

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882," and its amendments.

B. F. J. EDWARDS.

Declared before me, at New Plymouth, this 29th day of September, 1898—Robert Ward, a Justice of the Peace for the colony and a Judge of the Native Land Court.

I, *Gilbert Mair*, Land Purchase Officer, Thames, do solemnly and sincerely declare,—

1. That I volunteered for active service against the rebel Natives in the Bay of Plenty in December, 1866, and between that time and the year 1872 took part in more than thirty engagements, being promoted as ensign, lieutenant, and captain, respectively, in the New Zealand Militia for actions in the field, the several commissions taking effect from the date of such actions.

2. That between the years 1866 and 1888 I resided almost continuously in the Bay of Plenty, and, being actively employed all this time, I became thoroughly conversant with every incident that occurred in the operations against the rebels, even in cases where I was not actually present.

3. That at the time of the murder of Mr. Bennett White and Wiremu Popata, the mailman, in June, 1867, I was Clerk and Interpreter to the Opotiki Resident Magistrate's Court, and in that capacity constantly travelling along the beach between that place and Tauranga. That only two or three miles of the whole were ever considered unsafe—namely, the short portion between Onekawa Bluff and Waitotahi.

4. That on the several days following the murders the beach was perfectly safe for travelling, having been patrolled and repatrolled by considerable numbers of troopers. Women and children had passed over it unharmed. The party of rebels who committed the said murders had been followed far inland by Colonel St. John and some thirty troopers, and a strong infantry force under Captains Skene and Walker also pursued them, and ascertained, beyond reasonable doubt, that they had retired precipitately to the mountains, as is the usual Maori custom after committing like depredations. Thus it followed, as a matter of fact, that the Coast Road was much safer than it had been for a considerable time before the occurrence, as the whereabouts of the enemy had become definitely known.

5. That on the occasion when Trooper McDonald proceeded to Tauranga with despatches there was absolutely no danger, nor did he incur any risk whatever in the performance of that duty. Had he or his companion performed any act of distinguished bravery as now alleged by H. Wrigg, after a lapse of thirty years, it would have become a topic of general conversation at every camp-fire and in every home throughout the Bay of Plenty, as everything connected with the war was considered of paramount and absorbing interest.

6. The testimonials obtained by H. Wrigg at his urgent personal solicitation are, generally speaking, valueless, having been given by persons who knew nothing whatever of the circumstances, except through a tainted source. Neither Captain Bower nor Mr. Leonard Simpson were in Opotiki at the time as alleged.

7. That I was intimate with the late Colonel St. John for many years, and, while he frequently spoke to me of courageous acts performed by members of the Force, he never mentioned the name of H. Wrigg with favour.

8. That had H. Wrigg ever performed the courageous action as alleged, or even been considered capable of displaying distinguished bravery, the members of his own corps would never have unanimously memorialised their commanding officer to obtain the cancellation of his commission in the event of his not tendering his immediate resignation.

9. That the statement made by H. Wrigg in a recent letter of his, and published in the *New Zealand Times*, to the effect that I accompanied him along the beach just after the said murders is entirely untrue.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."

GILBERT MAIR,

Captain, New Zealand Militia.

Declared at Thames, this 1st day of October, 1898, before me—E. McDonnell, J.P.

THURSDAY, 27TH OCTOBER, 1898.

Mr. B. F. J. EDWARDS sworn and examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, occupation, and residence, Mr. Edwards?—Benjamin Frederick James Edwards. My occupation is Assessor of the Native Land Court.

2. Where is your residence?—My address is Wanganui.

3. *Mr. Wilford.*] You have made a declaration, Mr. Edwards, in reference to the Wrigg inquiry?—Yes.

4. That declaration was made on the 29th September, 1898?—Yes.

5. May I ask you who drew the declaration?—I drew it myself.

6. Is the declaration itself, the body of it, in your handwriting?—Yes.

7. The declaration?—Yes. Judge Ward drew the declaration.

8. And is it in his handwriting or yours?—It is in his handwriting.

9. From information supplied by you?—I wrote the body of the statement myself.

10. Who first communicated with you asking you for this?—Well, I was asked to sign a petition.