wilford.*] What is your name?—William George Rutherford.
 211. What are you?—Chief Draughtsman in the Public Works Department.
 212. Do you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
 213. How long have you known him?—About thirteen years; since June, 1885.
 214. Was he ever in the same department of the Government service as yourself?—He was my chief.
 215. Did you ever at any time hear him make a statement as to his believing he had a right to any Cross or distinction of value?—Yes; shortly after I first joined the Service in June, 1885.
 216. Did the conversation take place in the office?—In Mr. Wrigg's own private room.
 217. Will you tell the gentlemen of the Committee, as nearly as you can, the subject of that conversation?—It is so long ago, Mr. Chairman, that I cannot recollect anything of the precise words. We were talking about some old New Zealand war troubles, and he told me then that he was under the impression that he ought to have the Victoria Cross at that time, and showed me several letters purporting, I think, to come from some military authorities which bore reference to that subject. I can only remember that the letters were rather old, and that is all I can remember about it.
 218. Letters or letter?—There was more than one paper.
 219. You do not know how many?—No.
 220. You say he told you he was entitled to the Victoria Cross?—Yes; that he had been thought entitled to it.
 221. Did he make any reference of his intention of applying for the New Zealand Cross?—Not at that time.
 222. Did he at any time?—Not that I remember.
 223. *Mr. Hutchison.*] This camp order, is that the document that was shown you?—It was somewhat similar to that; I cannot say whether that was it.
 224. Do you remember a particular exploit for which some one thought Mr. Wrigg was entitled to the Cross?—It was in connection with some ride in carrying despatches.
 225. Were you acquainted with Colonel St. John?—No.

Hon. W. McCULLOUGH sworn and examined.

226. *Mr. Wilford.*] What is your name?—William McCullough.
 227. You are a member of the Legislative Council?—Yes.
 228. I believe you know and have known for some considerable time Mr. Wrigg?—Yes, for a great number of years.
 229. Covering what period?—Twenty-five years.
 230. Were you ever at Opotiki yourself?—No.
 231. Your name has been mentioned, Mr. McCullough, in reference to the action that Mr. Wrigg took in obtaining this decoration. Will you explain to the Committee what part you took in the matter?—Papers and testimonials held by Mr. Wrigg were shown to me, in Auckland, and to a number of my friends. I made some inquiries in connection with the documents, and, after consideration, I felt convinced that Mr. Wrigg had a good claim to the decoration.
 232. You became satisfied in your own mind?—Yes, in my own mind.
 233. And after you were satisfied, what was the next step you took, if any?—I had an interview with the Defence Minister, the Hon. Mr. Thompson, and expressed my views and opinions. I subsequently, at a request of a number of gentlemen in Auckland and others—members of Parliament—organized a deputation to the Hon. the Premier and the Minister of Defence, the Hon. Mr. Thompson. I read extracts from the testimonials and papers held by Mr. Wrigg, and expressed my own views upon the matter, saying that I thought there was a good claim made out upon the evidence submitted to me for the decoration, and urged that it should be granted.
 234. You had, I suppose, Mr. McCullough, Wrigg's own statement of what had occurred as well?—Yes.
 235. Was Mr. Wrigg a man whom you had known for a considerable period and one whose word you could place reliance on?—Certainly. I had had frequent interviews with Mr. Wrigg, and some mutual friends who knew Mr. Wrigg longer than I did were also of opinion that he was justly entitled to the decoration.
 236. Was there anything else?—Perhaps I should mention that, in justice to the Premier and Minister of Defence, at the deputation the question was raised by the Premier that, assuming that the services deserved recognition, was it not rather long in being claimed? I admitted that there was some force in that statement, but I pointed out that, in my opinion, in the matter of recognition of bravery was never too late to acknowledge. In a question such as that there was no statute of limitations.
 237. Or should be none?—Probably that is the more correct way of saying it. And that if the Government were convinced upon the evidence placed before them that it was a meritorious and brave action that on the point of the claim being made rather late should not, in my opinion, weigh with them.
 238. In these conversations you had with Mr. Wrigg did you go thoroughly into the matter with him before you decided?—I took very great care. It was a considerable time before I was convinced in my own mind that he had a claim, and that objection raised by the Premier was also raised in my own mind.
 239. Did he ever show you a camp order that has been produced here? Did he ever show you that camp order or a copy of it?—No, I do not think I saw this; but I saw this order, I think, upon another piece of paper with a stamp, and I think it had an indorsement signed by Captain Gwynneth.