

were so remarkably well done that nobody could have denied they were their own signatures. That was a matter of comment, I think, in the newspapers at the time.

147. Do you consider that that camp order you have looked at complies with all the regulations as to formality?—I think it is informal in this respect, that it was not signed by the officer commanding the district.

148. Look carefully at the form. Is the language used of such a kind as would be used—in reference to the carrying of rations and that sort of thing. Was it necessary between Opotiki and Tauranga for them to carry rations?—I have heard of men carrying despatches on that route frequently, but I have never heard of them carrying rations.

149. It has been represented by Mr. Wrigg that the dirtiness of that document (the camp order) should be excused on account of its getting wet in fording the rivers. Do you think that that would be a probability?—I think that the man bearing this might have fallen off his horse in crossing the Waioatahi.

150. Do you think Mr. Wrigg would be likely to have been carrying any document of that kind?—I have always doubted the genuineness of this document. I would not swear it was correct until I saw the original camp order.

151. There is an original despatch signed by Major St. John which the Committee has received since it last met, and I would like that put in, Mr. Chairman?—Yes.

152. *Mr. Field.*] You said, Captain Mair, that you knew Trooper McDonald?—Yes; very well.

153. You had ridden with him on various occasions?—Yes.

154. Had you ridden with him previous to this occurrence?—No; not till afterwards. I rode with him from Te Teko to Galatea just before his death.

155. Not previous to this?—No. I knew him very well personally.

156. Was he a man looked upon as being reliable and courageous?—Yes. He always had the reputation of being a plucky and a dashing fellow.

157. A man likely to be trusted in the service?—Yes.

158. Are you aware whether or not Trooper McDonald at the time of this occurrence was acquainted with the road between Opotiki and Tauranga?—I know he had been up to Tauranga a few days before to get married. He went a few days before with his father-in-law.

159. Before?—I believe so.

160. Then, you say you believe that he knew the road?—I think so; all the men knew the road.

161. *Mr. Lewis.*] At times the roads were sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men. Does that infer that at times it was not sufficiently dangerous to require any escort?—At times it was dangerous, and the question of an escort depended entirely upon this fact.

162. Was it at times dangerous?—Yes; when rumour came in that the Natives might be expected down on the Coast.

163. At other times it was not dangerous?—No; at times it was not.

164. If an escort was wanted it would be provided?—Always.

165. When not wanted, of course, it would not be provided?—That is so.

166. So if Mr. Wrigg were escorted along the beach he would not be in danger?—No.

167. If he was not escorted that would be evidence that the road was safe?—Yes.

168. *Mr. O'Meara.*] Respecting your interview with Wood, what was your object in that interview?—I had not forgotten the incident at all, but I wished to get independent testimony. I did not wish to act entirely upon my own impressions, but to get the testimony of others whom I knew had been there.

169. You said Wrigg accompanied McDonald. Would you not put it the other way, and say McDonald accompanied Wrigg?—It depends upon who was the bearer of the despatches.

170. Who do you say carried the despatches?—I said Trooper McDonald was detailed to carry the despatches. And Mr. Wood said Mr. Wrigg accompanied him, as Captain Gwynneth required some plans from the Survey Office in Tauranga.

171. Do you know of your own personal knowledge that McDonald had possession of these despatches and not Wrigg?—No.

172. You were asked by Mr. Monk respecting this great work of penmanship done by Mr. Wrigg. Is it not an ordinary thing that men expert with their pen are capable of doing this sort of thing?—I can only speak of this, and I instanced it as a proof of Mr. Wrigg's clever penmanship.

173. Have you been communicated with, either by letter or personally, since this petition was presented to Parliament, so as to influence you?—No, certainly not.

174. You have never received letters?—Yes, I have received a letter from Mr. Lingard, enclosing the petition. I think I got a letter from Captain Preece saying that it was proposed to get up a petition, and would I sign it.

175. You did not bring those letters with you, did you?—No.

176. There is nothing in those letters to influence you, is there?—No.

177. *Hon. Mr. T. Thompson.*] When Captain Mair was asked about that camp order with regard to these men having to take provisions with them, if we are told that the rivers were in heavy flood at that time, would it not be necessary that the men should take provisions with them?—No, sir. There is only one river that would have been affected by flood, and that is the Waioatahi, and if the men could not cross that they would return to Opotiki or wait until low tide. All the other rivers, the Ohiwa, Whakatano, Waihi, Matata, and Maketu, &c., had good ferries provided by the Government.

178. You have, no doubt, served with the irregular forces in camp?—Yes.

179. Was this not what occurred very frequently in those days: The officer commanding issued certain orders to the camp with regard to special duties, and the adjutant gave the details