

Mr ALBERT WOOD sworn and examined.

248. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Your name is Albert Wood?—Yes.
249. You reside at the Thames?—Yes.
250. You are a miner?—They took me down as a miner there.
251. You are a mining engineer, working in a mine?—Driving the big pump.
252. You were living in Opotiki in 1867?—Yes.
253. You became a member of the Bay of Plenty Volunteers?—Yes; from the starting of the corps.
254. Do you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
255. And Mr. Ford, who has just gone out of the room?—Yes.
256. Do you remember the news of Bennett White's murder coming into Opotiki?—Yes.
257. Quite distinctly?—Yes; I remember it quite well.
258. Was there anything done immediately after that you took part in?—Yes; the cavalry were called out.
259. You were one of those who paraded?—Yes.
260. How many paraded altogether?—I could not say as to the number. As many as we could get to go.
261. What happened?—We were a long while before we started. We fell in at Wilson's, and we crossed the river in a canoe.
262. You went out along the beach?—Yes, and it was dark when we got down to the sandhills and the place.
263. What place?—It is an opening before you come to the Waiotahi, which is on the Opotiki side, where the murder was committed.
264. Near the scene of the murder?—Yes.
265. Was it dark when you got there?—Yes. We got on to the sandhills, and our orders were, no one was to speak above a whisper, and no lights were allowed. No smoking was allowed there until morning.
266. In the morning you resumed the search?—We paraded at daylight, and there was Lieutenant Thompson, and then we were told off to escort Ramari te Wai, the Maori woman, and family to the ferry. After we got them to the ferry we had to proceed up on to some land between the Ohiwa and the Waiotahi. There were three men up there clearing. We went up on to this, crossed the mud-flats in going to the ferry, and got the three men; but I cannot mention their names. They were clearing land for Thompson and stocking there, and an old man was clearing for himself, I think. They came in with us.
267. Did you then return to Opotiki?—Yes. Our orders when we left Major St. John's party were to come back after fetching those men in with us, and, if we were to fall in, there would be some one there for us. If there was no one there where we left him, we were to proceed back to Opotiki.
268. When did you arrive back in Opotiki?—When I got back to Opotiki I went into the church, and saw Bennett White's head on the table.
269. You concluded the rest of your party had found the head and brought it in?—Yes.
270. Were you regularly in attendance at parades?—Pretty regularly.
271. Lieutenant Thompson and you were working together?—Yes; living together.
272. Was there any parade that afternoon or evening for volunteers to carry despatches?—No. When I came into camp from Ohiwa I went out to get my horse in, because I had gone out with a borrowed horse, being in a hurry. When I came back I heard Cornet Wrigg and McDonald had gone with despatches to Tauranga. I wanted to go to Tauranga, and I asked to be allowed to go if an orderly was wanted; and I asked Thompson how it was I was not to go. He said Captain Gwynneth wanted Wrigg to transact some business for him on behalf of the Survey Department.
273. Where?—In Tauranga; and Smith wanted McDonald to transact some business for him.
274. In Tauranga also?—Yes; and Smith was brother-in-law to this McDonald.
275. You mean Donald McDonald?—Yes, it is the same person you have been calling McDonald.
276. Did you do anything else—that is, with Lieutenant Thompson?—I knew it was no good going to Captain Gwynneth, so I went to Major St. John, and he said, "Wood, it is out of my hands altogether. I wanted two orderlies, and I have got them. It does not matter who they are, but that I should lose nothing by it." I told him I wanted to go up.
277. Were you disappointed when you did not get up?—Yes, I was.
278. Did you know the road?—Yes.
279. Had you been there before?—No, but there was no need to be.
280. Why?—Because other men went up there who had never been up there before.
281. Do you know whether the two went?—Yes, they went; but I did not see them go.
282. It is common report that they went?—Yes.
283. Did you see them return?—No.
284. Was there any patrol on the beach at that time?—Yes, but I was not always at it.
285. Was it a regular thing at that time?—Yes.
286. At what time of day or night, what circumstances?—We had to proceed to the Ohiwa and wait there until a little after half-tide, and if there was no one there we would come back. If there was any one coming up the beach they would come up with us.
287. How long did that arrangement prevail before the murder?—It was after the murder.
288. How soon after the murder was this arrangement started?—The next day.
289. Then, from and including the next day after the murder of Bennett White the beach was patrolled in the way you have mentioned up to the Ohiwa?—To the Ohiwa Ferry.
290. Why was it not patrolled beyond?—That was considered safe.