

162. Did you go?—Yes.

163. Did Wrigg go?—I believe so; I am not quite certain. There was such a crowd of us we could not see everybody. I am not quite certain whether he was there, or overtook us.

164. Could you tell me, first of all, who went out in this expedition; I believe there were a hundred men?—Quite that.

165. How would you advance—foot and horse soldiers as well?—Well, I think the foot soldiers went first, and I think the troop of cavalry followed us up.

166. Is there any dense bush between Opotiki and the place where you went to search?—Well, we went along the usual track on to the sandhills.

167. Were there not a great many hills and a lot of rising ground round where you went to search, and gullies?—Well, say, this is the flat [the witness indicating the position with his finger], the Rev. Mr. Wilson had property here. There was also a track over this hill right into the Waiootahi Valley, and we went round by the beach.

168. Then, would it be possible for there to be any Natives on the top of the hill leading to the Waiootahi Valley?—Quite possible.

169. And the probability is, if the Natives saw you coming along they would not wait to be caught up to?—No.

170. Is it not extraordinary that you did not see them when you went out?—We saw their foot-tracks. We saw where they lit the fire, and some of the Natives who were with us suggested that that was the fire where they cooked the Maori mailman's heart and liver.

171. Are you able to say the Maoris were not in the vicinity when you went by, or merely that you did not see them—they may have been in hiding?—They may have been in hiding, but Maoris do not do that sort of thing. It is not their custom when making raids.

172. Do you remember when Trooper McDonald and Wrigg returned from Tauranga?—I did not see them; but I heard that they had returned.

173. Do you remember that the day they got back they had to turn out to look for the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—That took place some time afterwards. Not so soon after Bennett White's murder.

174. Mr. Wrigg has said that as soon as he got back—only just getting out of the saddle—he went out to look for the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—That is nonsense. I remember when Mr. Wilkinson came into camp, with all his clothes torn off him, giving the alarm.

175. You do not remember the date?—It was some time afterwards; near the end of July. These four men were out on their land at Waioeka.

176. It is suggested these men were murdered three or four weeks before their bodies were found?—That is true enough. We could not find their bodies. The only way we found their bodies was that some Maoris came in and surrendered, and it was from them we found where their bodies were.

177. It was three weeks before the bodies that were missing were found?—Yes.

178. Will you say they were missing before Bennett White and the mailman were murdered?—It was not so, because they were out on the land.

179. Are you quite certain that they were not reported missing until after?—I am almost certain it was not.

180. You may have made a mistake, as before?—Yes.

181. Then, Mr. Edwards, your evidence comes to this, I suppose: You do not deny that Wrigg rode the journey to Tauranga and back on the day that he mentions?—I do not deny this.

182. You do not deny that he passed through this district, the locality of the murder of Bennett White and another, a day or two before?—That is right.

183. You are not able to deny that he was the only volunteer in the troop that agreed to go?—No.

184. You are not able to deny the fact that Captain Gwynneth called for volunteers, and he immediately stepped forward and offered to go?—I do not deny that.

185. Mr. Pirani.] Can you remember how long after this Native raid it was that Trooper McDonald went to Tauranga with a lady to get married?—I believe it was about three or four weeks afterwards.

186. Do you think it is probable he would have gone if the road were so dangerous?—No. I went along there myself four or five days afterwards. I went to Whakatane.

187. That is the dangerous part of the road?—Yes. I went to Whakatane about getting volunteers to go on an expedition up the Waimana Valley.

188. Mr. Wilford quoted Major Mair's evidence as to the danger of this road. Major Mair was asked if the road was most dangerous, and his reply was (question 462), "No more dangerous than walking down Lambton Quay"?—That is what we thought, that there was no danger. It never struck us there was any danger.

189. Mr. Fraser.] You were asked just now as to whether there was a possibility of the Maoris being in ambush after the murder of Bennett White and the mailman, and your reply was "It was not their custom." Would you explain to me what their custom was?—When a Native expedition came down like that they came on an expedition of man-killing. When they came across their enemy, or members of their party who had gone against them, they waylaid them, killed them, and probably carried the bodies away. If they did not do that they ripped the bodies open and took the heart and liver away. Probably decapitated the body and carried the head away.

190. Would the scene of a murder a few days afterwards be at all dangerous from a probability of Natives lurking about?—Well, Natives would not lurk about; they would go straight away into their country.

191. Then there would be no difficulty in passing the scene of the murder within a few days?—No, because the Natives would have gone. Probably four or five days afterwards Major St. John