

1909.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## PUBLIC PETITIONS M TO Z COMMITTEE, 1899

(REPORT OF), ON THE PETITION OF WILLIAM JAMES RAVEN AND OTHERS RELATIVE TO THE BESTOWAL OF THE NEW ZEALAND CROSS ON H. C. W. WRIGG; TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND EXHIBITS.

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*Report brought up on the 8th August, 1899 (but not then ordered to lie on the Table). Report and Evidence laid upon the Table 21st October, 1909, and ordered to be printed.*

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*Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 18th September, 1908.*

*Ordered, "That there be laid before this House the report of, and the evidence taken before, the Public Petitions M to Z Committee in the matter of H. C. W. Wrigg."—(Mr. WOOD.)*

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## R E P O R T .

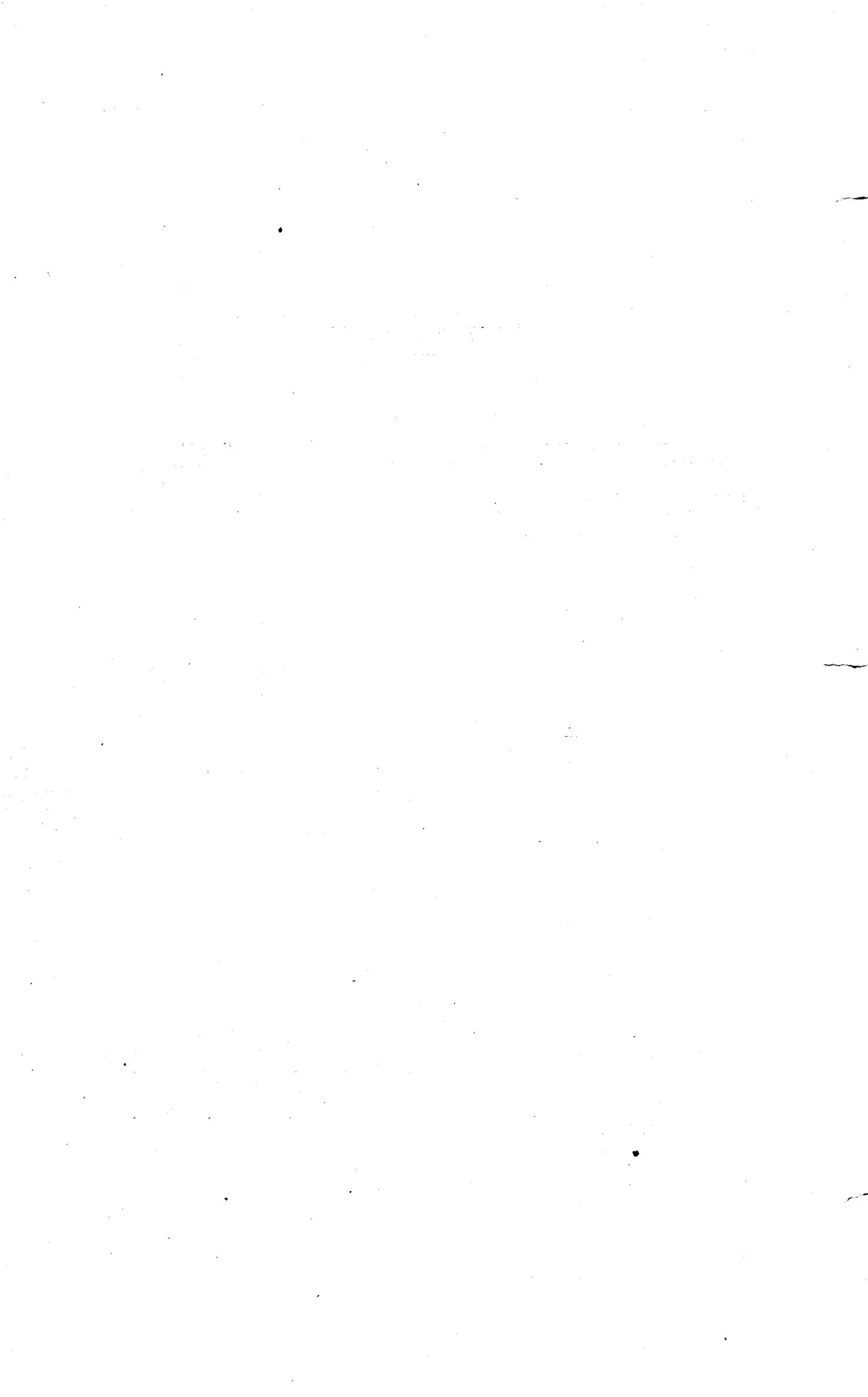
No. 209 (1898).—Petition of WILLIAM JAMES RAVEN and 5 Others.

PETITIONERS pray that a thorough investigation may be made into the circumstances in connection with the bestowal of the New Zealand Cross on Mr. H. C. W. Wrigg.

I am directed to report that, from the evidence adduced, the Committee is of opinion that Mr. H. C. W. Wrigg was not entitled to the New Zealand Cross.

R. MEREDITH, Chairman.

8th August, 1899.



## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1898.

(Mr. MEREDITH, Chairman.)

*The Chairman* : I will ask the clerk to read the petition. [Petition and correspondence read.]

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, as you presented the petition, is it your desire to give evidence?

*Mr. G. Hutchison* : It is.

*The Chairman* : The Committee have decided that the evidence shall be taken down in shorthand?—Yes.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, are you ready to proceed?

*Mr. G. Hutchison* : I would ask that the evidence be taken on oath.

*The Chairman* : Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the evidence be taken on oath?—Yes.

*Mr. Wrigg* : Mr. Chairman, before the Committee proceeds, I should like to make a request to be allowed to be represented by counsel.

*The Chairman* : Then I will ask the witnesses to retire while the Committee consider your request, Mr. Wrigg.

All witnesses then retired. The Committee then considered the request, and resolved that Mr. Wrigg should be allowed to be represented by counsel, after which an adjournment was made until the morning of the 29th instant, to allow counsel to be present on behalf of Mr. Wrigg.

THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1898.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Hutchison, will you proceed?

*Mr. Hutchison* : I shall ask to put in the Order in Council, 11th March, 1869, instituting the decoration of the New Zealand Cross. I think it will be convenient for the Committee to have that before it [Order in Council put in—Exhibit No. 1], and also copy of the *Gazette* notice notifying the bestowal of the decoration on Mr. Wrigg [Gazette notice put in—Exhibit No. 2]

*Mr. Hutchison* : I will now call Mr. Wrigg.

Mr. HARRY CHARLES WILLIAM WRIGG sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What is your full name, Mr. Wrigg?—Harry Charles William Wrigg.
2. You are now residing in Auckland, are you not?—Yes.
3. In 1867 you were at Opotiki?—Yes.
4. A surveyor?—I was a surveyor's assistant there.
5. You remember the formation of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry?—Yes.
6. Can you mention the date of its formation?—No.
7. Have you ever seen that book before? [Book produced.] It is a minute-book of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Corps?—I recognise the book.
8. It is a minute-book of the corps?—Yes.
9. It will indicate the date when the corps was formed?—Yes.
10. You had a rank of cornet in the corps?—Yes.
11. Who was captain?—Captain Gwynneth.
12. Was he a resident at Opotiki?—Yes; and I was his clerk, or an assistant surveyor.
13. You remember the murder of Bennett White and the mailman being known in Opotiki?—Yes.
14. What date was that?—I could not remember that.
15. Do you remember the report coming in?—Yes.
16. Was it in the evening, or morning, or when?—As far as I can recollect, it was in the morning.
17. What was done then—did the Cavalry turn out?—Yes.
18. And other Volunteers, I suppose?—I do not know anything about that, only the Cavalry.
19. Did they go along the beach to the supposed scene of the murders?—I went out along the beach where Bennett White was murdered.
20. Do you remember the force going out along the beach?—Yes.
21. Were you with them?—No, I followed them.
22. Why did you not go with the troop?—I was engaged on official business. As soon as they went out I followed them.
23. Would you say two or three went out?—As far as I know, half a dozen went out.
24. Did you go out afterwards?—Yes.
25. Alone?—Yes, alone; after the others; and met them coming back.
26. Where did you meet them?—I suppose, at the half-way distance-house. As far as my recollection goes, they had the man's head in a handkerchief.
27. Between Opotiki and Ohiwa?—Between Opotiki and Ohiwa.
28. One of them had a head in a handkerchief?—Yes, as far as I remember.
29. Can you mention the names of any of the troopers coming back?—No.
30. Did you return with them to Opotiki?—Yes.
31. What next happened—was the corps turned out after your return?—Yes.
32. What time of the day was that, evening or morning?—I cannot tell you that.
33. Did anything happen on parade?—Yes.

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34. What happened?—A volunteer was asked for to carry despatches to Tauranga.
35. Who asked for a volunteer?—Captain Gwynneth.
36. What happened when Captain Gwynneth called for a volunteer?—I volunteered.
37. In presence of the troop?—Yes.
38. Did you say anything?—I said, provided he gave me a trooper.
39. Did you not know the road yourself?—No; and another thing, it was winter-time—the rivers were flooded.
40. What happened when you said you would volunteer provided you got a trooper?—Trooper McDonald volunteered to go along with me.
41. Were there any camp orders issued?—Of course.
42. With special reference to your carrying despatches?—Yes.
43. Who issued them?—Colonel St. John, I presume.
44. He was then major?—Yes.
45. Did you see the camp orders?—Yes.
46. Did any other officer issue a camp order in connection with the volunteering?—No.
47. Did not Captain Gwynneth?—I think myself it was the troop camp orders I copied.
48. Did Captain Gwynneth issue any orders in connection with your carrying despatches?—Yes.
49. You saw them, I suppose?—Yes, and copied them.
50. Have you got a copy that you made at the time?—Yes.
51. You made a copy at the time, which copy you say is in the Defence Department—you forwarded it to the Defence Department?—Yes. The original copy that I made I sent to the department.
- Mr. Hutchison:* Mr. Chairman, I might ask Sir Arthur Douglas, Under-Secretary in the Defence Office, to produce the document. [Copy of extract from camp orders put in.—Exhibit No. 3.]
52. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Is that the document, Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
53. This purports to be an original?—It is a copy of the original.
54. That is the document you sent to the Defence Department?—Yes.
55. Is that signed by Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.
56. Is that the signature?—Yes.
57. How did you become possessed of this document?—Because they were my orders to go down to Tauranga.
58. That document was handed to you at the time?—Yes.
59. In whose handwriting is the body of the document?—Mine.
60. The signatures are those of Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.
61. When did you start on this ride?—In June.
62. Was it on the same day or next after the date of that order?—The next day; but I would not swear to that. I believe it was the next day we started.
63. What letters were given to you?—Despatches.
64. To whom were the despatches addressed?—To the officer commanding the district at Tauranga.
65. That would be Colonel Harington?—Yes, I think so, but I do not know who it was.
66. Did you not read the address?—I do not know that I did.
67. Were there more than one letter?—No; only one packet.
68. You did not read the direction on the parcel?—No, not that I remember.
69. You are sure there was only one parcel?—There was only one parcel.
70. Did you meet any difficulty on the way?—No.
71. Did you reach Tauranga?—Yes.
72. With Trooper McDonald?—Yes.
73. To whom did you deliver the parcel?—I think it was to Captain Goldsmith; I think it was he.
74. On the way did you meet any official coming from Tauranga to Opotiki?—No.
75. Did you meet Major Mair?—No, not Major Mair. He was only a young man at the time.
76. You met Major Mair—Captain Mair—or whom?—We did not meet him at all. I remember that a Captain Mair came back from Tauranga for two miles to see us on our journey back again; he was so pleased with our ride.
77. What had been the extent of your ride, then?—I suppose, eighty or ninety miles.
78. You got back, when?—I think it was in three days we got back.
79. What happened after you came back—was the troop paraded for further service?—No, not as far as I know.
80. Did you go on any other expedition?—When I arrived I wanted a bottle of porter. I went into the mess-room and got it. I had to be assisted on my horse, I was so sore with riding.
81. Did you go on any other expedition?—Yes, right off.
82. What was that expedition?—I went off to bring in the bodies of Moore and Beggs.
83. Who had been murdered some time before?—Yes.
84. Who was in command?—Captain Gwynneth.
85. Did you see Major Mair there?—Decidedly not.
86. What happened when the bodies were found? Did you bring them back or bury them?—We brought them in.
87. How long did you continue a member of the Volunteer Cavalry Corps after that?—I cannot exactly fix the dates; but there was an order came to me to go to the South, and I accepted it. It was understood another former letter was mislaid.
88. In consequence of that letter you decided to leave for the South?—Yes,

89. What date was that?—About two months after the ride.
90. Before you left did the troop come to any resolution with respect to yourself?—No.
91. Did they not pass a resolution asking the Governor to cancel your commission?—Decidedly not.
92. I want you to look at this minute-book. [Minute-book produced.] Look at that entry there. Are you aware of this resolution having been passed by the troop?—No.
93. At this time you were in Southland—the 10th August, 1867?—Yes, I was in Southland then, as far as I know. I certainly was not in Opotiki then.
94. Did you resign your commission?—Well, I did after Captain Gwynneth asked me to resign. I was in the Imperial Service at Home, and brought up for the Imperial Service. I was a martinet as far as the duties of my corps were concerned, and these men, for vindictiveness, I presume, brought this resolution forward. I never heard of the resolution until it was brought up in the petition before Parliament.
95. Can you give us any approximate date of your leaving Opotiki?—It was before that resolution was brought forward.
96. You went to Southland, then, a short time after the ride?—Two months, I think it was.
97. Did you remain there long?—Yes. I remained there, I suppose, about eighteen months.
98. Was it in private or public service?—It was in public service. I was transferred there. I was computer in the Survey Department.
99. After leaving Southland where did you go?—I was transferred to Auckland.
100. To the City of Auckland?—I was Chief Draughtsman in the Provincial Government. I was transferred to the Thames.
101. Did you continue there a long time?—Yes; for two years.
102. Where did you go then?—I was then transferred to Wellington. I asked to be transferred.
103. Did you remain in Wellington until you retired?—I remained about eighteen years.
104. Then you retired on a pension?—Yes.
105. On the ground of ill-health?—Yes.
106. So your service, then, from the time you went to Southland until you retired, was continuous?—Yes.
107. When did Captain Gwynneth die, do you remember?—I cannot tell.
108. Did you see him after you left Opotiki?—I saw him two months before he died.
109. What year was that?—I suppose, about 1885 or 1886.
110. That would be in Auckland?—In Cambridge. I would not be certain of the date.
111. Had you seen him in the interval?—No; but I would not like to say definitely.
112. How did he come to put that indorsement on the back of the document [Exhibit No. 3]?—I wrote to him to ask if he would put an indorsement. I had the original document in order to have a record. I thought I would write and ask him to give me an indorsement of that, and he did it.
113. You sent the document to him by post, and got it back?—Yes.
114. Do you know in whose handwriting the indorsement of this document is?—It is Captain Gwynneth's, and the signature is his.
115. Did you suggest what was to be put in the body of the document?—Decidedly not.
116. When you got the document back you put it away among your papers?—I did.
117. How did the idea of applying for the Cross arise in your mind?—Through an article in the *Wanganui Chronicle*.
118. You saw a paragraph, I suppose?—It was a suggestion by Colonel McDonnell, I think.
119. As to celebrating the Jubilee year by conferring the Cross upon veterans?—Yes, I believe that was it.
120. Did you put yourself in communication with any one on the subject?—Yes.
121. Who—Captain Bower?—Yes.
122. He was at Napier?—Yes.
123. Why is he called "Captain" Bower?—Once a man is captain he is always captain.
124. He had been at Opotiki in 1867?—Yes.
125. Was he in Opotiki on the date when the news of Bennett White's murder came in?—Yes.
126. Was he also there when you went to Tauranga?—Decidedly so.
127. Did you see him at Opotiki about that time?—Yes.
128. What did you write to him about—asking him to support an application for the Cross?—I did write to Captain Bower.
129. Did you get a reply?—Yes.
130. Will you kindly produce it?—Yes. [Reply, dated 10th July, 1897, put in—Exhibit No. 4.]
131. Did you send him a letter afterwards?—Yes, I think two or three.
132. Do you remember particularly a letter in reply to that letter in which you asked him to send a certificate?—I could not remember that. I cannot say.
133. Do you remember any letter before he gave the certificate—seeking to refresh his memory?—I do not know.
- Mr. Hutchison: Mr. Chairman, will you allow Captain Bower to be called in?—Yes.
- Captain BOWER called.
134. Mr. Hutchison.] Mr. Wrigg has handed in a letter of yours, Captain Bower: do you recognise it?—Yes.
135. Did you get a reply from him?—To this particular letter, Yes.

136. Look and see if you have a letter of the 16th July, from Mr. Wrigg to yourself?—I have a letter here [letter produced—Exhibit No. 5] of the 16th July. I do not know whether it is in answer to the one you mentioned or not.

137. Just look and see. Does it acknowledge receipt of the former one?—I believe it is in reply to mine.

138. *Mr. Hutchison* (to Mr. Wrigg.) That is your letter, Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

139. Did you get a certificate from Judge Wilson, as indicated in that letter?—No.

140. Why?—Because he refused it.

141. Why did he refuse it?—Because he is of a jealous nature.

142. What did Judge Wilson reply to your application for a certificate?—Judge Wilson said he could not give a certificate. He was not there. As far as I remember, he thought these ambuscades were laid for him instead of the mailman, and he considered he ought to have the Cross if it was conferred upon any one.

143. He refused you the certificate?—Yes.

144. About "the friend from Wellington" that you refer to in that letter—was that Mr. Tregear?—I object to bringing an old Government officer's name into the matter. I decline to answer that question.

145. You got a certificate from Captain Bower. It is in print in the parliamentary paper dated 24th July, 1897. [Parliamentary paper showing printed certificate put in—Exhibit No. 6.]

146. About this time also, Mr. Wrigg, you applied to other gentlemen for certificates?—Yes, and submitted my papers, of course.

147. Will you say what the papers you submitted were?—They were the camp orders, with indorsement.

148. What else?—There might have been Captain Bower's letter also.

149. You got a number of certificates?—Yes.

150. And they are all in print in this parliamentary paper H.-31—twenty-two certificates altogether?—Yes, there are about twenty-two.

151. And all but four of these are from gentlemen who certify on perusal of documents?—Yes.

152. The first of the four exceptions is that of Captain Bower's, which we have just read, dated 24th July?—Yes.

153. Then there is another one from Leonard Simpson, dated the 2nd August [Exhibit No. 7]. Did you get that in reply to a communication sent to him?—Yes.

154. The third is from Captain Percival, dated the 4th August [Exhibit No. 8]. How did you get that certificate—was it in response to a communication from yourself?—Yes.

155. Was it sent to you—sent to you for the purpose of being sent on?—Yes, and it was addressed to the Minister of Defence.

156. What rank did Captain Percival hold in the Colonial Forces?—He was a captain of the Colonial Forces at the time, as well as captain in the 55th Regiment.

157. Was he in Opotiki in June, 1867?—I cannot swear to that; I believe he was. He was Paymaster of the Forces. The ambuscade was laid for him.

158. I want to know whether you can say if Captain Percival was in Opotiki in June, 1867?—I knew Captain Percival on the East Coast. I believe he was in Opotiki in June, 1867.

159. The fourth is from Mr. G. H. Leaning, dated the 18th August, 1897 [Exhibit No. 9]. Did you see him on the subject of a certificate—did you call on him?—No; I sent a message.

160. By a mutual friend?—By a friend of mine.

161. And you got this document signed by him?—Yes.

162. Do you know what Mr. Leaning means by saying he was a "voluntary trooper"?—I cannot say.

163. Was he a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—Yes.

164. And in Opotiki in June, 1867?—Yes.

165. You do not know what he means by saying he was a voluntary trooper?—He means that he was a trooper in a Volunteer corps.

166. What does he mean by associating your name with "the disturbances of 1867 and 1868"?—Because he covered the ground.

167. You were not in Opotiki in 1868?—He says, "In the disturbance in 1868."

167A. He says, "I certify that I was a voluntary trooper in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry when Bennett White and the mailman were murdered, and when Cornet Wrigg stepped forward and volunteered to carry despatches in the disturbances of 1867 and 1868." What is Mr. Leaning now?—He is an undertaker or carpenter in Auckland.

168. Did you see any members of Parliament in this case?—Yes.

169. Sir Maurice O'Rorke and Mr. Holland?—Yes.

170. What others?—I did my best to get the thing through, because in these days men cannot get things through unless they work for them.

171. You saw other members of Parliament besides Sir Maurice O'Rorke?—Yes.

172. You saw Hon. Mr. Jennings?—Yes.

173. Hon. Mr. McCullough?—Yes.

174. Did they promise to interest themselves on your behalf?—Yes.

175. Did you also see the Defence Minister in Auckland?—Yes, I did, and who gave me very little encouragement.

176. Did you receive a letter from the Defence Department declining your application?—No.

177. Not towards the end of 1897—last year?—No; it went through Captain Bower.

178. Did you receive it, directly or indirectly?—I did indirectly, through Captain Bower.

179. The Defence Office then refused the application?—Yes.

180. When was that?—Some time in 1897.

181. You were not deterred by that refusal?—No, I went on fighting.
182. Did you also ask Captain Bower to interview Hon. Mr. Carroll as he was passing through Napier?—Yes.
183. You eventually were informed that you would receive the Cross?—Yes.
184. Do you know any instance of any one getting the Cross after such an interval as thirty years?—No, not after thirty years—but after twenty-three years, as in Colonel McDonnell's case.
185. Do you suggest that Colonel McDonnell's name was not mentioned in despatches at the time of the act of bravery for which he got the Cross?—I do not know anything about Colonel McDonnell.
186. Was your name mentioned in despatches about the time of your ride?—I do not know.
187. Colonel St. John was afterwards in Wellington, where you also were?—Yes.
188. You had often opportunities of communicating with him?—Yes; Colonel St. John was a great friend of mine.
189. How is it he never recommended you for the Cross?—He offered to recommend me in 1871, and afterwards.
190. Where were you then?—Here.
191. Was any one other than your two selves present?—He has mentioned it several times. I said I would not take it at the time, because I was very conservative.
192. Did you mention that to any of your friends, or to any one else?—I did not mention it to any one that I can at present remember.
193. Did you discuss it with your friends or acquaintances?—I think the only man who can remember anything about it is Lieutenant Price, who was a lieutenant in the Royal Marines. He is now in the Government service. He distinctly recollects me talking about the Cross, and being entitled to the Cross, and suggesting I was entitled to the Cross. He is an old Marine officer who has seen active service.
194. Did you get a New Zealand War Medal?—Yes.
195. When?—In 1868.
196. That was for service in the Waikato?—Yes.
197. On the recommendation of Colonel Lyon?—Yes.
198. Do you remember a man named Ford as a trooper of the Bay of Plenty Volunteers—Arthur Steel Ford?—No.
199. Do you remember the name of Mr. Albert Wood as a member of the corps?—No.
200. Do you remember the name of Mr. John Forsyth Connolly as a member of the corps?—I do not remember him as a member of the corps.
201. Do you remember Mr. Haselden at Opotiki in June, 1867?—No.
202. As a member of the 1st Waikato Military Settlers, do you remember that corps?—No; we used to call them the "first four hundred."
203. Do you remember Mr. Haselden?—I do not remember him at all.
204. *Mr. Wilford.*] Mr. Wrigg, do you remember the letter dated the 9th March, 1898, you received from Captain Bower?—Yes.
205. Was it a voluntary letter from him to you?—Yes.
206. This letter was sent to you in Australia?—It followed me to Australia. [Letter dated 9th March, 1898, put in—Exhibit No. 10.]
- Mr. Wilford:* Mr. Chairman, I have another letter here, marked "Private," from Captain Bower, dated 29th June, 1898. I would like to put this one in?—Yes. [Letter dated 29th June, 1898, put in—Exhibit No. 11.]
207. *Mr. Wilford.*] This is from Captain Bower too. I believe on the 28th June, 1898, you wired to Captain Bower, Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
- Mr. Wilford:* I want to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that it ought to be put in on oath that this is an exact copy of the wire sent and received.

Captain BOWER called.

208. *Mr. Wilford:* I want to ask you, Captain Bower, if you have a telegram sent by Mr. Wrigg to you, and dated 28th June, 1898?—I have one on the 27th June. Yes, I remember receiving that telegram. [Telegram dated 28th June, 1898, and reply put in—Exhibit No. 12.]
209. *Mr. Wilford.*] Mr. Wrigg, I want you to describe to the Committee the road you took in travelling those eighty miles from Opotiki to Tauranga?—There were any amount of possible ambuscades.
210. Was it through forest country?—No; mostly along the beach. Of course, the most dangerous part, there is no doubt, was the first twenty miles.
211. Why was it the most dangerous part?—Because there were cliffs—places of cover which would be of advantage to any one wishing to make an ambuscade.
212. The rivers, you say, were flooded at the time?—Yes.
213. Were the rivers very rapid?—Yes.
214. Were they wooded on the banks?—Yes.
215. Would there be sufficient wood and fern to afford a cover to any hostile Natives?—Yes, I think so.
216. I understood you to say that the country was unknown to you?—Yes.
217. Had you ever travelled from Opotiki to Tauranga before? Never.
218. You told us that you were accompanied by a trooper named McDonald?—Yes.
219. Had he a knowledge of the country?—No.
220. From whom did you get your directions as to the route?—We had to be our own guides. We had nothing to guide us, and had no previous knowledge.

221. How did the body of the copy of the camp order come to be in your handwriting?—Because I was clerk to Captain Gwynneth at the time.

222. Do I understand you that on ordinary occasions you wrote what he dictated, and did all the clerical work?—I usually did his clerical work, especially as regards the corps.

223. Was it (the camp order) signed by Captain Gwynneth the same day that you wrote it out?—It was signed the same day.

224. You say you knew Colonel St. John well?—Yes.

225. And saw him previous to his death?—Yes, previous to his death; two or three days before.

226. Were you on friendly terms up to his death?—On close relations all through.

227. You have read in the petition, under clause 22, that Colonel St. John, on hearing Mr. Wrigg had received the New Zealand War Medal, granted to you in 1861, expressed himself most adversely regarding the presentation, and before several witnesses?—I am not aware of it.

228. Did Colonel St. John ever express any condemnatory expression to yourself?—Certainly not.

229. He was on friendly terms with you up to the end?—Yes.

230. I understood you to tell Mr. Hutchison you got that war medal in 1868 on the recommendation of Colonel Lyon?—Yes.

231. We notice by clause 28 of the petition it is suggested and alleged that a vote of censure was passed upon you by your comrades a few days after your supposed ride. Have you ever seen a copy of that vote of censure?—No.

232. Is it included in the minute-book?—I am not aware of it.

233. Clause 33 says you interviewed certain gentlemen, and asked them to draft recommendations for the decoration. I believe, as a matter of fact, you have gone round to get the thing up in a proper light for the purpose of putting it before Parliament?—Not one of the officers can say that I drafted any of the recommendations, with the exception of Captain Bower, and he did not follow my draft, but put a stronger recommendation than was ever suggested.

234. At this time when volunteers were called for, about how many Volunteers would there be there?—About thirty-six.

235. On volunteers being called for, what would be the procedure: would they be mustered and formed up?—A company or troop would be formed, and then the officer commanding would call for volunteers.

236. Was there any one else beside yourself volunteered?—Decidedly not. Out of the thirty-six that were there I was the only one that volunteered. I said I would volunteer if they would give me a trooper.

237. After you had volunteered Trooper McDonald said he would go with you?—Yes.

238. We have had it mentioned already that when you returned from this ride, which you had volunteered, you had to start out right away again?—Yes.

239. Without practically leaving the saddle?—Yes.

240. For the purpose of bringing in these other bodies?—Yes.

241. Had you to travel any great distance?—About six miles.

242. That was partly through all the dangerous country?—No; in another direction.

243. In what direction?—In the opposite direction in which they had gone to—to Tauranga.

244. And you undertook that further duty directly you returned?—Yes.

245. Have you been on perfectly friendly terms with Captain Bower right up to this time?—I never knew him for thirty years.

246. The whole of this correspondence that you have had from Captain Bower is quite intact?—Yes.

247. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Do you say you were the first to volunteer to carry despatches?—Decidedly so.

248. *Mr. Wilford.*] Did you receive this document and enclosure—namely, “The Opposition will not leave a stone unturned. They will rake up and expose yours and your supporters’ most sacred antecedents. They expect to associate your powers of caligraphy with the extracts. Your wife’s name, also, is freely mentioned. The legality of your pension, it is hinted, will be tested. The whole affair will probably be made a catch question next general election. Volunteers assert they will never let the matter drop. Is a distinction you can never wear without being subject to public insult worth this ceaseless scandal? The above appears to be well worthy of consideration”?—Certainly.

*Mr. Wilford:* I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that that be put in as a document received?—Yes.

249. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Had you private reasons, Mr. Wrigg, for going to Tauranga?—Decidedly not.

250. Did you not go to Tauranga to get some tracings?—Never.

251. You did not go for any?—No.

252. *Mr. Lewis.*] What time of day did you start on this ride, Mr. Wrigg—can you remember that?—It was daybreak, as far as I remember.

253. You said you did not know whether you started on the day in which they came back?—The next day, I believe, I started.

254. On the discovery of this outrage, were troops sent in pursuit of the Maoris who had committed it?—I do not know that. I know only that we got orders to go.

255. *Mr. Morrison.*] Is it correct that a vote of censure was passed on you by your comrades a few days after this act of bravery?—I do not know whether it was or not. I only know I left the district in a hurry. The captain wrote to say other people wanted to get my appointment, and I had better resign.

256. What was the opinion with regard to you and McDonald having volunteered? Was it not generally remarked at the time the odds were three to one against you? Was it not generally

- stated in the troop at the time, when yourself and McDonald started to carry the despatches, that the odds were three to one you would never be seen again?—Yes.
257. *Mr. Field.*] Among other letters there is one from Captain W. H. Percival?—Yes.
258. Was he actually there when you carried these despatches?—He was in the district, of course.
259. Was he in Opotiki?—I cannot say if he was there on the day; but I believe he was there.
260. You got a similar letter from Mr. George H. Leaning. Was he there?—Yes; a store-keeper.
261. You stated you wrote that camp order yourself. Did you write that camp order after or before you carried the despatches?—Of course I wrote it before I carried the despatches. They bear the water-mark.
262. They got their water-mark during that ride?—Yes.
263. You also stated that you were not intimately acquainted with Captain Bower. The tone of the letters from him, and yours to him, hardly bear that out?—He was an old trooper, as I was. Old troopers always lean together. Though he was a clergyman's son, he was a trooper himself.
264. You say he passed himself as being one of the survivors at the Balaclava charge?—Yes.
265. *Mr. O'Meara.*] How many Volunteers were present when this call was made?—The troop.
266. How many were in the troop?—About thirty-two.
267. After you returned did you look upon this ride as hazardous and heroic?—Yes.
268. You simply had a drink with your comrades after this ride?—Yes.
269. What was done immediately on your return?—Colonel St. John said, "Wrigg, how did you get on? Did you receive any newspaper correspondents?" He said, "It was the first thing you ought to have done—to get your name into print right away."
270. *Mr. Moore.*] Have you got a copy of the letter you received from your captain asking you to send in your resignation?—No; he gave me a hint.
271. I understand you said you were in Southland when you received a letter from your captain asking you to resign because some one else in the corps wanted your position. Can you produce that letter?—No, it is thirty years ago. He recommended me to resign because other fellows were jealous.
272. Did a copy of the letter cover a copy of the resolution passed by the corps?—No.
273. When you returned from your ride of eighty to ninety miles, you say you had to be virtually carried out of your saddle?—Yes.
274. Immediately afterwards you rode out to search for other bodies?—Yes.
275. Did you ride out under orders from the officer in command?—My reminiscence is this: We were having a bottle of porter. I was so scarred and wounded from the leather breeches that I could not get into the saddle.
276. Yet you immediately mounted and rode out six or seven miles to look for bodies?—Yes.
277. The bugle was sounded and you had to go?—Yes.
278. In the reply that you received from Judge Wilson refusing to give you a certificate, did you get it in the shape of a letter?—It was merely saying that he was not in the district at the time.
279. Did you get the reply in writing? Could you produce the letter?—No.
280. Captain Bower, in his letter, states you returned the next day?—That is a mistake. When I went into camp in Tauranga, he means to say I returned the next day from Tauranga.
281. Captain Bower is wrong and you are right?—Yes.
282. You camped neither going nor coming on the road?—We camped only once.
283. *Mr. Lewis.*] In whose handwriting is this extract from camp orders, dated Opotiki, 28th June, 1867?—Captain Gwynneth's. The front is mine, on the back is his.
284. *Mr. Moore.*] Have you any other documents in the officer's handwriting?—No. the captain always backhanded his signature.
285. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Were you at any time during the parade or ride to Tauranga in practically any fear?—No.
286. You have spoken of a Mr. Price, I think, in the Government Buildings, to whom you had mentioned your claim. Were these gentlemen also working with you in the same Buildings—A. C. F. Koch?—Yes.
287. C. F. Rushbrook?—No, not in the Buildings; he was working in the same department.
288. Mr. Pierard?—Yes.
289. And while in Wellington you were acquainted with Mr. Beere, surveyor, and had talked with him about the war?—No. I did not carry it on my sleeve.
290. You know Mr. Beere?—Yes.
291. Captain Turner—he was in the district at the time?—He is an old friend of mine.
292. He was working with you in the same department?—Yes.

Captain MAURICE NORMAN BOWER sworn and examined.

293. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What is your full name, Captain Bower?—Maurice Norman Bower
294. You are now Town Clerk at Napier?—Yes.
295. In 1867 you were on duty at Opotiki?—Yes.
296. What was your position?—I was district adjutant.
297. Who was in command of the district?—Colonel St. John; I think he was only Major St. John then.
298. You knew Mr. Wrigg then in Opotiki?—Yes.
299. He told us he was an assistant in Captain Gwynneth's office?—Yes.

300. He joined the Bay of Plenty Cavalry, which were called out for service about that time? Yes.

301. Mr. Wrigg says he left soon after July, 1867, and went to Southland. How long was it after he left Opotiki when you heard from him again?—I do not think until thirty years. I do not think I heard from him till June of 1897.

302. Till some time last year, I suppose?—Until June, 1897.

303. That was about thirty years?—Yes.

304. Have you a letter from Mr. Wrigg, dated 26th June?—Here is a letter, dated Auckland, the 26th June, 1897.

305. Is that the opening of the correspondence?—Yes, as far as I remember. [Letter, dated 26th June, 1897, put in—Exhibit No. 13.]

306. *The Chairman.*] You put in that as evidence?—Yes.

307. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You replied to that letter, Captain Bower?—Yes.

308. We have your reply—the letter you produced this morning?—Yes.

309. You had a letter of the 16th July from Mr. Wrigg—it has also been produced—in which he asked you to send a certificate?—Yes; this is it. [Exhibit No. 5.]

310. You wrote a reply to that, which we also have—at least, it is in print—dated 24th July, in which you say, “Napier, 24th July, 1897.—Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, I have much pleasure in stating my recollection of what occurred at Opotiki, when you volunteered to ride with despatches to Tauranga. When Bennett White was found murdered by hostile Natives, the late Colonel St. John, then commanding the district, called for volunteers to ride with despatches to Tauranga, when Cornet Wrigg, of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, at once rode to the front and said he would go if a trooper would accompany him. This a trooper, whose name I forget, volunteered to do, and the two were sent. Their service was most dangerous, their route being along the beach, where Natives were known to be in force, and the rivers were in flood. They reached Tauranga, and returned from thence to Opotiki the next day, thus completing an arduous and very dangerous duty.—I remain, &c., M. N. Bowen, late District Adjutant, Opotiki.” Was that your answer to Mr. Wrigg’s letter of the 16th?—Yes.

311. At that time, Captain Bower, putting aside altogether the letter that you got from Mr. Wrigg of the 16th July, were the circumstances you wrote about in your recollection or not?—Yes, I thought so, at the time.

312. You do not mention any date in this letter as to when the ride took place?—No, because I was not aware of it.

313. You were not aware when the ride took place—of the actual ride; it is stated to have been on the 29th June, 1867?—I have since ascertained that.

314. We will take that as the date when the despatches were sent from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Yes.

315. Are you sure you were in Opotiki on that date?—I think I was, but believe I was not now. That was a thing I did not find out till after.

316. Look at this letter of the 16th July last year; see this passage in it, Captain Bower: “I think I had better refresh your memory as to how two came to volunteer. The evening we found Bennett White’s body, on parade Major St. John asked for a volunteer to carry despatches to Tauranga. I immediately rode to the front and volunteered, provided I had a trooper, when Trooper McDonald volunteered. The rivers were in flood at the season of year, and those we did not swim had to head until we got a ford. The risks, as you were aware, were great upon all sides.” I ask you to say whether you remember being in Opotiki when the news of Bennett White’s murder reached there?—My impression was that I was.

317. What is your reply now?—It is no mere hearsay evidence that I was there.

318. You have certified to a fact here, and I want to know whether you certified to that fact from your own knowledge or from Mr. Wrigg’s suggestion?—When I wrote Mr. Wrigg’s letter I really thought I did recollect the circumstance, but it must seem now I did not.

319. You gave a certificate which would imply you knew personally?—At the time I wrote the certificate I thought so.

320. Are there any circumstances which would lead you to say positively now, one way or the other, that you were in Opotiki when the report of the murder came in?—I have had hearsay evidence from my old brother-officers. That is the only thing I know.

321. Who were your brother-officers?—Major Mair, for one.

322. Did he recall any circumstance to your mind?—No; he referred to his own diary.

323. Is your name mentioned in his diary?—Yes, it is.

324. As having been absent from Opotiki on the 29th June, 1867? What is your own belief: were you there on that date?—I really do not know.

325. Can you recall to mind any incident that would bring to your recollection whether you were at Opotiki on the 28th June, when the news of the murders came in?—To this day my impression is that I was there.

326. You cannot recall any incident: it is only your impression?—That is all.

327. Can you recall any incident like a troop parade, where a volunteer was called for to carry despatches to Tauranga?—Well, no, not now.

328. Did you last year?—Oh, yes, I did last year.

329. You recollected the event last year, and have forgotten it this year?—It is curious to explain, but that is the impression left on my mind.

330. In July last year you thought you recollected it, but now you are not so sure?—No.

331. Had you yourself gone over this road?—Yes, hundreds of times.

332. You knew generally the state of the district in June, 1867?—Yes.

333. Where was the danger in June, 1867?—Between Opotiki and Ohawa.

334. What is the distance between these places?—I do not know.
335. Is it under twenty miles?—Yes.
336. Possibly under ten miles?—Really and truly, I forget the distance.
337. What is the distance between Opotiki and Tauranga?—I suppose about eighty miles.
338. This piece from Opotiki to Ohiwa was a short distance comparatively?—Yes.
339. Do you remember Trooper McDonald riding from Opotiki?—No.
340. Do you remember Cornet Wrigg riding with despatches?—I thought so in July last year.
341. What do you think now? You did not see him go?—No.
342. Do you know if any escort went with Trooper McDonald?—That is one of the things that has been brought to my recollection since. It has been brought to my recollection since that letter was written to Mr. Wrigg that there was no danger—when troopers were sent with despatches a body of men was sent out.
343. Do you think your recollection is better this year than it was last year as to the events of 1867?—Well, you see my recollection has been rubbed up in opposition, as it were, to what I had previously written.
344. If you were asked to-day to give a certificate as to Mr. Wrigg's conduct in June, 1867, would you give such a certificate as you wrote last year?—No.
345. You mean that you would not write such a certificate as you did twelve months or more ago?—No, not in the terms I did.
346. How would you write it now, or would you give any certificate?—If it were to happen over again, in all probability I should refuse to do it at all.
347. Did you know a Captain Simpson in Opotiki in 1867?—Yes; I knew Captain Leonard Simpson.
348. Late Captain, Second Waikato Regiment?—I knew him; he was a surveyor.
349. In Opotiki in 1867?—Yes.
350. Did he, in the month of June of that year, hold any military rank?—No, I do not think he did.
351. Then he would not have been on duty in any of the occurrences at that time?—No.
352. He is living at Maketu?—I do not know.
353. Did you know a Captain W. H. Percival?—Yes.
354. Was he in the Opotiki district in 1867?—Whether he was actually in Opotiki in June, 1867, I really do not know. He was a paymaster of the troops. He came periodically to pay us.
355. Your memory is not very good, I suppose, as to events of thirty years ago?—I do not exactly remember.
356. Captain Percival afterwards went to Auckland?—Yes, I think so.
357. Did he go afterwards to Melbourne?—I do not know.
358. You cannot recollect whether he was in Opotiki in June, 1867, or not?—I cannot.
359. Did you know Mr. George H. Leaning in Opotiki?—No.
360. Resuming the correspondence, we got to the day that you sent the certificate?—Yes.
361. Did you get a letter from Mr. Wrigg acknowledging the certificate?—Yes, I have a letter of the 4th August. [Letter, dated the 4th August, put in—Exhibit No. 14.]
362. It acknowledges receipt of the certificate, does it not—namely, "I tender you my sincerest thanks for the certificate," &c.?—Yes.
363. That was the letter acknowledging the receipt of the certificate?—Yes.
364. Did you afterwards receive a letter from Mr. Wrigg, dated the 14th August?—I have one dated the 21st.
365. Let us see that one?—Here it is.
366. Perhaps Sir Arthur Douglas has the letter of the 14th August from Mr. Wrigg to Captain Bower?
- Sir Arthur Douglas*: Here it is. [Letter, dated the 14th August, put in—Exhibit No. 15.]
367. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Did you get that letter, Captain Bower, dated the 14th August?—Yes, it is familiar to me.
368. Do you remember, Captain Bower, receiving that letter, or one to that purport?—My impression is that I received that letter from Mr. Wrigg, and that it was attached to the papers I sent to the Hon. the Defence Minister.
369. Have you one, dated the 21st August, with reference to the Cross?—Yes. [Letter, dated 21st August, put in—Exhibit No. 16.]
370. You will notice, Captain Bower, these two letters—the one just handed in and the one dated the week before—both to the same effect?—Yes; but I fancy the first was official, with the intention that I should attach it to the documents that went in.
371. The letter of the 14th August probably came along with that of the 21st?—I do not know.
372. Did you, in furtherance of the request contained in that last letter, send in an application to the Defence Minister?—I did.
373. Is it dated the 26th August, 1897. [Letter, dated the 26th August, put in—Exhibit No. 16A.]?—Yes, I recognise that.
374. Was this application written out by you from a pencil draft sent to you by Mr. Wrigg?—Yes, it was.
375. And you copied out the draft and signed the application?—Yes.
376. You sent in the application. Did you get a reply to the application that the Cross would not be bestowed on Mr. Wrigg—an official reply?—Never. I sent that in, and, excepting what I have heard from Mr. Wrigg, I have not had the slightest reply.
377. Have you a letter of the 31st August from Mr. Wrigg to yourself?—Yes. [Letter of the 31st August put in—Exhibit No. 17.]

378. That is dated the 31st August, 1897. The enclosures from Mr. Wrigg, I suppose, you sent on with the application?—I fancy that it is the type-written document. It is an additional statement by Mr. Wrigg, dated the 27th August, 1897, referring to an enclosure.

379. You forwarded that on also?—Yes; I have no doubt that it is the enclosure.

380. Have you a telegram there about this time, from Mr. Wrigg to you, in September of last year, indicating there was a difficulty owing to the great lapse of time between the event and the application?—No.

381. Have you a letter there, of the 30th September, *re* the Cross?—Yes. [Letter, dated the 30th September, put in—Exhibit No. 18.] There are two dated the 30th September.

382. Let us see one of them?—Here it is.

383. Look at that letter: do you see any reference there to a letter declining the Cross—do you not remember that some intimation reached you from the department declining the application that you had forwarded?—I never received it. I never had the slightest communication from the Defence Department from the day I sent in the application until now.

384. Have you a letter from Mr. Wrigg of the 9th January of the present year?—Yes.

385. Let us see it?—I appear to have scratched out most of it. It is about another matter altogether, I think.

386. You got a letter of that date in which Mr. Wrigg said he was urging the matter on as hard as he could?—Yes.

387. There are two telegrams you have not marked confidential—the 26th January and 27th June, 1898. Have you got them?—Yes. [Telegrams produced and read: “26th January, 1898.—Captain Bower, Napier.—Defence Minister picks up Carroll at Gisborne, proceeds to Napier, then Wellington without delay by ‘Westralia’; advise interview Carroll.” (Exhibit No. 19). “27th June, 1898.—Captain Bower, Napier. Parliamentary gossip to-night’s *Star* says New Zealand Cross likely to be warmly debated. It is stated that Captain Bower, who recommended Cross, has recently admitted in a letter to Captain Preece that he regretted his action. Reply paid.” (Exhibit No. 20.)] Is it a fact that you did write a letter to Captain Preece?—Hardly. I wrote a private letter in reply to one which I received from Captain Preece, an extract of which only has been published.

388. Have you any objection to the whole of the letter being put in?—No.

389. Have you got a memorandum there pinned on to the front of a letter of the 17th January, 1898, that you received?—There is a letter of the 9th January, 1898. [Letter put in—Exhibit No. 21.]

390. There is another letter, dated the 17th January, 1898?—Yes. [Letter, dated the 17th January, 1898, put in—Exhibit No. 22.]

391. You did not happen to see the Hon. Mr. Carroll?—No, I missed him.

392. *Mr. Wilford.*] You have been practically in correspondence, Captain Bower, with Mr. Wrigg for a little over a year?—Yes.

393. A telegram has been put in which was received from you, and which you acknowledge to be your own?—Yes.

394. That is to say, you have seen this before?—Yes.

395. As late as the 28th June, 1898, you are referred to by Mr. Wrigg in these terms: “Surely your letter did not imply that I did not earn the Cross”?—Yes.

396. And you replied to that?—Certainly not.

397. Can you say on your oath that your letter to Captain Preece did not imply that he had not earned the Cross?—So you will find if the letter is read *in extenso*.

*Mr. Hutchison:* We had better have the letter now that Captain George Preece is here.

Captain GEORGE PREECE called.

398. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You are called in, Captain Preece, to produce a letter that you received from Captain Bower?—I have not got it. I think I gave it to Mr. Lingard.

*The Chairman:* That will do, Captain Preece.

399. *Mr. Wilford.*] When you replied, “Certainly not,” Captain Bower, in answer to Mr. Wrigg’s telegram, you meant by that “Certainly not” that you did not imply in the letter that Mr. Wrigg had not earned the Cross?—Quite so. I may explain the matter: My letter to Captain Preece was in reply to his own to me.

*Captain Preece:* Here is the letter from Mr. Lingard. [Letter produced.]

400. *Mr. Wilford.*] Before I refer to this letter I should like to ask Captain Bower if he has Captain Preece’s letter in reply to him?—I have not. I have not been able to find it amongst my papers.

401. You have kept every other letter?—Yes. I was under the impression that this letter of Captain Preece’s was here amongst the other papers.

402. Was the letter a protest against the conferring of the Cross on Mr. Wrigg?

403. *The Chairman.*] Captain Preece, are you in possession of a Press copy of a letter which you wrote to Captain Bower, which conveyed the reply?—No, I have not a copy of it.

404. *Mr. Wilford.*] Will you tell us as nearly as you can the contents of this document? Was it an indignant protest?—No.

405. What was it?—He asked me questions: whether I interviewed and had been instrumental in obtaining the Cross for Mr. Wrigg. Then he went on in a joking manner to state that a Native we knew at Wairoa—

406. It had nothing to do with the matter?—No; but it comes in in this way: When I was replying to him, I replied, in fact, to all his questions, and the matter about this Native called Paora Apatu came in. When I replied “Certainly not” to Mr. Wrigg I meant there was nothing in my letter that imputed anything. I was imputing no comparison with him and Paora Apatu

("Paul-up-a-Tree"), which the letter published apparently did. That is what I meant by "Certainly not." As I said in my letter to Captain Preece, he never mentioned it. "Paul-up-a-Tree" was a coward. He was afraid, and, as I said in my letter, he was the only Maori who had the courage to show he was afraid.

407. This is the letter from Captain Bower to Captain Preece, dated the 20th April, 1898. [Letter put in—Exhibit No. 23.] That is the letter you wrote to Captain Preece in answer to a letter he wrote to you?—Yes.

408. In that letter you said you were to blame for Mr. Wrigg getting the Cross?—Yes.

409. What do you mean by that?—I had received letters from old brother officers, who said, "How on earth did you come to do it," and Captain Preece's letter was inquiring how I did it. And I wrote and told him how I did it.

410. How did you use the word "blame"; that was an unfortunate word?—Yes, it is.

411. And the word "blaine" does not adequately express what you meant to convey?—I do not know that I thought about the word when I used it.

412. The letter was written on the spur of the moment?—Yes; I sat down and wrote it as soon as I received it. When I replied to Captain Preece's letter I understood he was as ignorant as anybody as to how Mr. Wrigg had been awarded the Cross.

413. You notice that in that letter read just now were these words: "I remember the circumstance." The date of that letter is the 20th April, 1898. On that date you wrote to Captain Preece and told him you recollect the circumstance?—Yes.

414. On June, 1897, you wrote to the department and told them you recommended the Cross, and to-day you do not remember it?—That is so.

415. Is it not, as a matter of fact, that you would not give the recommendation now simply for the reason that it had caused dissension amongst your own comrades?—No, not quite that. That would weigh with me.

416. Is not that the chief consideration?—No. I should hardly call it the chief consideration.

417. Is this your telegram of the 28th June, 1898?—Yes.

418. Another private letter to Captain Preece was, "Regret my action has caused such dissension among my old comrades, and had I thought it would have been so, would not have sent recommendation." The reason you would not have sent the recommendation is because you knew it would have caused dissension amongst your old comrades now?—It has been proved to me most satisfactorily that I was not there at the time. After an interval of thirty years, when things were brought to my recollection, I was perfectly sure that I remembered it. Now I am not so sure.

419. You have been convinced you are not sure since the 20th April, 1898?—Yes. In fact, it is only since the Cross was awarded that I have had any doubts about the matter.

420. You, probably, if you had thought it would have raised dissension amongst your old comrades, would never have done it?—That is not the principle of it.

421. You admit, Captain Bower, you wrote and said you considered Mr. Wrigg should have the Cross, as he had done a brave action when the Natives were hostile?—I did so. I was justified in my belief by the testimonials and certificates which accompanied the application which Mr. Wrigg sent me.

422. You did not get the testimonials till after you had written the first letter. It was with Mr. Wrigg's third letter that you got the testimonials?—I got copies of them.

423. Referring to Mr. Wrigg's first letter, dated 26th June, 1897, in which he encloses copy of the camp orders and indorsement, can you show me any reference to the camp orders?—Yes; in this letter I am only asked for a certificate. The certificate was justified by the copy of the camp order. The original would subsequently follow with all testimonials.

424. He got the certificate from you solely on the camp order, and so you were wrong when you said you received various recommendations from these authorised individuals when you did so?—On this letter of the 26th June I sent him a certificate.

425. You sent him a certificate solely upon the copy of the camp order?—Yes.

426. You made the application on the recommendations that he forwarded to you?—Yes.

427. You only made the application?—The certificate that I forwarded to Mr. Wrigg—I made that on the camp order.

428. We therefore take the course of events to be: in 1897 you were satisfied you knew all about it, and characteristically described the country he went over; in 1898 you were of the same opinion, but now you are not, and so, as a matter of fact, you believed you were there?—I cannot state on the actual day.

429. You believed that you were there?—Yes.

430. The only reason you have been shaken in that belief is because they got at you?—I do not know that they have got at me. I have seen documents which led me to suppose that I was not there. If you had asked me six months ago I should have told you I was there.

431. You also believe that you saw Mr. Wrigg volunteer to go on the parade?—Yes.

432. You have that as if it were photographed on your memory?—Yes.

433. Was he on foot or horse?—He rode to Tauranga.

434. He volunteered to go, on parade?—Yes, I think so. That is my belief.

435. You believe that he out of the whole lot volunteered to go?—Yes.

436. And the only man that did volunteer to go?—Yes.

437. In a letter that you wrote, you stated to Mr. Wrigg that you did not remember the name of the man who went with Mr. Wrigg?—No, I did not.

438. You know a man went with him?—I learned that from him.

439. You do not remember if Mr. Wrigg was accompanied?—No.

440. When you spoke of the brave act you believed he was alone?—Yes. On the other hand, I have since had almost ocular demonstration that I did not see it. I cannot explain. When the

matters were brought to my recollection a year ago, I thought, and still thought it, but a few months ago—when I am shown diaries and things of that sort of events which occurred at that time—I begin to doubt the evidence of my own senses.

441. Do you remember Mr. Wrigg being there at all?—Oh, yes.

442. Was he doing any work except assisting Captain Gwynneth? Was he in active service?—He was in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry. They went out on service.

443. Mr. Wrigg did also?—Yes.

444. Do you know any conspicuous acts of cowardship?—Certainly not. The mention of “Paul-up-a-Tree” had no connection with Mr. Wrigg. It was in answer to a quotation of Captain Preece’s to me.

445. You never made any comparison at all?—Certainly not.

446. Your life has been badgered out since the granting of this Cross?—Yes.

447. All your old comrades have quarrelled with you practically?—They have disagreed.

448. You felt you were standing practically alone?—Yes, and badgered from both sides.

449. You of course handed the correspondence that you have to these gentlemen who have been working up the petition?—No.

450. Who underlined the letters?—A personal friend of my own in Napier.

451. Had he anything to do with advising you?—As a personal friend.

452. Is he a lawyer?—Yes.

453. He advised you how to make points against Wrigg?—Yes.

454. You went to your lawyer consulting him as a friend, not professionally?—No, it was not on account of his fee.

455. You consulted him not professionally to advise which were the points of the letter standing out against Mr. Wrigg?—In my own justification.

456. As a matter of fact, then, you had decided to take up the side of your old comrades and throw Mr. Wrigg over. Does that express what you mean?—Things have been brought to my recollection. For instance, the camp order, it has been brought to my recollection; but I, as a district adjutant—had the order emanated from me it would have been signed by me, and it should have emanated from me. There is no evidence to prove that it did.

457. There is nothing out of order in the look of the camp order?—If it were an abstract from our district order.

458. As a man up in these matters, you would not have been deceived by it?—No.

459. Your diffidence has practically cropped up since you took up your own old comrades?—That is so. I thought I had stated what was correct.

460. When you went to your lawyer to ask that question you went for the purpose of seeing what evidence you could get for the purpose of working for your old comrades against Mr. Wrigg?—I wanted to get myself out of a difficulty.

461. You thought that was the very best way to do it?—Yes.

462. You had more on your side than against you?—I had everybody against me.

463. It was judicious, no doubt, to do that. In working up the matter with the opposition to Mr. Wrigg you were, at any rate, putting yourself in a better position, because you got more for you than against you?—I had no antagonism to Mr. Wrigg.

464. You wanted to please both parties, and you could not?—I would like to have pleased both parties, and the result has been I have offended both.

465. Do you know Captain Peacock?—I used to.

466. May I take it from you that the Committee can take notice that Mr. Wrigg had your heartiest co-operation and support until your old comrades worked you round the other way?—He had my heartiest co-operation and support up till the time when I was shown that the certificate I had given was not correct, because I was not there.

467. I am right in saying that Mr. Wrigg had your heartiest co-operation and support until your comrades, who objected to Mr. Wrigg having the Cross, interviewed you?—Yes, I have no reason otherwise.

468. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Captain Bower, carry your mind back to the 24th July last year—that is when you wrote to Mr. Wrigg from Napier, the date of your certificate—just before you sent the certificate and before you got the copy of the camp order and indorsement. Could you from your own recollection have said anything about Mr. Wrigg’s exploits on the East Coast?—I do not know that I could.

469. You had the copy of the camp orders, with their indorsement, and a letter from Mr. Wrigg refreshing your memory?—Yes.

470. Were these documents the bases of your certificate?—The certificate I sent to Mr. Wrigg was in consequence of his enclosure of the camp order.

471. And the refreshing of your memory?—Yes.

472. Before the receipt of that letter, could you have given a certificate as to courageous conduct of Mr. Wrigg, or otherwise, in June, 1867?—No.

473. The next stage was, he found he could not apply himself, and got you to apply for him?—Yes.

474. Then you sent an application, which had been sent down to you in pencil manuscript?—Yes.

475. And you sent that on with the testimonials which accompanied the letter from Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

476. Is that the document you got on the second occasion—that is, before you sent in the application [document produced]?—It is not the original. It is the one I got.

477. In the first instance you got a copy of the camp orders and indorsement in June, and you sent to Mr. Wrigg a certificate. Afterwards you were asked to make an application in your own name, and send it on along with the documents to the Defence Department?—Yes.

478. The extract from camp orders appears to be signed by John Gwynneth on the face of the document, and also on the back?—Yes.
479. Captain Gwynneth was captain of the cavalry corps?—Yes.
480. Are you familiar with his handwriting?—No.
481. You cannot say anything about the writing of the indorsement?—No.
482. *Mr. Morrison.*] You said, Captain Bower, that you were district adjutant at the time this act of bravery was performed at Opotiki?—Yes.
483. You knew Mr. Wrigg then personally?—Yes.
484. Were you present on the particular occasion when volunteers were asked for to carry these despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Six months ago I would have sworn I was, but I do not know what to tell you now, because it has been shown to me that I was not there.
485. Your impressions were, up to six months ago, that you were present at Opotiki on that particular date?—Certainly.
486. Since then, by having a certain conversation with a gentleman named Major Mair, you are somewhat shaken in your opinion?—It is after the conversation. It is a diary which he kept.
487. I suppose, personally, you do not know whether that diary is correct or not?—No.
488. Is your name mentioned there?—Yes, as my having gone to Tauranga a few days beforehand.
489. Your belief in your presence is only by Major Mair's diary, not by conversation with your old comrades?—Is it only within the last fortnight or so I have had any doubts that I was actually there or not.
490. You said in the letter to Captain Preece that "I am to blame *re* Mr. Wrigg's Cross." I suppose if Captain Preece had sent you a letter commending you for the action you had taken on the behalf of Mr. Wrigg, your recollections would have been a good deal stronger than they are to-day as regards your presence at Opotiki?—I have tried hard to explain really and truly what passed there to my mind. Neither Captain Preece nor any one have had any influence on my memory, as far as that is concerned, until I had been shown an extract from a diary, which I have every reason to believe to be correct, and which showed that a few days before this occurred I had been ordered up to Tauranga.
491. Your present impression is, then, after reading this extract from that diary, you could not have been there?—There is no proof that I was not there. After this lapse of time it is impossible for me to remember the circumstances of the case, but I had no wish in any way to disparage Mr. Wrigg when I was writing to Captain Preece. The unfortunate suggestion of the mention of this man "Paul-up-a-Tree's" name, as I think I spoke to Mr. Wilford about just now—it never entered my head; it was in answer to a quotation of Captain Preece's, in which he asked me if I remembered this fellow at Wairoa. Mr. Wrigg's courage or cowardship was never called into question with regard to this man.
492. What are your present impressions with regard to whether you were present or not. Have you got any opinion?—My impression is that I was there.
493. You also said here your recollection had been so rubbed up in opposition to the certificate that you regretted recommending Mr. Wrigg for the Cross, and that if you were asked to give that certificate now you would not give it?—Yes, to this extent. When I was written to about the Cross, amongst other things it was mentioned to me that there was no danger at the time, because troopers were sent out on escort. They were accompanied by a detachment of seventy men under an officer.
494. Who wrote to you drawing your attention to that?—I forget.
495. One of your old comrades?—Yes.
496. Can you give us his name?—No, I have not got the letter. I brought down Mr. Wrigg's letters only with me.
497. You cannot on the spur of the moment remember the name of the writer?—I am not quite sure whether it was written or whether it was verbal.
498. You are thoroughly acquainted with this country from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Yes, I ought to be.
499. You have ridden over it hundreds of times?—Yes, I dare say I have.
500. You are thoroughly acquainted with every inch of the country?—Yes.
501. In your opinion, would there be any great danger in carrying despatches from Opotiki to Ohiwa?—Yes, there would be considerable danger.
502. You also state in reference to a reply from Mr. Hutchison, I believe, that you had travelled this distance hundreds of times, and he asked you the distance from Opotiki to Ohiwa, and you were unable to give the distance?—I do not know now.
503. Do you not think that is slightly inconsistent with the statement that you have travelled over this country hundreds of times, and yet you cannot tell us whether it is ten, twenty, or thirty miles?—I will say it is ten miles from Opotiki to Ohiwa.
504. You said you had no personal or written communication with Mr. Wrigg for a period of some thirty years, from 1867 up to June, 1897?—I do not know.
505. When you received a letter from him, as regards Colonel St. John, who had offered to recommend Mr. Wrigg for the Cross, it was asking if you would be kind enough to assist him?—Yes.
506. You had no reason to doubt the statements in the letter made by Mr. Wrigg?—No.
507. They were perfectly correct as far as your knowledge is concerned?—Yes.
508. *Mr. O'Meara.*] Do you think Mr. Wrigg is entitled to this Cross or not, Captain Bower?—Yes.
509. Do you think that in this particular ride he showed a great amount of heroism—that is, he is worthy of the Cross? I understood you were present when volunteers were asked for for the conveying of those despatches?—I have already explained to the Committee generally what my

impression was when I wrote that letter to Mr. Wrigg, and I have told you the reasons why I now doubt it.

510. Supposing an event happened ten years back, and I had got a diary, and had made a mistake, would you take my diary against your own personal opinion?—For thirty years, I should have thought a thing put down at the time was better than my own memory.

511. *Mr. Field.*] You say that the dangerous part of the road, Captain Bower, was from Opotiki to Ohiwa?—Yes.

512. Was the rest of the road dangerous—were you subject to attack from the enemy between Opotiki and Ohiwa?—Then we get into the country of a friendly tribe.

513. Was the country occupied by the friendly tribe?—Yes.

514. You made some reference to the fact that probably an escort was sent out with Cornet Wrigg and the trooper McDonald?—I have no recollection particularly of an escort going with them. It has been shown to me that escorts did accompany men with despatches on occasions. I have no recollection of an escort accompanying Mr. Wrigg and McDonald.

515. Have you any recollection of despatches having been forwarded from Opotiki to Tauranga at this particular time? Is it within your knowledge that an escort accompanied the carrying of the despatches any portion of the way?—Yes.

516. Are you justified in saying that it was an ordinary thing for an escort to accompany despatches over the most dangerous part of the road?—When in an occurrence like this, a raid of the Natives down from the inland to the coast, and the troopers were sent from Opotiki to Tauranga, then it was easy to send out fifty or sixty men under an officer as far as Ohiwa.

517. You say that until a short time ago you believed that you had actually been at Opotiki when these despatches were sent?—Yes.

518. But is that after a perusal of Major Mair's diary?—There is no doubt in my mind.

519. You know Major Mair?—Yes.

520. Do you regard him as a precise and reliable man?—Yes.

521. You thought that the fact that this entry having been made in his diary caused in your own mind a grave doubt of your previous belief?—Yes.

522. A doubt still exists in your mind as to whether you were there or not?—Yes, I am sorry to say it does. I believe I was there, but I do not know.

523. You are sure Major Mair is not a man who would "fake" his diaries?—I am as sure of that as I am of sitting here now.

524. *Mr. Holland.*] In regard to your being absent at the time, Captain Bower, is it not regular in the service that the district adjutant should always be present in the camp?—Oh, yes. But a district adjutant sometimes went on duty. I was only a district adjutant of the left wing. The headquarters were at Tauranga, and the detachment under the command of Major St. John was stationed at Opotiki, and I was stationed at Opotiki. I often went up to Tauranga.

525. I can recollect in 1864, when I was in camp?—There are lots of things I do not remember about.

526. *Mr. Moore.*] I would like to ask how Captain Bower reconciles the answer he gave to Mr. O'Meara, that he considered Mr. Wrigg entitled to the Cross, when in his previous evidence he said, had he known as much as he knows now he would never have given the certificate?—As I have stated before in a letter to Captain Preece, I do not think that should be taken as a matter at all, as far as I am concerned.

527. You refer to the matter as an "infernal" subject, and that you were to blame for making the application?—It is an unfortunate expression, "blame." But I must reiterate that when I stated to Captain Preece about "Paul-up-a-Tree" and his courage or the reverse, there was no comparison whatever in my mind with Mr. Wrigg and "Paul-up-a-Tree."

528. When you referred to the matter as an "infernal" subject, do you mean it is a matter that never ought to have been touched?—I meant that I had been so infernally worried about the matter that I called it "infernal." That was in a private letter to my old brother officer, and I never expected he would have made it public. As he has made it public I must reiterate that it never entered my mind that I made that reference to "Paul-up-a-Tree," that because he was a funk and a coward it had any reference to Mr. Wrigg.

529. *Mr. Monk.*] Was there anything, Captain Bower, in the diary with which you braced your mind, some circumstances which led you to distrust the impression previously held by you?—It was the diary.

530. It did not bring to your mind any circumstance. There is just the bare statement?—Just the bare statement that I went away to Tauranga some five days beforehand.

531. Have you ever been an officer in the Imperial army?—Never. I was a trooper in the 10th Hussars.

532. You are generally acquainted with the usages of the Imperial army?—Yes.

533. When you received the note from Mr. Wrigg did you think it was material as to what you gave in the matter of securing to Mr. Wrigg the bestowal of the Cross? Will you give your opinion from your experience of military matters, and having been connected with the Imperial army? Did you think it possible for Mr. Wrigg to obtain the Cross after such a lapse of time? Did you feel when giving your evidence you were giving it with a special responsibility?—I perhaps did not give the question that amount of consideration which I ought to have done, but when I gave Mr. Wrigg this certificate, and when I made the application for him, I was acting in perfect good faith.

534. When this letter came from a brother officer, talking about "Paul-up-a-Tree," evidently alluding to some experience between yourselves at Wairoa, did you not resent the insinuation?—There was no insinuation.

535. Could you find no relevancy to "Paul-up-a-Tree"?—Mr. Wrigg never entered my head with reference to "Paul-up-a-Tree."

536. Did not you wonder what Captain Preece was about?—Captain Preece, in his letter, when he was talking about Paora Apatu, was making no comparison with Mr. Wrigg either, as far as I remember. There are other things in Captain Preece's letter which had no reference to Mr. Wrigg's family matters.

537. There was mention in the evidence of a document, which you were supposed to have, in which the authorities had previously declined to bestow this Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—I have never received any sort or kind of reply from the date that I sent the application for Mr. Wrigg's Cross in.

538. You never heard of it?—Mr. Wrigg drew my attention to it.

539. *Mr. Lewis.*] Were the operations of this body of cavalry attended by much slaughter?—No; the cavalry were ordered out. There were always wars and alarms.

540. Did you often see dead bodies lying about?—They were the result of ambushes.

541. Do you remember having seen Bennett White's head brought in?—No.

542. Were heads brought in so frequently?—White's head being off the body was unusual—in fact, as far as I remember, White was the only man who was beheaded.

543. You have no recollection of his head having been brought in?—No.

544. At the time that Mr. Wrigg wrote to you, and during the correspondence, were you aware the Government had decided not to issue any more Crosses?—No.

545. Ohiwa was ten miles out?—Yes.

546. The day before the detachment had gone out and brought in these heads without meeting any hostilities on the part of the Maoris?—I think the road was clear, for as soon as they had committed the murders they retired inland.

547. Is it usual for Maoris to hang about ambushes?—No.

548. We have it in evidence, immediately on returning from a hundred-and-sixty-mile ride through dangerous rivers, and so forth, Mr. Wrigg was ordered out to go and fetch in the bodies of the murdered as well?—Yes, Moore and Beggs.

549. Might that be expected from one who had just returned from a perilous ride of a hundred and sixty miles, and who had displayed conduct which merited the New Zealand Cross?—The commanding officer, I believe, accompanied the detachment that went out to bring in their bodies, and the Bay of Plenty Cavalry accompanied the expedition; and, if Mr. Wrigg on his arrival found his troop going out, in all probability he accompanied them.

550. Captain Percival: do you remember whether he was an educated man? Was he a man who had risen from the ranks, or a man who had received an education which officers in the army generally receive? Was he an Imperial officer?—Yes, I believe so.

551. Was he an educated man?—Yes, I should say so. He was paymaster of the troops.

552. Are you quite sure you never received an answer from the department?—Quite sure I never.

553. *Mr. Moore.*] Are you in possession of the copy of the letter that was sent?—The first intimation of the award that I had was from Mr. Wrigg himself.

554. *Mr. Hutchison.*] This document purports to be a copy of a camp order. Is it regular for the captain of the troop to issue a camp order?—It should have been headed "Regimental order."

555. Who issues a camp order?—Troop orders or regimental orders are taken from the district orders and written into order-books.

556. Who issues a camp order?—I do not know the term. District orders are the orders issued to every branch of the service serving in a district, and signed by the district adjutant by order of the commanding officer. They send their orderlies, each particular company or troop, as the case may be, to the sergeant. They get their orders, and then they are entered into a troop or regimental book, whatever it may be.

557. That district order being entered into a regimental book would be by the commanding officer or his regimental officer?—Yes.

558. If you had been there on the 28th June it would have been you who would have issued the order?—Yes; in the district-order book.

559. *Mr. Wilford.*] Do you remember the death of Moore and Beggs?—Yes.

560. Do you remember the troop going out to fetch them in?—Yes.

561. You remember the commanding officer going out in charge to fetch in those bodies?—Yes.

562. Then, you were there?—It was not at the same time. It was a week afterwards.

563. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Do you say you remember seeing them there?—No; I remember the circumstances of Moore and Beggs's murder.

564. *Mr. Wilford.*] You say you remember the officer commanding going out to bring in the bodies?—Yes.

565. Do you know Major Mair?—Yes.

566. Do you know Captain Mair, his brother?—Yes.

567. Are you aware that Captain Mair was often at Tauranga?—Yes; they were both there often.

568. Mr. Wrigg has told us that when he went to Tauranga Captain Mair rode back two miles with him?—Yes.

569. You never got a letter from Mr. Wrigg until thirty years after the occurrence?—I never got a letter from Mr. Wrigg from the 26th June, 1867, until recently.

570. Upon that one letter you wrote him out the certificate?—Yes.

*Captain Bower:* Mr. Chairman, may I ask that that letter, supposed to be received by me, be read?—Yes. [Letter from the Defence Department, dated 27th September, addressed to Captain M. N. Bower, read and put in—Exhibit No. 24.]

571. *Mr. Monk.*] You are sure you never received such a letter, Captain Bower?—Yes, I am sure.

572. You were informed of the letter having been received?—It got into a paper somehow.

FRIDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1898.

Mr. FREDERICK HENRY HASELDEN sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Hutchison.*]—What is your name in full?—Frederick Henry Haselden.
2. You are a sheep-farmer, residing near Hunterville?—Yes.
3. You are also a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.
4. In 1867 were you at Opotiki?—Yes.
5. Did you serve in any of the military forces?—I joined the 1st Waikato Regiment in 1867—or 1866, I think. Yes, I joined the First Waikato Regiment in 1866.
6. Were you at Opotiki in July, 1867?—Yes.
7. I think your rank was that of corporal then?—I think I was a full private then, and promoted afterwards.
8. Do you remember the news of the murder of Bennett White coming in to Opotiki?—Yes, I remember the news coming in in the afternoon. Shortly afterwards the bugle was sounded, and we fell in on the parade-ground.
9. You were a military settler?—Yes.
10. Did any cavalry turn out?—I am not sure.
11. Did an expedition go out of Opotiki?—Yes, we marched down the beach to Ohiwa to where Bennett White was killed. I think we marched to this side of Ohiwa [witness indicating position on the map].
12. You marched out of Opotiki along to Ohiwa?—Yes.
13. What occurred?—The men found the head. I was put on guard there all night. We camped there that night.
14. Well, next morning?—Next morning we marched back to Opotiki. The Natives were dispersed.
15. The Natives had come down evidently from the interior?—They were supposed to have come down and met Bennett White on the beach and killed him there.
16. And you could not find any hostile Natives there?—No.
17. That was in the morning you started back to Opotiki?—Yes.
18. Do you remember any parade of cavalry when volunteers were called for to carry despatches to Tauranga?—No, I do not know. It is thirty years ago. There might have been a parade.
19. We assume that despatches were sent?—I believe I heard at the time two men were sent with despatches.
20. Was there any talk in the settlement as to any particular act of heroism as to carrying despatches?—I heard nothing whatever about that.
21. You knew Mr. Wrigg to be a resident at Opotiki?—I hardly knew him personally. He was with Mr. Gwynneth on the survey, and I was on the survey.
22. Did you ever hear his name at that time mentioned in connection with any particular act of bravery?—No.
23. Would you be likely to remember any report in connection with any conspicuous act of bravery?—I think I should have heard of it.
24. Did you know Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.
25. He was captain, we are told, of a Volunteer cavalry corps?—Yes.
26. You knew Major St. John?—Yes, I was under him.
27. Is this testimonial of the 28th December, 1867, in his handwriting?—Yes, written thirty-one years ago, and it has never been seen daylight until within the last week.
28. Did you know Captain Simpson at that time in Opotiki?—Yes.
29. Was he in Opotiki in June, 1867?—I am not sure.
30. Do you remember him in Opotiki about the time of this occurrence of Bennett White's murder?—No; I fancy Simpson was then in the Waimana Plains.
31. Did you know Captain Percival?—Yes.
32. Was he in Opotiki about the time of the murder of Bennett White?—No; I do not remember his being there.
33. Did you know a person named G. H. Leaning in Opotiki?—No; I do not remember the name. Of course there were hundreds there I did not know.
34. *Mr. Wilford.*] You were in a foot corps, Mr. Haselden?—Yes.
35. Mr. Wrigg, as far as you know, was in a mounted corps?—Yes.
36. Would the issuing of an order to a trooper by the officer commanding that troop be sufficient authority for the person to whom it was addressed to proceed to carry despatches without any countersigning, or without authority by the adjutant?—I should think not.
37. Would you be surprised to hear that the adjutant tells us that an order signed by the captain to the particular trooper would be quite sufficient authority for the carrying of despatches for the party whose name was set out in the authority?—I am not aware of it, although it might be so.
38. You are aware of the fact that two men did proceed to Tauranga on a ride?—I believe so: I did hear it at the time.
39. Although it was thirty years ago you remember that circumstance?—Yes.
40. Do you remember everything that occurred in that particular month, or any other circumstances that occurred in that particular month—in June?—Yes; I think that the bodies of Moore and Beggs were found.
41. Anything else?—No, I am not sure.
42. Then, the events of the month of June photographed in your memory are the finding of the bodies and the ride to Tauranga?—You can put it that way.

43. If the cavalry were ordered out for the purpose of calling for volunteers to carry despatches it would not be unusual if you happened to be there? The troop would have its own job without the foot being called?—Quite possibly.

44. Quite possibly volunteers were called for without any knowledge to yourself, as volunteers were only called from the mounted corps, not from the foot corps?—It is possibly so.

45. In those days, where danger was threatening you constantly, from the position you were occupying at Opotiki, you would not have considered the mere fact of men volunteering to ride to Tauranga as a matter worthy of exceptional notice?—No, because it was continually done. I was up and down the beach myself very often.

46. As far as Tauranga?—As far as Whakatane.

47. By yourself?—Yes.

48. How long before?—Some weeks before.

49. The calling for volunteers was almost the day after the bodies were found?—I do not know.

50. You remember two men going?—The going of the two men was almost directly after finding the bodies. I think it was the next day.

51. That would be at a time when the hostility of the Natives was plainly shown?—I think so.

52. You admit plainly it was a time, no doubt, of danger, because these men lost their lives?—Yes.

53. While you were there with the corps how many would there be with you—fifty or sixty?—I think there would be nearly a hundred men.

54. I suppose the company—would you call it the company or the corps?—I would call it the company.

55. They were called an expedition in those days. I suppose the expedition would march out in the manner you would march out in squads—single file, or what?—We would leave the township fours deep and then stroll out or march at ease.

56. And a body of 100 men walking out in that way would probably be able to be seen for a distance by any one on the look-out?—Yes.

57. And especially their movements. In order to save detection they would get into ambush there. There was plenty of ambush along there and places for hiding?—Yes, along the sand-hills.

58. Did you simply march to Opotiki and take a general survey of the locality, or was a search made of the ground?—We marched to Ohiwa, and were ordered to fall in there, and the guard was selected. And we camped; and then, I believe, they did search the place at 9 o'clock at night. Some of the men were told off to search in the dark. As far as I remember it was a dull night, showery, but moonlight.

59. How far they went you do not know?—No.

60. Or what area of ground covered you do not know?—No.

61. You returned in the morning, did you not?—We came back next day, but saw no sign of the Natives.

62. You had seen evidence that they had been there?—They found the two heads cut off.

63. When you say, as you stated a few moments ago to Mr. Hutchison, that the Natives had dispersed, I might alter that by saying the Natives were not in view, but may have been in the locality hiding?—Of course, that is possible.

64. You said, in answer to Mr. Hutchison, that you heard of no particular act of heroism in connection with the ride?—That is so.

65. And you further said that any acts of heroism were generally read out on parade next day?—Yes.

66. Would the act of heroism be read out by the commanding officer of the whole of the district?—Yes.

67. And was it usual for the foot and mounted corps to parade at the same time?—It was not usual.

68. It is a different order to command, of course?—Yes.

69. Then it would be quite possible that such an act as the act that Mr. Wrigg claims may have been read out on parade to mounted corps without your knowledge?—I do not think it is possible.

70. You know the rivers in that part of the district?—Fairly well.

71. I ask you were the banks of the rivers wooded, and would they afford any ambush for Natives at night? Parts of the river along your course to go to Tauranga?—I do not remember any wooded parts. Bluffs came out just before you came to the Ohiwa River.

72. It was a dangerous place to pass, and a place where a man could not protect himself if any one was hiding there?—Not well.

73. I could describe it as a place where there would be great peril in passing, then?—I do not think so.

74. Now, you look at it in an advantageous place?—I look at it in your own description.

75. You say bluffs came down, and so it was dangerous in passing?—Of course, they could shoot you there.

76. Without you having any chance of defending yourself?—Not much.

77. And this place would have to be passed by the two mounted men who went to Tauranga with despatches? There is no other way?—That is so.

78. Is the distance correctly stated as being about eighty miles to Tauranga?—Between seventy and eighty.

79. And in those days was it a good ride to have accomplished it in three days, there and back?—A fairly good ride. I did it once, and spent the whole day in Tauranga.

80. Did you never hear, that you remember, the names of the parties who rode this ride carrying the despatches?—I cannot say that I do remember that.

81. You say positively that you never heard the names of anybody who rode that ride?—I must have heard the names then, but I do not remember them now.

82. Were you communicated with by Mr. Wrigg to give evidence on this Committee? You are one of the petitioners, are you not?—Yes.

83. What is your grievance?—The only grievance I have is, I think it is a shame to give the Cross if it is not deserved: it is not deserved for that ride. Any one would have gone on that ride.

84. Then you would be surprised to hear, I suppose, that out of the thirty-six men called on parade only one volunteered to go?—I would be very much surprised.

85. Would you be prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg and Captain Bower if they said so?—I am not prepared to contradict them.

86. Captain Bower has said so in his communications, dated the 26th August, 1897. I suppose you would consider Captain Bower as a man of cool judgment?—Yes.

87. And a man whose honesty and opinion would not be questioned?—No.

88. Will you say that Captain Bower is writing that which is incorrect when he says that he recommends Harry Wrigg to be the recipient of the highly coveted distinction to which, in his opinion, Mr. Wrigg is fully entitled for his act of bravery in voluntarily carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga and returning through a country swarming with hostile Natives along a route when only the day before they had murdered two old settlers, and at a time when the rivers were in high flood and exceedingly dangerous to cross?—There was no danger if he passed Whakatane. He was amongst the friendly Natives.

89. You think it is a great shame Mr Wrigg should get the Cross?—I do for that.

90. Do you think you ought to have got it?—No; but since I have been asked that question, Mr. Chairman, I should like you to read this paper. [Certificate of character, dated 28th December, 1867, read and put in—Exhibit No. 25.]

91. That is your certificate of character?—Yes.

92. Will you swear that Captain Simpson was not in Opotiki at the time of this ride?—I will not swear that he was not in Opotiki, but I believe he was surveying on the Waimana Plains.

93. This was in the month of June?—Yes; I may assume it was June.

94. I suppose your belief is based upon your supposed recollection?—Yes. Captain Simpson was a friend of mine, and I am almost sure to have known if he was there.

95. But he was there frequently?—Yes.

96. Will you swear whether he was in Opotiki the month after or the month before?—No. Probably he was.

97. How is it your recollection of belief seems to fix this particular month as the time that he was away. How do you account for it?—The day that Bennett White was killed I was going to Whakatane to start farming on my own land, but my horse got away during the night, as we had no paddocks then, and I did not go.

98. Was Whakatane in the district where the friendly tribes were?—Yes; a few miles beyond Ohiwa.

99. About ten miles beyond?—Whakatane was about ten miles, and Ohiwa was about half-way between Whakatane and Opotiki.

100. You knew Captain Percival?—Yes.

101. Do you know of his having been there or not?—I do not know. He was paymaster. I do not think he was there.

102. You do not think he was there. Why do you not think so?—Because he used to pay the men, and I should recollect getting my cheque.

103. Why?—We had to wait a long time for our cheques.

104. Did you get paid in June?—Captain Percival did not always come down to pay us. We were paid by several different officers.

105. It is perfectly within the bounds of possibility that he was there?—Yes.

106. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What were the indications, Mr. Haselden? Was there an absence of the enemy at Ohiwa when you went down on this expedition?—The men searched for the bodies that night and only found a head, and in the morning they were sent out scouting. They went to the top of the range and came back and reported that there were no tracks or sight of the Natives in the vicinity.

107. What was the conclusion that was arrived at?—Major St. John concluded they had gone right back to the ranges.

108. What was the conclusion of your mind and the minds of the men?—We all concluded that they had retired back to the ranges.

109. At that time the indications were they had gone back?—Yes.

110. All the indications point to that?—Of course, they might not have gone back.

111. *Mr. Wilford.*] Mr. Haselden, you have had some experience in the Maori War?—I have.

112. You have given us an idea of what Captain Bower's description is of the alleged danger?—Perhaps I was too hasty in saying that. Still I meant what I said.

113. You meant it was principally largely imaginary?—I did not say it was imaginary, but good-nature of Captain Bower's.

114. It should not be taken too seriously?—No.

115. In a certificate that Captain Percival gave, he says the country between Opotiki and Tauranga was swarming with the enemy in June. What about that?—We could not find the enemy. We were always looking for them.

116. You say the only danger was between Opotiki and Ohiwa: you thought beyond that was friendly country?—Yes.

117. Do you know of others than the two that you heard of riding up and back at that time?—The mail used to go regularly to the day that they killed the men on the beach. I went up by myself shortly before these murders alone.

118. Are you able to say whether others went up and down soon after the murder?—People continued up and down; men going to their land, and so on.

119. *Mr. Morrison.*] You said that you were at Opotiki in 1867?—Yes.

120. And at that time you were a volunteer in the 1st Waikato Regiment?—I was a militiaman.

121. You belonged to the 1st Waikato Regiment?—Yes.

122. How many troops were in Opotiki at this particular date, in 1867, mounted and foot and all?—I think there would be about four or five hundred footmen, and the only mounted men at that time were the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry Company. That is as far as I remember.

123. What was the regiment outside your own at the time?—There was none.

124. Were there no other corps?—No, I do not recollect any other stationed there.

125. As far as you recollect, there were only the Waikato Regiment and the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Corps at that time?—Yes, at that time.

126. In your own troop or company, how many would there be?—The full strength would be about one hundred men.

127. Have you any idea of the number of men in the Bay of Plenty troop?—They were not a very large body.

128. Forty, twenty, or thirty?—Between thirty and fifty.

129. All told, there would only be forty or fifty men at that time?—The Waikato regiment had about ten companies; No. 4 Company had a hundred.

130. You stated you were on guard. You were marched out from Opotiki to Ohiwa when Bennett White's body was found. How many men went out?—I think there were about a hundred men that night.

131. You were on guard and saw no sign of the enemy that night?—No.

132. You do not remember any parade of cavalry that took place on this particular date: there might have been one?—Oh, yes, there might have been.

133. You did not question for a moment but what these Natives were all down on the beach two or three days prior to this murder taking place?—They were there when they killed White.

134. You do not remember how long they were there? You do not remember the remaining Volunteer corps stating when Wrigg and McDonald said they would volunteer to carry the despatches that that was the last they should see of them?—Never heard of it.

135. You were not aware the Ureweras were swarming on that beach prior to Bennett White being murdered?—No. I did not know or I should not have been going to Whakatane on that morning.

136. Then, you said you did not hear of any remarks being made with regard to Cornet Wrigg and McDonald in carrying these despatches?—I did not.

137. Is it not probable that these remarks might have been made without the 1st Waikato Regiment knowing anything about it?—Of course.

138. As young soldiers, you would be more interested in your own principal company or regiment than in the cavalry members?—We generally took a great deal of interest in anything that went on.

139. Two troopers might volunteer to carry out despatches, and the foot soldiers would not know anything about it?—Hardly, I think.

140. You say that you do not remember Leaning?—No.

141. You also stated in reply to that question that there were hundreds of others there that you did not know?—I do not recall them now.

142. In a camp of soldiers composed of some four hundred or five hundred men there were one or two hundred men there that you did not know, yet you wish this Committee to believe a cavalry corps could send a couple of men to Tauranga without it being known all over the camp?—I think it would have been known.

142A. You have also stated that orders issued by the captain of a troop, or troop orders, would not be binding on that particular company or troop unless sent by the district adjutant?—I never met a district officer who would not want to know what orders were issued.

143. You said that acts of heroism were generally read out on parade?—Yes.

144. Were there a number of general parades for acts of heroism that occurred in Opotiki when you were there?—The camp orders were read out every day, so that the men would know what to do.

145. I am wanting to draw your attention to the fact that acts of heroism were brought out and read out to the troops on parade. Do you remember any instance?—Yes.

146. Would you kindly give us one?—When we attacked Opape, the next day it was read out that Private Haselden was first in the village attacked.

147. That was read out in the district orders?—Read on parade.

148. Read on parade of the Waikato Regiment before all the troops?—No, all the troops were not there.

149. You were mentioned in the regimental orders?—Yes.

150. So that in that case, according to your showing, Cornet Wrigg and McDonald might have been specially mentioned in an order issued by the captain of their troop, and issued on parade, and the Waikato Regiment would not hear about it?—We would not hear it then, but would hear it all in the camp afterwards.

151. Were you aware of the state of the rivers at that particular date when these troopers rode over?—I think they were fairly high, and that it had been raining.

152. I suppose with regard to these acts of heroism your name was specially mentioned in despatches as being foremost in that attack in a certain place?—I suppose so.

153. I suppose if a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry said, "Well, look here, Mr. Haselden, I was on parade at that particular time, and I do not remember your name appearing in despatches," would not that show that it never took place?—No.

154. Supposing Mr. Wrigg was a member of the Bay of Plenty corps and said, "I do not remember anything of your name being mentioned"?—I do not think it would matter.

155. You also said that you do not recollect Captain Percival being there. Captain Percival seemed to belong to this expedition or corps, and was paymaster?—I do not think Captain Percival ever came with us, he simply used to come backwards and forwards to pay the men. I do not think he was ever stationed in Opotiki when I was there.

156. Are you prepared to swear that he was not at Opotiki on this particular date?—No.

157. You also said you went by yourself along the beach and there was no great danger?—I did not think there was any great danger.

158. Could you give us an idea of the time?—It could easily be proved if you have the old order-books, because I went on duty.

159. Was it before or after?—Some weeks before.

160. You know the habits of the Natives in connection with these murders fairly well?—Yes.

161. You know they would make a dash for a certain place, and after they had succeeded they generally retired to the hills?—Yes.

162. Is it not quite possible that at the time you rode along the road you did not happen to strike one of these periods?—Quite likely.

163. You do not know if it was a fact that a large number of Natives came down to the beach at the time McDonald and Wrigg carried these despatches: you assume they were there?—They were there when they murdered Bennett White, but I do not say they were there when the despatches were carried.

164. They had been down the day previous?—Yes. Then they appear to have retired.

165. You admit the Natives were down and the despatches were sent the following day?—Yes.

166. *Mr. Lewis.*] Mr. Haselden, you said it was a characteristic of the Natives to make a dash and immediately retire to the hills?—They used to do that sometimes.

167. When they made an attack on a few unprotected whites was it the custom to remain about the scene?—No.

168. About these rivers, were they wide?—They were not bad rivers to ford.

169. You had to ford them? There were no other means of getting across?—I have gone over some of them in a Maori canoe, and a Maori has towed the horse behind.

170. *The Chairman.*] Are you referring to the Whakatane?—I have crossed it sometimes with a canoe. You could generally ford them at low tide.

171. *Mr. Field.*] Were the rivers you had to cross on the routes from Opotiki to Tauranga regarded as dangerous rivers by you at that time?—I do not think so. They would be dangerous to a man who could not swim, but most men swam at that time.

172. Do you regard them as dangerous, or were they generally regarded by your people as dangerous?—No.

173. The majority of men who travelled that coast were used to these rivers?—Yes.

174. Have you a recollection of two men taking despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—I recollect two men had gone with despatches to Tauranga.

175. Was that before or after you came to Ohiwa?—As far as my belief goes, it was the next day.

176. After your company had scouted the hills in search of Natives?—Yes.

177. What was the character of the beach between Opotiki and Ohiwa? Was it flat and broad?—Fairly wide when the tide was out. It was a good large beach.

178. Was it a good beach to travel on?—Fairly good. Some parts were soft, but the bulk of it was good.

179. Was the ridge fringed with sandhills, or did the bush come down to the water?—From Opotiki to Ohiwa it was sandhills.

180. What width of sandhills is there between the beach and what you call the bush?—As far as I recollect, the bush was a long way back. You went off the sand into the fern-hills.

181. Was it anything like a common thing for men to go along in ones and twos?—It was continually done before Bennett White's murder. After that there was a check.

182. I suppose the despatches were still carried after Bennett White's murder?—Yes.

183. By a troop of men or a few?—I believe they were carried in the ordinary way, one or two would go. Generally two after the murder.

184. Nothing in the shape of a large escort?—I never heard of an escort going.

185. You said, Mr. Haselden, there were four or five hundred men camped at Opotiki about that time?—Yes, I believe that would be about the number.

186. Major St. John was in command?—Yes.

187. Would not despatches in the ordinary course be sent and signed by the commanding officer rather than by an officer of the troop?—That was my impression. I could not speak authoritatively. I was never an officer myself.

188. *Mr. Holland.*] You say that the morning that Bennett White was murdered you were going to Whakatane?—Yes.

189. You say that your horse got away?—Yes, he broke the tether-ropes.

190. Do you not think it a curious coincidence that your horse should get away that morning?—Yes. I think it was very fortunate, but there was nothing unusual for a horse to get away, as we had no paddocks at that time.

191. *The Chairman.*] The distance from Opotiki to Tauranga is between seventy and eighty miles?—I believe that is the distance.

192. In going that distance, were persons in the habit of keeping along the beach? Will you describe the route from Opotiki to Tauranga at the time you were there?—We went along the beach for a considerable distance. Then, near Whakatane you struck inland, went down a very steep hill till you struck the Whakatane River. You go over the Whakatane River, and go along the beach then for a long way. In some places the track might run in and out the sandhills. You arrive at Maketu, and then you have some beach-work and some sandhill-work until you arrive at Tauranga. I went a considerable way inland to Tauranga. I left my horse at the Maori pa, and went over in a canoe, leaving the beach a long way. That is as near as I can recollect it.

193. Is the country very much broken between Ohiwa and Whakatane?—Oh, yes; it is broken along the beach there.

194. You have referred to the Waimana country. Do you recollect if the Waimana Bush extends right down to the bluff?—We went through no bush. We went over a fern range.

195. Do you recollect patches of bush?—Yes. There were patches of bush all along the route.

196. At that time was there a considerable volume of water in the Whakatane River?—I believe there would be. I could not say. We had bad weather about then.

197. Therefore the Whakatane would be in flood?—Yes.

198. Do you recollect an immense swamp to the north of the Whakatane River?—Yes.

199. Would you be surprised of the extent of that swamp if I said it was about 50,000 acres?—I would be surprised at that.

200. Would you be surprised if I said it was 45,000 acres?—I would be surprised if you said it was 5,000.

201. Was that low-lying country?—Yes.

202. Was it capable of being drained, do you think?—I have no idea.

203. What is your opinion as to whether there was any cover for ambuscades in that swamp for hostile Natives?—Of course there was.

204. You are aware as soon as you crossed the Whakatane you get amongst the hostile tribes?—Yes; returning from Tauranga.

Captain GEORGE AUGUSTUS PREECE sworn and examined.

205. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Your name is George Preece?—George Augustus Preece.

206. Are you residing in Palmerston North?—Yes.

207. You are a captain in the Militia and a holder of the New Zealand Cross?—Yes.

208. What were you in 1867?—In 1867 I was in Wairoa. I was then Clerk to the Court, and had been acting as interpreter to the Forces, with rank of ensign.

209. How far is Wairoa from Opotiki?—Wairoa is in Hawke's Bay. I was down here [position indicated on map].

210. Were the affairs happening on the coast known throughout the Provincial Districts of Auckland and Hawke's Bay?—Yes.

211. Were you in the way of hearing all that was going on?—Yes; we heard where there was fighting. People who were connected with the Forces knew what was going on.

212. Afterwards?—I was afterwards stationed at Opotiki.

213. In what year would that be?—I came round from the West Coast to the East Coast in 1869 with Colonel Whitmore.

214. Were you a member of any corps then?—I was then lieutenant on Colonel Whitmore's staff, and I was through the Urewera campaign, and then in Taupo.

215. You knew all these districts?—From 1869 to 1875, when I was stationed at Opotiki, I was through all these districts.

216. Did you at that time hear of any particular act of heroism performed by Wrigg or McDonald?—No.

217. At what action was it that you got the Cross?—For the first attack on Ngatapa Pa on 3rd December, 1868.

218. Were you recommended by the officer commanding the corps, Colonel Whitmore?—Yes.

219. Did you apply for it?—No, certainly not. The first thing I heard of it was Colonel Whitmore told me he had recommended it.

220. Do you know how many there are who hold the Cross?—I think, nineteen or twenty.

221. When you heard that Mr Wrigg had got the Cross did you feel at all surprised?—Yes, I did feel very much surprised.

222. Did you represent the matter to the Defence Department in the way of a protest?—I did.

223. Is that a copy of the letter you sent in?—Yes. [Letter to Defence Department, 24th March, 1898, put in—Exhibit No. 26.]

224. We have heard of some correspondence between yourself and Captain Bower, and a letter of his has been put in. You were asked for the letter you sent him: have you got it or a copy?—No, I have not. I may say that letter was written to Captain Bower without any knowledge that he had recommended Mr. Wrigg for the Cross. I was writing to Captain Bower asking if he knew of the circumstances of Mr. Wrigg's alleged action of bravery, as I had heard nothing of him. I wished to get information.

225. *Mr. Wilford.*] You have been taking a very great interest in this matter, Captain Preece, have you not?—Yes.

226. And wrote to the papers as well?—Yes.

227. Did you write a letter dated the 12th August and sign it, "An East Coast Resident of Thirty Years"?—I did not.

228. You swear that positively?—Yes.
229. When you wrote did you write anonymously?—I wrote anonymously.
230. What was the *nom de plume*?—My letter was not published in the form of a letter. It was published as a portion of a leading article. I wrote after the presentation of the Cross to Mr. Wrigg by the Mayor of Auckland—not by the commanding officer—and the *Herald*, which I wrote to, declined to print it, as it was likely to come before Parliament. I afterwards wrote to another newspaper, the *Post*, and it published not my letter, but an article based on my letter.
231. What name did you sign to your letter?—"Degraded Cross."
232. You did not put your own name to it?—No.
233. You were not in Opotiki in 1867?—No.
234. You know nothing about the condition of affairs at that period, in the month of June, 1867, of your own knowledge?—Of my own knowledge I know nothing of the conditions of affairs at that time.
235. Of the condition of the country?—I knew a good deal about the condition of the country. I knew the whole of the officers of the Force.
236. In the month of June, 1867, can you tell us anything of the condition of the road from Opotiki to Tauranga as far as danger was concerned?—I know the country was occupied from Ohiwa to Tauranga by the Ngatiawa-Whakatane Tribe and the Arawa. There were friendly Natives between Ohiwa and Whakatane.
237. Are you aware that Mr. Wrigg volunteered to carry despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga, and he was the only man out of the company that did volunteer when volunteers were called for?—I am not aware of that.
238. Are you aware that a day or two before the ride Mr. Bennett White and the mailman were murdered?—Yes.
239. You are aware that occurred a day or two before that ride. Did you know there was a ride?—The murder just occurred a day or two before.
240. You told me just now, Captain Preece, you are aware Bennett White was murdered a day or two before?—It was alleged that there was a ride.
241. You have sworn to us a day or two before the ride Bennett White was murdered?—You say so.
242. You were asked whether a day or two before the ride Bennett White was murdered, and you said Yes?—Mr. Wilford assumes that there was a ride, and asks am I aware of two days before the ride. He says Mr. Wrigg went, when Bennett White and the mailman were killed. I was not there to see it.
243. Were the officer friends you spoke of in the mounted troop or foot corps. Did you know of any officers in the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—Not at that time.
244. Consequently we take it you were not in connection with any of the officers of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—No.
245. You heard nothing of this particular ride?—No.
246. For all you know it might have occurred?—Yes, it might have occurred.
247. Do you know those rivers running between Opotiki and Tauranga?—Yes.
248. Are you aware they are dangerous to cross in flood-time?—Yes.
249. The one immediately at Opotiki and the one at Waioeka were dangerous?—Yes. The Waioeka at Opotiki was; the Waioetahi in times of very high floods. I have swum both rivers on horseback.
250. And this would especially happen in winter-time?—Yes.
251. In winter-time they were more likely to be flooded than any other time?—Yes.
252. A man could not protect himself if there were any skirmishing if he was fording one of these rivers?—It is one of the things he would have to look after.
253. It was a risk?—A certain amount of risk. There is a risk in riding down the beach at any time when a river is flooded.
254. Do you know anything of the state of the part of the road which has been described by one of the witnesses as the bluff?—Yes, the bluff at Ohiwa.
255. That is a dangerous part of the road?—Yes; that would be practically the most dangerous part of the road.
256. There is no way of getting to Tauranga except by passing it?—That is the ordinary route.
257. There would be no protection, I presume, supposing there were men in ambush for a man riding past?—There is no protection. That is one of the things you would have to look out for. In carrying despatches you have to look out for ambuscades.
258. Will you tell me in what possible way you could guard against a danger like that?—You have got to run the risk. If there was a risk.
259. You know the beach between Opotiki and Whakatane?—Yes.
260. It appears to be a very rough, broken country?—No. Between Whakatane and Ohiwa is one of the best beaches in the colony.
261. The beach is right, but the country rough and broken. Do they have to cross the mouth of that harbour?—By ferry.
262. How would a man carrying despatches cross it?—He would have to get into a canoe, and have his horse taken across.
263. If there were no canoe, to swim it?—That is rarely done.
264. What is the width?—It is half a mile wide.
265. Would that be called a friendly or unfriendly side?—Between the two.
266. Possibly a man might find no ferry-boat there?—If he found no ferry-boat there he could not get across.

267. You swore you only wrote to Captain Bower for the purpose of putting yourself into communication with him. You did not know at that time Mr. Wrigg was claiming the Cross?—I did not know Captain Bower had recommended him.

268. In the letter you wrote to Captain Bower, did you make any nasty insinuations about the alleged courage of Wrigg, comparing him with a Maori called "Paul-up-a-Tree"?—Yes.

269. "Paul-up-a-Tree" was a man recognised among soldiers as a coward. Did you compare Mr. Wrigg in your letter to "Paul-up-a-Tree"?—As far as my recollection goes, I think I said, "From what I understand, he has not done more to deserve the Cross than "Paul-up-a-Tree."

270. You did not know him at all?—No, not personally.

271. You said in your recommendation that you sent into the Defence Department he was getting the Cross for services which did not warrant so high a distinction?—Yes.

272. You told us you did not know the condition of the Natives at the time in that particular spot?—Undoubtedly I knew the condition of the Natives.

273. You know nothing about the Natives being in this particular locality at this particular date? You did not know when you wrote that letter to the Defence Department what hostile Natives were in the vicinity of Opotiki?—Undoubtedly I did. I was in the Opotiki district directly afterwards, and heard the whole circumstances of the raid.

274. You never heard anything of the ride?—No.

275. You never heard Mr. Wrigg's name?—No.

276. Did you know McDonald went?—No; I knew Trooper McDonald, but never heard of Mr. Wrigg.

277. Was Trooper McDonald in the ride? Did you ever hear him say he was?—No.

278. You never heard him mention he was in the ride in any shape or form?—No.

279. You did not know until lately that he was in the ride?—No.

280. Who informed you?—I simply saw it in the *Gazette*, I think.

281. *Mr. Morrison.*] You have stated in evidence, Captain Preece, that you were at Wairoa in 1867?—Yes.

282. How many miles is that from Opotiki across country?—Over a hundred miles, I should think.

283. How long would it take for news to travel from Opotiki over to the particular place that you were stationed at? Communication was very slow, I suppose?—Probably a fortnight.

284. You have informed the Committee that whenever there was fighting you heard all about it?—Of course, you would hear all about fighting as soon as it occurred.

285. Is it not possible that volunteers might be asked for from companies or troops for forming danger-escorts to carry despatches and yet never be heard of?—Yes. Despatches were carried in dangerous times and thought nothing of after. They did not think they were entitled to the New Zealand Cross every time they carried despatches.

286. Is it not possible that troops in various times went with men while carrying despatches and performed dangerous and hazardous work, and you never would hear anything about it?—It is quite possible.

287. You say you felt it very much when you heard about Mr. Wrigg going to receive this New Zealand Cross?—Yes.

288. You entered a very vigorous protest against this person receiving the Cross?—Undoubtedly.

289. You laid down certain conditions under which the Cross should be conferred?—Yes.

290. Are you acquainted with the Order in Council in 1869, under which this Cross is given?—I have not heard of it for a number of years.

291. You made a strong point of the Victoria Cross for bravery under fire, and you thought the New Zealand Cross should be conferred on the same lines. Would it surprise you to know that this Order in Council gives His Excellency the Governor power to confer the New Zealand Cross on members of the Militia, Volunteers, or Armed Constabulary, who may particularly distinguish themselves by their bravery in action or devotion to their duty while on service? So the position you take up is, any one receiving the New Zealand Cross must have been under fire. I suppose you are an old military man?—I have not served in the Imperial army. I saw a great deal of field service in the colonial Forces.

292. You are not aware of volunteers being asked for for the purpose of carrying these despatches from Opotiki?—No.

293. You are prepared to place your opinion, seeing that you were at the time several hundreds of miles away from Opotiki—means of communication being so slow that it was sometimes a fortnight or more before you could hear from this particular place—against district adjutant Captain Bower and Captain Percival's?—I should not rely upon Captain Percival. I should not believe his oath.

294. Are you prepared to put your opinion against Captain Bower's, who was present at the time? Captain (late District Adjutant) Bower says that, "In accordance with this Order (Major St. John, then commanding the district at Opotiki, being since deceased), it affords me great pleasure to recommend Mr. Harry Wrigg, late cornet Bay of Plenty Volunteer Company, to be a recipient of this highly coveted distinction, to which, in my opinion, he is fully entitled for his act of bravery in voluntarily carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga (and returning), through a country swarming with hostile Natives, along a route where only the day before they had murdered two old settlers (Mr. Bennett White and the mailman, whose name I forget), and at a time when the rivers were in high flood and exceedingly dangerous to cross." Are you, Captain Preece, prepared to put forward your individual opinion against these words?—My opinion is the country from Opotiki to Tauranga was not swarming with hostile Natives. It is a matter of notoriety.

295. You never heard of this ride taking place?—No. Carrying despatches was nothing. People did it in the ordinary course of duty. I have known a man to carry despatches eighty miles, thirty miles through the enemy's country, without thinking anything of it.

296. You are a military man, and have some experience in colonial military matters?—It might be necessary, where Volunteers were not on regular pay, to be called for, where the men are simply Volunteers, and not on regular pay. If kept on regular pay they would be simply ordered to go. If not on regular pay, they might be called for as volunteers to go.

297. Did not Cornet Wrigg volunteer to perform this duty?—I cannot say.

298. You are not aware that he did so?—I am not aware that he performed it. If he did it he was not doing more than hundreds of troopers might do. Hundreds of others have done more.

299. You are prepared to pit your individual opinion—and you at that particular time were a hundred miles away from this particular district—against that of the officers with Mr. Wrigg. You say it was quite a usual thing for soldiers to carry these despatches, and think nothing of them?—It was their ordinary duty.

300. Did you know any of the officers of this Bay of Plenty corps?—I know Cornet Smith and most of them—almost all the men of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry; at that particular time I did not.

301. Do you think you were justified, in this letter you sent to Adjutant Bower, in comparing Wrigg to "Paul-up-a-Tree"?—I did not compare him. As far as I recollect, I think I said that from what I heard he had done nothing more than other men had done.

302. *Mr. Lewis.*] Captain Preece, you had a good deal of experience amongst the Maoris, and were accustomed to their habits?—Yes.

303. In the case of a slaughter of comrades, when a body of Maoris swooped down, did they generally hang about or clear out—they generally cleared out?—Yes.

304. Their tendency always is to clear out?—Yes.

305. Would that tendency be increased or diminished by the fact that a hundred armed men had camped upon and searched the spot?—It would be increased.

306. When you say that the services rendered by Mr. Wrigg were not of such a mighty distinction, were you referring to the fact that the Victoria Cross is not usually awarded for carrying despatches?—I did not say that it would not be awarded for carrying despatches. It might be to some man who had done some meritorious thing. It would not be awarded merely for carrying despatches through an enemy's country. There are numerous instances of men carrying despatches through the enemy's country who were never rewarded.

307. *Mr. Field.*] Captain Preece, you say you were not at Opotiki at the time this alleged ride took place, but were there afterwards?—Yes.

308. Are you intimately acquainted with the country between Tauranga and Opotiki?—Thoroughly. I have ridden up it hundreds of times.

309. Do you know whether the colonial forces were camped at Opotiki at that particular time?—I knew the camp at Opotiki was where the church was.

310. Do you know the place where the troops were camped in 1867 when this man Bennett White was murdered?—Yes; I know the camp. The ordinary camp was where the church was.

311. You said just now there were only two rivers you considered dangerous between Opotiki and Tauranga?—Yes.

312. I want to know how far the crossing is from the river at Opotiki to the camp?—About a mile.

313. We are right in inferring a man could cross in perfect safety as far as the hostile Natives were concerned?—I should think so.

314. Then, you mentioned the name of another river; that river is less dangerous, but still dangerous to some extent. Where is that river?—About four miles down from Opotiki to the crossing. It would be between four and six miles down.

315. Was it between Opotiki and Ohewa?—Yes; it is the Waiotahi.

316. Those are the only two rivers you regard as dangerous between Tauranga and Opotiki?—Yes.

317. You regard the last one, the Waiotahi, as only dangerous at certain times?—Yes. It must be an extremely heavy flood to make the Waiotahi dangerous.

318. Did you consider that the road from Opotiki was dangerous so far as the risk of river-crossings was concerned?—When a storm was on it might be dangerous.

319. Not otherwise?—No.

320. I understood you to say you had afterwards known a number of the men who belonged to the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry?—I was in charge of the Opotiki district for three months, and the troop was paraded under me twice. Cornet Smith was then captain, and J. F. Connelly lieutenant.

321. Do you know whether members of that corps were members of the corps spoken of in 1867?—Most of them were.

322. Did you ever hear any of them enlarging on the fact that Mr. Wrigg had done any act of bravery in carrying that despatch?—I never heard Mr. Wrigg's name mentioned.

323. You also say you knew Trooper McDonald. Did you ever hear him refer to any act of conspicuous bravery done by himself or Mr. Wrigg?—No. Still, my knowledge of Trooper McDonald was slight; he might have carried despatches with Mr. Wrigg.

324. Had these two men, Trooper McDonald and Cornet Wrigg, done anything conspicuous would it not have been a matter of common talk in their troop?—I think it would. I have heard of the occurrence in other districts. In the very Opotiki district I heard of courage shown by Lieutenants White and Rushton long before I was in the district.

325. Mr. Haselden has said in evidence that at the time of this occurrence there were four or five hundred men encamped at Opotiki, and that Major St. John was in command?—Yes.

327. And has also said the Bay of Plenty Cavalry, as far as he can recollect, was from thirty to fifty men?—Yes.

328. If a despatch were sent at that time would it not be sent by the commanding officer to Tauranga, or would it be sent by an officer of the troop?—The commanding officer.

329. And he would give the necessary orders?—Yes.

330. And the necessary directions relating to it would be signed by him or his adjutant?—By the adjutant or commanding officer.

331. As far as you are aware, the officer commanding the troop would have no authority for sending out despatches?—The officer commanding the district would send out the despatches.

Mr. F. H. HASELDEN re-examined.

332. Mr. Hutchison.] Do you know, Mr. Haselden, whether the Volunteers in June, at the time of Bennett White's murder, were on regular pay?—The bulk of them were. I myself was off pay, but the position was that at that time we were waiting for our land—some of them had got their land, and received 10s. 6d. a week for ration-money. After the alarm sounded we were supposed to turn out, and on the occasion of going down for Bennett White's body I think the alarm went, and the men assembled on parade. About a hundred men accompanied Major St. John.

333. Mr. Morrison.] The reply you have given to Mr. Hutchison's question simply refers to the Waikato Expeditionary Force?—Yes.

334. You know nothing at all about the Bay of Plenty Cavalry?—No.

335. Mr. Lewis.] By whom was the discovery of the murder of Bennett White made, and who brought the intelligence into camp?—I understood a Maori brought the intelligence in. I was not in my hut at the time. I was some distance from the parade-ground, and when I got on the ground the men told me news had come in by a Maori that Bennett White had been killed, and Major St. John came, and we fell in, about a hundred of us.

336. Were the Maoris in the camp in the immediate neighbourhood friendly?—Yes.

337. Mr. Hutchison.] Was Bennett White, of Opotiki, well known?—He kept a store at Whakatane and at Opotiki, and used to ride backwards and forwards.

Major WILLIAM GILBERT MAIR sworn and examined.

338. Mr. Hutchison.] Your name is William Gilbert Mair, is it not?—Yes.

339. You are a Judge of the Native Land Court?—Yes.

340. In 1867 were you in the public service?—Yes.

341. What rank and office did you hold then?—At that time I held a majority in the New Zealand Militia, and I was Resident Magistrate of the Opotiki district.

342. Where were your headquarters?—At Opotiki.

343. You travelled sometimes, no doubt, from there up the coast and down?—Yes, very often: from there to Tauranga.

344. Certain events occurred towards the end of the month of June, 1867. I refer especially to the murder of Bennett White and the mailman on the beach near Opotiki. Can you say where you were towards the end of June, 1867?—I left Opotiki on the 17th June to go to Tauranga. I have a slip of paper here. Mr. Chairman, with some dates written on it.

Mr. Wilford: I must object to that as evidence, Mr. Chairman.

345. Mr. Hutchison.] Are those contemporary notes?—Yes.

346. The Chairman.] Have you got your diary with you, Major Mair?—Yes.

347. Will you produce the diary?—Yes. [Diary produced.]

Major Mair [referring to his diary]: On the 16th June I left Opotiki to go to Maketu, really to attend the compensation Court that was to sit there.

347A. Mr. Hutchison.] Maketu: where is that?—It is on the coast on the way to Tauranga. From there I went on to Tauranga.

348. On what date did you arrive at Tauranga?—On the 22nd.

349. Before you left Opotiki had news been received there of any murders?—Two men named Moore and Beggs had been murdered during the month of May. At least, they were missing at that time—it was not known whether they had been killed.

350. When you left on the 17th did you know the fate of these men?—No.

351. You reached Tauranga on the 22nd, and you had business officially there to transact. I suppose?—Yes.

352. When did you start back?—On Sunday, the 30th June.

353. From where?—From Tauranga.

354. Coming along the beach?—Travelling by the beach. I went to Maketu that night.

355. That was a Sunday, was it not?—Yes.

356. You got to Maketu that night?—Yes.

357. Did you start on the next morning?—Yes, towards Opotiki, on the 1st July.

358. When did you hear any news of a serious occurrence?—Before leaving Tauranga on the Sunday, about noon a Native brought up the news of the murder of Bennett White and the Maori mailman.

359. Then you started to travel on to Opotiki along the road on which these murders had been committed?—Yes, immediately on receipt of that news.

360. On the Sunday night you reached Maketu?—Yes.

361. And went on next morning?—Yes. That evening at Maketu I received a despatch from Major St. John giving an account of these murders.

362. From whom did you receive the despatch?—From a man named McDonald, a trooper of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry.

363. Was that an official communication from Major St. John, commanding the Opotiki district?—Yes.

364. Had you a military rank in the district?—Yes. My position was I had my present military rank, but I had several duties to perform as well, which naturally occupied the most of my time; and I was also adviser in Native matters to Major St. John—that is to say, while he could do all things necessary for the defence of the district, he could not move any men out of the district without my approval—that is, for the purpose of making war; and in his absence from the district I was in command.

365. You were second in command?—Yes.

366. Of the district which included Opotiki?—Yes.

367. Did it include Tauranga?—No, the district of Opotiki.

368. What were its boundaries?—I think Matata was the boundary. I have a note here of the 8th June: "Put in orders to command the district in St. John's absence."

369. Was that a district order?—Yes.

370. Where was it published?—It would be noted in the records of the orderly-room.

371. At what place?—At Opotiki.

372. I suppose all Volunteers, or most, on duty would know of it?—I should think so.

373. Was it a public notification of the district orders of the day?—Yes.

374. Coming back to this Sunday night at Maketu, when you got the despatch from Major St. John, did you see any one in company with Trooper McDonald?—No; I have no recollection of any one else in connection with those letters than Trooper McDonald.

375. Is it possible that if there were an officer on duty carrying despatches he would not have reported himself to you?—Well, I cannot call to mind an instance of an officer carrying despatches in circumstances of that kind. Troopers and orderlies always carried despatches.

376. Supposing there had been an officer on duty with the trooper, would it not have been his duty to have reported himself to you?—Certainly.

377. No officer did report himself to you?—No.

378. Did you know a Mr. Wrigg before the 30th June?—No.

379. Did you know of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry having been raised?—Yes.

380. Who was in command?—At that time Captain Gwynneth was in command.

381. You knew of him being in command?—Yes; I knew him very well.

382. I suppose this despatch was an official intimation to you of the murders?—Yes.

383. And I suppose for the purpose of steps being taken for the peace of the district?—It was simply announcing the fact of these murders.

384. Did you keep the despatch?—I may have it amongst my papers in Auckland.

385. You got a despatch from Major St. John intimating the murder of Bennett White?—I will read what I have to say about it here: "What took place on Sunday: Kati, he was a Native sergeant stationed at Matata. Kati arrived from Matata with the news that Bennett White and Wi Popata had been murdered at Waiotahi by the Hauhaus on Wednesday, the 26th June. Mr. Henry Clark, Civil Commissioner, Mr. Richard Gill, now of the Native Land Purchase Department, and I started at 1 o'clock for Maketu; met letters from St. John."

386. Do you remember if McDonald was on horseback?—I met him at the ferry crossing. I could not speak for certain as to his being on horseback, but to the best of my recollection I met him on the beach, having crossed the river to Maketu.

387. There were not two Trooper McDonalds?—No.

388. Was Trooper McDonald in uniform?—I suppose he would be, but I cannot speak as to that. I knew the man very well.

389. You have no doubt it was from Trooper McDonald's hands you got the despatch?—Not the slightest.

390. Not any despatch from any one else?—No.

391. You were second in command under Major St. John at the time?—Yes.

392. You continued your journey. The next morning, Monday, the 1st July, you went on to traverse the very road that McDonald had passed over, and on which the murders had been committed?—Yes.

393. Had you any escort?—No; I went alone.

394. In travelling you had to study the tides?—A good deal of the track lay along the sand. From my note of that day, "I started at 11 o'clock from Maketu, halted to lunch at Matata, where I got letters from Wepiha, a Native chief who lived at Whakatane, to the effect that the bodies of White and the mailman had been washed up by the sea at Ohope. Got to Whakatane at dark, and to Ohope at 7.30. It is just to the eastward of Whakatane. I remained there that night. The next day was the 2nd July. A boat party of Whakatohea—that was the name of the Native tribe that lived at Opotiki—came up for the bodies of Bennett White and the mailman. They took White's body only. At 1 o'clock met St. John and some troopers at Ohiwa." Then I have a note: "St. John returned yesterday from an unsuccessful expedition up the Waiioeka Gorge." That was an expedition that had set out to try and intercept the murderers retiring. They lost one man by drowning, and another was burned after they came in. There was a drunken spree, and one man was burned to death.

395. Did you arrive on the 2nd July at Opotiki?—Yes. We got to camp at 5 o'clock, St. John living in my house. This is all the note for that day.

397. Can you say what occurred on the 3rd?—Yes; I heard that Moore and Beggs had been murdered. I had better explain, perhaps, here that these two men had so far been reported as missing, and in the interval on the 5th June I heard they were still alive in the hands of the

Maoris. But on that date, Wednesday, the 3rd July, I heard that Moore and Beggs had been murdered in the cemetery reserve at Waioeka. The man who brought in the news was Rakuraku, a sort of go-between between us and the Natives who used to bring me information. I heard from him that these men had been really murdered. On the day of the attack on their hut Lawson, an ensign stationed at Opotiki, went with a party to get the remains. I may explain here that this place called the cemetery was a reserve set apart for that purpose for Opotiki. It was a cemetery reserve six or seven miles from the actual camp, what is now the Township of Opotiki, and just at the entrance to the Waioeka Gorge. Prior to this date a post had been established there by an officer called Gray, with about five and twenty men. That explains what follows in my diary: "Gray heard voices from the redoubt, and marching out, had a skirmish with Lawson in the bush. The skirmish was between Ensign Lawson, who went out with his party from Opotiki, and the officer in charge of the redoubt. He heard voices in the bush about half a mile from his redoubt, and, thinking they were Maoris, marched out and fired on them, and they returned the fire. Fortunately there were no casualties. We all turned out pretty sharply, and rode out to the scene of action." Those are my notes for that day.

398. Can you say whether the bodies of Moore and Beggs were found that day?—Yes, I remember that distinctly.

399. Where were they found?—Directly this firing was heard Major St. John went out with a number of men, having at once come to the conclusion that this redoubt had been attacked, and I followed him as soon as I got my horse.

400. You know the details of the affair?—He probably took fifty or sixty men with him.

401. Mounted or on foot?—The bugle would sound the alarm, and every man that could snatch up his arms would be mustered, mounted and foot.

402. Did you overtake them?—When I got there Major St. John told me what had occurred—that Ensign Lawson and Mr. Gray had a skirmish in the bush, but fortunately no one was hit. Then myself and Major St. John went to Gray's quarters to inquire into the matter. In the meantime a number of men were sent into this bush gully to look for the bodies of the two men, and they found them and brought them to Opotiki, where they were buried two days afterwards.

403. Before you leave the subject of the expedition, did you see McDonald there?—No.

404. You do not know whether he or Mr. Wrigg was there or not?—No; I cannot say.

405. You told us you were second in command in the Opotiki district at this time: who was next in command?—Captain Skene.

406. Would he have precedence over Captain Bower?—He was senior captain. Captain Bower was district adjutant, but I do not know whether he was the junior of the four captains settled at Opotiki, but I know Captain Skene and Captain Broun were both senior to Captain Bower. There were four senior to Captain Bower—Major St. John, myself, Captains Skene and Broun, and then I do not know whether it would be Bower or Walker.

407. Was Captain Walker fifth in order of seniority?—Yes, I think so.

408. Did you remain any time at Opotiki then?—I was there in July and August.

409. Recurring to the incident when you met Trooper McDonald, did he go on or back?—I imagine he went on to Tauranga. I know he had letters from Major St. John to Colonel Harington, and would naturally go on to Tauranga.

410. It may be assumed he went to Tauranga and returned to Opotiki. You being at Opotiki at the time, and civil officer in charge at Opotiki, did you hear any particular act of heroism in connection with the carrying of despatches on that particular occasion?—No.

411. Did you ever hear any suggestion of an act of heroism?—No. I travelled that road oftener than any man in the Bay of Plenty, because my duties took me to Tauranga to confer with Mr. Civil Commissioner Clark.

412. Did you hear any special performance on the road to Tauranga in connection with the carrying of the despatches?—No; it was simply one of those things that come in a day's work. Any man might have been called upon to carry despatches.

413. When did you first hear of Mr. Wrigg's name in connection with the carrying of despatches to Tauranga?—I saw it in an Auckland newspaper in April or May last.

414. Is that the first time you had ever seen it?—That is the first time I ever heard Mr. Wrigg's name connected with the carrying of despatches.

415. You have been in the colony all the time since?—Yes.

416. Connected with the public service?—Yes.

417. Colonel St. John, we hear, died about ten years after the events we have been considering?—About eight or ten years afterwards.

418. Has any application ever been made to you as next in seniority in connection with the carrying of despatches by Mr. Wrigg?—No.

419. If any such application had been made should you have recommended it?—Certainly not.

420. It took you, then, entirely by surprise to hear that there had been any distinguished act of bravery or heroism in connection with the carrying of despatches in June, 1867?—Yes.

421. You were on intimate terms with Major St. John at that time?—Yes.

422. Did you ever hear him mention the name of Wrigg in connection with any heroism?—No.

423. Was Colonel St. John, to your knowledge, a man who would recognise any special performance?—Well, he recommended the man who, I think, succeeded Captain Gwynneth in command of this corps, Captain Angus Smith. He recommended him afterwards for the New Zealand Cross, and he got it. He was not a man to pass over anything of that kind.

424. As to the procedure of a military camp as was at Opotiki in June, 1867, what would be the course in reference to issuing orders?—They would be issued by the district adjutant and entered in the order-book, and promulgated by the sergeant-major.

425. That would be district orders?—Yes.

426. What would you understand by camp orders?—The orders applying simply to the camp.

427. And what was the camp at that time in Opotiki: did it embrace more than one corps?—It consisted of the Militia—that is, a wing of the 1st Waikato Regiment: military settlers they might then be called. A number of these men had formed a cavalry corps, and they were called out on emergencies and placed on pay. In this case the 1st Waikatos were military settlers who for their services, in addition to some remuneration, got small grants of land.

428. The cavalry were settlers or storekeepers who had come forward to serve voluntarily?—Many men of this Militia had gone off pay with a view to settling on their land, and then they formed a Volunteer cavalry corps.

429. Can you say whether any of the Volunteer corps were on pay in June, 1867?—In all probability, directly the news came in of the murders, the officer commanding the district would put them on pay, or a portion of them.

430. Captain Gwynneth was commanding the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps?—Yes.

431. Would it be his province to issue camp orders?—No.

432. Look at this document, which has been put in as signed by Captain John Gwynneth: how does that strike you?—It strikes me as being very irregular. Such an order may have been issued by Captain Gwynneth. There is one feature about it, and that is about the taking rations. It was not the practice of a man to be called upon to carry rations when travelling through such a country, especially when they had hotels as they had on the road to Tauranga, and house-accommodation, and friendly Native settlements along the coast.

433. It purports also to be an "extract" from camp orders, as if Captain Gwynneth had issued other orders besides that one: would such orders be within his province?—No; neither would he have the power to send men out of the district.

434. The Opotiki district you said you thought extended to Matata and not to Tauranga?—Yes.

435. Look at the back of that document described as "extract from camp orders": you do not recognise the handwriting, I suppose?—No.

436. It says, "Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald volunteered for the service of carrying despatches": would that be a usual occurrence to ask for volunteers to carry despatches?—I never knew of an instance of the kind, except that men sometimes were very glad to get a chance of going up to Tauranga. As a rule, men were very glad to get the opportunity of going there. All the Opotiki men had come from Tauranga originally.

437. Then it goes on to say, "At a time of great danger, as the Natives were known to be in force in the vicinity": were hostile Natives known to be in force in the vicinity at the time to your knowledge?—No, the Natives were never seen at all. It was not known in what force they were. They had retired. The country was scoured by the troops.

438. Was that a customary practice of the Natives, coming down from inland and, after making a raid, going back?—Yes.

439. Was the object of the expedition that you spoke of, as going up Waioeka Gorge, to cut off the retreat of the murderers?—Yes.

440. The expedition was not successful?—No.

441. It goes on to say, "The road they had to travel was that upon which Bennett White and the mailman had been murdered only the day previously, and abounding with every facility for ambuscades"?—The road lay along the beach, high cliffs for the most part on one hand.

442. We have been told the danger, if any, was between Opotiki and Ohiwa, a distance of seven or eight miles?—Yes, that is so.

443. The document goes on to say, "On the evening immediately after their return from this duty—which was performed with credit to themselves—and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in a search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs." Do you remember the hour your expedition started out to the redoubt where the skirmish took place?—Ensign Lawson went out in the morning. It was about midday I went out.

444. You had to overtake them?—Yes.

445. Would it be correct to say the expedition for the bodies of Moore and Beggs started in the evening?—I should say the firing between Gray and Lawson started about 10 o'clock a.m.

446. When were the bodies found?—They were found in the middle of the day, and brought in in the afternoon to Opotiki, and put into the church.

447. You think this reference in the document could not be correct: it must have been a mistake on the part of Captain Gwynneth referring to the expedition going out in the evening?—Decidedly.

448. It goes on to say, "And had been dragged from their dwelling into the bush and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp": what have you to say to that?—I will go back again to these four men—Moore, Beggs, Wilkinson, and Livingstone. They built a hut, and on the 21st May it was a rainy day, and they were playing cards in this hut because they could not go out to work. And one of them—I am, of course, speaking now of my recollection of the occurrence as it was described to me at the time—looking through a window saw a party of armed Natives, and they snatched up their rifles and got out of the back of the hut, and ran along under cover of an old Maori fence, and struck up a ridge; and the Natives saw them, followed them, and Wilkinson and Livingstone managed to make good their escape. They came into camp and reported what had happened. Parties went out several days in succession, but the bodies of the others could not be found, and it was not until the 3rd July they were found. From the accounts that had been given to me afterwards, they had been shot on this ridge and then dragged down into a wooded gully. That accounted for the long delay in finding them.

449. Mr. Wrigg, in support of the application made on his behalf for the Cross to the department, got a number of letters and testimonials from various officers—twenty-two in number I think

they are—all of which but four are based upon the perusal of certain documents; these four certificates purport to be from persons who speak from their own knowledge?—Here I may mention something that might help to give the Committee some idea of the condition of things there at the time, and what was the practice when these alarms occurred. It is a note in my journal of the 10th August: "At 7 o'clock a.m. heard heavy firing at Waioeka. Major St. John went out and sent me word that the Hauhaus were firing on the redoubt. Sent out the cavalry and forty or fifty men. Then followed, but met an orderly, who reported that the rebels had bolted. So returned. Sent two orderlies to Tauranga with letters."

450. Two orderlies went?—Yes. Again St. John went out at night with seventy men; some of the rebels were known to be wounded. They were probably about seventy strong.

451. The first of the four of the certificates I was going to call to your attention is from Captain Bower, district adjutant at Opotiki in 1867. Can you say whether he was at Opotiki on the 30th June, 1867, or about that time?—I am strongly inclined to believe that he was not there at the time.

452. Why do you say that?—Because the arrivals and departures of the officers in a small camp were matters of note, and it was my practice generally to note these things in my diary, and I cannot find any mention of Captain Bower. I do not find his name all through. I find no mention of Captain Bower at all.

453. Have you no recollection of him being there when you arrived from Tauranga?—No, I have not. I have a note of his arrival by steamer on the 18th July, he and a lot of others.

454. Would that be from Napier or Auckland?—No, from Auckland or Tauranga. Steamers always called at Tauranga from Auckland.

455. Captain Bower, speaking of the ride we have been told of, which started on the 29th, would imply that McDonald and Wrigg started from Opotiki on the day before you met McDonald, which was Sunday, the 30th; was it on that date you met him?—I met him on the Sunday night. According to that camp order, he appears to have started three days after the murders.

456. You met him on the Sunday night?—Yes.

457. What distance would that be from Opotiki?—About forty-seven miles, speaking roughly.

458. When would he probably have left Opotiki to reach Maketu: would he likely have started on the Sunday morning?—It was possible to do it in a day, but it would be very hard riding.

459. Supposing he had started on the Saturday night?—He might have travelled a stage on Saturday night, and got on the rest of the way on Sunday.

460. Is it likely a man starting with despatches on the Saturday morning from Opotiki would only reach Maketu on Sunday night?—It would be very slow travelling, from the date of the murders.

461. He could not go to Tauranga and return in three days at that rate from Opotiki?—Hardly, I should think, on one horse.

462. The certificate that Captain Bower gave, referring to the ride, proceeds in these words: "Their service was most dangerous." What do you say to that: was it most dangerous?—No more dangerous than walking down Lambton Quay.

463. "Their route being along where the road was dangerous and rivers in flood": how about that?—The rivers were high.

464. The document goes on: "They reached Tauranga, and returned from thence to Opotiki, after successfully completing an arduous and very dangerous duty": what do you say to that?—That is all nonsense.

465. Did you know a Captain Simpson at Opotiki?—Yes.

466. Was he there in June, 1867?—I think about that time he was surveying up the Whakatane Valley.

467. To the best of your recollection, was he in Opotiki at the time?—I know he was laying off sections up the Whakatane at that time. I know where his work was at that time.

468. Did you know Captain Percival?—Yes.

469. Was he in Opotiki in June, 1867?—Not there in June. He was paymaster for the forces stationed there, and used to come round periodically by sea from Napier.

470. Then, to the best of your recollection, he was not in Opotiki at the end of June, 1867?—I am confident he was not.

471. In the certificate he has given he says, speaking of the ride by Wrigg and McDonald, the volunteers carrying despatches, "it was a very dangerous feat indeed." What do you say: was it a dangerous feat?—No, certainly not. I know Captain Percival very well. I have known him very well for five and twenty years. For two years he was clerk to me. We sat at the same table, and spent our evenings together.

472. Did he ever refer to this ride of Wrigg and McDonald?—No.

473. Did he ever tell you he was in the British service?—I was not aware he had ever been in the British army.

474. He goes on to say, "Considering the country between Opotiki and Tauranga was swarming with the enemy"?—Oh, that is all nonsense. The greater part of the country was occupied by the Arawa friendly Natives and European settlers.

475. Did you know Mr. George H. Leaning?—I remember a young man of that name in a store at Opotiki.

476. Was he a voluntary trooper?—I remember him being in Mr. William Kelly's store there.

477. His statement says, "I certify that I was a voluntary trooper in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, when Bennett White and the mailman were murdered, and when Cornet Wrigg stepped forward and volunteered to carry despatches in 1867 and 1868"?—Yes.

478. Later on we find Captain Bower, besides giving the certificate I have read, made application for the bestowal of the New Zealand Cross on Mr. Wrigg, and in that application he says that

he regards the carrying of the despatches through a country swarming with hostile Natives as an act of bravery. That, you say, was an exaggeration?—Simply ridiculous. The practice was, when it was thought the Natives were about, to send an escort as far as Ohiwa. Occasionally I had to take an escort myself coming back from Tauranga; one had to take the chance, because there were no means of sending for an escort.

479. Speaking from your knowledge of camps, and of the district of Opotiki at the time of 1867, would any act of conspicuous bravery have been the subject of conversation?—Certainly it would.

480. These things were very largely talked of in camp?—Yes.

481. Were there newspaper correspondents at Opotiki at the time?—Yes; not regular correspondents, but occasionally articles appeared in the Auckland papers of the doings in Opotiki. I do not think there were any regular correspondents.

482. Have you heard of any instance of the New Zealand Cross being conferred after an interval of thirty years?—No.

483. Or any instance of persons receiving it not being mentioned in despatches at the time of the occurrence for which it was conferred?—No.

484. *Mr. Wilford.*] Are you prepared to swear, Major, that his (Mr. Wrigg's) name was never mentioned in despatches?—No, I cannot swear that.

485. It may have been mentioned for all you know?—It may have.

486. You say the practice was to send an escort to Ohiwa when there was danger?—Yes.

487. Then, there was danger at times?—Yes. There was one murder of a Maori committed previously on that coast.

488. It was considered advisable to send an escort on account of the danger. If it was known Natives were hovering in the vicinity some troopers were sent?—They would be sent as an escort.

489. There were occasions when it was considered a very dangerous ride?—No, not very dangerous.

490. Sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men?—Yes.

491. It was merely, then, a figure of speech when you made that statement, "Walking down Lambton Quay"?—I said that because the country had been scoured by troops, and there were parties searching for the bodies of the men murdered.

492. I understand that these expedition parties that used to go out scouring the district were in considerable numbers, were they not?—Perhaps fifty or seventy men.

493. And the country was of such a class that the movements of these fifty men would be observed before they reached Ohiwa by any one on watch at Ohiwa?—If they marched by the beach.

494. That was the usual course?—No; not always.

495. It must be perfectly well admitted that, though the Native were never seen, still they were there at times?—Oh, yes.

496. Though they were never seen, still they showed they were there by the murders they did. Do you know the bluff that runs down by Ohiwa?—Yes, Onekawa.

497. Would that bluff afford a suitable ambuscade to any Natives that might be looking out for passers-by?—No.

498. You disagree with Mr. Haselden and another witness that we had, and Captain Preece?—It was too high. Firing from a height is not the kind of place where Natives could successfully fire on people passing. There were places much more suited for ambuscades than Onekawa.

499. Many?—Where there was access from the shore to the beach, other than from a high cliff.

500. When you say there were suitable places for ambuscades, and admit murders have occurred, and Natives were seen in the vicinity, what do you mean by saying there was no more danger than walking down Lambton Quay?—I mean men thought no more in journeying along the beach in those days, and the country had been carefully scoured by the troops, and there was not the slightest reason to suppose any Natives were in the vicinity at the time.

501. You made the statement there was no more danger of going on that track than walking down Lambton Quay?—I made that statement.

502. I believe you, as Judge of the Native Land Court, have been sitting at Palmerston North for some time?—Yes, I have sat there.

503. Were you there on the 12th August of this year deciding a Native case?—No.

504. Were you in Palmerston North on the 12th August?—I may have passed through Palmerston about that time.

505. You were not living there?—No.

506. Have you written to any paper on this subject?—I wrote one letter to a paper—the *Herald*.

507. Did you sign your name?—No.

508. What name did you put on it?—"East Coaster."

509. Why did you not sign your own name?—It is not the custom.

510. You were not ashamed of what you had to say. You preferred to write under a *nom de plume*—"East Coaster": did not you use an "East Coast resident of thirty years"?—No.

511. Did not you write a letter to the *Evening Post* and say that the road was as safe as riding down Lambton Quay, and there was no more danger?—I only wrote one letter.

512. You swear on oath positively you never wrote any letter to the *Evening Post*?—I had some communication with the *Evening Post*, and sent some extracts.

513. I asked you whether you wrote a letter to the *Evening Post* on the subject: why did you say you did not?—I wrote one letter which appeared in the *Auckland Herald*.

514. You say you wrote a letter to the editor of the *Evening Post*, and sent him some newspaper extracts?—But I have no idea that they were published.

515. Are you prepared to swear it was not published?—If you have a letter there I could tell you whether I had written it. I know a resident of the East Coast wrote, but that letter was not written by me.

516. The letters you wrote to the *Evening Post* were simply to the editor?—I wrote a letter to the *Evening Post*, not for publication, sending some extracts.

517. Did you receive a reply?—I received no reply.

518. You have got a note in your diary, "Captain Bower arrived on 18th July by steamer"?—Yes.

519. Have you got any note of the date of departure of Captain Bower from Opotiki?—There is a gap here [witness indicating in his diary] from the 26th April to the 19th May.

520. How do you account for that gap?—I was out somewhere.

521. You do not know where?—I was travelling somewhere. I was at Tauranga, because I find that on my return to Opotiki I commenced to write up. I had left my diary behind.

522. The dates were between the 26th April and the 19th May?—Yes.

523. Do you always write your diaries in the evening of every day, or leave it for some days and then make a spurt?—My practice is to write it at night. Sometimes I let a day or two elapse.

524. If you left a day or two elapse you had to rely upon your memory for the events of each day, as you write them altogether?—Yes, to some extent.

525. How long would it take you to go from Opotiki to Auckland and back by steamer?—I mean the actual time occupied in the trip?—About twenty-six hours one way.

526. How often did the steamers go?—They had no regular time-table.

527. Once a week or twice a week?—About once a fortnight—wind and weather permitting.

528. It is quite possible Captain Bower may have left Opotiki for Auckland before the end of July, and been back by the 8th?—He may have been in Tauranga. As I said before, all these Opotiki people had come from Tauranga. Some of them had their homes in Tauranga.

529. What entry is there in your diary that made Captain Bower believe he was not there on that day, the 26th June?—I do not know.

530. Is there any entry except the 18th August?—That is all.

531. The absence of his name is what you go by. You have not chronicled his departure?—No.

532. I understood you to say to Mr. Hutchison it was usual in the camp to note the coming and departure of officers?—Yes.

533. You have not noted the departure of Captain Bower?—He may have gone in the interval between April and May, because Captain Bower told me himself he was not at Opotiki when Moore and Beggs were killed.

534. You are aware he also wrote and said he recollected the circumstance?—I am speaking of Moore and Beggs.

535. That was in May, was it not?—It was on the 21st May that Moore and Begg were killed. That makes me think he went away during the blank period in my diary.

536. There is nothing on which you can possibly fix the date of Captain Bower's departure from Opotiki?—No.

537. As far as you know, he may only have been going from Tauranga by steamer?—Yes.

538. Was he a man who was fond of riding?—He had been a cavalry man, but was not much of a horseman.

539. Probably if Captain Bower wanted to go to Tauranga he would take the boat rather than ride?—I cannot speak with certainty about that.

540. Now, in reference to the camp order, the words that you made use of to Mr. Hutchison, "Such an order may have been issued by Captain Gwynneth"?—Yes.

541. Do you suggest that that order was not issued by Captain Gwynneth? Are you prepared to even suggest that that order was not issued by Captain Gwynneth?—No.

542. Is it not possible that though it might be irregular—is it not possible this irregularity may have occurred in a regular camp order issued by Captain Bower to those under him?—It is quite possible.

543. Is there anything extraordinary that Captain Gwynneth, commanding this troop of cavalry—that he should issue direct instructions to his men to carry these despatches to Tauranga?—It is.

544. You mean to say he should not have sent the despatches—he had not the power conferred on him by authority?—Yes.

545. You told us, I believe, that Major St. John left Opotiki in June. You were in command then?—I read an extract showing he had gone out of the camp, leaving me in command.

546. Can you tell me whether Major St. John was in camp in June?—Yes, he was in command there.

547. When you were at Maketu McDonald came with despatches to you?—Yes.

548. At that time was Captain Goldsmith at Tauranga?—I do not know.

549. You remember Captain Goldsmith?—Yes. I do not remember whether he was there at that time.

550. He may have been there at that time?—Yes.

551. Was Colonel Harington there?—Yes, I believe so.

552. Was Colonel Harington in Tauranga the day you left it—between the 22nd and 30th? Can you show me any entry of your having spoken to Colonel Harington or seen him on those days?—No, there is no entry whatever.

553. Will you contradict Mr. Wrigg, who swore that he handed the despatches to Captain Goldsmith, as Colonel Harington was absent?—No.

554. It has not been suggested by Mr. Wrigg, you understand, that he had any despatches to carry to you. Are you prepared to say that on the same day that McDonald delivered despatches to you Wrigg was not on his way to Tauranga with despatches?—He may have been. I cannot connect him in any way with despatches.

555. You have told us also that when Trooper McDonald delivered despatches to you he went on in the direction of Tauranga?—I said, naturally he was going on. He told us he had despatches for Colonel Harington.

556. Did he show them to you?—No.

557. I suppose the despatches would be put up in a packet and sealed?—They would be in official envelopes.

558. Did he show you the envelope?—No.

559. When he said he had despatches to deliver he intended to convey he was in the parade that was delivering the despatches?—He gave me the packet addressed to myself, and then was going on with a packet addressed to Colonel Harington.

560. Was there another gentleman of your name in the district?—Yes, a brother of mine was at Tauranga in the service.

561. Is he living now?—Yes.

562. Where is he?—At the Thames.

563. Would you be prepared to assert that Mr. Wrigg, who swore that after he had delivered the despatches to Captain Goldsmith Captain Mair travelled with him for two miles on the way from Tauranga?—I cannot swear, of course, as to my brother's movements, but I showed him a letter in Wairarapa about three weeks ago. I showed him a letter signed "Harry Wrigg," in which there is a statement to this effect: "The late Colonel St. John (then Major) was still in command when I left the district, and for some time afterwards, I believe. Major Mair was never stationed there whilst I was in the Opotiki district. The only gentleman of that name was a Captain Mair, who was, I believe, stationed at Tauranga (presumably Captain Gilbert Mair, N.Z.C.), and, if my recollection serves me, after I had delivered the despatches, rode a couple of miles back with us on our return journey. Poor Trooper McDonald would have supported me in this had he lived, but he met a soldier's death whilst upon a similar duty on the Galatea Plains. I did make an effort to get Major Mair's support (not certificate) to my application; as a gentleman who had seen and done much good service for his country, his support would have been valuable, but the time was limited, and the major was away upon official duties." I showed that to Captain Mair the other day, and he said he had no recollection of anything of the kind.

564. Therefore you are not in any position to contradict Mr. Wrigg?—No.

565. You told Mr. Hutchison that Colonel St. John recommended a man named Angus Smith for the Cross?—Yes.

566. Do you know whether Angus Smith applied for the recommendation?—He may have; but it would have been a very improper thing to do.

567. You remember saying that you went out with the troops to get these bodies?—Yes, I followed afterwards.

568. You are quite certain that you were there when these bodies were recovered?—I heard that Moore and Begg had been murdered, and followed the troops which went out.

569. How were the bodies wrapped up?—I only saw the bodies that evening lying on sacks or stretchers.

570. How were these bodies covered?—When I saw them lying in the church they were lying either on stretchers or on sacks, and half the flesh had disappeared from the bones.

571. You did not see them at the camp?—No.

572. You could not describe them when they were found?—No.

573. Have you kept yourself in touch with your other brother officers since you left active service?—Yes.

574. Was Captain Gwynneth a friend of yours?—Yes.

575. Would you not recognise him as a captain in the same way as Major St. John?—We were very good friends. I used to dine at his house occasionally, and so on.

576. Was Captain Gwynneth simply captain of this mounted troop?—Yes; for a short time he commanded this company of Volunteers.

577. You said that the carrying of despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga would be all in a day's work?—Men were constantly being sent up and down with despatches.

578. Supposing you put these circumstances with their combined results of skirmishes—it was common knowledge that men had been murdered on the road, and that the cavalry corps had been called out, and the captain of that corps had asked for a volunteer to carry despatches, and only one man volunteered: would not that be a praiseworthy action?—I should say that there was not a man in the troop that would not have volunteered to go under the circumstances.

579. Probably if volunteers were called for it would stick in the memory of any one who was present, it being unusual?—Yes.

580. Mr. George Leaning tells us Mr. Wrigg stepped forward and offered to go?—I know McDonald often carried despatches, and was fitted for it. He was carrying despatches afterwards in the Taupo district, and was killed while doing it.

581. There is a danger in carrying despatches?—That was right through the heart of the enemy's country, sixty or seventy miles away from Opotiki.

582. I suppose you would consider that an act of bravery?—Yes. He really incurred danger, because he was killed.

583. You consider that Trooper McDonald, in carrying despatches through the enemy's country, was really a brave man and deserved the Cross?—Yes.

584. I suppose about this time, Major, a great many daring things were done by the men when it was required?—Occasionally daring acts were done by members of the forces.

585. I think one man has been referred to as "Mad-Acts-of-Gallantry O'Connor." Do you remember O'Connor?—No; I do not know him.

586. There were heroic acts done by individuals on certain occasions?—Yes.

587. I suppose when these acts were done they were a seven-days wonder—they would be talked about and discussed?—Yes.

588. Some fresh one would crop up and the old one be forgotten?—Probably.

589. Is Captain Bower a respectable, honourable man, as far as you know?—Yes.

590. A conscientious man too?—I should think so.

591. You have got nothing in your diary to suggest that he was not there on the 26th June except the fact that he came back on the 18th August?—No.

592. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Can you remember, Major Mair, whether the despatch that you received from Trooper McDonald was addressed to you at Tauranga or elsewhere?—No, I cannot remember how it was addressed. I remember when I met Major St. John at Ohiwa on the Monday he said he wondered where I was, and sometimes I would receive letters from him addressed "on the road."

593. Apart from that, is it at all reasonable to suppose Trooper McDonald would have despatches addressed to you and Colonel Harington, and that another man in his company would also have despatches for Colonel Harington?—No.

594. Is it reasonable to suppose Trooper McDonald would have a despatch for you, and another man in his company would have despatches for Colonel Harington?—No.

595. Would not the one man carry all the despatches on the road?—Yes.

596. You are clear if an officer was on duty with despatches it was his duty to report himself to you, and that no one did report himself on the occasion referred to?—Yes.

597. *Mr. Wilford.*] The order that Mr. Wrigg has produced is an order from his troop to him (Wrigg)?—Yes.

598. Is it likely that order to Wrigg would be handed over to you?—No.

599. You would not expect to see that order?—No. I would expect if any officer met me on the road he would report himself.

600. *Mr. Morrison.*] You have said, Major, you left Opotiki on the 17th June?—Yes.

601. In fact, you left Tauranga on the 30th June for Opotiki?—Yes.

602. When did you arrive at Opotiki?—I arrived at Opotiki on the 2nd July.

603. From the 17th to the 2nd you were absent from Opotiki?—Yes.

603A. It was during this period this murder took place?—Yes.

604. You have also stated in evidence that on your return journey from Tauranga you met Trooper McDonald, to the best of your recollection, on the beach?—At the ferry, the crossing of the river, I met him there.

605. You received certain despatches from him?—Yes.

606. Do you remember the circumstances concerning the receiving of those despatches, as regards the locality, the particular place where you received them?—In approaching Maketu, which is on a river coming from Tauranga, you have to cross that river to the settlement of Maketu, and to the best of my recollection it was there on the beach when I had crossed that I met him.

607. You are perfectly certain that it was Trooper McDonald that gave you the despatches?—Yes.

608. You have also stated you are not certain whether Trooper McDonald was in uniform or on horseback or not?—I cannot say whether he was mounted. The inference would be he would see me coming across the river and hurry out to deliver his despatches, because the settlement was right on the bank of the river.

609. Is it not somewhat strange that you are so decided on one point? Your recollection does not seem too clear in the matter of McDonald being on horseback or not?—I could not swear he was in uniform, but the probability is he would be in cord trousers and serge tunic, the regular uniform of his corps.

610. You said you were in command of the district of Opotiki?—Yes.

611. You knew Captain Gwynneth very well?—Yes.

612. On intimate terms?—Yes.

613. Was he a good man and honest, and a thoroughly reliable man?—I cannot speak as to his general character. He was head-surveyor there at the time, and when this company was formed he was elected by the men as their captain, and commanded them for about a year.

614. You have said you knew him. Will you kindly give the Committee your opinion about him as a soldier?—I never saw him in action. He never had any experience.

615. As a citizen or settler, what is your opinion of him?—I do not pretend to know anything about his private character.

616. You know that Captain Gwynneth issued a camp order?—I have seen it.

617. You have seen this camp order issued by Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.

618. Is it not customary in camps for the captain of a company or the captain of a troop to issue what may be termed a company or a troop order asking for volunteers to perform certain duties without it coming from the district officers at all?—I know of no parallel case.

619. The Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry was the only mounted corps that was on parade at the time?—Yes.

620. Is it not reasonable to suppose that Major St. John or District Adjutant Bower, having an important duty to perform like forwarding despatches with a certain amount of speed to Tauranga, would communicate with Captain Gwynneth's troop asking him to get a couple of his men to volunteer or order them to proceed to Tauranga with despatches?—The captain of the company might be asked to recommend mounted men for duty of the kind, but the order should emanate from the district officer, and should bear the signature of the district adjutant or the officer commanding the district.

621. That would be the order Captain Gwynneth would receive from the district officer commanding the district?—Captain Gwynneth would not have authority to send men outside the district.

622. Then we come to this next point, with regard to the order of seniority: you said that Adjutant Bower was fifth in command of the district officers?—Yes, to the best of my belief.

623. Seniority would have nothing to do with an order of this description from a military point of view?—No. The question was put to me with reference to the service of that order as to whether he was in command of the district.

624. You have, in reply to a question by Mr. Wilford, stated your impression was that Captain Bower was not in Opotiki at the time this murder took place—that of Bennett White and the mailman?—Yes.

625. What gives you that impression?—Well, the absence of his name in my journal and a note of his arrival from Tauranga or Auckland.

626. Because your diary is silent on this particular point you take it for granted that Captain Bower was not in Opotiki at this particular time?—Yes; I find no mention of his name, and I find names of the others mentioned.

627. Have you got a note in your diary there of when Captain Bower returned to Opotiki?—I have a note of his return to the place, but no note of his departure from it.

628. When did he return?—On the 19th July, I have his name down amongst some passengers who arrived by steamer.

628A. So that virtually we may take it for granted that three weeks occurred between this murder of Bennett White and the mailman by the Natives and the time of Captain Bower's arrival. And therefore you take it for granted that he was not there at all?—I do not know what he may have said on the point.

629. He said he believed a fortnight ago he was under the impression that he had been at Opotiki, but since he had seen an extract from a diary and some old comrades he was beginning to doubt his senses on the point?—Well, he thought he was there.

630. It is your impression that at this particular period, when these volunteers were asked for, this cavalry would be on full pay?—I think they would be called out.

631. According to your military experience, would not the captain have had power to order one or two troopers to the front and have told them that they had to proceed to Tauranga with despatches at a certain time without asking for volunteers?—My impression is he would have no power to order them out of the district at all unless he was in command.

632. The point I wish to bring out is this: If this cavalry corps was on full pay, according to military custom, could the captain not have ordered those men to proceed on this duty without asking for volunteers: could he have issued a command, a troop order, a camp order?—No; he could not order them at all without the instructions of the officer commanding the district.

633. That is outside of the district?—Yes. But, of course, those men were sent outside of the district.

634. If the duty had been within the district, could Captain Gwynneth have ordered two troopers to have carried despatches?—No, not if they had been called out, because they would have been under the command of the officer commanding the district. He could not have sent them out of the camp if they were on duty without orders from the officer commanding the district.

635. You say he has no power to order members to perform duties outside the camp without a district order?—Not without authority from the officer commanding the district.

636. If he could not order them, could he call on a volunteer to go?—If he could not order one he could not order another.

637. You maintain he had no power?—Unless he was in command.

638. Of course you must remember that this was during a time of war, and in all probability there would be some irregularities committed. We have the evidence of Mr. Haselden and also the adjutant that Captain Gwynneth would not of his own volition send these troopers away unless he had received instructions from somewhere. You have stated, in reply to one of my questions in the earlier part of the evidence, you could not say much of Captain Gwynneth as a soldier. Was it not quite possible Captain Gwynneth committed an irregularity in connection with what he has done in reference to Cornet Wrigg and McDonald with regard to these despatches: is it not quite possible?—Certainly.

639. *Mr. Monk.*] Do you think it possible, considering that you were second in command, that a special occurrence like this for which Mr. Wrigg is supposed to have obtained the New Zealand Cross would take place without your being specially informed of it?—Certainly not. I must have heard if there had been any special merit in the act of any man where I was.

640. In fact, you would be consulted, would you not?—I do not think that it would rest with the commanding officer to make any recommendation on that footing. But I certainly must have heard of it.

641. It would be mentioned to you by the officer superior to yourself?—Assuredly.

642. I infer it is quite impossible that such an occurrence, of the dangers stated to have happened, could have taken place without your being familiar with it?—Quite impossible.

643. Special occurrences would take place and then be forgotten, but not such an occurrence as would be considered deserving of the New Zealand Cross could ever be effaced from your memory?—No, certainly not. I can call to mind actions for which men should have got the New Zealand Cross, and I remember them as vividly as possible—men whose claims were overlooked.

644. *Mr. Field.*] Your knowledge of Maoris and their customs is a wide one, is it not, Major Mair?—Yes.

645. And you speak their language?—Yes.

646. And their general habits you are fully acquainted with?—Yes.
647. During the Native wars you also had gained a wide experience and intimate knowledge of their methods of warfare?—Yes.
648. Do you think it is at all consistent with the Native method of war to commit a murder, deprecation, and then wait about the place afterwards; or was it not rather, after murdering or doing whatever they were bent upon, they would leave immediately afterwards?—As far as my experience goes, they generally put as great a distance between the scene of the action and themselves as they possibly could.
649. We have it in evidence that the day that Bennett White and the Native were murdered, or at all events very shortly afterwards—almost immediately afterwards—the knowledge of the event was conveyed to the commanding officer at Opotiki, and the country was scoured by men in the endeavour to get at the Maoris?—Yes.
650. It has also been alleged that Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald carried the despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga, passed the country that had been scoured by these troops, and passed the place where the murder had been committed the day after the troops had been searching for the Natives. That being so, I ask you, do you think that Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald did any action which entailed any great danger, or necessitated any great danger on their part?—At the time those despatches were carried there was no danger along the road at all.
651. Probably that was one of the safest roads in the district?—Parties were out scouring the district for several days, besides a party out trying to intercept the Natives.
652. Do you know that an escort was sent out?—I do not know whether an escort went on this occasion or not, not being there, but parties were out every day.
653. I suppose, Major Mair, you knew the road between Opotiki and Tauranga perfectly?—Perfectly well. I was fired at one time close to the spot where Bennett White was murdered.
654. What rivers do you consider there are on that coast?—After leaving Opotiki there is a small river, the Waiotahi, which at high water you might have to swim. The next was Ohiwa, where there was a Native ferryman, and your horse had to be swum over that river. And the next was the Whakatane. There were Europeans and Natives living there. There was a ferryman there also, and your horse had to swim that river. The next was the Matata. There was a camp there, and your horse had to be ferried over there also. The next was a small river, the Waitaha, which you could always cross. The next was the Waihi, where you had to wait for the tide; then you reached Maketu.
655. And the rivers were in friendly country?—All except the Waiotahi and the Ohiwa.
656. Was there always a ferryman at Ohiwa?—Yes, a Maori ferryman.
657. Do you know of any occasion where difficulty had been encountered in crossing there on account of the ferryman, or anything of that kind?—No; there was a man paid regularly. I cannot call to mind any occasion on which he was absent.
658. You have no knowledge?—I travelled as often as any man on the coast and never found him absent.
659. You always travelled without an escort?—Sometimes an escort went as far as Ohiwa with me. Coming back I had to take my chance.
660. You have said, Major Mair, you were second in command at Opotiki?—Yes.
661. And Major St. John was there at the time this murder took place?—Yes.
662. Would any order with reference to the conveying of despatches to Tauranga or anywhere else have emanated from the commanding officer?—Yes.
663. If Captain Gwynneth sent despatches on his own initiative to Colonel Harington, would you not have regarded that as a most extraordinary proceeding on his part?—Yes.
664. You think it improbable any such thing should have occurred? You said "extraordinary"?—I did not say "extraordinary." Major St. John was there directing all the operations that took place.
665. You say on the same occasion Trooper McDonald met you at Maketu, and gave you despatches. Your journal states that was Cornet Wrigg with Trooper McDonald?—That I do not know. I have no recollection of ever seeing Mr. Wrigg until he was pointed out to me on Wednesday last. I have no recollection of seeing him in my life before.
666. Had Cornet Wrigg done anything in connection with the carrying of despatches that merited special recommendation you could not but know something of it?—I must have heard of it.
667. And you in the absence of Major St. John would have been the proper person to make any recommendation with regard to the bestowal of anything?—Yes.
668. Are you sure, Major Mair, from the best of your knowledge and belief, that you never saw Mr. Wrigg until you saw him the other day?—He has been an utter stranger to me. I never saw him until here on Wednesday.
669. You do not recollect seeing him at Opotiki?—No.
670. There were a number of men there. Is it at all likely that if he had been there you would not have come in contact with him there?—I have heard Mr. Wrigg's name mentioned some several years afterwards.
671. Not in connection with anything that occurred at Opotiki, or in connection with that district?—No. I remember the officers of that corps, but have no recollection of Mr. Wrigg.
672. You said that the district along there, between Opotiki and Tauranga, was at that time partially settled, and that there were accommodation-houses and hotels along the route?—There was a hotel at Whakatane, and a store and two or three settlers. Then, at Matata, the next place, there was an accommodation-house kept by this man Kati that I mentioned as having brought the news of the murders to Tauranga.
673. Was there any stopping-place between Whakatane and Opotiki?—There was only a ferryman at Ohiwa, and the Native village at Ohope.

674. What is the distance between Opotiki and Whakatane?—From Opotiki to Ohiwa it is about seven or eight miles, and about eight miles from Ohiwa to Whakatane; but there was a Native settlement two miles and a half before you reached Whakatane. There is a friendly settlement there. That is the spot where the bodies were picked up.

675. The mention of that order to carry rations was altogether unnecessary?—I have never heard of a case of men being required to carry rations on that journey.

676. *The Chairman.*] For how long was Trooper McDonald in your company when he handed you the despatches?—I imagine he would simply give me the despatches and get his horse, if he was not mounted. I can only recollect his giving me the despatches.

677. You were going south and he north?—We did not meet on a road, but at a settlement. He had apparently just arrived.

678. Will you look at the signature on this [camp order, signed by Captain Gwynneth, produced]? Are you in possession of any correspondence from the officer who signs that, so that you might be able to compare the signature?—I cannot say anything about Captain Gwynneth's signature.

679. You have no knowledge?—I have seen it. I dare say I have specimens of his writing in my possession.

680. Are you of opinion that the signature attached to that document is genuine, compared with the signature attached to the minute-book?—I cannot say that it is not Captain Gwynneth's signature.

681. *Mr. Wilford.*] Is it not like the signature in the book?—It is like the signature in the book.

682. *The Chairman.*] You are not in possession of any correspondence by which you could certify to the signature of Captain Gwynneth?—No.

683. *Mr. Morrison.*] In the course of your evidence, Major Mair, this afternoon you said that you knew Captain Percival very well—that he had held a position of clerk under you for some considerable time?—Yes.

684. You were in the habit of spending your evenings together?—Yes.

685. Chatting over bygone days, I suppose?—Yes.

686. You said in all the conversations you have had with Captain Percival this little incident that occurred at Opotiki never cropped up?—No.

687. You were on the most intimate relations with him?—Yes.

688. According to his certificate here we find he has occupied a position in the Imperial army?—Yes.

689. You never knew that?—No.

690. Your relations have not been so confidential as you led us to believe?—I was not so fully in his confidence, if you put it that way. I had no idea that he had ever been in the Imperial service.

691. *Mr. Monk.*] Except that you see it stated in that letter you do not feel yourself thoroughly convinced that he ever was in the Imperial army?—No.

692. *Mr. Field.*] With reference to Captain Percival. Captain Percival was paymaster?—Yes.

693. Where would his headquarters be?—He used to pay the men all up the East Coast as far as Tauranga. His headquarters were, I think, at Napier.

694. Not at Opotiki?—No.

695. Can you call to mind as to whether or not Captain Percival was at Opotiki about the time that Bennett White was murdered?—I am confident he was not there at that time.

696. Then, he cannot have been an eye-witness to this action of carrying despatches?—I cannot speak of my own knowledge.

TUESDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 1898.

*The Chairman:* Gentlemen, we will now resume the inquiry on the petition of William James Raven and others *re* the conferring of the New Zealand Cross on Mr. Harry Wrigg. Have you any witnesses to examine this morning, Mr. Hutchison?

*Mr. Hutchison:* Yes. I will call Captain Turner.

Captain TURNER sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What is your Christian name, Captain Turner?—Archibald Campbell Turner.

2. You are in the Survey Department, Wellington?—Yes.

3. In 1867, in the month of June, were you living at Opotiki or in the district?—No; I was at Tauranga at the time.

4. In June, 1867?—About that time I was there.

5. About the time of the murder of Bennett White and the mailman on the beach?—I was at Maketu the day the body of the Maori mailman was brought in—Wi Popata.

6. You had been in the district some time before, and continued in the district for some time after, I believe?—Yes.

7. Were you familiar with the road between Tauranga and Opotiki?—Yes, I travelled it many a time.

8. The road ran, we are told, from Opotiki to Tauranga along the beach?—Yes, except at Whakatane, where it deviated inland for a mile or two. I used to keep to the beach generally from Opotiki to Ohiwa.

9. With regard to the safety or otherwise of that road soon after the murder of Bennett White and the mailman?—I always considered there was a certain amount of risk in travelling that road.
10. What was the most dangerous part?—From Opotiki to Ohiwa.
11. Being in the district you would hear what was going on, I suppose?—Yes.
12. Did you hear at about that time or not of any conspicuous act of bravery associated with the name of Mr. Harry Wrigg?—I do not recollect any.
13. Would you have forgotten it if the matter had been talked of at that time, an act so conspicuous as to deserve an order such as the New Zealand Cross?—I think I ought to have recollected it, but cannot say I recollect it.
14. You were asked to produce some specimens of the handwriting of Captain Gwynneth, whom I suppose you know?—Yes; I have a letter here.
15. Is that Captain Gwynneth's handwriting?—Yes.
16. Is that a private letter?—No; it is an official letter.
17. Were you associated here, in Wellington, in the Government service with Mr. Wrigg afterwards?—Not here; I was District Engineer in the Public Works Department, but was not in Wellington.
18. *Mr. Wilford.*] You say, "I think I ought to recollect such an act if it occurred": is it not possible you may have forgotten it?—It is possible.
19. Do you know the part described on the route near Ohiwa called the "Bluff"?—There was a bluff very near Ohiwa, and there was one at Whakatane.
20. The bluff at Ohiwa, do you know that?—Yes.
21. On the ordinary route to Tauranga one had to pass that bluff?—Yes.
22. If Natives were posted on the top there would be no protection for any one passing?—No. I think that was where Bennett White was shot.
23. There would be no chance whatever of protecting yourself from the firing from off the bluff?—No; you would be exposed.
24. What distance could you get away from the top of the bluff inland?—You might get inland for some miles.
25. The ordinary track, what was the width of it, that they travelled round to the bluff?—They travelled on the sea-beach.
26. What would be the width of the sea-beach—100 yards?—Provided the tide was low.
27. If it was high tide, would there be 10 yards?—More than that.
28. Twenty yards?—I think there would be a chain and a half or 2 chains.
29. Do you agree, Captain, that it was at times a very dangerous road?—Yes, at times.
30. Will you agree, Captain Turner, that at times this was a very dangerous road between Opotiki and Ohiwa?—It has been proved it was so, as Bennett White and the mailman, Popata, were killed.
31. You have some knowledge, I suppose, of regimental orders and camp-duties?—Yes.
32. Would you think it an extraordinary circumstance for an officer commanding a troop of cavalry, such as the Bay of Plenty Cavalry—would you think it extraordinary for a captain to issue an order to his troop?—No, there is nothing extraordinary in it.
33. Then, an order from a captain of a troop of regular cavalry would be sufficient authority for the party to whom it was directed to carry despatches?—I think it would be usual to go through the adjutant, though it might be done another way.
34. Do you know Captain Gwynneth?—Yes.
35. Do you think he understands regimental service?—I hardly think so.
36. You would be more unlikely to expect an irregularity from him than an ordinary soldier?—Oh, yes.
37. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Supposing the captain of a troop issued an order directing two men to proceed outside the district, would that be regular?—No; he would lay himself open to a vote of censure.
38. This bluff at Ohiwa, do you know it?—Oh, yes.
39. You do not know that it was there that Bennett White was killed?—From what I can recollect, it was there.
40. Between Waiotahi and Ohiwa would not be all bluff, would it?—No, not all the way.
41. It was put to you that he was killed at this place, at Ohiwa, but you cannot say so?—I cannot say positively.
42. This bluff comes out on to the beach?—Yes.
43. Is not the country on the top, and away for some miles back, open?—There was a track over the top of a hill.
44. Was it open or bush country?—It was open for some distance.
45. And a track over it, by which, I suppose, if the tide was in, travellers would go over it?—Yes, some have gone over it.
46. *Mr. Monk.*] You have just said, Captain Turner, that it was possible you would have known about this act of bravery that has been under consideration. Do you think it probable it would have occurred without your knowing?—I should have known of it, because I was doing military duty at the time as well as civil duty.
47. *Mr. Field.*] What duty were you on at this time?—At the time that the mailman was killed I was then doing survey-work at Maketu.
48. Did the survey-work take you out of the camp—out of the settlement?—At that time I was working very near Maketu, principally behind it.
49. In a friendly district?—Yes, the Arawa district.
50. You said that from the bluff to where the track passed it was from a chain to a chain and a half?—Yes.

51. I suppose any one going up there anticipating danger would go very fast?—Yes, it would be just as well to go fast—less chance of being shot.

52. Was it at all an unusual thing for mounted men to go out there in ones and twos?—I fancy they would go in twos, because it was the custom.

53. Is this occasion on which these two men were murdered the only occasion you recollect any fatality in that vicinity?—Yes.

54. Do you know if after this murder was reported the locality was scoured the next day or shortly afterwards in search of the enemy?—I could not say for certain; it is so many years ago it is difficult to recollect.

55. You do not know if a body of men went out, but have some recollection of hearing of it?—I think there were some; I do not recollect.

56. You do not know if Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald went along this road the day after this scouring party were out?—I do not recollect that.

57. You have had some knowledge of Native warfare and their methods?—Yes, some little knowledge.

58. What is your experience?—I was in the war in 1863 right up till the end of 1869 or 1870 off and on; during the latter period I commanded the East Coast contingent after Te Kooti.

59. You had four or five years of it?—Yes; although I was in the Civil Service I was frequently called upon to act in a military capacity up to 1870.

60. Were you engaged on any occasion?—Yes.

61. You have a fair knowledge of the Native methods of warfare?—Yes, I think so.

62. Has it been your experience that, after a murder such as this committed, the Natives usually hung about the spot after the act, or did they shift their quarters?—I cannot say. I do not think it is likely they would hang about the spot. They would expect a party to go out and attack them.

63. Do you think they would shift their quarters?—Yes.

64. In that case there was no special danger in a man going up there the day after the parties were out?—I fancy there would be less danger at that time.

65. Were you up and down the road about that time?—No, not about that time. I was over that road before, but not in that particular time.

66. At that time did you know Mr. Wrigg?—I do not think I did. I might have known him. I knew him afterwards very well.

67. At that time did you hear of any act of conspicuous bravery on the part of Mr. Wrigg in connection with the carrying of despatches?—I cannot recollect that.

68. Did you know or ever hear of Trooper McDonald, of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry Corps?—I do not recollect him.

69. Had Mr. Wrigg done anything to distinguish himself in that way, do you not think it is probable that you would have heard of it at the time? It would have been to some extent impressed upon your memory?—Yes, I naturally would think so.

70. Do you know how many men there were camped at Opotiki at that time?—I cannot say from memory. There was the left wing of the first Waikato Regiment.

71. How many do you suppose they numbered?—Between three hundred and fifty and four hundred men, perhaps.

72. In addition to them the Poverty Bay Mounted Troopers were staying there?—Yes.

73. Do you know who was in command?—Captain Gwynneth.

74. Was Captain Gwynneth in command of the Waikatos as well?—No; Major St. John; he was the commanding officer.

75. In the case of certain despatches going through to Tauranga, whose duty would it be to send them?—The commanding officer, Major St. John, or through his adjutant.

76. So long as the superior officer was there it would not, I understand, fall to Captain Gwynneth to send them?—No; if the commanding officer was absent, of course, the next senior takes his place.

77. Do you know whether Major St. John was away?—I cannot recollect.

78. In any case, it was the business of the senior officer?—Yes.

79. *Mr. Moore.*] From your knowledge of the Maori system of carrying on their warfare, and your knowledge of the bluff—provided that the murder was committed at the bluff—and that the country had been scoured the next day by scouts, do you think there would be any danger after that for a day or two?—If the country had been scoured I do not suppose there would be much danger.

80. You think the Natives would naturally clear away into the back country?—Yes.

81. That was the most dangerous part of the road?—Yes, I may point to that as being the most dangerous part of the road.

82. *The Chairman.*] When the murder of Bennett White and the mailman was committed, where were you at the time?—I have an idea I was at Tauranga, and came up to Maketu immediately afterwards. I recollect the body coming in very well on a pack-horse.

83. How many miles would Maketu be from Ohiwa in the neighbourhood in which the murder was committed?—I should think it would be about thirty-five miles.

84. When did you arrive at Opotiki? Did you have to remain at Maketu, or did you go on to Opotiki?—I remained at Maketu.

85. So you had no actual knowledge of what transpired at Ohiwa?—No.

86. Had you any personal knowledge of Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Not that I can recollect. I can recollect orderlies coming up to Tauranga from Opotiki, but cannot recollect anything of this special occasion.

87. *Mr. Holland.*] In reference to these camp orders: The camp order we have is an extract signed by Captain Gwynneth. Is it not the senior officer in camp that issues the camp orders, and each of the captains of companies takes their orders from that?—At the bugle-sound each orderly sergeant goes to the orderly-room and brings the orders round to the officers, and they bring them round to the men. Orders are generally read to the men by captains of companies the following morning on parade.

88. We have nothing to show, Captain Turner, that these camp orders were not issued by the senior officer?—I have a recollection of being in camp myself, and every night I was instructed to go and get the orders for our company for next day.

89. So we have no proof that Captain Gwynneth issued that camp order himself?—It is an extract signed by Captain Gwynneth.

90. *Mr. Field.*] What do you understand, Captain Turner, by camp orders?—Orders issued by the commanding officer in camp.

91. Of what?—He might order parade next day, or extra pickets. If an officer got leave it would be camp orders.

92. Were camp orders applying more particularly to camp affairs, or applying to the carrying of despatches?—They might apply to any movement necessary to make the next day. They were general.

93. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Do you remember the name of Captain Skeen?—Yes.

94. Would he be senior to Captain Gwynneth?—I think he would. I am almost certain Skeen would be senior.

95. The Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers were only raised a few months before this occurrence?—Yes.

96. He would be the junior in the camp?—Yes. And I think Captain Broun was also there, and he would be senior to Captain Gwynneth.

Mr. A. KOCH sworn and examined.

97. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What is your name?—August Koch.

98. You are a draughtsman in the Public Works Department?—Yes.

99. Were you on the East Coast in 1868?—Yes; principally at Napier.

100. When did you come to Wellington?—In December, 1871.

101. You have been in Wellington ever since then?—Yes.

102. Did you know Colonel St. John very well?—Yes; I knew him intimately during the last six years of his life.

103. Was he in Wellington during the last six years of his life?—Yes.

104. You had frequent opportunities of conversing with him?—Yes, I had.

105. Used you to talk over bygone events—events which occurred during the war?—Yes, both at Napier, and here we used to talk over them.

106. Did you know Mr. Wrigg also?—Yes.

107. Was he stationed in Wellington for several years?—Yes.

108. Did you ever hear Colonel St. John refer to any particular exploit performed by Mr. Wrigg?—No.

109. Any act of conspicuous bravery in carrying despatches, or anything of that kind?—Never heard of it before.

110. Did Mr. Wrigg ever mention such a thing to you himself?—No.

111. Do you remember a conversation with Colonel St. John about Mr. Wrigg getting the New Zealand War Medal?

*Mr. Wilford* objected to this question on the ground that the evidence was inadmissible, it being purely hearsay. He suggested that it was not competent for the petitioners to call any evidence of conversations between the witnesses and individuals, which conversation had not taken place in the presence of Mr. Wrigg, on the ground that no such conversations could be evidence for or against him.

*Mr. Hutchison* contended that if Colonel St. John were alive his statements as to the conduct of Mr. Wrigg while under his command would be relevant in this inquiry, and that as Colonel St. John was dead the statement he made to this witness would be admissible as being the best evidence now procurable.

111A. *Mr. Hutchison.*] What was the conversation between you and Colonel St. John?—I remember a conversation, but it was not solely with regard to Mr. Wrigg at the time.

112. Did it affect Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

113. Tell us what the conversation was?—It was to the effect that it was doubtful if Mr. Wrigg was entitled to even the war medal.

114. Did he refer to Mr. Wrigg's conduct at any time when under fire?—No. Colonel St. John said Mr. Wrigg came to the field of battle after the engagement was over, but, being on the roll, he received a war medal along with the rest; that he was ill on the commissariat-cart, which arrived too late—in fact, after the battle was over.

115. It was for that you understand Colonel St. John said he received the war medal?—Yes, along with the rest who had been in the engagement.

116. The further question I wish to ask you is, Did he refer to the illness that Mr. Wrigg was suffering from in the commissariat-cart?—He said that he was intoxicated.

*Mr. Wilford*: I object to this as evidence, Mr. Chairman.

*The Chairman*: I consider that hearsay evidence is not worth the paper it is written on.

117. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Did he (Colonel St. John) refer to a commissariat-cart or an ambulance wagon?—I think it was a commissariat-cart.

118. *Mr. Wilford.*] Are you aware that Cornet Wrigg got the New Zealand War Medal not under Colonel St. John, but under Colonel Lyon?—I am aware of that.

119. You and Mr. Wrigg are not good friends?—No.

120. You have been bad friends?—No, not that I can say.

121. You have had high words together?—The only high words which ever passed between us were those used by Mr. Wrigg when leaving this room at the recent adjournment, when he called me a "liar."

122. Do you suggest to the Committee you have no bias against Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

122A. *The Chairman.*] Can you state how many years it is since the conversation you relate took place between you and Colonel St. John?—It must have been in about 1876 or 1877.

123. That would be twenty-two years ago?—Yes.

124. *Mr. Hutchison.*] How long before Colonel St. John's death was it that the conversation took place?—I cannot remember; it might be a year or two.

125. *Mr. Wilford.*] Who recalled this conversation to your memory: Mr. Lingard?—Mr. Lingard spoke to me one day in the street saying he had the petition with him. I just casually cast my eye over it, and I said I would sign no petition affecting a fellow-officer of mine for many years, and I refused to sign the petition. And then we spoke about Mr. Wrigg. I said I quite approved of the petition, but at the same time I would not sign it myself.

126. Did Mr. Lingard ask you if you recollected any conversation you had with Colonel St. John in reference to Mr. Wrigg?—I believe he did. Yes, I think he did.

127. Did he state to you the tenor of the conversation?—No. He said, "Mr. Wrigg has got the war medal too." I said, "Yes." He said, "Is he entitled to it? I do not think he is." I said, "I knew that years ago."

128. Did Mr. Lingard suggest to you the conversation you had with Colonel St. John? Did he suggest to you the conversation you have told us?—No, he did not suggest it.

129. Did he suggest such a thing had occurred?—He told me Mr. Wrigg had got the war medal. I said, "I know that." He said, "I hear he is not entitled to it." I said, "I know that."

130. Did he suggest to you that such a conversation as you have given to-day had taken place between you and Colonel St. John?—He could make no suggestion, as I distinctly told him what the conversation was.

131. Did he prompt you as to what was supposed to have occurred? Did he call to your recollection a conversation which he suggested you had had with Colonel St. John?—No.

132. Did he suggest to you the conversation you have related to-day?—No.

133. Did he write it down at the time in your presence?—I did not see him.

134. Did he give you any conversation in writing?—No.

135. Did you ever subsequently give him a note of that conversation in writing?—No; no writing ever passed between me and Mr. Lingard.

136. If Mr. Lingard repeated the conversation you have told us occurred between Colonel St. John and yourself, if he was able to repeat that word for word, he did it simply upon his memory from what you told him in the street?—On his memory.

137. Though you wished to help him all you could?—I did not know at the time that any petition was contemplated. I said I would have nothing to do with it.

138. *Mr. O'Meara.*] Since you knew this petition was going to be presented to Parliament have any others waited upon you respecting this conversation you had with Colonel St. John?—No one.

139. You have not been prompted by any person?—No.

139A. *Mr. Field.*] How long did you know Colonel St. John?—Since the beginning of the war; since 1863, I suppose.

140. You knew him intimately?—I knew him intimately before ever I came to Wellington.

141. Did you ever hear him mention any act of conspicuous bravery that Mr. Wrigg had done?—No.

142. Do you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

143. How long have you known him?—Since 1869.

144. Have you known him anything like intimately?—I was in office with him for seventeen years.

145. Did you ever hear him refer to any act of bravery on his (Mr. Wrigg's) part?—Never.

146. You said just now you do not wish to say anything in disparagement of Mr. Wrigg?—Yes, not voluntarily.

*Mr. Hutchison:* Before calling Sir Arthur Douglas to give evidence I should like to put in the depositions of a number of witnesses who have not been able to attend. The Chairman will remember the circumstances of my attendance before the Committee, when I handed in certain names—those of Arthur S. Ford, Albert Wood, John Forsyth Connelly, and Benjamin F. J. Edwards—and you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Fraser subsequently saw me, and we discussed the matter. It was then that the Chairman suggested that as these witnesses would have to come from a long distance, and, as it would be rather expensive, we might get their statutory declarations. I then withdrew from calling them, and have now got their statutory declarations. Of course, they cannot be cross-examined, but the evidence is given in the form of statutory declarations, so that those making them would be liable to perjury if false statements were made.

*Mr. Wilford:* I object to the whole of those statutory declarations being put in as evidence, Mr. Chairman. My objection to them is this: The fact that a statement has been made by a person not called before the Committee is not evidence. The fact of such a statement being recorded on documents setting out the statements of such persons who have not been called is irrelevant, and comes within the definition of hearsay evidence. The true test of the question is, is it the best evidence procurable. If it is not the best evidence procurable, then it is secondary evidence, and the law says no secondary evidence is admissible where primary evidence can be obtained. I would

also suggest it is obviously an injustice that one-sided statements should be handed to the Committee when the witnesses could be called and subjected to cross-examination, this being the only means by which the real true test and value of evidence can be assessed.

*Mr. Hutchison* : Mr. Wilford's contention is untenable. These deponents are not hearsay witnesses. They are witnesses who speak from personal knowledge, but are living at a great distance, and it would cost something like £100 to bring them here. I ask that these declarations be taken for what they are worth. They are original statements by people who were actually on the scene of the occurrences that have been referred to.

*Mr. Wilford* : It is generally understood that hearsay evidence is evidence setting out facts which, if these witnesses were called, they could give themselves. The evidence is irrelevant.

*Mr. Hutchison* : The alternative would be to adjourn the Committee for three weeks, and have the witnesses brought to Wellington at a very considerable cost.

*The Chairman* : As to the evidence Mr. Hutchison is about to put in, I rule it is the best evidence procurable under the circumstances. Of course, there is this, Mr. Wilford : if you protest against it, and consider that it is necessary in the interest of Mr. Wrigg that these witnesses be summoned, you can put in a request to that effect, and the Committee will consider it.

The statutory declarations of Messrs. A. S. Ford, dated 23rd September, Albert Wood, dated 23rd September, John Forsyth Connelly, dated 26th September, and Benjamin F. J. Edwards, dated 29th September, were then read and put in.

*Mr. Hutchison* : In connection with Mr. Connelly's affidavit there is an exhibit—the minute-book marked "A." I would like that certain extracts in it which refer to Cornet Wrigg and Captain Gwynneth be referred to. One is on the 10th August, 1867, as follows : "Proposed by Corporal Dette, seconded by Trooper Kirwin, That the commanding officer be requested to recommend the Government to cancel the commission of Cornet Wrigg, in the event of his not sending in his resignation to the corps within one month from this date.—Carried." The second one is on the 6th July, which reads thus : "Proposed by Trooper Dempster, seconded by Trooper Creed, That Cornet Wrigg, Sergeant Hughes, Troopers Kirwin and the seconder form a Committee to aid the commanding officer in the management of the finances for the present year.—Carried."

*The Chairman* : Was that minute confirmed?—Yes; by Captain Gwynneth.

*Mr. Hutchison* : Then on the 16th May, 1868, there is the following entry : "Proposed by Trooper W. Kelly, and seconded by Trooper McFarlane, That a letter be sent through the commanding officer of this district requesting Captain Gwynneth to hand over all funds belonging to the corps before the Government accepts his resignation."

*The Chairman* : That last resolution refers to Captain Gwynneth?—Yes. Minutes were then confirmed by the captains.

*The Chairman* : Do you know if the Mr. Kelly there referred to is the Hon. William Kelly?

*Mr. Hutchison* : I have no doubt of it.

*Mr. Wilford* : I wish to say, with regard to the putting-in of the extracts from the minute-book, of course I do not object to those. But it seems to me advisable to have these witnesses. One witness, B. F. J. Edwards, states that Wrigg never carried Major St. John's despatches to Tauranga. We never said he did. We said he carried Captain Gwynneth's, which was a troop order. We suggest that it was a despatch camp order by Captain Gwynneth. The man Connelly swears George Leaning was never a member of the troop. That requires some cross-examination. A. S. Ford says Major St. John would have reported the ride had it occurred. He does say Major St. John never reported the ride. Then Wood suggests there was no honour or danger in the matter, and that nothing had been done to deserve it (the Cross). Taking into consideration the evidence given by Captain Turner as to the danger and difficulties on the road, it is quite right that those witnesses should be cross-examined and their statements put together.

*The Chairman* : I would suggest, Mr. Wilford, that between this and the luncheon adjournment you should consider the question of summoning these witnesses, and the Committee can then decide if it is necessary to summon them.

*The Chairman* : Is that all the evidence you intend calling?

*Mr. Hutchison* : All but the evidence of Sir Arthur Douglas.

Sir ARTHUR DOUGLAS sworn and examined.

147. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Sir Arthur Douglas is your name?—Yes.

148. Are you Under-Secretary for Defence?—Yes.

149. Have you got with you the certificates of Captain Bower, Captain Leonard Simpson, Captain Percival, and Mr. Leaning?—Yes. [Certificates produced.]

150. Have you been able to find the despatches for the period between June and September, 1867?—No. Despatches are a thing that take a considerable time to look up. We have got to hunt up old records.

*Mr. Hutchison* : The despatches up to the 12th June, 1867, from Opotiki, are published in the Appendices of the Journals of the House for 1867 as A.—No. 20—that is, a few days before the murder of Bennett White. There is then an interval in the despatches of about three months; that is within the time these occurrences took place. I ask that they be produced, and Sir Arthur Douglas could be questioned on them by-and-by.

*The Chairman* : I understand from Sir Arthur Douglas's statement the officers of the department are now making a search for these documents?

*Sir Arthur Douglas* : Yes.

151. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Have you looked into the records of your department with a view to being able to tell us if there is any recommendation by Colonel St. John for the bestowal of the Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—Well, I should like to say something to the Chairman on that. As the Chairman knows, I am only a custodian of the papers for the Minister, and, of course, some of

these papers I have produced are simply the originals of the documents placed before the House. I would rather the Chairman would look at these papers. [Sir Arthur Douglas's papers handed to the Chairman.]

*The Chairman* : Inasmuch as the information is available for the Chairman it is available for the Committee. If there are any portions of the departmental papers strictly confidential I think the Minister at the head of the department should appear here before the Committee.

*Mr. Hutchison* : I am not asking any information as to matters that might be considered confidential. Despatches would not be considered confidential.

152. You do not produce the documents voluntarily, you produced them as a witness?—  
Yes.

153. *The Chairman*.] Any papers that are not strictly confidential I shall ask you to produce?—  
Yes.

154. *Mr. Hutchison*.] The question was, Sir Arthur Douglas, whether you could find in any despatch from Colonel St. John a recommendation with reference to any conspicuous act of bravery by Cornet Wrigg?—None whatever.

155. Have you found any reference or any communication whatever from Colonel St. John in reference to Cornet Wrigg?—No, I have not seen any reference at all.

156. I suppose you are aware that Colonel St. John was the officer commanding the Opotiki district in June, 1867?—Yes.

157. And for some little time after?—Yes.

158. In June and July?—Yes, he must have been, for I have seen letters for June and July.

159. Who were the officers second in command of that district in June and July, 1867?—I really have not looked the subject up sufficiently.

160. You might do so, and let us know who was next in command—in short, give us the rota for June and July, 1867, in the Opotiki district?—Yes, I will endeavour to do that.

161. Do you know it to be a fact that Colonel St. John did recommend one Volunteer for the New Zealand Cross, and one person got it?—I do not say it is not the case, but I may say I have not looked into the subject.

162. I would like you to do so. Angus Smith was recommended for the Cross, and he got it. Can you say that there have been recommendations by commanding officers of districts for the bestowal of the decoration which have not been acceded to?—Well, there have been cases where the New Zealand Cross has been brought up which have not been acceded to, but I cannot recollect whether they were on the recommendations of the officers commanding the districts.

163. Any of them?—I have not really looked through.

164. Will you look—recommendations which have not been acceded to?—I will look it up.

165. I want you to look up whether a statement was made by the office some time ago that the bestowal of them was closed?—I think we have already produced that letter. I think it was definitely stated in that letter that the list was closed.

166. Prior to then?—I do not remember anything prior to then.

167. I want you also to produce a copy of a letter dated the 2nd September, 1895, in reference to an application of Mr. George Johnston Small, of Wanganui?—I will look for that.

168. You have put in a letter in reference to Mr. Wrigg's case declining it in December, 1897?—  
Yes.

169. I would like you to produce a copy of the communication by which it had been acceded to?—Yes.

170. In one of the letters put in in the course of this inquiry from Mr. Wrigg he speaks of you as having met him on a previous occasion: do you recall that?—No. I may say that the first day this Committee opened Mr. Wrigg met me in the passage, and he said, "How do you do, Sir Arthur Douglas." I said, of course, "How do you do." He then said—I think the words were to this effect: "I do not know whether you have anything against me with reference to this on account of something that happened years ago." I said, "Mr. Wrigg, you must be labouring under some mistake. To my knowledge I never saw you before in my life until I saw you sitting in this room just now." He said, "Oh, yes; you brought down a tracing to my rooms some years ago, and you were very angry about it." I can only say that to my knowledge I never saw him in my life before this.

171. *Mr. Hutchison*.] You have no feeling whatever in this matter?—Absolutely none.

172. Any suggestion contained in a letter or conversation to that effect would be incorrect?—  
Yes, absolutely.

173. Are you aware that the first-named petitioner, William James Raven, holds the New Zealand Cross?—I can look at the roll when I get back.

*The Chairman* : Does that close your case, Mr. Hutchison?

*Mr. Hutchison* : All but the documents which Sir Arthur Douglas will put in.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Wilford, have you any evidence?

*Mr. Wilford* : I wrote a letter to you, Mr. Chairman, during the luncheon hour.

*The Chairman* : I will ask the Clerk to read it. [Letter from Mr. Wilford to the Chairman read.]

*Mr. Wilford* : In reference to that letter, if I could have an opportunity of going through this matter, and seeing what the effect of these statutory declarations are, probably I might come to the conclusion, after considering the expense that it would be to bring these witnesses here, that it would be best to leave the matter as it is, and leave the Committee to come to their decision. I do not mean to suggest to the Committee, but the matter is unusual as far as such evidence is concerned. Would you allow me to go through that evidence and consider it?

*The Chairman* : The opportunity will be given you, Mr. Wilford.

*Mr. Wilford* : The first witness that I wish to call, is Mr. Leslie.

Mr. WALTER LESLIE sworn and examined.

175. *Mr. Wilford.*] What is your name, Mr. Leslie? Walter Leslie.
176. What are you?—A *Hansard* reporter.
177. Do you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
178. How long have you known him? I have known him about thirteen years—that is to say, it is thirteen years since I first knew him.
179. Have you at any time been in the Government service at the same time as he?—For three years, off and on, I was a draughtsman in the Public Works Office.
180. At that time Mr. Wrigg was a clerk there as well as yourself?—He was Chief Draughtsman.
181. Was Mr. Koch employed in the office at that time?—Part of the time.
182. What part of the time?—He was retired, I think, on compensation—at any rate, he left about a year before I did.
183. Are you aware if he blamed anybody about his being retired?—I do not think that he has actually told me so.
184. Were you led to believe anything?—I inferred from conversations with him, and subsequently with other officers of the department, that he was under the impression that Mr. Wrigg had something to do with his leaving.
185. Will you tell me on what terms they were while in the office?—I have reason to believe they worked fairly well together in the work of the office, but they were not otherwise on good terms. The reason I have for saying so is this: for some considerable time I was working in the same room with Mr. Koch and another draughtsman, Mr. Gell, and for a considerable number of weeks whenever I was left alone in the room with Mr. Koch he used to come and say all kinds of things to me about the work of the office and the arrangement of the work, and about Mr. Wrigg and Mr. Gell, and when I was left alone with Mr. Gell he used to do the same thing, and Mr. Wrigg used also to tell me his view of the case.
186. At that time would you say from the conversation that you had with Mr. Koch that he used to speak in a perfectly friendly manner of Mr. Wrigg?—No, certainly not. He gave me the impression that he thought he and not Mr. Wrigg ought to be Chief Draughtsman.
187. Did this occur once, or was it a frequent occurrence?—It was a frequent occurrence during a considerable time. There was one particular “row” Mr. Koch and Mr. Gell had—a tremendous row about something—and they took the matter to Mr. Blackett or Mr. Blair, and I fancy Mr. Wrigg considered Mr. Gell in the right, and supported Mr. Gell.
188. Did he strike you at any time as being a man who was spiteful towards Mr. Wrigg?—It certainly struck me that he used to say things to me, not only about Mr. Wrigg, but about others in the office, which were unnecessary and uncalled-for, as if he wanted to prejudice me against him and them.
189. Would you say from your knowledge of him whether he was a man of cool deliberation or was prone to exaggeration?—Mr. Koch, I should say, was particularly cool, as far as my recollection goes.
190. Would you say he was a man of exaggeration?—I do not know about exaggeration exactly. I should say Mr. Koch was a man who would say things in an irresponsible way.
191. Was he a man with a good memory?—I have no idea at all.

Lieutenant JAMES HERVEY PRICE sworn and examined.

192. *Mr. Wilford.*] What is your name, Mr. Price?—James Hervey Price.
193. What are you at present?—A retired lieutenant in the Royal Marines, and am working as a draughtsman.
194. That is the Imperial Service?—Yes.
195. You now are working as a draughtsman—where, Mr. Price?—In the Public Works Department.
196. Do you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.
197. About how long have you known him?—I have known him since I came to the colony—since 1875.
198. Did you ever work in the same office with him?—Yes. I worked for three years consecutively with him, and at intervals: altogether for about four years. He was Chief Draughtsman.
199. During that time were you on friendly terms with him?—Yes.
200. It has been suggested that Mr. Wrigg has not discussed his claim to the New Zealand Cross with any of his friends or acquaintances. Taking it that you are a friend of his, did he ever discuss his claim with you?—I remember him talking about the war, and his saying that he could get the New Zealand Cross if he applied for it.
201. Did he tell you why he had not applied for it?—He said he thought it was not an Imperial order, and he did not care about getting it.
202. He did not follow it up?—No.
203. Why?—Because he thought it was a colonial distinction.
204. Did he ever lead you to understand that he had been enrolled in the Imperial Service?—Yes; he told me he was a trooper in one of the dragoon regiments, I think.
205. You understood that?—Yes.
206. Did he ever tell you what he had done for which he deserved the decoration?—No.
207. Simply told you he could get it if he applied for it?—Yes. As a matter of fact, I looked upon it as one of those things a man might say without meaning it.
208. There is no doubt whatever but that he did make use of the expression?—Yes.
209. About what year was it this discussion occurred between you and Mr. Wrigg?—Some time between 1885 and 1889, I should say.

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.

240. Was it a copy?—Yes, I think so.
241. Typewritten, was it?—No, I have an impression I saw a blue paper, written and stamped.
242. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Do you remember the date when you first interested yourself in Mr. Wrigg?—It would be previous to last session—probably two or three months before last session.
243. *The Chairman.*] That would be April, 1897?—Yes.
244. *Mr. Hutchison.*] These testimonials are dated July and August?—But last year there were two sessions.
245. These testimonials are dated the end of July and August?—Probably there is a little confusion in my mind as to the exact month, but I know it was two or three months before the meeting of Parliament, and as the second session was held in September, the dates you mention are correct.
246. It would be about August?—Yes, very probably.
247. Are you aware, then, that soon after—some time in September, I think—an intimation was made by the Defence Minister declining the application? Are you aware of that?—I cannot answer to that, but I know that the Hon. the Defence Minister was not at one time favourably disposed.
248. There was a letter from the Defence Minister dated the 27th September, 1897, intimating that the application was declined. You had interested yourself in Mr. Wrigg's behalf prior to September?—Yes.
249. Did you renew that after September?—Yes.
250. Here is the letter dated the 27th September, 1897. [See Exhibit No. 24.] You renewed your application for Mr. Wrigg after that, and organized a meeting?—Yes, the deputation waited on the Premier about the 11th of November.
251. I suppose you wrote afterwards on the subject?—I did not. I do not remember writing any letters.
252. Who composed the deputation to the Premier?—I think there were fourteen or fifteen; nearly every Auckland member was present.
253. I suppose Mr. Holland was there?—Mr. Holland, Mr. Monk, Mr. Crowther, and Mr. Lawry.
254. As Wrigg says in one of his letters, he had "all the Auckland members fighting for" him?—I do not know that they were actually fighting for him.
255. *Mr. Monk.*] Do you say I was there, Mr. McCullough?—I think so.
256. What meeting was that?—Where we went into the Premier's room about Mr. Wrigg's claims for the New Zealand Cross.
- Mr. Monk:* No, I was not there.
257. *Mr. Hutchison.*] About this blue paper with a stamp on it, Mr. McCullough, what kind of stamp had it?—It was an embossed stamp.
258. Would it be a stamp they put on deeds, or an official stamp?—It was a blue paper with an embossed stamp near the top.
259. Who produced it to you?—I think it would have been Mr. Wrigg, if any one did.
260. Was it purported to be camp orders, or something of that sort?—Yes, that is the impression on my mind. It is certainly not that document which is on the table.
261. *Mr. Monk.*] Are you in any way an expert in military matters and regulations?—I would not like to say that I was an expert. I served for fifteen or sixteen years in the Volunteers, and know as much as any ordinary individual.
262. *Mr. Field.*] I understood you to say on Mr. Wrigg's statement and after perusal of his papers, and after gleaning information from others, that Mr. Wrigg was entitled to the Cross?—That is so.
263. For the information you relied entirely upon Mr. Wrigg, and that information is the groundwork upon which you based your recommendation?—Certainly.
264. *The Chairman.*] How many members of both Houses from the Provincial District of Auckland formed the deputation to wait on the Premier and the Minister of Defence in reference to conferring the New Zealand Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—Certainly not less than a dozen.
265. Did the members volunteer to accompany you?—Yes; they accompanied me. I asked them, and explained the object in view; and I also mentioned that the deputation was organized at the request of a number of persons in Auckland who thought it advisable to wait upon the Premier. I saw each member, and arranged the hour and day they were to accompany me to the Premier's office for the purpose of laying this matter before him and the Minister of Defence, and that is all the influence I used.
266. The Committee may infer each member of the deputation knew the object of the deputation?—Certainly.
267. *Mr. Moore.*] You say each member of the deputation knew the purport of the deputation?—Yes.
268. Was that from their own knowledge or any statement that you made to them in reference to the matter yourself?—Oh, I dare say it would be owing to statements I had made to them and the papers I had shown them.
269. Merely on your own representation to them?—And from their general knowledge of the matter. I did not influence the members in any way.
270. *The Chairman.*] Is the Committee to infer each member of the deputation was as well acquainted with the circumstances of the case as you were yourself?—I cannot answer as to how much they knew.
271. They had a knowledge of the circumstances of the case?—Yes.
272. They had a knowledge of the circumstances of the case apart from that which you gave them?—Certainly; for months the Auckland papers had references to the matter of Mr. Wrigg being recommended for the New Zealand Cross.

Hon. W. KELLY sworn and examined.

273. *Mr. Wilford.*] What is your name?—William Kelly.
274. You are a member of the Legislative Council?—Yes.
275. I understand you have known *Wrigg* for a number of years?—Since the formation of the Bay of Plenty Force. I think it was formed in 1867. I went to Opotiki in 1866.
276. Were you in Opotiki in 1867?—Yes.
277. How long previous to 1867 had you been there?—I was there since the 1st Waikato Regiment went there.
278. Would that be in 1866?—The end of 1865 or 1866.
279. During the time that you were there, at Opotiki, in 1867, do you remember hearing of the murder of Bennett White and the mailman?—Yes; I went over the beach the same day that he (Bennett White) was murdered.
280. From where?—From Whakatane to Opotiki. Bennett White and I went over together. I left in the morning, and he left some time after me.
281. You left for Opotiki on the morning of the day Bennett White was murdered?—Yes, from Whakatane to Opotiki.
282. From information that you have gathered now he would leave in the afternoon?—I could not say the time he left.
283. What distance would you consider it from Whakatane to Ohiwa?—About ten or eleven miles.
284. You came through that part of the country by yourself?—Yes.
285. Did you have any difficulties to contend with?—When I came to the Ohiwa Ferry the old ferryman took me across, and told me to be very careful along the beach, for he said the Ureweras were in the neighbourhood.
286. Are those the same Natives that are described as the Hathaus?—Yes. It was low-water at the time, and I kept as well out on the beach as I could.
287. Did you not have to pass the bluff at Ohiwa?—After I passed the Ohiwa bluff I was going along close to the Waiotahi, when I saw some Natives coming down to the beach, who sung out to me to come to them. I gave my horse the spurs and went as hard as I could. I crossed the river at low-water and went on to Opotiki. I did not think very much about it. The next day we heard of Bennett White's murder.
288. Whereabouts were the Natives at that time when you saw them?—Between the Waiotahi River and the bluff, on the sandhills.
289. If those Natives had been on the top of the bluff while you passed the bluff itself would you have had any chance of escaping?—I do not think they would have hit me the way I was galloping.
290. It would be a dangerous spot to be at?—It was always dangerous there—supposed to be.
291. I understand there is a track on the top?—Yes, there is a good beaten track.
292. They would not be able to be seen from the track which goes past the bluff?—You could not see them at all; they would be sure to keep where you could not see them.
293. I presume the proper course would be to go as hard as you could, and keep as far out on the beach as you could?—I was compelled to go as hard as I could for safety, and to keep out close to the water.
294. The element of danger would be considerably increased were the tide high?—Yes.
295. It would bring you in a chain or two nearer?—Yes.
296. What would be the distance to the base of the bluff—two or three chains?—Yes, about that distance.
297. What would it come into—two or three chains?—It would come right up to the bluff at high water.
298. Would you say when the tide was in that it is a very great deal increased in depth?—When the tide is full in a horse would be up to his belly in water close into the bluff in those days.
299. Then, I presume that if you came through at the time you mention, having left in the morning, and caught the low tide, Bennett White evidently caught the high tide?—Yes; but you could come along all right at half-tide.
300. Was it understood that you had to suit the tide? It would be generally understood by those who usually travelled that they must travel at low tide?—Yes; I have known many travellers come there and have to swim their horses. I have had to swim mine on many occasions when late for the tide.
301. From Ohiwa to Opotiki, would you say the country was one that would afford a good ambuscade for hostile Natives?—Yes, in those days it would be, as the land was covered with heavy scrub.
302. Do you remember whether at any part of the route the road became diverted from the sea-coast through the sandhills?—Not in those days. You crossed an arm of the estuary at Ohiwa. That was the only place you went off the beach.
303. What would be the position of a man if he landed over there and there was no ferryman there?—He would have to stay there until he came, or return.
304. At the Opotiki side of the river the hostile Natives were?—Yes.
305. What chance would a man have carrying despatches pursued by the Natives towards the river with the river in a high flood and no ferryman there?—He would have to take the river and swim if he could.
306. If he had to take the river, he might be able to swim across?—Yes, if he could it would be a long swim.
307. So there is plenty of ambush in this three-miles ride down to the beach?—There are large pohutukawa-trees there right down to the beach.

308. You got into Opotiki, then, the evening of the day you had left Whakatane?—Yes.
309. And on the following day heard that Bennett White was murdered?—Yes.
310. Did you go out to look for the body?—No. I told Major St. John when I arrived at Opotiki what took place—what the ferryman told me.
311. You reported to Major St. John the fact that you had been hailed by Natives and had ridden away, and also the communication that had been made to you by the ferryman?—Yes.
312. Had you at that time anything particular to do, as far as taking part as a Volunteer in the cavalry was concerned?—No; I joined it as an honorary member.
313. I notice from the minute-book that you have taken some part in it. Can you tell me when you began to take an active part?—I think it was in 1868. In September, 1868, I think I was elected captain of the corps.
314. We notice on the 16th May, 1868, you were not at that time captain?—No.
315. You were elected in August, 1868?—I could not say the date.
316. At a meeting held at Opotiki on the 16th May, 1868: "Proposed by Trooper W. Kelly, and seconded by Trooper McFarlane, That a letter be sent to the commanding officer of this district requesting Captain Gwynneth to hand over all funds belonging to the corps before the Government accepts his resignation": would that be yourself?—Yes.
317. There is no doubt in 1868 you were at Opotiki, and also in 1867?—Yes.
318. You remember, you say, the time of Bennett White's murder?—Yes.
319. That would be conclusive evidence to you that hostile Natives were in the vicinity of Ohiwa?—Yes.
320. Do you consider it would be a dangerous thing to ride along that road the day after without an escort?—I consider it would be a dangerous thing.
321. Will you say it was a hazardous undertaking with a great deal of danger?—Yes. I heard it remarked in Opotiki at the time that the two that went would likely never come back.
322. Did you ever hear it talked of among the men that it was three to one they would never return?—I do not know that I heard the exact words.
323. Do you remember the circumstance of Cornet Wrigg and McDonald carrying despatches to Tauranga?—I remember the circumstance well.
324. Though you were not a member of the troop at that time?—No.
325. Do you remember Captain Gwynneth?—I do.
326. Do you remember in 1867 that he was captain of the troop?—Yes.
327. Do you remember the fact that Cornet Wrigg did the clerical work for Captain Gwynneth?—Yes, I remember that.
328. Have you seen Captain Gwynneth's handwriting?—Yes.
329. Frequently?—Yes.
330. Here is a letter reported to have been written by Captain Gwynneth. We have been told Captain Gwynneth used to write one way and write his signature the other way?—The signature is his, but I do not think the writing is his.
331. Do you notice it compares with the body of the camp order—shaky, and so on? It may or may not be?—Yes.
332. The signature you are quite certain is his?—Yes.
333. Do you remember at the time that these men, Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald, carried despatches that volunteers were called for by Captain Gwynneth to carry those despatches?—I was told by the men of the corps that they were the only two that volunteered to go; that is, McDonald and Wrigg.
334. Could you tell us of your own knowledge who actually carried the despatches to Tauranga?—I could not.
335. It has been suggested by one gentleman who has been called here as a witness that an escort accompanied Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald on the way to Ohiwa. Cornet Wrigg has sworn that they went alone. Is that so?—I always said they went alone.
336. Do you remember Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald returning from that ride?—I do not know when they returned.
337. You remember the fact of them having returned?—Yes.
338. Do you remember the murder of Moore and Beggs? Do you remember their bodies being found some six miles from Opotiki?—Yes. That was in another direction. That was not where the hostile Natives were supposed to be.
339. I understand that it was a long way beyond the cemetery?—Yes; the cemetery was within the township boundary.
340. It was six miles from Opotiki?—Yes; to where Moore and Beggs were killed.
341. Do you remember whether some of the members of the corps started out on the day or day after that Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald started out?—I think the troop went out. I think it must have been about the same time.
342. Could you say whether Cornet Wrigg went to Tauranga with the despatches on that expedition?—I do not know.
343. The matter was discussed before they went out that there was a probability that they would never return. Was the bravery or pluck of their action discussed afterwards?—I heard it often spoken of—on several occasions.
344. As what class of an action?—I have heard several of the men say that they would not have done it without they had an escort.
345. Did you say you had known Mr. Wrigg for a considerable time?—Since 1867. I think he was on the survey works with Captain Gwynneth, who was District Surveyor.
346. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You say, Mr. Kelly, that you were told that McDonald and Wrigg were the only two who set forth?—Yes.

347. Can you recall who told you?—I could not recall it, but heard it spoken of. Lieutenant Thompson was one that mentioned it to me first.
348. When was it that Thompson spoke to you about it? You do not know, as to many of these incidents, of your own knowledge what occurred after you got to Opotiki?—No.
349. Having heard of Bennett White's death, you saw Bennett White's body brought in?—Yes.
350. Who brought in the body?—The infantry men who were there brought it in—not the cavalry.
351. Perhaps you are thinking of the head, Mr. Kelly: we are told the body was not brought in for several days and then by boat?—I only saw the body.
352. You are thinking of seeing it after it arrived, not of how it arrived?—No; I do not know how it arrived.
353. You remember Arthur Steel Ford being a member of the corps?—Yes.
354. At the time of this occurrence?—Yes, I think so.
355. Do you remember Albert Wood?—Yes.
356. Was he a member of the corps at that time?—I could not say whether he was a member of the corps at that time.
357. You would not contradict him if he said he was?—Oh, no.
358. He is a man whose statement you would accept—Albert Wood?—I did not know very much about him at the time. I remember Arthur Steel Ford; he was a blacksmith there.
359. Do you remember John Forsyth Connelly?—Yes.
360. He was a resident at Opotiki at the time?—Yes.
361. You knew George Leaning, did you not?—Yes.
362. He was in your store?—No, he managed Mr. Wrigley's store.
363. You knew of him?—Yes.
364. Was he a member of the corps?—I cannot say.
365. Would Connelly likely know whether he was a member or not?—Connelly ought to know. I do not think Connelly was a member of the corps at first.
366. Connelly says George Leaning was never a member of the troop. Do you know what a "voluntary trooper" is?—He would be an honorary member.
367. Would an honorary member go out?—Yes.
368. You say you had to do duty every night in bringing the women and children into the church?—Every one did duty in those times.
369. What is a "voluntary" member of a corps?—They were all military men on pay—Militiamen. Then there were two corps there, and a Native contingent as well.
370. Benjamin F. J. Edwards had something to do with that contingent, had he not?—Edwards the interpreter?
371. The interpreter?—Yes.
372. Did you know what was going on?—Yes. He (Edwards) left Opotiki shortly after that and went down the coast as storekeeper.
373. Edwards was there at the time of the murders?—Yes; but shortly after went away.
374. Perhaps you can explain this resolution proposed in May, 1868: "Proposed by Trooper W. Kelly, and seconded by Trooper McFarlane, 'That a letter be sent through the commanding officer of this district requesting Captain Gwynneth to hand over all funds belonging to the corps before the Government accepts his resignation'"?—There was some £80 belonging to the corps. We could not get it from him, and never got it from him. Then, afterwards, the corps pressed me very hard to take action against him and put him in gaol, but I refused to do it.
375. Do you think those words an authentic record?—Yes; perfectly.
376. It has been pointed out by Mr. Holland that this does not seem to be confirmed. You know it was carried?—Yes. I may state Captain Gwynneth was in the chair at the time that that was proposed, and he refused to sign the minutes of that meeting.
377. *Mr. Field.* Did you know the ferryman at Ohiwa?—Yes; Hemi.
378. Was he a ferryman for any length of time?—He was there for years.
379. You have been by there a considerable number of times?—Very often.
380. About how frequently?—Perhaps twice a month.
381. Usually by yourself, or with an escort?—I always endeavoured to go when others were going, but went very often by myself. I never liked going by myself. The paymaster used to go, and some other officers might be going.
382. Was the ferryman always at his post?—Yes, he was always there, except once or twice when I was kept waiting there, he being ill.
383. Upon one or two occasions he was unwell: do you mean to say, not able to perform his duties?—Yes. I had to go back to Opotiki once or twice after I got there.
384. How did you know it was in consequence of his illness?—At one time he was lying in his whare, and at another time he was not there at all.
385. He was not absent from any other cause?—No, not intentionally.
386. Have you any recollection of the time when he was sick?—I could not tell.
387. Was it before or after this period we are now talking of?—I think it was afterwards.
388. I suppose he belonged to one of the friendly tribes?—No; he belonged to the Ureweras.
389. How do you account for the fact that he stayed there in a dangerous place for so long and attended to his duties, and at the same time was not molested?—The chiefs there protected him. They fought and assisted the party who took the Ureweras. This old man was a man of rank, and he was never interfered with.
390. He never refused to take any one over?—He always told me when there was any danger.
391. You say, on the occasion on which you went along the beach before Bennett White was murdered you were accosted by some Natives?—Yes, they were coming down to the beach. Those were the same Natives that killed Bennett White.

392. About how many of them were there?—I only saw about eight of them.
393. I think I understood you to say that a party of scouts had gone out after the news had come in of the murder of Bennett White?—That was the next day.
394. A party of scouts had gone out to search for the murderers?—I do not know whether they did or not. A day or two after they were round in the Waioeka Gorge.
395. You think they murdered this man and then cleared out?—Yes.
396. That was their usual practice?—Yes.
397. Somebody went out to look for the bodies of these men murdered?—Yes.
398. Do you know what troop went out?—No.
399. You know some one went out to look for the bodies?—Yes.
400. You also said you were an honorary member of the Poverty Bay Mounted Troopers?—No, of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry.
401. What did the Bay of Plenty Cavalry number about that time?—Forty-two or forty-five, I think. I know they have mustered forty-five.
402. You knew Trooper McDonald?—Yes, well.
403. Was he regarded as a man of courage?—Yes, a devil-may-care sort of fellow, who would go with anything.
404. I understood you also to say that at that time there were a number of other men camped there?—Yes, a great number.
405. Several hundred?—Yes. One of the wings of the Waikato Regiment was stationed there and settled on land granted for military services.
406. Who was in command at that time?—Major St. John; then, Major Mair.
407. Do you know who his junior was?—There was Captain Skene, Captain Walker, Major Goring (I think the latter was a lieutenant then), and Lieutenants Hurrell, Ross, and Lawson.
408. Was Major Mair there then?—He was Resident Magistrate there then.
409. How many officers were there there senior to Captain Gwynneth?—They were all senior to Gwynneth that were there—all the captains.
410. Do you not think, in the case of sending despatches, they would be sent by one of the other officers, the commanding officer at the time being?—I presume the commanding officer instructed Gwynneth to get volunteers to go. That is the only way it could be done.
411. They would be sent him?—Then Gwynneth would parade his men and ask for volunteers to go, and I always understood that Wrigg and McDonald set out to go.
412. Those despatches would be sent, as far as you know, to whom?—To Colonel Harington; he was the senior officer in the Bay of Plenty.
413. You knew Mr. Wrigg there at that time?—Oh, yes.
414. *Mr. Moore.*] You say you were along the beach the day the murders were committed?—Yes.
415. And reported you had seen Natives on the route?—Yes.
416. But did not know that a party was sent out the following day?—I did not know they were sent out.
417. Supposing the statement is true that a party was sent out and scoured the country the following day, would you think it dangerous during the following day?—Yes.
418. Is it the habit of the Natives to remain on the spot after a murder?—I think not.
419. You consider, after a raid had been committed, and the country had been scoured by the forces?—They could not scour the country; they could only go along the beach.
420. Would you be surprised to learn that other witnesses have stated they could go inland and scour the country?—They could not scour the country, there were no tracks, and the scrub was too dense to scour the country.
421. Would it not be dangerous for a friendly Native to remain as ferryman, and take over the Europeans: his services would be given to the Europeans at the time?—I suppose Major Mair, who had the power to make these arrangements,—I suppose he succeeded in getting the Natives to send a man they would not interfere with in any way. There was always communication between a Resident Magistrate and themselves. They were not all Hauhaus, although they committed other murders. Pitcairn was murdered by that tribe.
422. Would a Native that was unfriendly take instructions from Major Mair at a time like that?—This man was paid to look after the ferry, but I do not think he got anything for it from the tribe. He was placed there by the other Natives to make use of the ferry for themselves a good deal.
423. Was the man a friendly Native to the Europeans?—He was working in the interests of the friendly Natives.
424. If he was working for the Europeans he could not be considered as working in the interests of the hostile Natives?—I think he worked just as much in the interests of the Europeans.
425. Under these circumstances, if the country was in a dangerous state from the hostile Natives, would not his position be endangered?—He might know nothing about it. He only heard at the time he told me that the hostile Natives were in the vicinity when I went along there.
426. If it is true that the country had been scoured, would you consider it dangerous immediately afterwards?—Yes, I would.
427. *Mr. Monk.*] Was it a matter of common knowledge, Mr. Kelly, that after the Natives had committed the depredation they would clear out, and that spot would be the safest?—They did not always clear out.
428. Can you tell me where a party going in search of the Natives had had a brush with them?—At Whakatane.
429. That was quite a different affair—only a surprise?—If they had got a lot of people there that would have happened at the same time.

430. You say that the Natives could not be followed back to the ranges. Witnesses said there was a road, and they tried to intercept them at the gorge, but were too late?—There was no gorge there.

431. The gorge is at the entrance to the ranges?—There are only three gorges, ten miles apart.

432. They had to go into these ranges to get into the back country?—I am speaking of getting into a position of safety.

433. *Mr. Hutchison.*] They went up the Waioeka Gorge?—Yes.

434. *Mr. Monk.*] One member of the Committee asked the question as to whether the ferryman was friendly or otherwise?—Yes.

435. It was thought the Native would act friendly to both sides, but be distrusted by both sides?—Yes.

436. This Native would be protected by the Ureweras, who would sanction his staying there?—Yes.

437. He would give information to both sides?—Yes.

438. *Mr. Holland.*] Mr. Kelly stated that Mr. Gwynneth had given that order on instructions from the commanding officer?—I suppose that would be so.

439. Is it not the practice of the commanding officer to have the camp orders posted in a conspicuous place every night?—I have never seen them done like that at Opotiki.

440. Each commanding officer of a troop would have instructions to provide so many men for certain work next day?—Yes, if they were wanted.

441. Therefore, that should be a copy of the camp order of the instructions given to him?

442. *Mr. Morrison.*] You have stated you were thoroughly well acquainted with the country from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Yes.

443. And that you were present in Opotiki on this 28th June, 1867?—Yes.

444. Was there any shelter alongside of that road between Ohiwa and Opotiki, where any one could fire or jump out on any passer-by?—Oh, yes, all along the beach.

445. Very heavily wooded?—Timbered, and regular caves in the land that you could get into all along the bluff.

446. You have also stated, in your opinion, it was a very dangerous road from Opotiki to Whakatane, especially to Ohiwa?—Yes, in those days it was.

447. I suppose, being a resident in the district, you would be pretty well acquainted with the whole of the officers?—Yes, I was acquainted with them.

448. Did you know District Adjutant Bower?—Yes, well.

449. Was he a man that every dependence could be placed upon his word?—Yes, I think so.

450. You have also stated that the paymaster used to go round once a month?—Yes.

451. I suppose when you refer to the paymaster you refer to Captain Percival?—Yes.

452. Can you tell the Committee, at the time Bennett White and the mailman were murdered, whether Captain Percival was in Opotiki?—I could not tell you. Very likely he was there.

453. You are not sure of it?—No.

454. You also, I suppose, would know Major Mair?—Yes.

455. What position did Major Mair occupy from a military point of view?—He commanded the Native contingent.

456. And was also Resident Magistrate?—Yes.

457. Did he take command together with the Bay of Plenty Cavalry or the Waikato troop?—He was in command of the district. Whenever Major St. John went away he was in command.

458. After Major St. John went away, had Major Mair anything to do with the Volunteers?—Yes, he had all to do—he took command.

459. From a military point of view what office had he?—He was major. Major St. John was senior, then followed Major Mair.

460. You are perfectly sure that the whole of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry thought that this was a very dangerous and hazardous undertaking that Cornet Wrigg and McDonald took upon themselves in carrying these despatches?—Yes.

461. And that it was the general opinion of the troop that they would not be seen again?—I heard several of the members state so.

462. *The Chairman.*] As a member of the Bay of Plenty Mounted Volunteers, Mr. Kelly, did you see any active service?—Yes. I was in one expedition to Whakatane in command of the troop.

463. What position in the corps did you attain to?—Captain of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry.

464. On that memorable day in which White and the mailman were killed, did you consider your life in danger as you rode along the beach from Ohiwa to Opotiki?—Yes; they would have fired at me, but it was ten to one they would not hit me. Then, I had my revolver in my hand, and went as fast as the horse could go.

465. Are you of opinion that there was about that time considerable risk?—There was always, for months and months, until the Government stationed the Arawa Tribe on the top of this bluff at Ohiwa, and then there was no danger afterwards.

466. In reference to scouring the country by troops, could that be done to any extent?—No; the scrub, fern, and ti-tree prevented it.

467. The country, then, from Opotiki to Ohiwa was more or less broken, rough, and covered with bush and scrub?—Yes.

468. I think you stated in your evidence that Mr. Edwards left the neighbourhood of Opotiki immediately after the murder?—I could not tell you the exact time. He took a position in a store fifty miles south of Opotiki.

469. It is quite possible that Mr. Edwards, having left the district, might not have heard of Wrigg's gallantry in conveying the despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga?—No, he might not have heard of it.

470. *Mr. Wilford.*] We have had the word "voluntary" trooper mentioned, Mr. Kelly: might I ask you whether this would be the description of a man who was not serving for pay—who might be working in a store, or engaged in any other occupation, and who, on the call to duty, would offer his services?—He would be compelled to go if he was paid; but he might have done duty voluntarily without being asked.

471. Might not a man describe himself as a voluntary trooper who would be there, an individual in the district—who had no rank, and was not in the line, and yet who could volunteer his services in a moment of emergency?—I suppose it is a misnomer. There were no men exempt there. The only men exempt were those employed by myself as butchers, storekeepers, and bakers.

472. Would not George Leaning be exempt?—He was in another store.

473. He would get paid from the time he started?—Yes, if on duty.

474. *The Chairman.*] I understand you were contractor to provision the army?—Yes.

475. You were, therefore, intimately acquainted with the troops?—I had a contract for the troops all along the coast where they were stationed—Tauranga and Opotiki included.

476. During 1867?—Yes.

477. *Mr. Monk.*] Can you tell me whether or not Captain Bower was there?—Yes.

478. At this particular time?—I am sure he was.

479. Can you say if he was there when you got to Opotiki at the time of the actual murder?—I am not sure; but he was stationed there, and should be there.

480. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Mr. Edwards is an Assessor now?—Yes.

481. In a statutory declaration he says: "I recollect the time—the 26th June, 1867—when the late Bennett White, a storekeeper, of Opotiki, and a Native mailman named Wi Popata, were murdered on the sea-beach at Waiotahi, some four or five miles from Opotiki, by the Hauhaus, under Te Maikoha, when some friendly Natives from Whakatane brought in the news that they saw the dead bodies of White and Wi Popata lying on the beach late in the evening. The next day Major St. John mustered the field force, and we proceeded to the scene of the murder, accompanied by White's Maori wife and some other Natives. I think some of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry went out with us, but I am not quite sure if Mr. Wrigg went with them. I know he was a cornet in the Bay of Plenty Cavalry at the time. After searching about for some time the Natives discovered White's head amongst a lot of sea-drift. The bodies had been carried away by the ebb-tide during the night, and were only recovered some time afterwards some miles down the coast towards Whakatane. After scouring the country for some distance inland—and traces of the enemy could be plainly tracked for some distance, but we failed to come upon them—some returned to Opotiki, Mrs. White carrying her dead husband's head in a handkerchief, and it was buried in the churchyard." Do you doubt that?—No, I do not doubt that.

482. Would that be the way the Ureweras came down?—They had tracks of their own that you could never find out.

483. It goes on to say: "I remember that two or three days after this, Trooper McDonald, of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry, being sent to Tauranga with despatches by Major St. John to the officer commanding at Tauranga, Lieutenant-Colonel Harington, I think. Trooper McDonald was about to be married, but as there was no minister at Opotiki his intended wife accompanied him, and some of his comrades of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry escorted them as far as Ohiwa to get them beyond the most dangerous part of the beach. Once across the Ohiwa Harbour they were in a friendly country, as friendly Natives lived along the coast at Ohope, Whakatane, Matata, and Maketu, and on to Tauranga. It was on this occasion that Mr. H. Wrigg is said to have carried Major St. John's despatches to the officer commanding at Tauranga, Lieutenant-Colonel Harington, through most dangerous country infested with Hauhaus. I give this a flat denial." Are those other feats which Edwards speaks of such as you would be likely to speak of?—I think so.

484. You cannot say how long it was?—It was months afterwards.

FRIDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 1898.

Hon. W. T. JENNINGS sworn and examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You wish to take the evidence of Hon. Mr. Jennings, I understand, Mr. Hutchison?—Yes.

2. *Hon. Mr. Jennings.*] Might I be permitted to make a statement before any further evidence is given, Mr. Chairman?—Yes.

*Hon. W. T. Jennings:* Well, I may state in regard to this case that it has not been in any way a political matter, nor has political partisanship been shown by myself. Mr. Wrigg never interviewed me in the first instance at all. A gentleman in Auckland, who has occupied a very responsible position in that city for over twenty years, and who now is in the same position, spoke to me about Mr. Wrigg receiving the Cross. I may say this gentleman is one who holds very strong views antagonistic to mine politically. After hearing his statement I said it was a pity the matter had been allowed to remain so long without a claim being made. This gentleman then gave me the typewritten opinions of some twenty or more military gentlemen. I took the papers home and carefully read them, and then came to the conclusion, particularly after reading Captain Bower's statement of the affair—which statement, I understand, he now repudiates—that Mr. Wrigg was entitled to recognition. I told the gentleman above referred to I was satisfied, after reading the opinions of the military men, that Mr. Wrigg deserved the Cross, and that I would help with other Auckland members in securing that object. About a fortnight after this I met Mr. Wrigg,

who was unknown to me except by repute, and told him I thought he was entitled to the distinction, and that I would do all I could for him. All subsequent proceedings were of a public nature, such as deputations of Auckland members interviewing the Defence Minister (the Hon. Mr. T. Thompson) and the Right Hon. the Premier (Mr. R. J. Seddon). I wish to accentuate my disclaimer against the imputation of political partisanship that has been set up in connection with this case by certain newspapers in the colony, as both Mr. Wrigg and the gentleman who spoke to me about the Cross distinction hold political opinions contrary to my own. I also wish to state that the conduct of Captain Bower in publishing a letter of mine without my consent, and which letter was never intended for him, is both discreditable and dishonourable, and I leave his conduct to the consideration of all persons who will be prepared to take an impartial view of the matter.

3. *Mr. Hutchison.*] With reference to that letter dated the 14th October, Mr. Jennings, do you recognise this to be a copy?—That is not a copy; that is my handwriting.

4. That is a copy, a photographed copy; you can recognise it, I suppose. The letter is a copy of one which Captain Bower was to send to either the Chairman or myself?—That is a copy of the letter I wrote to Mr. Wrigg. I will put that in as evidence, Mr. Chairman.

*The Chairman:* If you wish to put that in as evidence I will ask the Clerk to read it.

The Clerk then read the letter, dated the 14th October, 1897. [Exhibit No. 27.]

5. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Are the letters you refer to as having seen, before you made up your mind to support the claim, those which have been printed in a parliamentary paper?—Yes, those are the letters.

6. *Mr. Wilford.*] You interested yourself, then, Mr. Jennings, for the purpose of satisfying yourself in your own mind whether the claim was a genuine one or not?—Certainly.

7. And before supporting Mr. Wrigg's claim in the way that you say you have done you satisfied yourself not by the statement from him, but from other outside evidence?—Exactly. I wrote to that gentleman whom I have spoken of, in Auckland, and who asked me to read the opinions, asking if I could make use of his name. I have no doubt that he will allow me to do so.

8. Have you given the information outside, in reference to certain correspondence that has been put before the Committee, for publication?—No; I knew nothing about it until I saw it in the *New Zealand Herald*, the *Otago Daily Times*, and the *Canterbury Press*. That is the first intimation that I had of all this correspondence and my own letter being published with it.

9. Have you had any reason to doubt since you took this step that such was an improper step?—None whatever. I have been acting-lieutenant myself, and, having served eighteen years as a Volunteer in the early days, I know the feeling of anxiety and alarm which existed in those days, and which made me perhaps a little more zealous on Mr. Wrigg's behalf, and also knowing the occurrence of the naval, military, and volunteer land-claims frequently cropping up. It is so often the case that a number of soldiers will not bother themselves at the time about honours or land-claims. They are as a rule very careless, and then some time afterwards they send in their claims. I thought Mr. Wrigg did not bother himself much about it, and then made an application; and I thought he was deserving of it, especially after reading the military opinions.

10. *Mr. Moore.*] Before you took the matter up, Mr. Jennings, you say from the documentary evidence placed before you you were satisfied that Mr. Wrigg was a person entitled to the Cross?—Yes, after reading the evidence, particularly Captain Bower's evidence.

11. In your statement you stated that you relied in a great measure on the recommendation in the letter from Captain Bower?—I may here just state the reason why. He states he was the adjutant in the district at the time, and being conversant with the circumstances I thought strongly that he knew the whole position, and I attached a great deal of weight to what he wrote.

12. In your statement you say Captain Bower has now repudiated his former recommendation?—I have heard that he has done so.

13. In the event of his having done so, would that cause you to alter your opinion, seeing that you based your first opinion on his recommendation?—Now that I have given great attention to the matter, and seeing the position, I am quite satisfied that if Mr. Wrigg and Trooper McDonald conveyed those despatches through the hostile country it was an act a good many men would not care about doing, seeing that Bennett White and the mailman were killed the day before they carried the despatches.

14. You are basing your claim on the evidence?—Yes.

15. You consider that the other documentary evidence you had before you at the time, apart from Captain Bower's, would still be sufficient to justify you in having taken the step you have taken?—Yes. There is Captain Morrow's statement; that gentleman has been a Volunteer for forty years, and knew the alarm that existed in Auckland in those early days. Thirty-five years ago we thought it dangerous to go out to Drury.

16. Was the documentary evidence you had placed before you from persons on the spot at the time?—I endeavoured to get a copy of that evidence. Captain Bower's was the particular statement, and a Mr. George Leaning, who is now in Auckland.

17. And was on the spot at the time?—Yes; and Captain Gwynneth.

18. *The Chairman.*] You say you introduced a deputation to the Minister of Defence *re* the conferring of the New Zealand Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—Yes.

19. Who formed that deputation?—Hon. Major Harris, Hon. W. Kelly, Mr. Holland, and myself. Then, after that, there was a deputation of ten or twelve Auckland members who interviewed the Premier in regard to the Wrigg decoration as to why there was delay in the presentation.

20. Do you recollect who introduced that deputation to the Premier?—The Hon. W. McCullough.

21. Were you one of the deputation?—Yes.

22. Do you recollect the others?—I think Hon. W. Swanson, Mr. Crowther, Hon. W. McCullough, Mr. Holland, and the other names I cannot bring to my recollection, but there were quite ten.

23. Do you recollect if there was any particular willingness on the part of the Minister of Defence and also the Premier to meet the views of the deputation?—The Minister of Defence, Hon. Mr. Thompson, had Sir Arthur Douglas there to hear what the deputation had to say, and, as far as my recollection of the circumstances goes, it was the opinion, I think, of the Minister or Sir Arthur that it was establishing a precedent that would be perhaps a dangerous one—that is, allowing the decoration to be given to any one after such a lapse of time, as these things are generally done within a reasonable time after any act of bravery or heroism is performed.

24. Do you think if the influence of these deputations had not been brought to bear on the Government they would have conferred the New Zealand Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—I think if the persons who have taken exception to it had not done so the Government would have conferred the Cross on Mr. Wrigg; but it appears to me there is a sort of seesaw business over the whole affair, particularly by the setting-up of this Committee to investigate the matter.

25. What weight do you attach to the deputation waiting on the Government in the way of influencing the Government to confer the Cross on Mr. Wrigg?—Seeing that deputations in many ways are for the purpose of influencing Governments, a deputation of Auckland members waited on the Premier over the Stratford Railway quite recently, the object of which was to place the best views of the Auckland members on that particular line; and the same thing would apply to Mr. Wrigg's deputation waiting on the Minister of Defence and the Premier. They all believed then and now that Mr. Wrigg was entitled to the Cross, and that simply a lapse of time ought not to be a bar to what was considered to be a meritorious act.

26. *Mr. Hutchison.*] On the 27th September, 1897, the Government had formally declined to confer the decoration on Mr. Wrigg?—I was not aware that the Government had declined.

*Mr. Hutchison:* Mr. Chairman, I want to put in a note of the resignation of Cornet Wrigg as it appears in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 20th December, 1861, page 511. [Exhibit No. 28.] [Exhibits Nos. 29, 30, and 31 were also put in.]

#### STATUTORY DECLARATIONS.

I, *Albert Wood*, of the Thames, in the Provincial District of Auckland, miner, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I remember well all the circumstances connected with the murder of Bennett White and the mailman in June, 1867. I was one of the troopers—about twenty-five or thirty in number—who were sent out to search for the bodies. When we reached the scene of the murder it was then too late to do anything, so we took cover in the scrub at Waiwhakatoitoti, keeping our horses bridled and saddled, and tethered to our legs, and remained in perfect silence throughout the night, neither lighting our pipes nor making fires. The next morning we searched for the bodies, but only Bennett White's head was found, and the carcass of the mailman's horse. The main body of our men followed the enemy's trail a long distance inland, while Lieutenant Thompson, myself, and two others went on to Ohiwa with a Native woman—Ramari te Wai—and a young woman and boy. Then we went up to the tableland to warn a surveyor's hand who was working there. We then returned to Opotiki, long after the main body had got back. The same evening it was arranged that Trooper McDonald was to go to Tauranga with despatches. He particularly wanted to go on urgent private business, also to do something for his brother-in-law, Angus Smith, who then kept a store. Mr. H. Wrigg wished to go too, as he had to transact some business, and get tracings, &c., for Mr. Gwynneth at the Survey Office, Tauranga. I begged my commanding officer to let me go, but as he said the two others had special reasons for going I would have to give way. There was no honour attached to going, neither was there any danger, and every man in the troop would have been glad of the chance of going. In my opinion, Mr. Wrigg was less entitled to special honour than any man in the whole Force, for he had done nothing whatever to deserve it.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."

ALBERT WOOD.

Declared at Thames, this 23rd day of September, 1898, before me—James Finlay, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand.

I, *Arthur Steele Ford*, of Coromandel, in the Provincial District of Auckland, miner and engineer, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I was the second man to enrol as a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps, and am familiar with the names of those who distinguished themselves by acts of bravery, but I declare I never heard the name of Mr. Wrigg mentioned as ever having done anything out of the common. As a matter of fact, he was only in the corps for a short time, and was not regarded as a man conspicuous for bravery. There were troops stationed along the East Coast, and the only place that could be considered as being unsafe was a distance of three or four miles between Waitahi and Ohiwa, and even over that part there was very little danger, as the custom was for a detachment of the corps to ride through and see that the route was clear. I recollect the occasion on which Mr. Wrigg claims to have displayed such valiant conduct as to merit the distinction of the New Zealand Cross; but the matter was regarded in a very different light at the time by his comrades, who saw nothing above the common in what he did, nor more than most of us were in the habit of doing when required. The man who carried the despatches on the occasion referred to was Trooper Donald McDonald, and Mr. Wrigg merely accompanied him, and nothing of moment was reported at the time as having occurred during the ride from Opotiki to Tauranga. I am sure that, had there been any special danger attached to the journey, the fact would have become known to those of us who were in the corps at the time and performing active

service. If Mr. Wrigg had performed any act or service above the common, our commanding officer, Colonel St. John, would no doubt have recorded the fact at the time, and reported the matter to the proper authorities. Colonel St. John lived for several years after the period referred to.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."

A. S. FORD.

Declared at Coromandel, this 23rd day of September, 1898, before me—T. W. Rhodes, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand.

I, *John Forsyth Connelly*, of the City of Auckland, merchant, do solemnly and sincerely declare: I joined the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers on the 28th September, 1867, and served in the troop for over fourteen years, and was lieutenant. For some time before I joined the troop I was resident in Opotiki, and was well aware of all occurrences taking place in the settlement and district. I remember the news of the murder of Bennett White and Wiremu Popata, the mailman, on the beach-road nine miles north from Opotiki. I remember on the night following the receipt of the news Trooper McDonald leaving with despatches from Tauranga. There was no danger understood to render the road unsafe. I did not hear of any act of bravery by Acting-Cornet Wrigg then, or at any time, until it was known that the decoration of the New Zealand Cross was to be conferred on him. The minute-book of the troop has been in my possession almost continuously since November, 1869, and is the book marked "A," exhibited by me, and is, as far as I am aware, and believe, the only book used for recording the proceedings of the troop. George Leaning, who is in a testimonial produced by Mr. Wrigg in support of his claim, was never a member of the troop, as he describes himself.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."

J. F. CONNELLY.

Declared at Auckland, this 26th day of September, 1898, before me—H. Rees George, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand.

I, *Benjamin F. J. Edwards*, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows: In the years 1866 to 1869 I was acting interpreter to Lieut.-Colonel Lyon, officer commanding the Opotiki Expeditionary Force at Opotiki, and afterwards to Major St. John, who succeeded Lieut.-Colonel Lyon in the command, and finally with Major W. Mair, now Judge of the Native Land Court, who assumed command when Major St. John left Opotiki. I was also in charge of the Native allies as sergeant-major on expeditions up the Opotiki gorges and into the Urewera country. I recollect the time—26th June, 1867—when the late Bennett White, a storekeeper of Opotiki, and a Native mailman named Wi Popata, were murdered on the sea-beach at Waiotahi, some four or five miles from Opotiki, by the Hauhaus under Te Maikoha; when some friendly Natives from Whakatane brought in the news that they saw the dead bodies of White and Wi Popata lying on the beach late in the evening (27th June, 1867). The next day Major St. John mustered the field force and we proceeded to the scene of the murder, accompanied by White's Maori wife and some other Natives. I think some of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry went out with us; but I am not quite sure if Mr. Wrigg went with them; I know he was a cornet in the B.P.C. at the time. After searching about for some time the Natives discovered White's head amongst a lot of seadrift. The bodies had been carried away by the ebb-tide during the night, and were only recovered some time afterwards some miles down the coast towards Whakatane. After scouring the country for some distance inland, and traces of the enemy could be plainly tracked for some distance, but we failed to come up to them, so we returned to Opotiki, Mrs. White carrying her dead husband's head in a handkerchief, and it was buried in the churchyard. I remember that two or three days after this Trooper McDonald, of the B.P. Cavalry, being sent to Tauranga with despatches by Major St. John, to the officer commanding at Tauranga, Lieut.-Colonel Harington, I think. Trooper McDonald was about to be married, but as there was no minister at Opotiki his intended wife accompanied him, and some of his comrades of the B.P.C. escorted them as far as Ohiwa to get them beyond the most dangerous part of the beach; once across the Ohiwa Harbour they were in a friendly country, as friendly Natives lived along the coast at Ohope, Whakatane, Matata, and Maketu, and on to Tauranga. It was on this occasion that Mr. H. Wrigg is said to have carried Major St. John's despatches to the officer commanding at Tauranga, Lieut.-Colonel Harington, through most dangerous country infested with Hauhaus. I give this a flat denial. He did not carry the despatches, nor was there any danger along the coast, except that between Opotiki and Ohiwa, a distance of about six or seven miles. He was not long in the B.P. Cavalry when he resigned and left Opotiki. I may state here that about a week or so after McDonald was sent to Tauranga, Major St. John mustered the field force, and we made a night march from Opotiki, and up the Wainana Valley we suddenly came upon the Hauhaus in their camp, early in the morning. The result was four of them were killed and three wounded; the rest of them retreated precipitately into the bush. We had one man wounded in this brush. This victory was considered by the friendly Natives a good *utu* for the murder of B. White and his companion. We returned to Opotiki the same day, carrying our wounded man with us. This ended the expeditions over this affair. Mr. Wrigg was not with us on this occasion, nor at any other time that I can remember. I now say that Mr. H. Wrigg never went through the enemy's country for ninety miles carrying despatches, as he claims to have done. It was McDonald who took the despatches, and Wrigg only volunteered to go with him; and the only dangerous part, as I said before, was between Opotiki and Ohiwa, and then they were escorted by their comrades through the most dangerous part of the beach, a distance of six or seven miles. I do not think I ever saw Mr. Wrigg after that. It is now thirty years since the affair took place, and it is a very long time to remember everything that took place then; but I am certain of this: Mr. Wrigg was never intrusted with Major St. John's despatches. He simply accompanied McDonald, who carried the despatches to Tauranga.

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 Waiotahi.

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.

11. Who by?—By Captain Preece.
12. Where did Captain Preece see you?—He saw me at Dannevirke, I think.
13. I want you to tell us what took place between you and Captain Preece?—He simply asked me did I see the report in the Auckland papers with regard to this New Zealand Cross being given to Mr. Wrigg.
14. And you said—what?—I said, Yes, I did see it; and I was surprised.
15. Well, go on?—Well, he said, “We are getting up a petition to the House to have an inquiry over this business.”
16. Yes?—I said, “Are you?” and he said “Yes.” He said, “Have you any objection, being one of the parties down at Opotiki in 1867, to sign it?” I said, “I have not the slightest objection.” He said, “You know the circumstances; you were down there at the time.” I said, “Yes, I know the whole of the circumstances.”
17. Did you sign the petition?—Yes.
18. Then, you are one of the petitioners?—Yes.
19. Did you know Mr. Wrigg?—Yes, I knew Mr. Wrigg then.
20. At Opotiki?—Yes.
21. And have you ever seen him since?—No.
22. Were your relations with him at the time you knew him friendly?—Yes, perfectly friendly.
23. When you say “friendly” what do you mean?—We were down there together; the troops were down there. Mr. Wrigg was down there, and was draughtsman in Mr. Gwynneth’s office.
24. In what troop were you enrolled?—I belonged to the 1st Waikato Regiment. I was colour-sergeant in No. 2 Company in the foot corps at first.
25. And afterwards?—When I got down at Opotiki I was out on the staff as interpreter to Colonel Lyon, who was then in command.
26. You will remember the occurrence of Bennett White and the mailman being murdered?—Yes.
27. Do you remember the date?—I think it was about the 26th June.
28. Why do you say the 26th June?—That is from my recollection.
29. Why should you fix the 26th as the date?—Well, the 26th or thereabouts.
30. Will you swear absolutely it was the 26th?—No, I will not. It was somewhere thereabouts.
31. Then, when you swore in the declaration it was the 26th you meant about that date?—Yes.
32. You do not go back from your declaration. These were your words, “That was the 26th.” Was that date supplied to you?—It was partly supplied.
33. Your recollection was prompted by what there was in the papers?—Yes.
34. Was it customary at the time of the murder for the foot corps and mounted troopers to parade together?—Well, you are getting before the time. The Bay of Plenty Cavalry was only formed after we arrived there.
35. Was it customary for the foot corps and the mounted corps to parade together, on the 26th June, 1867?—Sometimes, when we were going out together.
36. When there was a general call for the whole of the troops there, you all paraded together?—Yes.
37. And I take it on other occasions the foot corps when called paraded, and the mounted corps when called paraded also?—Yes. When the mounted corps was called on for special duty they paraded themselves.
38. Do you know what a camp order is, Mr. Edwards?—I know what a district order is.
39. I asked you if you knew what a camp order was?—Yes; it is a district order.
40. Well, what is a camp order?—An order issued by the commanding officer to the captain of the company.
41. A district order or camp order is an order issued by the commanding officer to the captain of a company or companies?—Yes.
42. It is not addressed to the whole of the companies, but may be addressed to one company in particular?—The sergeant in charge of the company takes the order down.
43. The camp order is addressed to either the captain of a company or captains of companies?—All the sergeants go into the orderly-room and take it down—that is, an order to the cavalry would be taken down as an order to the companies.
44. It would not be their business to take any notice of it?—No; but they would take a record of it.
45. Who was the captain of your corps?—Well, I was not in a corps at the time.
46. Who was the captain of your corps while you were colour-sergeant?—Captain Bower, I think.
47. That, I think, was in Tauranga?—Yes.
48. Would you consider it sufficient authority if Captain Bower had issued a camp order for one of the men of your corps to carry a letter or notification to some one at Opotiki?—Yes; I suppose a captain could do it.
49. If you were in camp there together it would be called a camp order, no doubt, issued in camp?—But that was carrying out a special order.
50. It would be special authority for the man to act?—It is doubtful, because the place was under martial law down at Opotiki, and the commanding officer would be the only person to issue commands to the captains of the different corps.
51. I am asking you whether an order issued by the captain of a troop, and directed to one of the men of the troop, would not be sufficient authority for that man to act?—Under ordinary circumstances—camp duties.

52. Would you consider, if a camp order was made out and signed by the captain commanding the troop to a special trooper to carry a letter from him to some one else—would it be sufficient authority for that trooper to leave the lines and carry it?—I do not think the captain would do such a thing.

53. I asked you whether it would be sufficient authority for that man to leave the lines and proceed?—Yes. But the captain would be responsible for the man's going from his camp. The captain would have to answer to the commanding officer.

54. Can you tell me whether there was a parade of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer corps on the 26th June, 1867: would it be possible for there to be a parade of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer corps without your knowing it on that date, on the 26th June, 1867?—I would have known it, because I was always with Major St. John.

55. Would you necessarily have known what occurred at that parade?—I do not admit that there was a parade.

56. In the event of there being one, would you necessarily have known?—I would have known, because I was always with Major St. John; always at the orderly-room.

57. Are you prepared to state whether or not volunteers were called for by Captain Gwynneth at a parade of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer corps, held in June, 1867, to carry despatches to Tauranga?—I was not present when Captain Gwynneth paraded the men. I do not know whether he did parade the men or not.

58. Did not the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry corps have a separate parade-ground to the ground upon which the troops were paraded?—Yes, I think they had.

59. Was it not some distance from the parade-ground?—Not very far.

60. Across the swamp?—You see, supposing this was the tree where Mr. Volkner was murdered, there was a little bit of a creek there. Captain Gwynneth's survey-house was the old mission-house on that spot. The cavalry used to parade over there, and the foot corps down here, near the church.

61. Could you see each other other?—Yes.

62. But not hear what took place?—No.

63. Are you prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg and Captain Bower when they say that volunteers were called for on parade to carry despatches to Tauranga in June, 1867?—Volunteers may have been called for. I cannot say. All I can say is, Trooper McDonald was the man who I heard was going to carry these despatches.

64. Then, you are prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg or Captain Bower when they say volunteers were called for to carry despatches to Tauranga?—Captain Bower was not there.

65. Are you prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg when he says on parade that he volunteered, and he alone volunteered, to carry despatches to Tauranga?—No, because I was not there. I was not on the parade-ground.

66. Are you prepared to contradict Mr. Wrigg when he says that he stepped forward alone of those who were assembled and volunteered to carry these despatches, and that Trooper McDonald afterwards stepped forward and consented to accompany him?—No.

67. Then, whether that is correct or incorrect you have no knowledge?—I have no knowledge.

68. Do you know Captain Gwynneth's handwriting?—Well, it is such a long time ago since I saw it.

69. Do you ever remember having seen his signature?—Yes, once or twice.

70. Will you look at this camp order, and his signature there, and tell me whether that signature is like his?—I could not say.

71. You have not sufficient knowledge?—No.

72. Did you see any one set out to carry these despatches on this date: did you absolutely see any one set out to carry these despatches?—All I remember is this: Trooper McDonald was told off to carry those despatches.

73. By whom?—By Major St. John.

74. In your presence?—I was there at the time.

75. Where?—At the orderly-tent.

76. Were you aware at the time that he was accompanying Cornet Wrigg?—Not at that time.

77. Were you later?—I heard later that Mr. Wrigg went with him.

78. Will you tell me, in the event of a cornet being ordered to carry despatches and a trooper to go with him, whether it would be the custom of the cornet or the trooper to carry the despatches?—It depends upon the commanding officer.

79. Then, it is quite possible that Mr. Wrigg may have volunteered to carry the despatches. Trooper McDonald may have been appointed to go with him, and yet Trooper McDonald carried the despatches?—Trooper McDonald was ordered to take those despatches. Whether Mr. Wrigg went with him or first volunteered to go, that is another thing altogether. But Trooper McDonald was the man who was mentioned in the room as to carry those despatches.

80. You mean actually carrying the despatches?—In a bag.

81. Do you suggest there is any more danger in carrying the despatches than accompanying the party who carries them?—No.

82. Are you aware that Mr. Wrigg was a cornet in the Bay of Plenty corps?—I am quite aware of that. I think Gwynneth was captain, and I think Thompson was Lieutenant.

83. Do you remember seeing Trooper McDonald and Cornet Wrigg set out?—No; I remember seeing Trooper McDonald go to the orderly-tent.

84. Did you see them actually set out?—I remember Trooper McDonald coming to the tent to get the despatches from Major St. John.

85. Do you know whether they started in the morning or afternoon?—It think it was about mid-day, but I cannot recollect that. It would be after 10 o'clock, anyhow.

86. Can you tell me whether any one else besides Trooper McDonald went with them together?—I believe there was an escort of troopers.

87. You say that on oath?—I believe there was an escort of troopers.

88. You believe he was accompanied by an escort?—Yes.

89. When you say you believe it, do you believe is that your knowledge of what occurred?—Major St. John was a man who never sent anybody on a dangerous mission without some one accompanying him.

90. Do you admit it was a dangerous mission?—For about four miles, when you got on the beach after leaving Opotiki and passed the Waiotahi and got across the Ohiwa entrance. That was the only dangerous part of the expedition.

91. Will you admit that six miles was a dangerous part?—That was the only part in which there was any danger.

92. Was there any lady accompanying them?—That is where I made a mistake. I beg to withdraw that—that is, that marriage business.

93. *The Chairman.*] Would you make a statement on that point?—I made a mistake there where I said McDonald was about to get married: "Trooper McDonald was about to be married. His intended wife accompanied him, and some of his comrades of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps accompanied him to get him over the most dangerous part of the beach." I wish to withdraw that.

94. *Mr. Wilford.*] Why do you wish to withdraw that?—Because it was on another occasion.

95. Then, when you declared that to be true it was a mistake?—Yes.

96. Did you depend upon your memory for that fact, or was it a suggestion from some one else? On that occasion you found your memory played you false?—Yes, just on that occasion.

97. You admit openly now that you stated that McDonald was about to be married, and there was no minister at Opotiki, and his intended wife accompanied him?—Yes.

98. You muddled that part up with another occurrence?—Yes, that part I did.

99. I suppose it is quite possible you muddled other parts up?—I may have.

100. Will you tell me whether a camp order issued by Captain Gwynneth directed to a trooper in the Bay of Plenty Volunteers to carry despatches, could in the ordinary sense of the word be deemed to be an order of the commanding officer?—Well, it should be mentioned by the commanding officer that he desires so-and-so.

101. Did you know Captain Gwynneth?—He was in charge of the Survey Department down there, surveying confiscated lands.

102. Was Captain Gwynneth a man skilled in military etiquette and discipline?—No.

103. Would he be a man in whom you would expect to find some irregularity in technical matters?—Yes. I remember a row between him and the commanding officer, Major St. John.

104. About some irregularity?—Yes.

105. Taking into consideration the fact that Captain Gwynneth was a man who, as you say, was not skilled in military matters, would you consider it a very wrong thing if he called the order that he issued "an order from the commanding officer"?—Oh, yes; that is all right.

107. It could be done?—Yes; the commanding officer sees the order.

108. If Captain Gwynneth issued an order, would it be very wrong for the trooper to say he was carrying an order from the commanding officer?—He goes to the orderly-room for his instructions.

109. If he got his orders from Captain Gwynneth he would not necessarily go into the orderly-room?—No, he would not.

110. The authority that he had received from his superior officer being sufficient warranty for him to leave the district, it would not be necessary for him to communicate with the commanding officer?—Not according to your way of looking at it.

111. Would you consider that an order in these words, signed by Captain Gwynneth, would be sufficient authority for a man to leave the lines at Opotiki and proceed to Tauranga, viz.: "Opotiki, 28th June, 1867.—Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald will proceed to-morrow to Tauranga with despatches to Colonel Harington, or officer commanding the district, and await his reply (if any). Report themselves to him, and return with all speed, taking two days' rations with him.—(Signed) JOHN GWYNNETH, Captain Commanding B.P.V.C."?—Well, I would consider it a breach of discipline. It would be a breach of discipline.

112. I will repeat the question: Would it be sufficient authority for the trooper to go?—He could go if he liked.

113. Would he be hauled up for it?—If anything happened the captain would.

114. It was sufficient authority for him, but wrong of the captain?—Yes. But you must consider that the place was under martial law all the time, and the commanding officer was the supreme head of everything.

115. Taking it as a fact that this camp order was issued by Captain Gwynneth, that it did direct Wrigg to go from Opotiki to Tauranga, and that it was usual for Major St. John, his commanding officer, to sign the despatches, would you consider Wrigg had made a mistake in saying he had carried St. John's despatches, but those from the subordinate officer? If he carried them straight from Captain Gwynneth, would not he be right in saying he was carrying the commanding officer's despatches?—Well, there must have been two despatches.

116. Do you know whether any despatches were taken to Major Mair?—There may have been.

117. Do you know whether Trooper McDonald carried any despatches on that occasion to Major Mair?—No; all I know is that he came to the orderly-room for despatches.

118. Do you know to whom they were addressed? You do not know to whom the despatches were to be carried that Trooper McDonald was carrying?—I understood they were to be carried to Colonel Harington.

119. I asked you whether you knew who those despatches were carried to?—I understood they were carried to Colonel Harington.

120. From whom?—From Major St. John.

121. You do not know whether any were carried to Major Mair?—I am not quite certain. They may have been.
122. Do you know whether there were one or more despatches?—No, only one lot sent.
123. Would it be customary for any one carrying despatches to carry two different lots of despatches in one parcel?—Yes, of course.
124. And be able to open it and take out those despatches on the way?—I do not know what occurred on the road.
125. Would it be usual?—I suppose so. If there were despatches to Major Mair, and the messengers saw him, I suppose they would tell him there were letters for him. But I would not say anything on that point.
126. Major Mair stated that despatches were delivered to him by Trooper McDonald, and that he (McDonald) gave him the packet addressed to himself: do you know where he got that packet from?—From the orderly-room, I suppose, because they were all enclosed.
127. Is it not quite possible that the packet that Trooper McDonald got at the orderly-room were the despatches that he handed over to Major Mair?—It might be.
128. And that Mr. Wrigg may have been carrying other despatches from Captain Gwynneth to the officer commanding at Tauranga?—I cannot see how that is possible, because all despatches come from the orderly-room from one commanding officer to the other. Captain Gwynneth was not a commanding officer.
129. He was a captain commanding a troop?—Yes.
130. Will you swear that Wrigg got no despatches from the orderly-room? Did not Wrigg come to the orderly-room and get his despatches to carry to Tauranga?—Not while I was there.
131. You do not suggest you were there always?—I was there until 4 or 5 o'clock.
132. Do you know the road from Opotiki to Tauranga?—I know the road.
133. Do you know the road from Opotiki to Ohiwa well?—Yes.
134. You tell us you know the road particularly well from Opotiki to Ohiwa?—Yes.
135. Do you admit that the road between Opotiki and Ohiwa, on the 26th to the 28th June, was dangerous to travel over?—We never thought that there was any danger.
136. Do you admit now that it was a dangerous part of the road to travel over?—No.
137. The Hon. William Kelly says, question 30: I asked him, "Do you consider it would be a dangerous thing to ride along that route the day after the murder of Bennett White and the mailman?" He said, "I consider it would be a dangerous thing?"—Yes.
138. The next question I asked him was: "Will you say it was a hazardous undertaking with a great deal of danger." His reply is: "Yes; I heard it rumoured in Opotiki at the time that the two that went would likely never come back." Do you agree with that?—I do not know. We never gave it a thought.
139. Did you know that part of the road called the bluff, at Ohiwa?—Yes.
140. Was it dangerous?—Yes. There was a Maori killed there about three months before we went down.
141. Was the Native shot?—I believe he was shot.
142. Did you have to pass that bluff on the way to Tauranga?—Yes.
143. What means of protection was there for an individual riding past there from any Natives who may have been hiding on the top in ambush?—There was no means of escape.
144. No means of escape and no means of protection?—Unless he was armed, and did the best he could single-handed.
145. Then, do you not consider that a dangerous part of the road?—It was dangerous the way you put it. It never struck us as dangerous. We never thought it was dangerous.
146. When you say "It never struck us as dangerous," you mean "we never considered the question of danger"?—That is it.
147. When you look back on it now, will you not admit it was a very dangerous part to pass: will you not agree with Mr. Kelly?—It might have been.
148. You know the ford at the Waiotahi?—Yes.
149. I understand there was a Native acting as ferryman there?—Not at Waiotahi.
150. Do you know where the ferry-boat was?—Yes; it was at Ohiwa.
151. Was there a Native in charge of that ferry-boat?—Yes.
152. A friendly Native?—Yes.
153. Do you mean a Native belonging to a friendly tribe or a hostile tribe that was presumably friendly?—He belonged to a hostile tribe who surrendered and took the oath of allegiance, and he was appointed ferryman. He was named Hemi Kaketu.
154. Were there a number of the hostile Natives camped on a little island close to the ferry?—When?
155. At the time this man was acting as ferryman in June, 1867?—No.
156. Were the Natives camped on a little island close to the ferry?—Rakuraku and his people were.
157. Would you call them hostile people?—No. He used to go into Opotiki; in fact, he used to give me all the movements of their people in the interior.
158. Had he taken the oath of allegiance?—I believe he submitted to Major Mair. Yes, he did; because the Government supplied him with ammunition and arms to protect himself.
159. Do you remember whether despatches were carried to Tauranga the day that Bennett White and the mailman were murdered, or two days after?—It was either the day he was murdered or the next day, because there was an expedition out under Captain Skene the evening that the news came in.
160. That was an expedition where?—On the Waiotahi beach.
161. I understand that when the expedition went out to look for the hostile Natives they were not able to see any of them. Was there any sign of the Natives when the troop went out?—No, except footmarks.

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 Waiotahi 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 Waiotahi 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 Waioka.
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

got word that these Hauhaus were going to make another raid on the beach. I went along to Whakatane and interviewed the chiefs of the Ngatipukeko to get them to send down twenty men, and we all came down together. We came to Opotiki, and this was all done in secret because we had Natives we could not trust. I may say Major St. John was a great fighting man. He was a very able and great fighting man. He told me we were to make the march about 7 o'clock at night, and go through by the foot of the mountains. I think the officers were Captain Skene, Lieutenant Rushton, Mr. Grant, who was killed afterwards in the Urewera Country, Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Ross. The expedition was formed; I think we were about eighty or ninety strong. We travelled all night and got down into the Waimana Valley in high fern, and we got out our shawls and slept there, without attempting to light a fire or strike a match. We slept there till 3.30, and then we got up and we fell in, and then we marched along until we got within half a mile of the Waimana River. We could not see anything. It was a cold wintry morning. We came to the stream, and Major St. John said, "Now, we will have to be careful." He told Captain Skene to hold his men in readiness, to extend his men along the river bank, and then we crossed the river. The Natives could not hear us; they were fast asleep and the sentry was fast asleep. They could not hear us, because there was a rapid two hundred yards above which made a row. When we got across we saw an old fellow starting a fire. I said, "There is a light, Sir." We were right on them. They had their horses tethered, and these horses were making a tremendous noise. The horses saw us and got a fright, and were trying to break away. We advanced quietly up and got on to the rising ground. I think there were three men killed and one wounded, and this was the payment for Bennett White's death.

192. *Mr. Monk.*] I think I understood from you you did not think it likely Captain Gwynneth would give such an order as is recorded on that paper?—I would be very much surprised if he did; and Major St. John was such a peculiar man that had anything been done without his orders he would have been very touchy about it.

193. If Major St. John had been informed of this irregularity on Captain Gwynneth's part, would there not have been a public inquiry held?—He would have had Gwynneth before him. The place was under martial law the whole time. Well, martial law means the officer commanding that district is responsible for everything that happens there.

194. Then any special act of bravery would be a matter of common talk in your camp at that time?—Yes.

195. You lived under a condition of military excitement?—Yes, for two years.

196. You took particular notice at that time of special acts of bravery in individuals?—We did.

197. Your reason for doing so would be you would be so dependent upon military observance of personal bravery?—Yes.

198. Did you know Captain Percival?—Yes; the paymaster. He was paymaster of the First Waikatos, and used to come there monthly to pay the troops. I remember him.

199. W. H. Percival?—Yes; I met him afterwards.

200. What sort of a reputation did he have amongst you there for observance of his duties and personal conduct?—Well, he had no camp duties to perform. He simply came there, paid the men, and cleared out; at least, he did not pay the men: he gave the money to captains of companies, and they paid the men.

201. Did you regard him as a man of temperate habits?—No.

203. Do you know from your own personal knowledge that he was intemperate: would he come in that condition usually known as *delirium tremens*?—He was laid up in my house for three weeks.

204. At this particular time?—Yes; about that time, in the year 1867.

205. Do you know Captain Simpson: the one that writes with reference to the cross—Captain Simpson?—Yes; Leonard Simpson is his name.

206. What were Captain Simpson's habits?—He was a jolly fellow.

207. Are they such as you would place reliance on his statements in important matters?—Yes, I have no grounds to doubt what he said is the truth.

208. He is in the habit of living in a very irregular way amongst the Natives?—Yes.

209. You think that Captain Simpson was not a man that lived such a strict life that you would take his evidence as being of importance?—Free and easy, like all the rest of the fellows down there campaigning. I do not know what Simpson said. I know when we first went down Simpson was not there; he was surveying away up Whakatane when we went down there.

210. Was Captain Simpson at Opotiki at that time when Bennett White and the mailman were murdered, or about that time?—He was not there at the time Bennett White was killed, to the best of my belief.

211. Did they have to swim their horses?—Yes; I had to swim my horse. There were any amount of horses down there. Fellows used to go out and drive them in in mobs.

212. Was there not a ferry at Ohiwa?—Yes, there was a ferry.

213. Do you think it was gone at the time when Mr. Wrigg was said to have carried these despatches. Was this Native, that is, the Native in charge of the ferry, away at the time?—He was away when I got there.

214. Do you think he was away at this particular time I have mentioned?—He might have been.

215. Then, this Captain Simpson—afterwards he just settled with the Natives in the usually-termed Pakeha-Maori style?—Yes; he became a surveyor: and you can hardly separate a surveyor who has camped with the Maoris from mixing up with them.

216. Do you know who was in command at the time at Opotiki when Bennett White and the Native were murdered?—Major St. John.

217. Who was second in command?—Major Mair, now Judge of the Native Land Court.

218. Who was third in command?—There is no third in command except the captains of the companies.

219. What is an adjutant?—He carries out the orderly-room orders; he delivers orders to the sergeant-major, and the sergeant-major delivers them to each company. He drills the men and forms parades, and everything like that; and sees, when men are to be punished, that the sergeant carries out the duty of punishment, and so on.

220. In the position which you held there, would you know who was adjutant at that particular time?—Captain Walker, he was acting-adjutant for a while. Then Ensign Lawson took it up: he was killed afterwards, at Opepe.

221. Walker and Lawson?—Yes.

222. Did you know a person named Bower?—Yes; he was captain of my company.

223. Was not Bower adjutant at that time?—No; he came down some time afterwards. I knew that Bower came down afterwards. He occupied a little place across the creek.

224. Are you sure Captain Bower was not there at the time?—Captain Bower was not there at the time this murder was committed. He came down some time afterwards. He did not stay there long before he went away again.

225. In what is called a camp order, given by Captain Gwynneth, there are certain instructions for the preparation of the journey. Supposing you had been going at that time from Opotiki to Tauranga, would you have provided yourself with rations, or were there places where you could get them?—I never did. You could get them at Ohope, Whakatane, Matata, and Maketu, and other places.

226. Troopers going with despatches had places of obtaining food as they went along?—Oh, yes.

227. And it was not usual then for the camp order to stipulate the rations carried by a trooper when going along with despatches?—No, we never used to think of it along that coast.

228. *Mr. Lewis.*] You remember Bennett White's head being brought in, Mr. Edwards?—Yes, by Mereana, his wife. She was out there on the beach. She was in Opotiki when the alarm was brought in.

229. Who brought in the alarm that he was killed?—Natives from Whakatane.

230. They passed over the road that he had traversed, of course?—Yes. They saw footmarks and the tracks of the horses.

231. Were the Natives there?—No; they had decamped.

232. Bennett White was killed on the 26th, we are told?—Yes.

233. And Mr. Wrigg started out on the 29th, three days after?—Yes.

234. In the meantime, a body of men had been camped on the spot?—Captain Skene and his men.

235. Would you consider that a dangerous part of the country under those circumstances?—They could not find their bodies that night, and they remained there. They got the head early in the morning, in amongst a lot of sea-drift.

236. If Mr. Wrigg crossed this river three days after Bennett White, in the interval it had been crossed by so many people, would you consider it dangerous on the day that Mr. Wrigg crossed it?—No. If I had been ordered to take those despatches I would have taken them, and would not have thought of any danger or anything else.

237. When you talk of the road being dangerous, you assumed it would be dangerous if the Maoris were there?—Yes.

238. About this extract from camp orders, which reads as follows:—“Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald will proceed to-morrow to Tauranga with despatches to Colonel Harington, or officer commanding the district, and await his reply (if any). Report themselves to him, and return with all speed, taking two days' rations with him.” Who is “him,” have you any idea?—I do not know.

239. “Two days' rations with him.” You could not form an opinion as to whom “him” refers to?—All I know is, McDonald came to the orderly room for despatches.

240. *Mr. Holland.*] You say that when the murder was committed Captain Bower was not at Opotiki?—I did not see him there at the time of this murder.

241. You saw him there afterwards?—Yes.

242. He may have been there before?—Yes, of course. He was captain of No. 2 Company, but only stayed there a short time, and went back again.

243. You are not quite sure that he was there?—I am not quite certain.

244. You told Captain Preece, when he came to see you, that you were surprised when you saw the account in the papers?—I was surprised.

245. Would you have taken any action yourself in this matter?—No.

246. *Mr. Wilford.*] Have you got any Maori blood in you yourself?—I am a half-caste.

247. You stated that Leonard Simpson was not at Opotiki at the time Bennett White and the mailman were killed. Do you swear that positively?—No, I will not swear it positively.

248. Then, when you say he was not there, you mean you did not see him there?—If he had been there I should have seen him. I know pretty well all the people.

249. Do you remember George Leaning in a store at Opotiki?—Yes. He kept the store for a man named Company, and then I think he and a little fellow named Davis got into partnership.

250. Do you know whether George Leaning would be allowed to volunteer as a trooper in the case of an emergency if he was not enrolled?—I dare say he would, though he was not wanted. He might have been allowed.

251. Will you swear he never did volunteer as a trooper?—No.

252. Will you swear he never did go out as a voluntary trooper?—He might have gone out.

253. One more question about Captain Bower. You say Captain Bower was not there at the time?—No.

254. You swear positively that Captain Bower was not there at that time?—I am certain he was not there.

255. Why?—Because I knew all the officers that went out on the expedition.

256. When did he leave?—He came there some three or four weeks afterwards.

257. How long was he away in Tauranga?—He was away for months and months.

258. Did you see Mr. Lingard last night or this morning?—No; I do not know any one here in Wellington, except in the Native Land Office.

259. You have seen no one, then?—No.

260. Are you aware of the statements that Captain Bower has made in reference to this Order in Council of the 10th March, 1869?—No.

261. I will read you one thing he said, viz.: "In accordance with this order (Major St. John then commanding the district at Opotiki, being since deceased), it affords me very great pleasure to recommend Mr. Harry Wrigg, late Cornet, Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, to be a recipient of this highly-coveted distinction, to which, in my opinion, he is fully entitled for his act of bravery in voluntarily carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga (and returning), through a country swarming with hostile Natives along the route, where, on the day before, they had murdered two old settlers (Mr. Bennett White and the mailman, whose name I forget), and at a time when the rivers were in high flood, and exceedingly dangerous to cross. Strictly speaking, perhaps, I should not now be making this application as I was not the commanding officer of the force or district, but I was District Adjutant (through whom all orders were issued), and I am quite certain that had the late Colonel St. John been alive he would have made every effort to obtain the decoration for Mr. Wrigg. It may be said also that the claim should have been made before, but I respectfully submit, amongst others, as a precedent, that Colonel McDonnell received his cross in 1886 for an act of bravery in 1863, or twenty-three years after. A perusal of the accompanying documents will, I feel sure, enable you to strongly recommend Mr. Wrigg's claim to His Excellency the Governor's most favourable consideration." Now, Captain Bower has told us, and has contradicted himself at times, that he was there, and then that he was not there, and then that he was certain he was there. Now, you say positively that you are certain Captain Bower was not there in the month of June, but he was away months before, and did not return until some weeks afterwards?—Some weeks afterwards. He was in Tauranga.

262. *Mr. Monk.*] You told the Committee that you belonged to the company of which Captain Bower was captain, No. 2?—Yes.

263. Who commanded during Captain Bower's absence?—Well, you see it was this way: When the order came for reinforcements to go down to Opotiki, Major St. John was deputed to take volunteers from the 1st Waikato Regiment to go down there, and then anybody that liked volunteered to go. In that way he collected one hundred and fifty or two hundred volunteers from every company in the 1st Waikato Regiment, and then we formed what they called an expeditionary field force, and we went down. That is the way it was done.

264. In your special position, you were, so to speak, the right-hand man of Major St. John, and you would be sure to have known if Captain Bower was there?—I should have known it. I was always about. When I saw Captain Bower and his wife they came down and stayed there for some time, and then went away, and I lost sight of them.

265. What do you call the office in which you were?—The orderly-room.

266. That would be frequented by officers, would it not?—Yes. They all go there.

267. An adjutant especially would have been more frequently there than any other officer?—Yes.

268. The orderly-room might be considered strictly the office of the adjutant?—Yes.

269. And Captain Bower was not there and not in that position at that time?—No.

270. But Captain Walker was?—Yes.

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FRIDAY, 28TH OCTOBER, 1898.

ARTHUR STEELE FORD sworn and examined,

1. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Your name is Arthur Steele Ford, is it not?—Yes.

2. You live at Coromandel?—Yes.

3. You are a mining engineer?—An engineer and miner.

4. You were a member, I believe, of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry Corps in 1866?—I remember that.

5. You were a member from the very beginning, were you not?—I think I was the second man that was enrolled.

6. How long did you remain a member?—I remained there until the goldfields broke out at the Thames.

7. When was that?—I think it was at the beginning of 1868 that I went to the Thames Goldfields.

8. Were you acquainted with all the other members of the troop?—Most of them. I was acquainted with all of them at the time.

9. And I suppose the Opotiki occurrences were pretty well known all over the place soon after they happened, and discussed among the residents?—Every one knew what occurred within a few hours.

10. You knew Mr. Wrigg, did you not?—Just slightly.

11. How long was he a member of the corps?—As far as my recollection carries me, about a couple or three months.

12. You remember the news of the murder of Bennett White and the mailman coming into Opotiki?—Yes.

13. Did the troop turn out?—The troop turned out.
14. For what purpose?—To recover the bodies of the mailman and Bennett White.
15. Where did the troop go?—They went from Opotiki down to Ohiwa, where the murder took place.
16. You were there?—I did not go on that occasion. I was on other duty.
17. Do you remember the troop returning from that expedition?—I do. I went the following day.
18. You went with the troop somewhere the following day?—I did.
19. Where was that?—To the beach, where the murder took place.
20. With what object was that expedition sent out?—Down to see if they could find the bodies, because the bodies were not recovered the same day. The first day the head was brought in.
21. Were you in Opotiki on that day the head was brought in?—I went into the church to see the head.
22. Were you in regular attendance at the parades of the troop?—Never missed a parade—only one.
23. Not about this time?—No, not at this time.
24. On the day you say the head was brought in you say you saw it in the church. Was there a parade at which volunteers were called for to carry despatches?—Not as far as my recollection serves me.
25. Is your recollection of the event about that time tolerably clear?—Yes; I remember it only too well.
26. Is it at all likely that there would have been a parade at which volunteers were called for at which you were not present, or of which you would not have heard if you had been absent?—I feel quite satisfied I would have heard, because I was living so close to the parade-ground.
27. Do you know or did you hear of any despatches being carried?—Yes.
28. About that time, I mean. What was it you heard?—That Trooper McDonald would go to Tauranga with despatches. Donald McDonald, I think, was his name.
29. Do you know of your own knowledge if he went?—I did not see him start.
30. Nor return?—And I did not see him return.
31. You remember an expedition to recover the bodies of two men who had previously been murdered?—Yes. There was a man called Wilkinson, now Native Land Purchaser, and a man called Livingstone, who came past my place, and running into camp. The alarm sounded to turn out, and I was on the parade-ground, and we heard that the Hauhaus had come down on Moore and Beggs. and Livingstone and Wilkinson, and had burned the whare down, and two escaped and got in, but the other two, they said, were missing. It was getting on towards evening, and I think there were ten or a dozen of us volunteered to go out. We found no trace of them, and had to come back.
32. Was that before the occurrence of the murder of Bennett White?—I think it was after.
33. Did the troop find the bodies?—No; the bodies were not found—not on the first occasion. That, I believe, was a Saturday, and on the Sunday morning we went out and traced the footprints of these men (the rebels) for a considerable distance into the bush, but had to go back again.
34. Were the bodies eventually found?—Some three weeks or a month after, we got word from the friendly Maoris that the bodies were to be found in the bush. A considerable number went out, and we got up to this hill, that part near the old Maori pa.
35. I was coming to the point as to whether Mr. Wrigg was there when the bodies were found?—Mr. Wrigg was there, and Mr. Gwynneth went part of the distance.
36. Why did he not go?—He said to Mr. Wrigg, "Wrigg, take my revolver; I am puffed." At that moment there was an alarm, and the word was passed along to look out—that they expected a volley, and I heard Captain Gwynneth say, "Take my revolver; I am puffed." We mounted over the parapet, and found it was a tent that the dog had been barking at, which had been left by some rangers who had been looking for the bodies, and there was a false alarm on that occasion, and they ran and left the tent behind them. We found the bones of the bodies some distance behind, and brought them in. The clothes were all stripped off.
37. You heard that despatches had been carried from Opotiki to Tauranga and that Trooper McDonald had returned. Was it a matter of conversation in the camp that anything extraordinary had occurred?—Not that I am aware of.
38. Would it have been a matter of conversation if anything extraordinary had occurred: would the military settlers have talked about it?—No; because it is so common for men to go out on despatch duty.
39. Did you hear of any act of bravery being performed at this particular time?—Not a single word until I saw in the papers that a Cross had been given. In fact, there were a number of men wanting to get away to Tauranga. It is more of a pleasure trip; and after you pass this bluff at Ohiwa there is no further danger.
40. Is that at Ohiwa?—Yes, as far as Ohiwa.
41. Mr. Wilford.] Now, Mr. Ford, the last statement was that when you passed that bluff where the troops were, there was no particular danger. You told Mr. Hutchison that you did not see McDonald set out from the camp?—Yes.
42. Will you swear that McDonald was accompanied by any other members of the troop than Wrigg?—I was not there.
43. Are you prepared to swear that Wrigg and McDonald were accompanied by any members of the troop—any detachment of the corps—on that particular ride?—That I could not tell you. All I know is this place was kept open by a troop of cavalry riding up and down on the beach to keep it open for people passing over this particular part.
44. You are not prepared to state a detachment accompanied Wrigg and McDonald?—No; I cannot recall that to my mind.

45. In details you are not clear on, the main facts are obscured?—I do not see that. I could not very well remember.

46. Of course you have heard the statement, have you not, made by Wrigg that volunteers were called for to carry despatches to Tauranga, and that he volunteered?—I heard he stated that.

47. You understand by that that he volunteered alone from the troop?—Yes.

48. And as you were a member of the troop at that time, if his statement is correct it is to a certain extent a reflection on yourself?—"If," yes.

49. You have no recollection of any volunteers being called for to carry despatches?—None whatever. Had volunteers been called for, the whole troop would have stepped to the front. "Volunteers wanted," that means "step to the front." I have done it so often I know something about it.

50. When volunteers are called for, I presume a man prepared to go as a volunteer steps out from the ranks?—From wherever he is.

51. Are you prepared to state positively that no volunteers were ever called for by Captain Gwynneth to carry despatches to Tauranga?—I am quite certain no volunteers were ever called for on that occasion.

52. Would you recognise Captain Gwynneth's signature?—After thirty-one years I certainly could not swear to it.

53. You might look at this camp order. It (the signature) is a peculiar one?—I could not call to mind his signature.

54. Now, this extract from camp orders purports to be signed by John Gwynneth, is dated 28th June, 1867, and says: "Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald will proceed to-morrow to Tauranga with despatches to Colonel Harington, or officer commanding the district." That is signed by Gwynneth, and dated 28th June, 1867?—Quite so.

55. Can you suggest any reason why that should not be in order?—There is something missing about that; it does not say that they had volunteered to do special duty.

56. That is on the back of it. You see they volunteered?—I say they did not volunteer. That is the reason it is not there.

57. We have got on the back of this camp order: "Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald volunteered for the within-named service at a time of great danger, as the Natives were known to be in force in the vicinity, and the road they had to travel was that upon which Bennett White and the mailman had been murdered only the day previously, and abounding with every facility for ambushes. On the evening immediately after their return from this duty, which was performed with credit to themselves, and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in the search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs, who had been dragged from their dwellings into the bush and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp." Are you prepared to contradict that statement of Gwynneth's?—Most undoubtedly.

58. You know you did not care to go?—There was a reason. They did not give us a chance. It was a bit of favouritism.

59. It was a bit of favouritism of Captain Gwynneth's to Wrigg?—To McDonald; they managed to be picked out.

60. Was the road from Opotiki to Ohiwa dangerous?—Not as long as the troops were there. It was very seldom that the rebels came round that way. If they did we always got warning.

61. Would you consider passing the bluff at Ohiwa a dangerous undertaking then?—It is not advisable to go alone. But a trooper is quite capable of taking care of himself.

62. Is it not a fact that the bluff at Ohiwa affords capital ambush for any hostile Natives?—Well, they have got cliffs all the way along. They could fire from the cliffs.

63. A party passing would have no means of protecting himself except by galloping quickly, I suppose?—Well, he never did, only on this occasion.

64. I suppose a party passing that bluff would have no means of protecting himself except by galloping from a Native ambush there. He could not get away out of range?—If it was a civilian I suppose he could, but a trooper generally returns the fire. On this occasion they let a European pass. In fact, they detained him, got him and kept his horse, as he was a man they did not want to kill. Bennett White had given evidence of the murder of Falloon against them.

65. Who first asked you to make a declaration in this matter?—I do not know that it was Mr. Hutchison. I got a communication from him.

66. Have you got the communication from him?—I know when I read this I put certain letters in the paper contradicting this.

67. You received a letter from Mr. Hutchison, enclosing a declaration for signature?—Yes.

68. Was that declaration already drawn up for your signature?—Yes.

69. Then the words of the declaration are whose words—the actual wording of the declaration?—I think they tally with my letter.

70. The words of the declaration are Mr. Hutchison's, are they not?—I could not say.

71. Did you write a letter to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Ford, about the matter before you received one from him?—I think it was to Mr. Hutchison I wrote. I will not be sure.

72. Did you keep a copy of that letter?—I did not.

73. And, then, it was in answer to that letter that you received a letter from Mr. Hutchison and the declaration, and you might say to the best of your recollection it embodied the terms of the letter?—Yes.

74. You signed the declaration because you believed the same to be true?—That is correct.

75. Do you remember or have you any knowledge of who actually carried the despatches?—As far as my recollection goes I believe it was McDonald who carried the despatches.

76. Will you tell me why you believe that?—Simply from memory.

77. From memory of what circumstances?—That Trooper McDonald took despatches.
78. Did you see him in possession of them?—I did not.
79. You never saw him leave or return?—I did not.
80. You believed he carried the despatches?—It was the talk of the camp, and we wondered why he got the preference, and all that sort of thing.
81. You told Mr. Hutchison that if an act of valour had been performed by one individual, it might not have been discussed. You said that the Military Settlers would not necessarily admire a ride of this kind, because it was a common thing for men to carry despatches?—Yes; except as to acts of valour.
82. Then the carrying of despatches through this country might not necessarily be a subject of comment?—That is quite correct.
83. And the fact that a man carrying despatches faced real dangers in a time like the time we speak of would not necessarily be commented on?—The only real danger was when a trooper went inland to follow up a party of Rangers to give them or bring back despatches. The beach was not dangerous.
84. Is it not a fact some man was killed also about the same place?—There was a Native mailman killed.
85. No, some other Maori. Do you remember a Maori besides the mailman being killed?—There was one killed at Ohiwa, on the island.
86. Killed by the hostile tribes?—Yes, but partly inland, on an island.
87. Is that near where the ferry was?—Yes, only some distance inland.
88. I want you to bring your recollection back to the time that they went out to discover the bodies of Moore and Beggs. You remember that Wrigg went?—That is the third time we went out.
89. How long do you think the bodies were missing?—About three weeks or a month, as far as my recollection carries me.
90. Do you remember whether the news that they were missing was received prior to the news of the murder of Bennett White and the mailman?—It was some considerable time afterwards. How long, I could not tell you.
91. Why do you say it was after? How is it you come to recollect that it was after?—Well, in getting dates I have got to tax my memory. My memory tells me Bennett White was killed some time before Moore and Beggs.
92. The news was received that they were missing, but their bodies were not found till after. Are you able to swear I am incorrect?—The news was brought in by Wilkinson.
93. The news was suppressed?—I do not know that that was the case.
94. To the best of your recollection it was not so?—It was some time before Moore and Beggs were missing that Bennett White was killed.
95. Would you be prepared to state that it was after the 29th July, 1867, when the bodies of White and the mailman were recovered?—I cannot swear to the date. Thirty-one years ago is a very long time.
96. Do you know whether it was in the month of June or July?—That I cannot tell you.
97. Or the beginning or end of any particular month?—I could not tell you.
98. Do you remember the day of the week?—I remember—this is on the Sunday—a couple of men went with us to keep our horses, and we tried to see if we could track Moore and Beggs. We received the news that they were killed on a Saturday.
99. Did you know Major St. John well?—Very well.
100. Were you on such terms of friendship with him that you could go to the house and discuss matters with him?—I knew him as my superior officer.
101. Were you on visiting terms, and dined at his table?—Oh, no.
102. Your relationship was friendly as between commanding officer and trooper?—Quite so. We had a little freedom because he preferred going out with old active-service men.
103. In recommendations he made as to merit of any particular individual he would not consult you about it?—Certainly not.
104. Would it be likely that you would hear of it?—It would be soon over the camp if any one had been mentioned.
105. Is it not a fact that at times, in despatches and letters which were sent by the commanding officer, certain names were honourably mentioned, but the members of the troop knew nothing about it until some time afterwards?—I never heard of it.
106. You are aware the New Zealand Cross was not instituted until 1869?—Quite correct. They keep records of any acts of bravery.
107. You have stated in your declaration, "If Mr. Wrigg had performed any act of service above the common, our commanding officer, Major St. John, would no doubt have recorded the fact at the time and reported the matter to the proper authorities." Would you swear he did not?—Not being his secretary, I could not swear that.
108. Are you prepared to state that he never did?—I could not swear it.
109. When you speak of the words "carrying despatches" you mean actually carrying despatches—carrying the documents themselves from one commanding officer to another?—Quite so.
110. What do you mean by putting it on paper that Trooper McDonald carried the despatches when you do not know who did?—We were told in camp that McDonald was going away with despatches, and that Wrigg was going with him.
111. You have made a declaration that the man who carried the despatches on this occasion was McDonald?—Quite correct.
112. What do you mean by swearing that?—Because we heard he went away.
113. Do you not think it would have been the honest way to have said, "I heard he carried the despatches," instead of saying he carried it, and not Wrigg?—I call that splitting straws.

114. Call it what you like. Perhaps the words of the declaration are Mr. Hutchison's and not yours?—Oh, no; I went through that typewritten declaration, and was satisfied with it, and would have struck anything wrong out of it.

115. It is not a fact that you were reckless, then?—No.

116. You cannot say you saw Trooper McDonald carry despatches?—I know he volunteered to go. He went to the officer commanding when he heard there were despatches to go to Tauranga; and there was a row because he was favoured.

117. You say Trooper McDonald went to the commanding officer and volunteered to go?—He heard there were despatches, and he went and asked to be favoured.

118. How do you know that?—Because it was the talk of the camp.

119. You mean he did not volunteer on parade to go?—Oh, no.

120. You know that Cornet Wrigg accompanied him?—Of course he did.

121. Will you tell me whether these despatches were to be carried up to Major Mair?—To Tauranga, I think.

122. Will you tell me whether any despatches were to be carried to Major Mair?—I cannot say.

123. You have made a declaration that the man who carried the despatches was Trooper McDonald, and Wrigg merely accompanied him?—Quite correct.

124. Do you mean to say, "I heard Trooper McDonald carried the despatches"? Is not that really it?—All I know is what was reported in camp. I never heard the camp orders read out.

125. Am I right in saying you heard Trooper McDonald first carried the despatches, and that you stated in the declaration that he did carry them?—Yes.

126. How do you know he went with the despatches?—Simply because it was commonly talked of in camp. More than one was annoyed that he should have been picked upon.

127. You are not prepared to swear that Wrigg did not have those despatches?—Quite so.

128. And the mere carrying of the paper does not introduce any extra element of danger?—Not any difference. That particular place was kept open by the troop.

129. Did you know George Leaning?—A storekeeper?

130. Yes?—I did.

131. Do you remember him being at Opotiki at the time?—Yes. He was in Thomas Wrigley's store. He was in the store, and Sergeant Davis was in the troop.

132. They went into partnership afterwards?—I could not tell you.

133. Would Leaning be allowed to take part in the doings of the troop in case of emergency?—I do not think he was in the troop.

134. Would he be allowed, in case of emergency, to go out and join the troop as a volunteer, as an honorary member?—The only honorary member I remember was William Kelly.

135. Do you mean to say that was the only honorary member—William Kelly?—Oh, no.

136. What would you understand by "voluntary trooper"—a man who could go forward in case of emergency to help the troop?—A man who could use a sword and a carbine.

137. You referred to Mr. Wrigg as "Acting-Cornet Wrigg." What do you mean by that?—At the time I knew him he was only acting.

138. You told us you only knew Wrigg slightly?—Yes.

139. As far as you know, he was only in the corps two or three months?—As far as I remember.

140. Would you be surprised to know he was there about ten months? Do you remember he was gazetted at the time Captain Gwynneth was gazetted?—I am not aware of that.

141. Did you know Mr. Wrigg personally yourself that you could remember?—I can just remember him.

142. Could you have recognised him if you met him in the street?—I do not say I could.

143. Have you been approached by any of the petitioners in reference to this matter?—No; I have only just come from Coromandel.

144. When did you come?—I arrived here yesterday afternoon.

145. You have not been in communication with any of the others?—No.

146. Has there been any communication with Mr. Hutchison—with any of the other petitioners?—No.

147. Have you been in communication with a Mr. Lingard recently?—What is he?

148. He is an insurance agent?—No.

149. Have you been in communication with Mr. Lingard?—I do not know the man.

150. Do you remember Colonel Lyon?—I knew him very well.

151. Do you know Mr. Wrigg received the New Zealand War Medal from him?—I was not aware of that.

152. Were you aware that he received the New Zealand War Medal under Colonel Lyon for services rendered at Wairoa and Papakura?—I never heard of it.

153. What, did you not know Mr. Wrigg had received the New Zealand War Medal?—No.

154. You were not aware until this moment that Mr. Wrigg was a New Zealand War Medal man as well?—I did not get my medal until I had left. I think I got mine in 1883. It came to Coromandel to me.

155. You did not know Mr. Wrigg was a man who had also received the New Zealand War Medal?—No.

156. *Mr. Hutchison.*] I want you to listen to this declaration, and say whether it is absolutely correct or not: "I, Arthur Steele Ford, of Coromandel, in the Provincial District of Auckland, miner and engineer, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I was the second man to enrol as a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps, and am familiar with the names of those who distinguished themselves by acts of bravery, but I declare I never heard the name of Mr. Wrigg mentioned as having done anything out of the common. As a matter of fact, he was only in the

corps for a short time, and was not regarded as a man conspicuous for bravery. There were troops stationed along the East Coast, and the only place that could be considered as being unsafe was a distance of three or four miles between Waiotahi and Ohiwa, and even over that part there was very little danger, as the custom was for a detachment of the corps to ride through and see that the route was clear. I recollect the occasion on which Mr. Wrigg claims to have displayed such valiant conduct as to merit the distinction of the New Zealand Cross; but the matter was regarded in a very different light at the time by his comrades, who saw nothing above the common in what he did, nor more than most of us were in the habit of doing when required. The man who carried the despatches on the occasion referred to was Trooper Donald McDonald, and Mr. Wrigg merely accompanied him, and nothing of moment was reported at the time as having occurred during the ride from Opotiki to Tauranga. I am sure that had there been any special danger attached to the journey, the fact would have become known to those of us who were in the corps at the time and performing active service. If Mr. Wrigg had performed any act or service above the common, our commanding officer, Colonel St. John, would no doubt have recorded the fact at the time, and reported the matter to the proper authorities. Colonel St. John lived for several years after the period referred to. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of 'The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882.' Declared at Coromandel, this 23rd day of September, 1898, before me, T. W. Rhodes, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand.—A. S. Ford?—That is absolutely correct.

157. Mr. Wilford read part of the indorsement on the Camp Orders; I want to read another part. This is supposed to be an indorsement by Captain Gwynneth made some two years after the murder of Bennett White: "On the evening immediately after their return from this duty, which was performed with credit to themselves, and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in a search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs, who had been dragged from their dwellings into the bush and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp." Can you say whether the expedition that went out brought back the bodies in the evening or not?—We started in the morning.

158. Would Captain Gwynneth be correct in saying he was one of those who went all the way and found the bodies?—No, it is not correct.

159. *Mr. Wilford.*] May I ask whether those are your words or Mr. Hutchison's when you say, "As a matter of fact, Mr. Wrigg was only in the corps for a short time, and was not regarded as a man conspicuous for bravery." You told us you knew him. Are those your words?—Yes.

160. You swear you put those words in the letter that you wrote to Mr. Hutchison?—I am pretty well certain it is word for word.

161. Why should you make use of that statement?—Because we know if a man is credited with any acts of bravery it becomes known.

162. You do not mean it is a reflection on Mr. Wrigg that he was a coward: you mean to say he was not regarded as a man conspicuous as having done any particular brave act?—I know when I have gone out I have never seen Mr. Wrigg. He was generally in the office.

163. Were not those his regular duties? He had been with Captain Gwynneth?—That surveying business?

164. Yes?—Yes; that would account for his not being in the troop when wanted.

165. Do you suggest Mr. Wrigg would not go out when he was called?—I could not say that.

166. Are you able to say Mr. Wrigg ever shirked his duty and refused to do it?—The only time I remember seeing him on an expedition was some three weeks or a month after Moore and Beggs were killed. It was then we got word from the friendly Maoris where the bodies were. He did go with us on that occasion, and Captain Gwynneth did not go.

167. "Then he (Captain Gwynneth) handed over his revolver to Mr. Wrigg and said, 'I am puffed': Would that hand over the command to Mr. Wrigg?—Oh, no, it would be giving two revolvers to one man. We expected an ambuscade ahead of us. A dog was ahead of us, and it gave the alarm.

169. You are not able to say Mr. Wrigg ever shirked his duty or refused to go when called on?—Because I do not know when he was ever called on.

170. *Mr. Holland.*] Do you recollect Captain Bower?—I just remember him, in Tauranga.

171. You do not remember whether he was there at the time this took place?—Major St. John, Captain Walker, and Captain Lawson were in charge at times.

172. *Mr. Field.*] You said, Mr. Ford, that you were one of the first men to join the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps?—One of the first.

173. And you remained a member of that corps about how long?—Until the Thames Goldfields broke out.

174. How long would that be?—That would be the latter end of 1867 or 1868 that I went to the Thames diggings.

175. Was Mr. Wrigg a member of the corps at the time you joined?—That I could not tell you.

176. You said you were the second man to join: was he a member before you were a member—at the time you joined yourself?—I think it is most likely he was a member. There were so many surveyors that joined the troop that they tried to get their survey offices arranged in connection with their commission offices.

177. That being so, you could hardly have been the second member?—Officers are elected after the corps is formed. They do not form a corps and then look for privates.

178. You joined as a private, so did Mr. Wrigg?—I take it for granted Mr. Wrigg joined as a private.

179. I want to know whether or not Mr. Wrigg joined before you: do you recollect?—I think the remark of the man that was coming out as I went in was, "Ford, you are next; I am No. 1."

180. Was Mr. Wrigg a member of the corps at the time you left it: had he left the corps before you?—No, John Kelly was our cornet then.

181. I want you to say, Mr. Ford, to the best of your recollection, whether Mr. Wrigg had left the corps, ceased to be a member of the corps, before you left it?—I did not leave it. I got leave of absence to go away to the diggings.

182. Had Mr. Wrigg left the district before you left for the diggings?—I could not tell you.

183. Of whom was this corps composed: were they men belonging to the district?—Mostly all men belonging to the left wing of the 1st Waikatos.

184. Had they a knowledge of the district?—Yes, they were living there, settling on the land.

185. I want to know whether the men who joined that corps had a general knowledge of the district previous to joining?—Yes, they had to go out and look at the land to see whether they would take that land or not.

186. I want to know whether or not these men knew the district; whether they were resident in the district at the time they joined that corps?—The men, I think, knew the district very well, because the land extended a good distance, and we used to go out pig-hunting when things were quiet.

187. You knew Trooper McDonald?—Yes.

188. What was his reputation—was he regarded as a good man? Was he a man you would regard as being possessed of an ordinary amount of courage, and so on?—I should say he was a strictly reliable man.

189. And a courageous man—or otherwise?—Well, I never had an opportunity of proving whether he was more courageous than any other man. He had never been in any force before he joined the Troopers.

190. Did he know the district?—Just as much as the rest of them.

191. He belonged to the 1st Waikatos?—I do not know whether he did or not.

192. Have you any idea how long he had been there at the time he joined?—He came with the left wing, and his brother-in-law.

193. How long had this corps been formed at the time that Bennett White was murdered?—It could not have been very long.

194. How long do you suppose?—Well, I do not know the date that Bennett White was murdered, nor the actual date when the corps was formed.

195. Mr. Wrigg has said that at the time he and Trooper McDonald went along on this memorable occasion and carried the despatches that that was the first occasion in which they had been along that coast. Is that true to the best of your knowledge and belief?—I do not know whether McDonald could have been. The troop used to go down the beach to keep the road open.

196. Is it within your knowledge or not that McDonald had been along that road before from Opotiki to Tauranga?—If the troop went he would be with them. I do not know.

197. Had any members of the corps been along the road before?—As far as my recollection carries me, I think the troop had been down the beach.

198. So far as you know, had any member of that corps at that time been along the coast between Tauranga and Opotiki?—I could not swear, sir.

199. You had not been along yourself?—I could not remember.

200. Not from Tauranga to Opotiki?—I could not remember.

201. Were there any men who were permanently settled in the district—men who had been there for any length of time before?—I think there was one man who originally belonged to the Wanganui Cavalry that settled in Opotiki, which was there before our corps was formed, and I think that man was there before we arrived.

202. Do you think it is at all likely, Mr. Ford, that, had there been any men in that troop who knew the road, do you think it is at all likely that Captain Gwynneth would have sent two men who did not know the road?—There was no danger in the road—only the beach.

203. Is it at all likely that Captain Gwynneth would have sent men to carry the despatches who did not know the road if he had had at his command men who did know the road?—I think they were all tarred with one brush. We had to go out. We had patrolled the beach.

204. My question was as to whether or not any members of that troop knew the road from Opotiki to Tauranga?—I do not know.

205. You said you were a constant attendant at the parades of the troop?—Quite correct.

206. You have seen that document put in that purports to be a camp order?—Yes.

207. Have you seen other camp orders?—I have.

208. Does this camp order resemble one, or is it anything like what you consider a camp order should be, or what a camp order ordinarily was?—It reads something like a daily camp order.

209. You have no doubt as to its genuineness?—That I could not say.

210. You said that you wrote to a newspaper on one or two occasions. Why did you write?—Because I heard that Mr. Wrigg, formerly cornet of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry, had received the New Zealand Cross, and I wanted to know why. Then I found out that it was for carrying the despatches to Tauranga, notifying the murder of Bennett White and the mailman. Then I wrote to the papers contradicting it.

211. One of the reasons was you did not think Mr. Wrigg was entitled it?—That was the reason.

212. You did not think he had done anything particularly meritorious?—He had not done anything meritorious.

213. You also said, Mr. Ford, that it was a practice to patrol that portion of the road between Opotiki and Ohiva?—Correct, sir.

214. Was that done every day?—As far as my recollection carries me, there were so many men told off to patrol the beach every day.

215. For the purpose of keeping it open?—Yes.

216. Was it a common or uncommon thing for men—for troopers—to go along that beach?—That I could not say; it is so long ago.

217. Then, the fact that a man went along that beach, or a pair of troopers went along that beach, would not excite comment?—It would not.

218. You were a young man in those days, I presume, Mr. Ford?—I was a young man then. I am fifty-five years of age on the 20th of this month.

219. I suppose you took a fairly active part in what was going on?—The usual share.

220. You did not shirk duty?—No, indeed. I was full of life.

221. I take it that any act of conspicuous bravery would have been a matter of talk and comment: is that not so?—Quite so.

222. Did you ever hear Wrigg's name mentioned in connection with any such action?—No, sir.

223. *Mr. Moore.*] You say there was no parade of the corps at the time Cornet Wrigg volunteered?—No.

224. Do you think any conspicuous act of bravery could have been carried out at that time without coming under your notice at the camp?—I feel quite positive that it could not have.

225. Was it the practice to mention any act of special merit?—It would have been read in orders before the whole parade.

226. Such an occurrence as Mr. Wrigg refers to as having occurred?—It would have been read in orders by Major St. John.

227. Was there anything of that sort?—Nothing.

228. *Mr. Monk.*] Do you know whether the relations between Major St. John and Captain Gwynneth were cordial or strained?—I could not say.

229. Supposing the camp order was issued at that time, who was the proper person to sign it?—All camp orders were signed by Major St. John.

230. Who next to him should have signed it, allowing that he was not there?—The next officer in command would be Captain Walker, as far as I can remember. I think he was second in command. There was Major Mair, I forget whether he acted on these occasions.

231. Would it be a breach of discipline for Captain Gwynneth to sign the order?—In the presence of his superior it would. Major St. John was an active-service man, and Mr. Gwynneth had only just then joined the cavalry and knew nothing about military practice, and must have taken all his instructions from Major St. John.

232. Major St. John has been in the Imperial service, has he not?—I think so.

233. He was considered a good soldier?—Yes.

234. If Captain Gwynneth had issued a camp order would not Major St. John have called him to book for having done so?—I think he would have done so.

235. Did you hear then of any contention, or any question being made, as to a breach of discipline on the part of Captain Gwynneth by Major St. John?—I have no recollection.

236. His troop would have been sure to have known?—Yes.

237. It would have been notorious, would it not?—Yes.

238. *Mr. Holland.*] You said you were the second man to join the corps?—I think so.

239. Did not Mr. Wrigg join before you?—I could not tell you.

240. Was Mr. Wrigg not nominated as a lieutenant?—Not to my knowledge, unless it was a matter in the survey camp.

241. Was he not nominated to the Government for cornet before the company was formed?—I am not aware of it.

242. You would be surprised to see here in the minute-book he was nominated for lieutenant before the company was formed, but lost it by three votes, out of four men. Then he was nominated for cornet, and recommended to the Government for cornet, before the company was formed. Mr. Wrigg's name is mentioned in this book as third, and yours is not mentioned until the 37th is reached?—I am only telling you what a man said to me coming out of the room. He said, "Old man, you are No. 2; I am No. 1."

243. When did that meeting take place?

*Mr. Wilford:* On the 31st October, 1866. He was only in it three months, and you speak of June, 1867\*?—During all the time we were in Opotiki I had only seen him on one occasion in active service.

244. Look at this minute-book: is that your signature?—It is very like my signature. And does it state the men who were sworn there?

245. This is it: "We, the undersigned residents of Opotiki, being desirous of forming ourselves into a Volunteer cavalry corps, do now offer our services in accordance with certain resolutions passed at a meeting held in Opotiki on the 23rd October, 1866." And then follow the names.

246. *The Chairman.*] This resolution in the minute-book appears to be an application addressed to the Defence Minister for the formation of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps, and Mr. Wrigg's name is third. Mr. Ford's name is No. 37 on the list. Would it not appear, Mr. Ford, forasmuch as Mr. Wrigg's name appears third on the list of applicants who signed the application form to the Defence Minister to form the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps, that Mr. Wrigg took a prominent part at a very early stage in the formation of that company?—It would seem so. But I know when the left wing were disbanded the first thing was to evade getting into the Militia.

247. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Here is a minute of the 9th February, 1867: "This is really the first meeting, and the day that members were sworn in.—J. F. C."?—I have forgotten all about those meetings in the minute-book.

*Mr. Wilford:* You were wrong when you said those meetings did not take place.

*Mr. Hutchison:* Here is another entry in the minute-book: "On the 9th February Mr. Wrigg proposed, and Captain Gwynneth seconded, That Donald McDonald be a member of the corps."

*Mr. Holland:* I have pointed this out because some say they did not know Mr. Wrigg, and had never seen him, while from the first meeting of the corps he is mentioned in this minute-book.

\* The services of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteer Corps were accepted on 23rd December, 1866: *vide New Zealand Gazette* No. 5, Jan. 19, 1867, page 47.

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.

291. Do you remember the day the expedition went out to bring in the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—Yes.
292. Where were you on that day?—I was on the beach.
293. During what hours?—I could not say the exact time. It was in the afternoon when we got into camp.
294. Would you be there in the morning of that day—on the beach, I mean?—Yes.
295. At what hour would you start to go down on patrol?—I could not say. It was some time after breakfast, and we came back after dinner.
296. At the time you started for patrol duty on that day, had the expedition started which brought in the bodies of Moore and Begg?—We knew nothing of it until we came in.
297. Are you satisfied that the expedition started between the interval of your going out and coming in?—Yes.
298. And you were on the beach all the time?—Yes.
299. Did Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald return along the beach that forenoon?—No.
300. Would you have seen them had they come down?—Yes.
301. There would have been no escaping your observation?—No.
302. You remained, I suppose, at Opotiki for some time after these occurrences?—Yes. I think it was in the beginning of 1869 that I left.
303. Did you hear of any act of conspicuous bravery performed by Wrigg in carrying despatches between Opotiki and Tauranga?—No.
304. *Mr. Wilford.*] You told us you went to Major St. John for the purpose of seeing if you could carry these despatches to Tauranga?—Yes.
305. But Major St. John told you he had got two orderlies, and therefore the matter was out of his hands?—Yes.
306. Did he tell you he had got the two orderlies—he had applied to Captain Gwynneth for two orderlies, and Captain Gwynneth had got these two orderlies for him?—Yes.
307. These two orderlies were Wrigg and McDonald?—Yes.
308. And Wrigg was the senior to McDonald in the troop, was he not?—Yes, he was superior to him.
309. Wrigg was a cornet, McDonald a trooper?—Yes.
310. Then, were the two orderlies picked by Captain Gwynneth, in connection with Major St. John's application for two orderlies?—Yes.
311. Was it usual for cornets to carry despatches?—No.
312. Is it not usual that if a cornet was put up to carry despatches that the trooper might have control of the packet, though the cornet would be with him?—I never heard said of a cornet carrying despatches. I do not say they do not do so.
313. You were not a regular attendant at parade?—I was not paid.
314. You were not the worst, but not the best?—If there was any work to be done, I was generally there.
315. There were parades that you missed?—Very few, if any.
316. You have told Mr. Hutchison you were not a regular attendant?—Of course, I was busy working all the time.
317. You were generally at parade, but not always?—Not always.
318. Then, it is possible volunteers were called for by Gwynneth and you were not there?—If it had happened I should certainly have heard of it.
319. You heard from some of the members of the troop afterwards?—Yes.
320. When Wrigg swears that Captain Gwynneth, in accordance with the order from Major St. John, called for volunteers, and that he (Wrigg) stepped forward and offered to carry the despatches, are you prepared to deny that on oath?—I am hardly clear on that subject.
321. When Mr. Wrigg has sworn that Captain Gwynneth called for volunteers to carry despatches to Tauranga, and that he (Wrigg) volunteered to carry them, and taking into consideration that you knew Major St. John wanted Captain Gwynneth to get volunteers, will you swear that that never occurred?—I am not certain about swearing. I was not on parade; but there was never a word about it, because if there had been there would have been two troopers instead of the cornet.
322. If volunteers are called for from a corps, or from a troop, that means any one who is ready to go, not necessarily the troopers alone?—I am not quite clear, but if any volunteers had been called for there would not have been only two troopers, but a lot more would have stepped out.
323. You do not remember any such circumstance?—No.
324. Mr. Wrigg tells us the circumstance occurred, and you are not prepared to contradict him, because it is possible you were not on parade when that did occur?—It is my opinion there was no parade at the time. Orderlies were told off to go.
325. How were they (Wrigg and McDonald) told off?—They were told off privately.
326. Why?—Because his (McDonald's) brother-in-law had a store or canteen, and wanted him to transact business.
327. Why would Gwynneth pick on him?—Because it was "cut and dried" between them.
328. Do you suggest favouritism by the captain of your corps?—Yes.
329. You know that Captain Gwynneth took an action for defamation of character, and got damages against St. John?—I could not remember that.
330. Do you not remember that he took an action against Major St. John for defamation of character, and got damages?—I know there was some bobbery amongst them, but I never kept that in my mind. The only things I am clear on are things I was actually in.
331. You said it was arranged that Wrigg and McDonald should carry despatches to Tauranga?—Yes.
332. You have no doubt about that?—No.

333. Why did you not say so in your declaration, if that is so, and you have no doubt about it—why did you not say so?—I am no writing man myself, and Captain Gilbert Mair came to me and asked me to make the statement, and I did so.

334. Who wrote it down?—Captain Mair wrote it down.

335. Did you tell Captain Mair that McDonald and Wrigg were chosen to carry the despatches? Did you say it was arranged that Wrigg and McDonald were to carry the despatches?—Yes.

336. Take these words: "In my opinion Mr. Wrigg was less entitled to special honour than any man in the whole Force." Were they your own words?—My own words.

337. And these words: "It was arranged that Trooper McDonald was to go"?—I think they were my own words. You see, Captain Mair came and asked for me at the pump. I told him as he was talking to me. He asked me if I remembered the affair, and I told him I did. I said I could not remember anything there. He asked me if I would write a statement, and I said, if he would come up any time I would be happy to tell him what I knew about the affair, and he came to me one night when I was on night shift. I told him the statement as plainly as I could, and he wrote it down.

338. Did you tell him it was arranged that Cornet Wrigg and Trooper McDonald were to go to Tauranga with despatches?—Yes.

340. Did you suggest he was to keep back the name of Wrigg and put the name of McDonald in your declaration?—Oh, no. I did not see them go. I said I did not know.

341. You said there was no danger in going on this trip?—No.

342. Did you not consider the bluff at Ohiwa was dangerous to pass?—Not if it was not past half-tide.

343. You could not get out of range of a hostile Native's gun in ambush?—There were no Natives there.

344. You are not prepared to swear they were not there?—I was prepared to go down on the beach and not be afraid of Maoris.

345. It has been admitted that the bluff at Ohiwa was a dangerous part to pass, because there was no protection for a man passing, from ambush?—The only mischief that was done was at the bluff at Waiotahi.

346. All along there?—Yes.

347. It is a dangerous place from Natives hiding, is it not?—No.

348. Are there not plenty of places for ambush? Is it not where Bennett White was killed?—That was at the Waiotahi.

349. Is that considered a dangerous spot?—Yes.

350. Very dangerous?—Yes.

351. Then, what do you mean in stating that there was no honour attached, and no danger?—There was no danger then because the major and the men had followed these Maoris inland, and all the corps had gone to Ohiwa.

352. You have no proof that these Natives were driven inland. They may have been in hiding in the Waiotahi Valley or Ohiwa?—They may have been.

353. You remember the expedition to fetch in the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—I remember hearing tell of it when I came back.

354. What year was it in?—In 1867.

355. Had the fact of Moore and Beggs being missing been reported a month, three weeks, or how long, before the murder of Bennett White and the mailman? How long do you think before Bennett White's murder was committed was it before the matter was notified?—I cannot say about the time. There were all kinds of rumours.

356. Moore and Beggs were missed?—Yes.

357. How long previous to the fact of your knowing that Bennett White and the mailman were murdered was it that you heard that Moore and Beggs were missing?—It was about three weeks. From the time they were missing we had men stationed in the Waioeka Redoubt.

358. It has been generally said they were missing about three weeks?—That is about it.

359. Would you think it was a week or two previous to the fact of Bennett White and the mailman being murdered that they were missed?—I could not be clear on that.

360. How many days do you think it was after Bennett White and the mailman were sought for that the bodies of Moore and Beggs were found?—I should think it was over a week. I know we patrolled the beach a good bit.

361. Suppose we take the murder of Bennett White and the mailman to be in June. If the murder was on the 26th, the bodies of White and the mailman were found on the 29th, about two days after the fact was reported?—I think about two days afterwards we went down to the ferry, and the ferryman told us two bodies were picked up. Two orderlies came into Opotiki to see what was to be done with the bodies. We met these two orderlies coming back, and another trooper and myself returned back to Ohiwa, and told them the bodies were to be brought back to Opotiki. That was the time we thought it dangerous coming round the bluff, because the tide was in.

362. The rivers were very high at that time of the year?—They were not, much in flood at that time.

363. Partly in flood, just a fresh in them?—We were expecting a heavy flood, but it did not come.

364. Do you think the date upon which they went out to try and find the bodies of Moore and Boggs would be about a week from the time the bodies of Bennett White and the mailman were recovered? Was it the day you came back that the two orderlies went out?—The day that they brought the head in, in the evening was the time that the two orderlies left.

365. Do you think that Messrs. Wrigg and McDonald had time from the 28th—that is, from the day the head was brought in—to have gone to Tauranga with those despatches and come

back to Opotiki, and yet be in time to have gone out with the expedition to fetch Moore's and Beggs' bodies in?—They could not have gone out that day.

366. Did they have time to go to Tauranga and get back to Opotiki before the detachment went out to fetch in the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—That I could not say.

367. You reckon it was about a week. Then, they would have had plenty of time. They would have had time to return to Tauranga then before they went out for the bodies?—Yes.

368. Mr. Wrigg said he started out at once to fetch in the bodies of Moore and Beggs?—That could not have been so.

369. You did not know what time he returned?—No.

370. He may have returned before the detachment went out. You left in the morning, and you say it is not possible for you to have missed him on the beach?—It is not possible.

371. In crossing the rivers you might have missed him?—If he had taken the top crossing and we took Wilson's Crossing, we would have missed him then.

372. It is possible you may have missed him?—Yes.

373. Have you been in communication with anybody else except Captain Mair in this matter?—No, I have not.

374. You have not been rushing into print with letters?—No.

*Mr. Hutchison:* I want to read to you this declaration, Mr. Wood, and I want you to say whether it is correct or not: "I, Albert Wood, of the Thames, in the Provincial District of Auckland, miner, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I remember well all the circumstances connected with the murder of Bennett White and the mailman in June, 1867. I was one of the troopers—about twenty-five or thirty in number—who were sent out to search for the bodies. When we reached the scene of the murder it was then too late to do anything, so we took cover in the scrub at Waiwhakatoitoi, keeping our horses bridled and saddled."

*Witness:* No; the saddles were off.

375. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You say that is not correct—that the saddles were off?—Yes.

376. The declaration continues as follows: "and tethered to our legs, and remained in perfect silence throughout the night, neither lighting our pipes nor making fires. The next morning we searched for bodies, but only Bennett White's head was found, and the carcass of the mailman's horse. The main body of our men followed the enemy's trail a long distance inland, while Lieutenant Thompson, myself, and two others went to Ohiwa with a Native woman—Ramari te Wai—and a young woman and boy. Then, we went up to the tableland to warn a surveyor's hand who was working there. We then returned to Opotiki, long after the main body had got back. The same evening it was arranged that Trooper McDonald was to go to Tauranga with despatches. He particularly wanted to go on urgent private business; also to do something for his brother-in-law, Angus Smith, who then kept the store. Mr. H. Wrigg wished to go too, as he had to transact some business and get tracings, &c., for Mr. Gwynneth, at the Survey Office, Tauranga. I begged my commanding officer to let me go, but as he said the two others had special reasons for going, I would have to give way. There was no honour attached to going, neither was there any danger, and every man in the troop would have been glad of the chance of going. In my opinion, Mr. Wrigg was less entitled to special honour than any man in the whole Force, for he had done nothing whatever to deserve it. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of 'The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882.'—ALBERT WOOD. Declared at Thames, this 23rd day of September, 1898, before me, James Finlay, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand"—Yes, that is right.

377. Is it correct, with one exception, that the horses were not saddled?—"Mr. Wrigg" ought to be added, in front of the word "McDonald."

378. When it was sent you, you considered it was substantially correct?—Yes.

379. With the exception that the horses were unsaddled, instead of saddled, and that Cornet Wrigg's name should have been before Trooper McDonald's, it is correct?—Yes.

380. *Mr. Wilford.*] You say here, "that Mr. Wrigg had to transact some business, and get tracings, &c., for Mr. Gwynneth at the Survey Office, Tauranga." Who told you that—Lieutenant Thompson?—That is the put-off I got when I wanted to go.

381. You say Mr. Wrigg was less entitled to honour than any man in the Force because he was no time in the Force, and did very little work while he was in it. Is that your suggestion or Major Mair's?—That is my own.

382. The question about Trooper McDonald's and Wrigg's name is not your own?—No.

383. And the question about the saddle is not your own?—No.

384. *Mr. Hutchison.*] One name should be in front of the other?—They always put an officer in front of the man.

385. *Mr. Field.*] You recollect the missing, or the alarm concerning the men Moore and Beggs?—Yes.

386. Do you recollect the alarm coming into camp?—Yes.

387. How long before or after the murder on the beach was that?—It was before the murder on the beach, but I cannot say how long.

388. You say that you lived with Lieutenant Thompson, I think?—Yes.

389. He was the lieutenant of your troop?—Yes.

390. I suppose on that account you were kept pretty intimately acquainted with what was going on?—Yes.

391. Had it been usual previous to the murder of Bennett White for men to ride along that beach in ones and twos, either troopers or civilians?—It was a common practice.

392. Had any of your troop been up the beach previous to this occasion?—Yes; we had been looking at our land previous to that, I believe. In company we had been along the beach times out of number.

393. I am asking whether or not you had been along the beach?—Oh, yes. It was thought nothing of. When I went up on this land to warn those men to come down, and tell them

about these men being killed, they said they were down on the beach picking up frost-fish, and never saw anything of the Natives.

394. Then there was nothing remarkable about a man riding along that beach in company or alone? Oh, no; because Bennett White and the mailman were going down by themselves, and Waitiri, the chief, was following along behind.

395. *Mr. Moore.*] You stated, in riding past the bluff on this particular occasion there was danger, did you not?—On which occasion?

396. At the time the bodies were found?—On account of the tide.

397. Was the danger from fear of the Natives being in ambush, or the high tide?—From the wash of the sea.

398. *Mr. Field.*] You stated, Mr. Wood, that after this occurrence—the murder of Bennett White and the mailman—that the beach was patrolled every day by some of your troop?—Yes.

FRIDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 1898.

Captain GILBERT MAIR, sworn and examined.

*The Chairman:* I will ask the clerk to read your sworn declaration, Captain Mair, to refresh your memory. [The clerk then read the following declaration:] “I, Gilbert Mair, Land Purchase Officer, Thames, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I volunteered for active service against the rebelled Natives in the Bay of Plenty in December, 1866, and between that time and the year 1872 took part in more than thirty-eight 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 action. 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 operation against the rebels even in cases where I was not actually present. 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 Waiotahi. 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; 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 Mr. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.’—(Signed) GILBERT MAIR, Captain, New Zealand Militia.—Declared at Thames, this 1st day of October, 1898, before me, E. McDonnell, J.P.”

1. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Have you anything to add to this statement, Captain Mair. I would direct your attention to this passage: “Neither Captain Bower nor Mr. Leonard Simpson were in Opotiki at the time as alleged.” Are you sure of that?—I am quite sure.

2. Then, they could not speak from any knowledge acquired at the time of this ride?—Certainly not.

3. Do you know Mr. George H. Leaning?—Yes, he was a storekeeper for Mr. Thomas Wrigley.

4. Was he there in Opotiki at the time?—Yes, I believe he was in Opotiki at the time. He was never a member of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry.

5. Then, there is another who gave a certificate besides Captain Bower and Captain Simpson, a Captain Percival. Was he there?—Certainly not.

6. Then, of the four that I have named, Bower, Simpson, Percival, and Leaning, who gave certificates that they knew personally of the occurrence, only one was there, and that was Leaning, who, you say, was not a member of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Corps?—Yes.

7. *Mr. Wilford.*] Are you one of the petitioners, Captain Mair?—No.
8. Simply interested in the cause of Volunteering, I suppose?—Yes; you may put it that way.
9. You have taken a great deal of interest in this matter?—To a certain extent.
10. Looked up evidence, for instance?—Yes.
11. Do you remember calling on Mr. Wood?—I do.
12. Have you seen a copy of the printed evidence taken before this Committee already?—No, absolutely not a line.
13. This that has been printed?—I did not know any had been printed.
14. You remember going to see Mr. Wood?—Yes.
15. Do you remember asking him to make a declaration;—No; I did not ask him to make any declaration. I asked him to give me an account of the occurrence as far as his memory would help him.
16. Of what occurrence?—Of Trooper McDonald carrying despatches to Tauranga.
17. Did you mention Mr. Wrigg's name?—Yes, I did.
18. Then, did you say the despatches carried by Trooper McDonald and Wrigg or by Trooper McDonald alone?—As far as I remember by Trooper McDonald alone. I never knew Wrigg carried despatches.
19. Had you heard so?—I had seen it stated in the papers recently. It was not my own impression.
20. You drew Wood's declaration, did you not?—No, I drew no declaration. I wrote from Mr. Wood's dictation the account.
21. Then, the words were Mr. Wood's and not your own?—Yes, generally they were. He asked me to write it out, because he was an indifferent scholar. He procured ink and paper, and I just wrote out what he told me.
22. Did he tell you, as stated in his declaration, that when they reached the scene of the murder it was then too late to do anything, so they took cover in the scrub at Waiwhakatoitoi, keeping their horses bridled and saddled, and tethered to their legs?—Yes; he told me that.
23. Are you quite sure he told you that?—I have said he did.
24. None of these are your own words?—No.
25. On a small detail like that you would not be making a mistake?—I was not there myself, and trusted entirely to his statement. I could never supply details of that sort.
26. How do you mean you were not there?—I was not with the troop on that occasion.
27. Now, Mr. Wood says there is a mistake in that part of the declaration. That he never said, "the horses were bridled and saddled"?—Well, perhaps I misunderstood him on that point. Mr. Wood was very clear on that point, and said how angry he had been to find he had been holding his horse all night when a few yards away the next morning he found luxuriant grass which he might have given his horse the benefit of.
28. We have in the declaration of Mr. Wood: "The same evening it was arranged that Trooper McDonald was to go to Tauranga with despatches." Are those Wood's own words?—Yes.
29. Then he tells us here, in giving evidence, that Mr. Wrigg's name should have been put before Trooper McDonald's, that it should have been Mr. Wrigg and then Trooper McDonald?—That may have been an omission on my part, or on Mr. Wood's part, but I read the statement over to him and he made no corrections or additions.
30. Is it not a curious thing that Mr. Wrigg's name should be left out of that particular line when it is the whole crux of it?—No, not at all.
31. Simply an ordinary accident capable of the explanation you have given?—I have said I never heard Mr. Wrigg had been sent to carry despatches. It was unusual to send an officer to carry despatches. They are always sent by troopers.
32. That does not apply to volunteers if they are called for?—No.
33. You are not an officer in the Imperial Forces, are you?—I have served with the Imperial Forces in New Zealand.
34. Do you know Mr. Edwards?—Which Mr. Edwards?
35. He was acting interpreter to Colonel Lyon?—Yes.
36. He is a very loquacious individual, is he not—full of anecdote and story?—Fairly so. I think he is a remarkably well-informed man. A very versatile man indeed.
37. Are you aware that Mr. Edwards says in his affidavit that Wrigg volunteered to go with McDonald?—I have not seen Mr. Edwards's affidavit.
38. Mr. Edwards made an affidavit and said: "McDonald took the despatches, and Wrigg only volunteered to go with him"?—That is the first I have heard of it.
39. Do you suggest that Wrigg did not do this ride?—I believe he did accompany McDonald; at least, I have been so informed.
40. Were you at Opotiki at the time these men left with the despatches?—No.
41. Then, what makes you believe Wrigg did go?—I have heard so.
42. Where from?—Well, I think I was at Ohope at the time, or Whakatane. I may have met them there.
43. I want to know this. You are satisfied Wrigg rode, but you are not satisfied he carried the despatches. Now, how do you know he rode?—I say I heard lately he rode.
44. At the time?—Afterwards.
45. Then the subject was discussed?—In those days we knew everybody who left Opotiki, and everybody who came into it. If anybody travelled to Tauranga it would be known, or if anybody came from Tauranga it would be known in the village.
46. Have you any records to show where you were in June, 1868—any records you can produce here?—No; I have no records at all; because a journal I kept from 1852 to 1881 was burnt in Laery and Campbell's fire in Wellington. It was a journal showing my whereabouts and work for every day.

47. Then you have only your memory to rely upon?—Yes.
48. You remember the murder of Bennett White and the mailman?—Yes; very distinctly.
49. You were at that time Clerk and Interpreter at the Magistrate's Court?—Yes; and during that month I was attending a Compensation Court on behalf of the Commissioner at Whakatane. I reached Opotiki very early in July.
50. Do you remember whether Colonel Harington was in command in June?—Yes.
51. And do you remember any part of the month that Colonel Harington was away and Captain Goldsmith was in command?—No, I do not remember that.
52. Do you remember the fact of his being away? Do you ever remember Captain Goldsmith being in command at Tauranga?—No; I only remember him being in command of the No. 3 Company, I think, of the 1st Waikato Militia.
53. Would Captain Goldsmith be the second in command at Tauranga, if Colonel Harington was away in the month of June, 1867?—I think Captain Hunter would be.
54. Captain Hunter was killed, was he not?—Not until June, 1868.
55. At the Bald Hill?—No, at Okotuku, in the Wellington Province.
56. Do you remember being in Tauranga in the month of June, 1867?—Yes, I have no doubt I was.
57. Do you remember on any occasion riding any distance along in the direction of Opotiki for the purpose of companionship with McDonald and Wrigg?—Certainly not; I never rode in company with Mr. Wrigg.
58. Or with McDonald?—I have often ridden with him.
59. Were there two Captain Mairs there?—No.
60. You were Captain Mair at the time?—No; Lieutenant Mair.
61. You remember riding with McDonald?—Several times. I never rode with McDonald on that ride to Opotiki.
62. Would you call it two miles from Tauranga in the direction of Opotiki?—No; I have never ridden over that part with McDonald.
63. Do you remember reading a statement of Mr. Wrigg's where he mentioned that fact, and said that, "to the best of his recollection, you accompanied him along the beach"?—I denied that specifically in my affidavit.
64. Now, were you intimate with Major St. John?—Yes, very.
65. Are you able to state that he never mentioned Wrigg's name in despatches with favour?—Certainly not. He never mentioned his name to me.
66. You know nothing about his despatch-writing: did you ever see the contents of his despatches?—Many times. I am not able to say whether he wrote in favour of Mr. Wrigg or otherwise.
67. Then, when you used the words in your affidavit, "that he never mentioned the name of H. Wrigg with favour," you mean he never praised Mr. Wrigg to you?—That is it.
68. You mean he never discussed the matter with you: you do not mean any slur upon Mr. Wrigg?—No.
69. Do you know any one at all that Major St. John ever recommended for the Cross?—Yes.
70. Who?—Captain Angus Smith.
71. Was it on Captain Angus Smith's own solicitations?—I do not think it was; I never heard so.
72. Did you know Captain Moorsom?—Yes, I did.
73. Will you look at Exhibit No. 29, on page 90, viz.: "On the 7th June, 1869, when a party of cavalry in charge of Cornet Smith was surprised at Opepe by Te Kooti's band, and nine men out of thirteen were killed, Cornet Smith, though suffering from a desperate wound in his foot, set out with the object of finding the tracks of his commanding officer, and apprising him and the party with him of their danger, when a less brave or thoughtful man would have proceeded straight to Fort Galatea, which post no doubt he would have reached in forty-eight hours with comparatively little risk, and with the certainty of getting medical assistance for himself. On his road Cornet Smith was captured by the rebels, tied up to a tree, and stripped of all his clothing and Crimean medals. He was in this position four days without food or water when he managed to release himself, and proceeded to Fort Galatea, which he reached on the 17th June, having been ten days without either food or clothing. On account of his wound he had to go for a considerable distance on his hands and knees, and to risk his life thrice by swimming rivers. Recommended by Captain Moorsom." Will you tell me what that "Captain Moorsom" means?—I was under the impression it was Major St. John.
74. Then, Captain Moorsom is the man who recommended Angus Smith. That is a slip of yours?—Yes. I know Major St. John strongly approved of his (Angus Smith's) obtaining the Cross.
75. For how many years after 1867 were you intimate with Major St. John?—I knew him up till 1875.
76. Are you aware that the institution of the New Zealand Cross did not take place until 1869?—Yes.
77. Then, for the first two years after the ride it would not be likely that the question of conferring the New Zealand Cross would be discussed, because it was not even instituted?—That is so.
78. You know the road, of course, well, from Opotiki to Tauranga?—Yes; I have travelled over it hundreds of times.
79. Do you agree with certain gentlemen who have been called to give evidence here, and who have said that the road was dangerous from Opotiki to Ohiwa? Mr. Kelly, for instance (question 320) was asked, "Do you consider it would be a dangerous thing to ride along that road the day after without an escort?"—in the vicinity of Ohiwa—and he replied, "I consider it would be a dangerous thing." Then he was asked that question 321, "Will you say it was a hazardous undertaking, with a great deal of danger?" and he replied, "Yes. I heard it remarked in Opotiki at the time that the two men that went would likely never come back." Now, Mr. Kelly heard

that mentioned at the time. Are you prepared to contradict him, and say what he said is contrary to fact?—I say at that time the road was not dangerous, for this reason: that the enemy had been ascertained to have retired far inland, and the road was patrolled and repatrolled.

80. You mean that the whereabouts of the enemy could not be perceived?—I mean more than that. They had been traced for ten or twelve miles inland.

81. We have evidence before us that they went and searched in the Waiotahi Valley and certain other places, and could not see any sign of them; and if they could not see any sign of them, the evidence went to show that they (the Maoris) may have been in cover?—Their trail was followed for many miles inland.

82. That is hearsay evidence?—Yes.

83. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Mr. Kelly did not give us that?—No. I heard that from many members of the Force: that they followed the trail far up the Waiotahi Valley, until it crossed over into the Waimana.

84. *Mr. Wilford.*] Do you know Captain Turner?—Yes.

85. Look at page 37, questions 21 and 22: "On the ordinary route to Tauranga one had to pass that bluff?"—"Yes." "If Natives were posted on the top there would be no protection for any one passing?"—No; I think that was where Bennett White was shot." Do you know the bluff at Ohiwa?—Yes.

86. In the ordinary route from Opotiki to Tauranga had one to pass that bluff?—Yes.

87. At high tide what would you consider the width of the passing—a chain?—Barely.

88. If Natives were posted in ambush on this bluff, would there be any protection if any one were passing at high tide?—If the Natives were posted on the top of the bluff you might pass underneath with impunity.

89. If they were in ambush?—If they were near the caves or in ambush a person could not escape if the Natives wished to kill. He might try and trust to the Maoris being bad marksmen.

90. That would be a risk?—Yes. I have passed along there several times, and always preferred going at low tide, because there would then be a much wider beach.

91. Recognising the danger, you chose low tides?—Yes, on one or two occasions I have selected low tide for passing along that beach, for it was reported the enemy were in the neighbourhood.

92. Then, there is some danger there?—There would be at the time when the Natives were expected to make a raid.

93. In 1867?—Yes.

94. Are you aware that about 1867, in the month of June, the rivers were higher than they are in the summer?—I was not.

95. Are they not higher in winter?—No. It depends upon whether there had been a flood or not. Sometimes the rivers in the Bay of Plenty in June are lower than at any period of the year.

96. Captain Turner says that the bluff is a very dangerous part to pass. You agree with that?—Yes, in certain circumstances.

97. Major Mair says, questions 489 and 490, "There were occasions when it was considered a very dangerous ride?—No, not very dangerous." "Sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men?—Yes."—I never heard of a fixed number.

98. Would you contradict Major Mair, who says in question 490 that at times it was sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men?—No, I would not contradict him, but I have never known that that was the number fixed upon. I have often heard of a much smaller escort accompanying troopers with despatches.

99. Major Mair said, "That there was no more danger than walking down Lambton Quay," and on another occasion said, "It was sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men?"—I do not know anything about Major Mair's statements.

100. Do you agree that it was dangerous in the month of June, 1867, and that it was sufficiently dangerous to require an escort of twenty-five men?—At that time, taking all the circumstances into consideration, I believe it was safe. A person would run no more risk in passing Onekawa Bluff than in walking down Lambton Quay.

101. Only it was just the lower tide?—I did not state so.

102. You are not one of the petitioners, Captain Mair, are you?—No.

103. It is stated in allegation No. 40 of the petition that thirty-seven commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates who were actually in the camp on the night when Mr. Wrigg and Trooper McDonald left with the despatches, and who were also in the camp when they returned, can now be produced. They have not been produced. Can you tell us where to find some of them. Would you kindly give me a few names out of the thirty-seven who were actually in the camp on the night?—I believe Captain J. Rushton, Sergeant Armstrong, Sergeant Heard, and others were.

104. You say you believe: you are not sure?—That is my impression.

105. I want the names of those you saw there?—I can only give you my impression. I have had the statements of several of these men that they were there. I know from my own intercourse with these men that they were there.

106. Do you know anything of the contents of this petition, or have you had any share in the compilation of it?—None whatever. I absolutely know nothing about it. A copy was sent to me.

107. A copy was sent to you?—Yes.

108. When?—I received it in the Thames.

109. How long was that before you came down here?—About five or six weeks ago, I should think.

110. I suppose you have been in correspondence with certain gentlemen who have been working this matter up?—I wrote to Captain Preece, and I received one letter from him. I also received a short note from Mr. Lingard, enclosing a copy of the petition. I think I answered his letter.

111. You heard from Mr. Lingard?—Yes.
112. Are you aware that Mr. Wrigg was a recipient under Colonel Lyon of the War Medal?—I heard that he had received a War Medal.
113. Under Colonel Lyon?—I do not know whom it was under.
114. Are you aware the War Medal was received for services rendered some considerable time before?—I have no idea.
115. Mr. Wrigg has sworn that he volunteered to carry despatches to Tauranga in June, 1867. Can you contradict that?—No, I will not contradict that.
116. Again, he has said that he carried despatches. Can you contradict that?—How can I? I was not there.
117. Have you seen the camp order which he produced?—I have not; I would like to see it.
118. Here it is. You see this camp order?—I do.
119. Do you know Captain Gwynneth's signature?—Yes, I do.
120. Have you any reason to say that it is not Captain Gwynneth's signature?—I will not swear to it.
- The Chairman:* Perhaps if the witness saw the signature of Captain Gwynneth in the minute-book of the troop it might assist him. [Minute-book produced.]
121. *Mr. Wilford.*] Have you any reason for saying that that is not Captain Gwynneth's signature?—I have not said it is not his signature.
122. Do you recognise it as his signature?—I would not swear to it.
123. Were you aware that Captain Gwynneth was commanding the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Corps?—Yes.
124. And would you consider that an order of the commanding officer of that troop would be sufficient for a trooper to leave the lines?—Certainly not.
125. Can you contradict Mr. Wrigg when he says that he had never been over that road before?—I do not know what his knowledge was.
126. Were the rivers very high at the time?—What rivers?
127. The rivers between Opotiki and Tauranga?—They may have been so.
128. Is there any hazardous part except the bluff at Ohiwa?—The portion considered dangerous at times was between Opotiki and the bluff.
129. Is there plenty of ambush?—On both sides of the Waioatahi River there are facilities for ambush.
130. *Mr. Monk.*] You are somewhat acquainted with military discipline, are you not, Captain Mair?—Fairly well.
131. Would not a camp order be issued by the commanding officer?—That is the rule.
132. And if a camp order were issued by the captain of a company, and the commanding officer was there, would he not think it a subject for court-martial, that is, when martial law was prevailing?—The proper course would certainly be for the commanding officer to issue the camp order, particularly as he wrote the despatches that were being carried.
133. Would it be likely that Major St. John did direct Captain Gwynneth to furnish him with a volunteer trooper—this company that Captain Gwynneth commanded was considered a Volunteer company, was it not?—They were members of the First Waikato Regiment who had joined this Volunteer company.
134. I am speaking now of the mounted Force?—They were mostly selected from the First Waikato Regiment.
135. But went under the name of Volunteers?—Yes. They were immediately under Colonel St. John.
136. If Colonel St. John directed Captain Gwynneth to furnish him with a volunteer would he not furnish him with a volunteer trooper?—At that time there was so much feeling between Colonel St. John and Captain Gwynneth, which afterwards terminated in a libel action, that I do not think they would have had any connection with one another.
137. It is evident that if Colonel St. John had required a trooper to carry despatches he would not be likely to have given the order to Captain Gwynneth to furnish him with a trooper?—No; I think he would have given the order direct to the adjutant.
138. And the adjutant would then have arranged the details?—Yes.
139. With whom?—With the captain of the troop principally. He would tell the captain of the troop that the commanding officer required one or more men.
140. He would not be likely to go amongst the men himself to select a man? What is the military usage?—Properly speaking it should be done through the officer commanding the company. The colonel commanding would give the order to the adjutant, and the adjutant would, no doubt, go to the officer commanding the corps the men were to be duly picked from.
141. Is it likely that, with the relations existing, Captain Gwynneth would have dared to issue a camp order?—It is very improbable, I think. When I heard that these men were detailed to carry despatches on a camp order signed by Captain Gwynneth I always doubted it.
142. You know it is against military routine?—Yes.
143. In the relations existing between the two, a breach of discipline was not likely to be tolerated?—No; it would not be overlooked.
144. Have you any knowledge of Mr. Wrigg's professional ability as a calligraphist?—Yes; he had a very high ability in that respect.
145. Have you heard anything of documents having been imitated by Mr. Wrigg so perfectly, that they absolutely deceived the owners of the names inserted in those documents?—Yes, I have.
146. Can you mention a case?—Well, there was one case that created some talk in Auckland, where Mr. Wrigg made a pen-and-ink sketch of a table-cover showing a number of cards, and on each of the cards there were what purported to be signatures of well-known Aucklanders. They

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

to the captains of the companies, volunteer or otherwise, and a camp order such as this would be issued by the captains of the companies? No. The officer commanding would give the camp order—a certain number of men to perform a certain duty. He would give that detail to the adjutant, and then the adjutant would communicate with the captains of the different companies, who would mention the men by name.

180. Different corps?—Yes.

181. But this has often occurred: Instead of detailing men, the officer commanding, or someone detailed by him, would notify that volunteers were wanted for such and such a date?—Yes, and on these occasions there was always a scramble amongst the men to get to Tauranga.

182. *The Chairman.*] This is the camp minute-book. Do you not notice a striking similarity between the signatures of Captain Gwynneth in half a dozen places, and his signature attached to this camp order. Just look carefully at them and see?—Certainly there is. It is either genuine or it is a very clever copy.

183. Then you are of opinion that the signature on the camp order is identical with that in the minute-book?—I have not said that. There is a wide difference between these two, for instance.

184. You can notice a difference here on this one, cannot you?—Yes.

185. Then turn over the leaf to this one. These three signatures are by the one man. You see the turn of the "J" which is a peculiarity?—Yes.

186. *Mr. Lewis.*] Do you know Captain Gwynneth's writing apart from his signature?—Yes. His signature and handwriting were generally the same. I have lots of his letters.

187. We are told that that is his writing on the back of the camp order, and he always back-handed his signature and made it entirely different?—I certainly would not swear to that.

188. *The Chairman.*] This is a despatch from Captain Gwynneth. You will notice that the signature attached to this despatch is identical with that attached to the camp order?—Yes. There is a very strong resemblance.

189. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You hold the New Zealand Cross, Captain Mair?—Yes.

Sir ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS recalled and examined.

190. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You are on your former oath, Major Douglas. You have found, have you not, an original despatch from Major St. John?—Yes.

*The Chairman:* I will ask the clerk to read that original despatch. [Despatch read; exhibit No. 32.]

191. *Mr. Hutchison.*] You have another from Major Mair?—I produced all the despatches that I could trace, after a personal search.\*

192. Will you produce a letter and say whether it is a copy of the letter from the Defence Minister written by Sir Arthur Douglas and put in on a petition this session with reference to the New Zealand Cross?—I believe that is a copy of one I sent in.

*The Chairman:* I will ask the clerk to read that letter. [Letter read and put in; exhibit No. 33.]

193. *Mr. Wilford.*] You will allow me to ask Mr. Wrigg two questions, Mr. Chairman?—Yes.

Mr. H. C. W. WRIGG recalled and examined.

194. *Mr. Wilford.*] Mr. Wrigg, Mr. McCullough stated that you showed him the camp order. You showed him, also, a blue paper which he believed was stamped. Will you clear that matter up?—There were several copies made of these papers accompanying the camp order, and, if I recollect aright, there were one or two done upon the blue paper. There were no stamped copies.

195. Mr. McCullough may have seen a copy on blue paper, but not on blue stamped paper?—Yes.

196. Major Mair stated in his evidence that he and Captain Gwynneth were good friends, and that he used to visit the house occasionally. [In question 575, page 32.] I believe you lodged with Captain Gwynneth?—Yes, the whole time I was at Opotiki.

197. During that period did you ever see Major Mair dining at the house?—No, never. I am sure he never did.

198. Was he a friend of Captain Gwynneth's?—Not that I know of.

199. Major Mair said that he had never seen you before?—Yes.

200. Had you seen him frequently?—Yes; we used to travel on the boats together, morning and evening.

201. You used to travel with him?—Yes.

*The Chairman:* That closes the evidence, gentlemen.

\* Despatches between 28th June, 1867, and 11th September, 1867. Nos. 67/3056 and 67/3062, cannot be traced.

## EXHIBITS.

## EXHIBIT No. 1.

G. F. BOWEN, GOVERNOR.—ORDER IN COUNCIL.

At the Government House, at Wellington, this 10th day of March, 1869.

Present: HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

WHEREAS it is expedient that regulations should be made for conferring a decorative distinction on members of the Militia, Volunteers, and Armed Constabulary, who may particularly distinguish themselves by their bravery: Now therefore His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council of New Zealand, and in exercise of all powers and authorities enabling him in this behalf, doth by his present order institute a decorative distinction to be conferred on members of the Militia, Volunteers, or Armed Constabulary who may particularly distinguish themselves by their bravery in action or devotion to their duty while on service. And doth, with the like advice and consent, make and ordain the following regulations under which such distinction shall be conferred:—

Firstly, the decoration shall consist of a silver cross with the name of the colony and the name of the recipient engraved thereon. Secondly, it shall be suspended from the left breast by a crimson riband. Thirdly, any person upon whom the distinction has been conferred who shall afterwards perform any act of bravery which would, had he not been already decorated, have entitled him to the honour, may receive for every such act a silver bar, to be attached to the riband by which the Cross is suspended. Fourthly, the distinction shall only be conferred upon those officers or men who, when serving in the presence of the enemy, shall have performed some signal act of valour or devotion to their duty, or who shall have performed any very intrepid action in the public service; and neither rank nor long service nor wounds, nor any other circumstance or condition whatever, save merit of conspicuous bravery, shall be held to establish a sufficient claim to the honour. Fifthly, the distinction shall be awarded by the Governor only. It shall not be claimed by any individual on his own account, but the claim must be made in favour of the person considered to be entitled to it by the commanding officer of the force or district to which such person belonged, and the Governor shall call for such description and attestation of the act as he may think requisite. Sixthly, every person upon whom this distinction is conferred shall be publicly decorated before the force or body to which he belongs, or with which the act of bravery for which he is to be rewarded shall have been performed; and a roll shall be kept in which shall be inscribed the names of the recipients with a brief description of the special act for which the distinction has in each case been awarded; and every inscription on the roll shall be published in the *Government Gazette*. Seventhly, if any person on whom such distinction shall have been conferred be convicted of treason, felony, cowardice, or of an infamous or disgraceful offence, his name shall be forthwith erased from the roll. Eighthly, constables and privates decorated with this distinction will take command of other constables or privates on duty when no officer or non-commissioned officer is present.

FORSTER GORING,

Clerk of the Executive Council.

## EXHIBIT No. 2.

[Extract from *New Zealand Gazette*, 18th March, 1898.]*Decorative Distinction conferred.*

Defence Office, Wellington, 26th February, 1898.

HIS EXCELLENCY the Governor has been pleased to award the decorative distinction instituted by Order in Council dated the 10th day of March, 1869, to Harry Charles William Wrigg, Esq., late Cornet, Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers, in consideration of his having, on the 29th June, 1867, with Trooper McDonald, voluntarily carried despatches from Lieut.-Colonel John H. St. John, then at Opotiki, to Lieut.-Colonel Phillip Harington, at Tauranga, through country infested by the Native tribes then at war with the British.

T. THOMPSON.

## EXHIBIT No. 3.

## EXTRACT FROM CAMP ORDERS.

B.P.V.C., Opotiki, 28th June, 1867.

CORNET WRIGG and Trooper McDonald will proceed to-morrow to Tauranga with despatches to Colonel Harington or officer commanding the district, and await his reply (if any), report themselves to him, and return with all speed, taking two days' rations with him.

JOHN GWYNNETH,  
Captain, Commanding B.P.V.C.

True extract.—JOHN GWYNNETH, Captain, B.P.V.C.

## INDORSEMENT.

CORNET WRIGG and Trooper McDonald volunteered for the service at a time of great danger, as the Natives were known to be in force in the vicinity, and the road they had to travel was that upon which Bennett White and the mailman had been murdered only the day previously, and abounding with every facility for ambushes. On the evening immediately after their return from this duty—which was performed with credit to themselves—and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in a search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs, who had been

dragged from their dwellings into the bush, and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp.

27th April, 1869.

JOHN GWYNNETH,  
Late Captain, Commanding B.P.V.C.

EXHIBIT No. 13.

EXTRACT from LETTER from Mr. H. WRIGG to Captain BOWER.

(Private.)  
MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—  
Frogmore House, Symonds Street,  
Auckland, 26th June, 1897.

I am about to ask your assistance in a matter concerning myself, and I think I can rely upon your support. I saw an extract from the Wanganui paper that Colonel McDonnell had written to that paper suggesting that, this being Jubilee year, the New Zealand Cross ought to be bestowed upon several old veterans of the late Maori War, and amongst others mentioned were Sir George Grey, Sir Walter Buller, Mr. Northcroft, and O'Connor, Government messenger in Government Buildings, Wellington. I believe from what I know personally that the two latter names have earned the distinction. O'Connor's almost mad acts of bravery were freely commented upon during my sojourn in the Empire City.

I noticed about a month ago that a Mr. Carkeek died lately somewhere in Wellington Province, who, it was mentioned, had the New Zealand Cross for having ridden thirty miles with despatches through the enemy's country. Now, I rode ninety miles, and ninety miles back. Now, by a curious coincidence, upon looking through some old papers some few months ago, I turned up the original order and indorsement—water-stained, where we swam rivers—a copy of which I inclose, but if you wish will forward the original should you desire to help me. Now, many years ago, the late Colonel St. John, who was a great friend of mine in Wellington, volunteered to recommend me for the Cross for that special service, and as he was at the time commanding the district, I regret very much now that I did not take advantage of his offer, but I held then the opinion that in carrying out the order I had only done a soldier's duty; but since then I have been several times recommended by friends to go in for it. I wore Her Majesty's livery in the Dragoons in the Old Country in my very young days, and was amongst the first batch gazetted for the New Zealand War Medal. Now, knowing you were in service at Opotiki at the time I volunteered for this service, I thought it would not be asking you too much to support me in my application should I finally make up my mind to apply. You could word it as you feel disposed. I know of no one whose testimony would be so valuable or of so much assistance, especially were your signature to quote your late Imperial regiment. I have made inquiries in by-gone times as to my companion in the ride, but learned, as far as my memory serves, that he was either killed or drowned, I forget which; however, should he happen to be still in the living he would, of course, be entitled to the honour.

Believe me, &c.,  
HARRY WRIGG.

EXHIBIT No. 4.

MY DEAR MR. WRIGG,—  
Town Clerk's Office, Napier, 10th July, 1897.

Till I got your letter of the 26th ultimo I had no idea that Tom McDonnell had suggested the bestowal of the New Zealand Cross on any one, and was quite astounded when I read the names you mentioned—Sir G. Grey and Sir Walter Buller! Good heavens! What did they ever do to deserve such an honour? Northcroft ("The Boy," as we used to call him), certainly, and O'Connor (although I do not remember him); but the other two, surely not. I did not even know that Sir Walter had the War Medal. I remember Carkeek, the man you mention as having ridden thirty miles with despatches, and I think it was from Waikaremoana to Wairoa that he rode; but it was all in the course of duty, and he was detailed for the duty. In your case you both volunteered at a time when there was extra risk, and I think that this alone would entitle you to it. Personally, anything I could do to further your wishes should be done with pleasure; and as I was district adjutant when St. John commanded perhaps I might be of use, and if you apply (which I should do forthwith) you can rely upon me. Many thanks for your photograph, which I have placed amongst all my old brother officers. I will send you mine with pleasure, but must get taken first as my last one went to get an enlargement. I do not see any sign of illness in your likeness, so I hope that when it was taken you had got over the heart trouble you complain about. I see, on looking over your letter, that you think my signature over the name of my old Imperial regiment would be of use; but I think the fact of having been district adjutant would be better than "Late Lance-sergeant B Troop 10th Hussars," to meet your case.

With kind regards to all old friends in Auckland,

Believe me, &c.,  
M. N. BOWER.

EXHIBIT No. 5.

EXTRACT from LETTER from Mr. H. WRIGG to Captain BOWER.

(Private.)  
MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—  
Frogmore House, Symonds Street,  
Auckland, 16th July, 1897.

Your kind and very generous letter to hand, and beg you to accept my grateful thanks for same. I think you will agree with me that it would be better for me to send the certificates with the application, as otherwise, if I only referred to you, I have been long enough in Government service to learn that any document of that description would be more complete, and otherwise might stand a chance of being shelved awaiting communication between the Government and yourself, especially as having all the documents appertaining to the subject is of great importance when submitting application to Minister; therefore, I am going to tax your generosity further by asking

you to forward your certificate to me in enclosed stamped envelope, which includes registration. For this purpose I have enclosed the original order, which you will perceive bears the traces of having crossed the rivers which were in flood. I think I had better refresh your memory as to how two came to volunteer. The evening we found Bennett White's body, on parade Colonel St. John asked for a volunteer to carry despatches to Tauranga, I immediately rode to the front and volunteered provided that I had a trooper, when Trooper McDonald volunteered. The rivers were in flood at the season of year, and those we did not swim had to head until we got a ford, the risks, as you were aware, were great upon all sides.

I have by this mail written to Judge Wilson of the Native Land Court, a friend of mine, who you remember at Opotiki, for a certificate, as he was also there, and I know he will assist me; but of course yours as district adjutant would, as you may be sure, be invaluable. Of course, if my companion were alive and I received the decoration he could apply, but I learned that he was either drowned or killed shortly after I left Opotiki. I am rather conservative in my ideas, and though, under the circumstances and to meet the case, the signature above the district adjutant, as you suggest, would be better, but I should also say "Late 10th Hussars," as I know your antecedents and that you are a gentleman born, and as you must be aware are not the only gentleman youngster who has worn Her Majesty's livery as a trooper in a crack cavalry corps—take, for instance, your humble servant, I was a trooper in the 4th Dragoon Guards (*quis separabit*), and I only wish I had remained (only for my wife). If a man was a gentleman and rode straight he was bound to go up the ladder. It is only very lately I had a letter from a comrade who has retired as a major, and who wrote out for particulars as to the country, and is thinking of bringing his family out, and he was a "gentleman trooper." From what I remember of you you were my ideal of a soldier.

I met an old friend from Wellington the other day; he has not seen service, but I was telling him my case, and he advised me to apply at once, but said he thought I would have more chance if it was sent through a Veteran Club or Society, and informed me there was one established in Wellington and Napier. Will you kindly give me your opinion upon the matter? Do you know of such a thing in Napier; if so, would you kindly give me any hints as to procedure in such a case, *i.e.*, how or to whom to forward, or would it be better to send direct to Minister? I would ask Sir Maurice O'Rorke to see that it was not shelved. I know I am giving you a lot of trouble, but I am one that never forgets an obligation, and if I can at any time or in any way be of service you have only to command me.

Believe me, &c.,

HARRY WRIGG.

EXHIBIT No. 6.

DEAR SIR,—

Napier, 24th July, 1897.

In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, I have much pleasure in stating my recollection of what occurred at Opotiki when you volunteered to ride with despatches to Tauranga.

When Bennett White was found murdered by hostile Natives, the late Colonel St. John, then commanding the district, called for volunteers to ride with despatches to Tauranga, when Cornet Wrigg, of the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, at once rode to the front and said he would go if a trooper would accompany him: this a trooper, whose name I forget, volunteered to do, and the two were sent. Their service was most dangerous, their route being along the beach where Natives were known to be in force, and the rivers in flood. They reached Tauranga and returned from thence to Opotiki the next day, thus successfully completing an arduous and very dangerous duty.

I remain, &c.,

M. N. BOWER,

Late District Adjutant, Opotiki.

EXHIBIT No. 7.

THIS is to certify that I was in Opotiki at the time Bennett White and the mailman were killed on the beach near that place, and when Cornet Wrigg volunteered to carry despatches to Tauranga.

In volunteering for this duty Cornet Wrigg ran very considerable risk, not only from the hostile Natives, but also from the flooded state of the rivers, and I consider him fully entitled to the favourable consideration of the Hon. the Defence Minister in any application he may make for a recognition of such service.

LEONARD SIMPSON,

Maketu, 2nd August, 1897.

Late Captain, 2nd Waikato Regiment.

EXHIBIT No. 8.

SIR,—

"Normanby," Grattan Street, Melbourne, 4th August, 1897.

Having served with the Expeditionary Field Force on the East Coast in 1865-67, I have the honour to state that I am fully aware of the valuable services performed by Cornet Harry Wrigg on many occasions during the campaign, but more especially, at the time when Bennett White and others were massacred, his having volunteered to carry despatches, a very dangerous feat indeed, considering that the country between Opotiki and Tauranga was swarming with the enemy, and, in my humble opinion, is entitled to the New Zealand Cross; in fact, this decoration has been bestowed for less bravery than that displayed by him.

I have, &c.,

W. H. PERCIVAL,

Late H.M. 55th Regiment, and Captain Colonial Forces.

Hon. the Minister of Defence, Wellington.

## EXHIBIT No. 14.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM Mr. H. WRIGG TO Captain BOWER.

(Private.)  
 MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—  
 Frogmore House, Symonds Street,  
 Auckland, 4th August, 1897.

I have to tender you my sincerest thanks for your certificate. It could not be more correct or more to the point, and I shall always be under a lasting obligation to yourself for the great trouble you have taken upon my behalf. I may tell you that I thought it would be as well to get written opinions from the leading ex-military officers here, and I have been backed up right and left—very handsome letters; amongst others one from Captain Armstrong, late 14th Regiment; Lieutenant Tylden, late 70th Regiment (wounded), now barrister; Captain Beere, late 62nd and 15th Regiments and 4th Waikato Regiment; Captain Richardson, late 95th Regiment; A. Cairns, late R.N. (Chairman Crimean Association), and others, and am promised, which I shall get tomorrow, one from Colonel Craigh, late 42nd (Black Watch), and Captain Peacock, late 4th Waikatos, and Captain Daveney, late 6th Dragoon Guards, Lieut. Brodie, late 71st Regiment. Colonels Dawson and Burton I have yet to see, so my chances are at least good.

Believe me, &c.,  
 HARRY WRIGG.

## EXHIBIT No. 15.

SIR,—  
 Auckland, 14th August, 1897.  
 After getting to this stage, I find at the last moment that the Order in Council provides "That the distinction shall not be claimed by any individual on his own account, but the claim must be made in favour of the person considered to be entitled to it by the commanding officer of the force or district." Colonel St. John being deceased, will you, as late adjutant of the district, kindly forward, with any recommendation you may be pleased to make.

I have, &c.,  
 HARRY WRIGG,  
 Late Cornet, B.P.V.C.  
 Captain Bower, Town Clerk, Napier.

## EXHIBIT No. 9.

Wellesley Street East, Auckland, 18th August, 1897.

I CERTIFY that I was a voluntary trooper in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry when Bennett White and mailman were murdered, and when Cornet Wrigg stepped forward and volunteered to carry despatches in the disturbances of 1867 and 1868.

GEO. H. LEANING.

## EXHIBIT No. 16.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM Mr. H. WRIGG TO Captain BOWER.

(Private.)  
 MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—  
 Auckland, 21st August, 1897.

I find after all, at the last moment, that the Cross cannot be claimed by any individual on his own account, but the claim must be made in favour of the person considered to be entitled to it by the Commanding Officer of the Force or district. (See *Gazette* of 1869, page 127.) I am sure, under the circumstance, you will forgive me having again to refer to you for your kind assistance. I am sending the papers up to this point, and thought it better to do so, so as to show the support I have received. I should like you to read them over carefully; and I have sent herewith a rough pencil draft of what I think would meet the case. You can alter or revise, of course, as you think proper, only I give you my word of honour that Colonel St. John, not upon one but upon many occasions, offered to recommend me strongly for the decoration, only I refused upon grounds I have already stated before. I have, I may mention, seen Sir Maurice O'Rorke and Mr. Holland, Ms.H.R., and supplied them with type-written copies of all the correspondence in connection therewith, and asked them to see the Minister of Defence when he comes up with the Governor, to ask him to take the matter in hand himself, and not to go by any minute the Under-Secretary may make, though that could be nothing but favourable; but I know things just about session time are likely to get shelved for an indefinite period. They (Sir Maurice and Mr. Holland) think there ought to be not the slightest difficulty about the matter, and have promised their best support. Hon. Mr. McCullough, M.L.C., has also been interviewed by a friend of mine to see the Minister, so now you know how the matter really stands. I have been to a lot of trouble in the matter, as the gaining the Cross means more to me just now than mere vanity. I think you will agree with me that the "certificates" and "supports" are all that could be desired, more especially as many of the gentlemen I never spoke to until I submitted my papers, amongst them Captain Daveney, Colonel Dawson, Colonel Creagh, and Captains Peacocke and Brodie. I send you stamps which I think will be sufficient for postage, but I am further in your debt should there be a deficiency. My letter to yourself, attached to papers, I have made very official; your letter to Minister you could attach or send separate as you may deem fit, attached I should consider best. He will, I presume, in reply communicate direct with yourself. I have left your letter of 24th July attached also, so as to make papers complete. The latter portion of your letter, "Returned from thence to Opotiki next day," of course means we had only one night in Tauranga; we left daylight 29th June, and were back at Opotiki a little over the three days. I know I am giving you a fearful lot of trouble, but I shall ever be in your debt, and will endeavour to cancel a portion of it hereafter, but I know you will help me as far as possible to gain the end.

Believe me, &c.,  
 HARRY WRIGG.

## EXHIBIT No. 16A.

SIR,—

Napier, 26th August, 1897.

By an Order in Council of the 10th March, 1869, the distinction (the New Zealand Cross) shall "not be claimed by any individual on his own account, but the claim must be made by the Commanding Officer of the Force or district."

In accordance with this order (Colonel St. John, then commanding the district at Opotiki, being since deceased), it affords me great pleasure to recommend Mr. Harry Wrigg, late cornet, Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, to be a recipient of this highly coveted distinction, to which, in my opinion, he is fully entitled, for his act of bravery in voluntarily carrying despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga (and returning), through a country swarming with hostile Natives, along a route where only the day before they had murdered two old settlers (Mr. Bennett White and the mailman, whose name I forget), and at a time when the rivers were in high flood and exceedingly dangerous to cross.

Strictly speaking, perhaps, I should not be now making this application, as I was not "the Commanding Officer of the Force or district," but I was District Adjutant (through whom all orders were issued), and I am quite certain that had the late Colonel St. John been alive he would have made every effort to obtain the decoration for Mr. Wrigg. It may be said also that the claim should have been made before; but I respectfully submit amongst others, as a precedent, that Colonel McDonnell received his Cross in 1886 for an act of bravery in 1863, or twenty-three years after. A perusal of the accompanying documents will, I feel sure, enable you to strongly recommend Mr. Wrigg's claim to His Excellency the Governor's most favourable consideration.

I have, &amp;c.,

M. N. BOWER,

Late District Adjutant, Opotiki.

Hon. T. Thompson, Defence Minister, Wellington.

## EXHIBIT No. 17.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM MR. H. WRIGG TO CAPTAIN BOWER.

(Private.)

Frogmore House, Symonds Street,

MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—

Auckland, 31st August, 1897.

I am just off a sick bed, and was able to go down to interview the Defence Minister to-day, Sir Maurice O'Rorke having very kindly offered to make an appointment, and went with me to see him. I must tell you that I sent a type copy of all the correspondence to a very old and true friend of mine in Wellington—Sir Osborne Gibbes, Bart.—and asked him to see Sir Arthur Douglas (another baronet), the present Under-Secretary for Defence, and I enclose you his reply, which you can destroy when read. Seeing the real difficulty that might perchance occur, I thought it better to make an additional statement, a copy of which I enclose for your information, and after explaining matters to the Minister hand him the same, which I did. He told me he had not as yet seen my papers or your recommendation, but that he would on his return to Wellington look into the matter, as of course as the case stood he could not give an opinion, but that several who had seen the papers had spoken to him. So the case stands, and I presume you will be the first that will have an official reply. I was in doubts whether I would again trouble you after so much kindness upon your part, but after a little consideration thought it better to let you know. Never mind replying to this, it will be time enough when you hear from Wellington.

Believe me, &amp;c.,

HARRY WRIGG.

## EXHIBIT No. 24.

SIR,—

27th September, 1897.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo advancing the claims of Mr. Harry Wrigg, late cornet in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry, for the decoration of the New Zealand Cross for services rendered by him on the 29th June, 1867.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that the Government has decided, after full consideration of the question, that the list of recipients of the New Zealand Cross for the Native wars in this colony must be considered as closed, and that they are unable therefore to make the recommendation you ask for.

I have, &amp;c.,

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS, Major,

Under-Secretary for Defence.

Captain M. N. Bower, Town Clerk, Napier.

## EXHIBIT No. 18.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM MR. H. WRIGG TO CAPTAIN BOWER.

Frogmore House, Symonds Street,

MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—

Auckland, 30th September, 1897.

I suppose you will wonder why I have not communicated with you sooner re Cross, but, to tell you the truth, the matter is not finally finished yet. I have all the Auckland members still fighting for me, as you will see by enclosed note I received from Hon. Jennings.

Believe me, &amp;c.,

HARRY WRIGG.

## EXHIBIT No. 21.

EXTRACT from LETTER from Mr. H. Wrigg to Captain Bower.

(Confidential.)

Frogmore House, Symonds Street,

Auckland, 9th January, 1898.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—

Now *re* Cross again. I was not far wrong in surmising that I had an enemy in the Under-Secretary for Defence, as one of the members of one of the deputations who waited upon the Defence Minister informs me that the Secretary was called in, and raised nothing but objections, and he could see at once that he was an enemy, and the case now stands as under.

Several of my friends have waited upon Hon. Mr. Thompson, who is here now, and I interviewed him myself also, and it appears the Cabinet admit that I am entitled to the decoration, but the hitch is that it is not recommended by the "officer commanding the district." I told him that was merely a departmental "quibble," and pointed out that the commanding officer never dies. However, to come to result. He promised to bring the matter up himself upon his return to Wellington before his colleagues, and use all his influence to obtain the decoration for me, but laid great stress that he was only one amongst seven. Now, I took a hint from this, and immediately set my wits to work, as independent of my wishing to gain my ends, . . . so have got friends here to write to Hons. Cadman and Carroll, asking them to deal with the case on its merits—amongst others the editor of the *Star*, secretary of Harbour Board, Major Pitt (who knows you, and informed me he had seen you a few months ago, and that he never saw you looking better in your life). They have asked these Ministers to go thoroughly into the matter personally. So far, so good. Now, it has occurred to me that amongst your friends, of whom you have many, I am informed, but I surmise same, you have one who must know some of the Ministers, and, after you explaining how matters really stood, would not object to send a wire—a few words—"When Hon. Thompson brings Wrigg's Cross up before Cabinet deal with it upon its merits," or something to that effect; even if it be to one of the Ministers—Cadman or Carroll—who have been written or wired to, it would only add to the obligation. You grasp the situation, I surmise, and I enclose two shillings in stamps in case you act upon the suggestion: of course, it would in no case do for you to send—I need not remind you of that. The Hon. Downie Stewart has also been written to, to interview Hon. McKenzie. Of course, it is easy for Hon. Ministers to be misled with any minute upon papers placed before them, and, as the Under-Secretary for Defence is not a military man, he does not know that in accordance with military usage "the commanding officer never dies," independent of the down he has upon me.

I never knew till the last few months how many friends I had. Colonel Creagh and Captain Brodie (late Highland regiments) have called twice within the last week to know result of interviews with Hon. Mr. Thompson, and I should have felt inclined to have dropped the matter in disgust long since only for my friends, who urge carrying it on until the "last shot is fired."

Now, I would not have troubled you further, as you are by this time, I have no doubt, sick of the two names "Wrigg" and "Cross," only I am still in hopes that I have not exhausted your patience. I may mention that Mr. Wilson, proprietor of the *Herald*, has interested himself upon my behalf as far as he can, *i.e.*, interviewing or writing to Ministers, as he rightly says he is in "opposition," and it would only injure my case. However, it was him who introduced me to the editor of the *Star*.

Yours, &amp;c.,

HARRY WRIGG.

## EXHIBIT No. 22.

EXTRACT from LETTER from Mr. H. Wrigg to Captain Bower.

(Private.)

MY DEAR CAPTAIN BOWER,—

26, Shortland Street, Auckland, 17th January, 1898.

I have just time for these few lines as I have only just received your letter.

I see Hon. Carroll was late for s.s. "Mararoa," so you may meet him in Napier.

Yours, &amp;c.,

HARRY WRIGG.

*Private.*—If Hon. Mr. Carroll, after interview with Captain Bower, is satisfied, then Hon. Mr. Carroll perhaps would send Hon. Mr. Thompson following wire to strengthen his hands, as he (Mr. Carroll) might be absent when matter is being dealt with: "From inquiries here and information received shall support Cross being given to Wrigg."

## EXHIBIT No. 19.

Captain Bower, Napier.

Auckland, 26th January, 1898.

DEFENCE Minister picks up Carroll at Gisborne. Proceeds to Napier then Wellington without delay by "Westralia." Advise interview Carroll.

Wrigg, Auckland.

## EXHIBIT No. 31.

SIR,—

4th March, 1898.

Referring to previous correspondence, I have now the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to approve of your being presented with the New Zealand Cross for having, on the 29th June, 1867, voluntarily carried despatches from Lieut.-Colonel John H. H. St. John, at Opotiki, to Lieut.-Colonel Philip Harington, at Tauranga, through country infested by the Native tribes then at war with the British. I will at as early a date as possible inform you as to the time and mode of presentation.

I have, &amp;c.,

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS,

Under-Secretary for Defence.

H. C. W. Wrigg, Esq., Auckland.

## EXHIBIT No. 10.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM Captain BOWER to Mr. H. Wrigg.

DEAR WRI GG,—

Town Clerk's Office, Napier, 9th March, 1898.

I saw by the *Auckland Herald* that you had at last been awarded the "Cross," and, although I have not been communicated with, and only learnt it by seeing it in the newspaper, you must accept my most hearty congratulations not only that your brave action should be duly recognised, but that your unceasing efforts since have met with the success they deserve. . . .

Yours, &amp;c.,

M. N. BOWER.

## EXHIBIT No. 26.

SIR,—

Palmerston North, 24th March, 1898.

I have the honour to state that I have heard with surprise that it is the intention of the Government to award the decoration of the New Zealand Cross (which is the equivalent of the Victoria Cross) to one Harry Wrigg for some supposed act of valour for carrying despatches between Opotiki and Tauranga in the year 1867.

I would most respectfully request that you may make every possible inquiry into this matter, and that the Government should pause before degrading this honourable military order by awarding it lightly for services which do not want so high a distinction.

I submit that had the services rendered by this gentleman been of such a nature as to warrant any special commendation, he would have been recommended for special favour by the officers in command in their despatches to the Government at the time; also that the New Zealand Cross or Victoria Cross would not be recommended by any military commanding officer unless the special act of bravery took place under fire, the mere carrying of despatches where there was a possibility of being fired at by the enemy would not justify the award of the order. If this were the case the Victoria Cross in the Imperial Army would become a very common and worthless order.

Had the services of this gentleman been of the nature which would justify his being recommended for special distinction by the commanding officer his name would have been well known amongst the colonial forces.

There is no doubt there are officers and men both in the New Zealand Forces and Imperial Army who have done acts of valour under fire which would justify the award of the New Zealand Cross or Victoria Cross. I do not think, however, that there is a single instance on record of the Victoria Cross having been awarded after a lapse of thirty years.

In conclusion, I would again urge that this honourable decoration should not be rendered valueless by being given for any service except conspicuous bravery in the field, such as carrying a wounded comrade under fire, leading a forlorn hope, or some act which would inspire men with confidence when wavering in an attack on the enemy, or covering a retreat when under fire.

I have, &amp;c.,

GEORGE PREECE, Capt., N.Z.M., N.Z.C.

The Honourable the Defence Minister, Wellington.

## EXHIBIT No. 23.

DEAR PREECE,—

Napier, 20th April, 1898.

I would have replied to your note of the 24th ultimo long before this, but I have been so fearfully busy (yearly balance) that I could not do so. *Re* Wrigg's Cross, I remember all about it, and what's more I am to blame for his getting it. He wrote asking me to apply for him as St. John was dead, and he (Wrigg) according to the regulations could not apply himself. As I was district adjutant at Opotiki at the time and remembered the circumstance, I wrote to the Defence Office just stating the bare facts, and telling him at the same time that he had no more chance of getting it than I had. However, as you know, he did get it, or rather it is awarded him—which, I suppose, is much the same thing. Perhaps he deserved it, and perhaps he didn't any more than poor old "Paul-up-a-Tree," who when he really was in a funk had the pluck to let every one see it. Peace to his ashes! You have already got the "hang" of the thing, so I need not dwell on this infernal subject any more. I told them at home I was going to write, and they both wish to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Preece, in which I cordially join, and remain,

G. A. Preece, Esq., Palmerston North.

Thine,

M. N. BOWER.

## EXHIBIT No. 20.

Captain Bower, Napier.

Auckland, 27th June, 1898.

PARLIAMENTARY gossip to-night's *Star* says New Zealand Cross likely to be warmly debated. It is stated that Captain Bower who recommended Cross has recently admitted in a letter to Captain Preece that he regretted his action. Reply paid.

HARRY WRI GG.

## EXHIBIT No. 12.

TELEGRAM FROM Mr. H. WRI GG TO Captain BOWER, and Reply.

To Captain Bower, Napier.

Auckland, 28th June, 1898.

SURELY your letter did not imply that I had not earned the Cross. Placed now in most awkward position.

HARRY WRI GG.

To Harry Wrigg, Auckland.

Napier, 28th June, 1898.

CERTAINLY not.

M. N. BOWER.

## EXHIBIT No. 11.

(Private.)

MY DEAR WRIGG,—

Napier, 29th June, 1898.

I little thought when I sent in your application for the Cross that I was raising such a hornets' nest about my ears, and you would not wonder at my expressing my regret if you could only see the letters that I have received from old comrades and others on the subject. However, what I said to Preece was in a private letter, and I cannot but feel annoyed that it should have gained publicity. All the letters that I have received tend the same way—"That the danger run and risk incurred was not a sufficient claim for the Cross." This, of course, is a matter of opinion, some twenty of your certificates stating that the act deserved the Cross, whilst many of my old comrades (and here's where my regret comes in) think not. My position is this: I remember the occurrence, and in my opinion it was a plucky thing to do. I therefore sent in the application, the more so because St. John, had he lived, would have done so, and he was then the officer commanding, both yours and mine. There is one thing in all our correspondence I never thought of, and that was that it carried £300 and £10 per annum with it. Knowing as I do now that it was the honour you coveted, I should have suggested the waiving any claim to the back money—viz., £300.

Well, they cannot take it away from you now, and so you need not worry about it.

A lot of people are waiting for me, so that I cannot say any more just now.

Yours, &amp;c.,

M. N. BOWER.

## EXHIBIT No. 25.

Opotiki, 28th December, 1867.

MR. HASELDEN entered the 1st Waikato Regiment as a substitute in November, 1866, since which time he has been to the date of his discharge under my command. He is a young man of good intelligence, sober and steady in his habits, and possessed of undoubted pluck. His name has been mentioned in despatches for gallantry. I much regret his leaving this district, but as there is no opening for him here I think he is right to try elsewhere. I am certain that wherever he tries he will make himself liked and respected as he has been in Opotiki.

J. H. H. ST. JOHN, Major,

Commanding Opotiki District.

## EXHIBIT No. 27.

Wellington, 14th October, 1897.

DEAR MR. WRIGG,—

With Major Harris, Mr. W. Kelly, and Mr. Holland, I saw Mr. T. Thompson concerning your application for the New Zealand Cross.

There is no case, believe me, Mr. Wrigg, that has given me greater pleasure to advocate than your own. I am quite convinced of the genuine nature of your claim, and therefore am strongly advocating it.

We had a long talk with the Minister over the matter, and Sir Arthur Douglas was sent for to state precedents, &c. We did our best to break down the departmental objections urged by Sir Arthur. At the conclusion of quite an hour's talk, the Minister promised to see others over the matter, and to inform us as to how Colonel McDonnell got his recognition after so many years had elapsed.

We shall do our best in connection with this matter, and will advise you further on.

Yours, &amp;c.,

WM. T. JENNINGS.

## EXHIBIT No. 28.

LETTER from Cornet WRIGG resigning his Commission in the B.P.V.C.

SIR,—

Invercargill, Southland, 11th September, 1867.

It being probable that my stay in this province may be prolonged for a further period than I had at first anticipated, it will be unfair of me to retain my commission as cornet in the Bay of Plenty Volunteer Cavalry; therefore have the honour to request that you will forward this, my resignation as cornet in the above-mentioned corps, to His Excellency the Governor, praying his approval of same.

I have, &amp;c.,

HARRY C. W. WRIGG,

Cornet, B.P.V.C.

Captain Gwynneth, B.P.V.C., Opotiki.

ACCEPTANCE of resignation recommended.—JOHN GWYNNETH, Captain, Commanding B.P.V.C.—3rd October, 1867.

His Excellency the Governor is respectfully advised to accept the resignation of the Commission held by Cornet H. C. W. Wrigg, Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers.—T. M. HAULTAIN, 4/12/67.

[Extract from the *New Zealand Gazette*.]

Colonial Defence Office, Wellington, 20th December, 1867.

His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to accept the resignation of the Commissions held by the under-mentioned officers, viz. :—

Lieut. C. Stephenson, Auckland Naval Volunteers,

Lieut. Wm. De Troy, No. 1 Company Canterbury Rifle Volunteers,

Cornet H. C. W. Wrigg, Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers.

T. M. HAULTAIN.

## EXHIBIT No. 29.

RETURN of the Names of those Persons on whom the New Zealand Cross has been conferred, the respective Dates, for what Service, and by whom recommended.

Names.	Date when conferred.	Services.	By whom recommended.
Kepa, Te Ahururu Henare	17/8/1870	For his gallant conduct during the attack on the enemy's position at Moturoa on the 7th November, 1868. The storming party, failing to find an entrance, passed round to the rear of the work. Conceiving an entrance to the pa was desired, Constable Kepa climbed the palisades of the fortification alone, in doing which he was shot through the lungs, but nevertheless walked out of action and brought his arms into camp	Colonel Whitmore.
Black, Solomon	17/8/1870	For his gallant conduct at the siege of Ngatapa in January, 1869. The rear of the enemy's position was assigned to the attack under Major Fraser, consisting of Nos. 1 and 3, Armed Constabulary, and Hofene's Ngatiporous. The extreme right, on a scarped stony ridge, was commanded from the enemy's rifle-pits and works, and a lodgment was only effected by cutting out standing-room with a pickaxe. The enemy made several determined sorties against this point, and it became extremely difficult to maintain the position, which was essential to the success of the operations. A party of twelve volunteers were at length placed there, and they succeeded, with some loss, in holding the position till the end of the siege, and in repelling several resolute attacks. One of the most conspicuous for his bravery was Constable Black	Colonel Whitmore.
Biddle, Benjamin	17/8/1870	For his gallant conduct at the siege of Ngatapa in January, 1869. The rear of the enemy's position was assigned to the attack under Major Fraser, consisting of Nos. 1 and 3, Armed Constabulary, and Hotene's Ngatiporous. The extreme right, on a scarped stony ridge, was commanded from the enemy's rifle-pits and works, and a lodgment was only effected by cutting out standing-room with a pickaxe. The enemy made several determined sorties against this point, and it became extremely difficult to maintain the position, which was essential to the success of the operations. A party of twelve volunteers were at length placed there, and they succeeded, with some loss, in holding the position till the end of the siege, and in repelling several resolute attacks. One of the most conspicuous for his bravery was Constable Biddle	Colonel Whitmore.
Lingard, William	17/8/1870	For his gallant conduct before the enemy on the 28th December, 1868. While the Kai Iwi and Wanganui Troops of Cavalry Volunteers were reconnoitring the enemy's position at Taurangaika, a portion of the force galloped in close to the palisades of the pa, receiving the enemy's fire at the distance of a few yards, several men becoming dismounted through having their horses shot. Trooper Lingard rode past the pa at the distance of about 40 yards, and cut with his sword the tether-line of a horse belonging to the enemy, brought it to one of his comrades whose horse was shot, and assisted him to mount thereon	Captain Bryce.
Hill, George	17/8/1870	On the 10th April, 1869, Constable (now Sergeant) George Hill, of No. 1 Division, Armed Constabulary, accompanied the Wairoa Natives who, under Ihaka Whanga, proceeded to relieve Mohaka, then being attacked by Te Kooti. A party volunteered to run the gauntlet of the enemy's fire, and to dash into the Jerusalem Pa, then sorely pressed. This was a dangerous service, and it was in a great measure due to the example set by Constable Hill, who led that party, that it was successfully carried out. During the subsequent portion of the siege Constable Hill animated the defenders by his exertions, and contributed greatly to the repulse of Te Kooti; and his conduct is spoken of with admiration by the Natives themselves	Colonel Whitmore.
Smith, Angus	17/8/1870	On the 7th June, 1869, when the party of cavalry in charge of Cornet Smith was surprised at Opepe by Te Kooti's band, and nine men out of thirteen were killed, Cornet Smith, though suffering from a desperate wound in his foot, set out with the object of finding the tracks of his commanding officer, and apprising him and the party with him of their danger, when a less brave or thoughtful man would have proceeded straight to Fort Galatea, which post he would, no doubt, have reached in forty-eight hours with comparatively little risk, and with the certainty of getting immediate medical assistance for himself. On his road Cornet Smith was captured by the rebels, tied up to a tree, and stripped of all his clothing and Crimean medals. He was in this position four days without food or water, when he managed to release himself, and proceeded to Fort Galatea, which he reached on the 17th June, having been ten days without food or clothing. On account of his wounds he had to go for a considerable distance on his hands and knees, and to risk his life thrice by swimming rivers	Captain Moorsom.

RETURN of the Names of those Persons on whom the New Zealand Cross has been conferred, the respective Dates, for what Service, and by whom recommended—*continued.*

Names.	Date when conferred.	Services.	By whom recommended.
Carkeek, Arthur Wakefield	17/8/1870	On the 7th February, 1870, while the force under the command of Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell was serving in the Patitere country, Te Kooti with his force came out of the bush on the further side of the ranges and attacked Ohinemutu, where Captain Mair with some Arawas were posted. It was of the utmost importance that immediate notice should be sent to Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell of the whereabouts of the enemy, and Sergeant Carkeek, who was then at Ohinemutu, used every exertion to get Natives to convey a note to him at Tapapa through the bush, but no one could be induced to incur the risk. Sergeant Carkeek then determined to take the information himself, and, having found one Native who agreed to accompany him, started at daylight on the 8th, and arrived at Tapapa at about 3 p.m., having come upwards of thirty miles through dense bush known to be haunted by the enemy, and in danger of being surprised by them at any moment, when certain death would have been his fate	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Featherston, Isaac Earl	25/11/1875	Extract from recommendation by Lieut.-General Chute: "As I have already acknowledged in my despatches the eminent services rendered to me by Dr. Featherston throughout the campaign, I now consider it my duty to recommend this officer in the strongest terms for the distinctive decoration of the New Zealand Cross, in recognition of his meritorious and intrepid services during the period referred to, and more particularly at the storming of that formidable pa Otapawa, where, I must in truth say, Dr. Featherston so exposed himself in the service of his Queen and country as to become, as it were, a target for the enemy's fire, thus by his noble example stimulating the courage of the Native allies"	Lieut.-General Chute.
Roberts, John Mackintosh	12/9/1876	For the gallant and conspicuous example shown by him (when Sub-Inspector) at Moturoa on the 7th November, 1868, to his young and newly raised division while covering the retreat from the pa, although outnumbered, and at one time almost surrounded. To Inspector Roberts's fortitude and officer-like qualities it was due chiefly that these young soldiers, who had only joined the force one day, not only maintained their ranks and discipline in a dense bush in spite of the repeated efforts of the enemy to close with them, but were enabled so efficiently to perform the dangerous duty intrusted to them that the force, encumbered with many wounded, was able to draw off in good order. It must also be remembered, to the honour of Inspector Roberts, that it was mainly owing to his fortitude and resolute bearing that the great bulk of the force left behind at Te Ngutu-o-te-Manu were rallied and safely brought off to Waihi, reaching that post the day after the rest of the force had arrived and given them up for lost	Colonel Whitmore.
Kepa, Ranghiwinui	12/9/1876	For devoted and chivalrous conduct at Moturoa on the 7th November, 1868, when at the head of a very small portion of his tribe, with which he covered a flank of the retreat and assisted the removal of the wounded, although exposed to a very heavy fire at a close range. And for the personal gallantry and constancy shown by him in conducting the pursuit of Titokowaru's followers after their defeat at Otauto on the 13th March, 1869, hanging on their rear and constantly harassing them during several days in dense bush. His force on this occasion was composed entirely of volunteers, several officers and many men of the Armed Constabulary having volunteered to follow this distinguished chief, besides the members of his own tribe	Colonel Whitmore.
Ropata, Wahawaha	12/9/1876	For personal gallantry and loyal devotion on the occasion both of the first and last attack on Ngatapa, and more especially for the courage he showed on the first occasion, at the head of only seventy men, when all the rest of the Native Contingent had retreated and left him without support. Major Ropata then pushed his way close to the entrenchments, and held a position at a pistol-shot distance all day and until, under cover of night, he was compelled by want of ammunition to retire, having sustained heavy losses	Colonel Whitmore.
Mace, Francis Joseph	12/9/1876	For conspicuous bravery in the performance of his duty throughout the Taranaki war; for most valuable and efficient services in conveying despatches through the enemy's country; and in acting as guide upon many important expeditions: notably his conduct at the Kaitikara River on the 4th June, 1863; at Kaitake on the 11th March, 1864; and at Warea on the 20th October, 1865. Captain Mace's services were publicly noticed by General Pratt, Colonel Warre, and other officers upon several occasions; and he personally received the thanks of Governors Browne and Grey	Lieut.-Colonel Moule

RETURN of the Names of those Persons on whom the New Zealand Cross has been conferred, the respective Dates, for what Service, and by whom recommended—*continued.*

Names.	Date when conferred.	Services.	By whom recommended.
Preece, George ..	12/9/1876	For personal bravery (when interpreter to the Native Contingent and attached to Major Ropata) on the occasion of the first attack upon Ngatapa. Mr. Preece's behaviour was so brilliant as to elicit the admiration of Major Ropata, who recommended him for special reward to the colonel commanding on the following day, with the very complimentary remark that with two or three more like him he would have been able to break into the pa, at that time not fully completed	Colonel Whitmore.
Walker, Samuel ..	12/9/1876	For conspicuous gallantry in the performance of his duties as assistant-surgeon on many occasions during the campaign of 1868-69, and notably at the successful attack upon the position and encampment of Titokowaru at Otauto on the 13th March, 1869, where he was exposed to a very heavy fire, and bore himself with great courage	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Maling, Christopher	12/9/1876	For most valuable and efficient services as sergeant of the corps of guides on many occasions, and especially in going out to scout in advance with three men (two of whom were shot on the morning of the 26th February, 1869), by which an intended ambuscade was discovered, and many lives saved; and for a long reconnaissance, with two men of the corps of guides (which lasted two nights and days), in advance to ascertain the direction of Titokowaru's retreat after he had evacuated Taurangaika. This service was a most daring one, and of the utmost importance to the force, as intelligence was thus obtained which in no other way could have been procured	Colonel Whitmore.
Shepherd, Richard ..	12/9/1876	For distinguished bravery at Otauto on the 13th March, 1869, while holding the ground close to the encampment, and enabling a close reconnaissance to be made by Major Kepa and the colonel commanding. Sergeant Shepherd was dangerously wounded on this occasion	Colonel Whitmore.
Austin, Samuel ..	12/9/1876	For gallant and distinguished conduct on the 7th January, 1866, when, at the capture of the Putahi Pa, Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell was severely wounded, and Sergeant Austin carried him during a great part of the engagement under a raking fire, and finally off the field, which action was witnessed by General Chute, who then thanked him for his fearless and heroic conduct not only in this instance, but on all occasions during the campaign on the West Coast. Also, on the 17th October, 1866, at the capture of the Village of Keteonetea. Captain William McDonnell, leading a small advance guard of Maoris, came upon an ambush, and fell severely wounded; his men leaving him, retired on the main body, who commenced to retreat, when Sergeant Austin, assisted by another man (since dead), returned to where Captain McDonnell lay, on the point of being tomahawked by the enemy, and at all risks carried him off under a heavy fire	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Rodriguez, Antonio	12/9/1876	For noble and daring conduct in assisting and carrying wounded men from the field under fire on several occasions, notably on the 2nd October, 1863, at Poutako, and 11th March, 1864, at Kaitaki, upon which latter occasion he was particularly mentioned in garrison orders after the engagement. Rodriguez's conduct was repeatedly mentioned by Colonel Warre and other officers in their despatches	Lieut.-Colonel Moule.
Adamson, Thomas ..	12/9/1876	For good and gallant services as a scout and guide throughout the campaign of 1868-69, continually undertaking hazardous and laborious reconnoitring expeditions almost alone in advance of the force; and for personal gallantry when attacked, with other guides, in advance of the column beyond Ahikeru on the 7th May, 1869, where they unmasked an ambuscade, and Adamson, with others, was severely wounded, and the guide Hemi killed	Colonel Whitmore.
McDonnell, Thomas	5/7/1887	In October, 1863, Sub-Inspector McDonnell, Colonial Defence Force, volunteered to accompany the late Major Von Tempsky to reconnoitre the enemy's position and works at Papatatu, fourteen miles distant from General Cameron's advanced post at Whangamarino, which was surrounded by rebel Native outlying parties and scouts. The only track known was in the hands of the enemy, and constantly used by them in moving from their stronghold at Meremere to Papatatu. This undertaking was successfully carried out by Major Von Tempsky and Sub-Inspector McDonnell, who ran extreme danger from scouting parties of the Natives, and had to conceal themselves in a swamp close to Papatatu during part of the night and the whole of the next day. During the campaign of 1866 on the west coast of the North Island Major McDonnell was serving with the Imperial troops in command of a Native corps, and distinguished himself by frequent acts of bravery, more especially at the capture of the Putahi Pa, when, though severely wounded in the foot, he insisted on leading his men till the close of the engagement. The late General Chute has on more than one occasion pressed the claims of Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell upon the Colonial Government for the distinction of the New Zealand Cross	Major Walmsley and Major-General Chute.

RETURN of the Names of those Persons on whom the New Zealand Cross has been conferred, the respective Dates, for what Service, and by whom recommended—*continued*.

Names.	Date when conferred	Services.	By whom recommended.
Mair, Gilbert	5/7/1887	In February, 1870, after Te Kooti had succeeded in escaping from the pursuing column under Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell at Patetere, and engaged and repulsed that under Lieut.-Colonel Fraser from Tauranga, he turned to his right to regain the protection of the Urewera Mountains by the way of the friendly settlement of Rotorua, which he purposed destroying on his march. Captain Mair was at Rotorua, with no troops except a handful of Arawa Natives, when one Baker, a deserter from Her Majesty's navy, who had been residing among the Maoris, brought him intelligence of Te Kooti's intentions. Captain Mair thereupon made every possible preparation, creating a fictitious appearance of force by employing the old men and women to show themselves to represent troops. Te Kooti, finding the settlement apparently so strong, turned towards Kaitiria, and made off towards the Rangitaiki River. Captain Mair thereupon boldly assumed the offensive with such young men as he could get, and pursued Te Kooti's force, inflicting heavy loss, closing with the rear-guard and not retiring till after dark, when he was almost alone, and had driven the enemy down to Fort Galatea, on the Rangitaiki River, which was, unfortunately, unoccupied by troops. During this spirited engagement, which lasted many hours, Captain Mair, by personal example and devoted gallantry, inspirited his men to come to hand-to-hand conflict with Te Kooti's rear-guard, himself killing the notorious Peka McLean, and driving the rest before him in disorder	Colonel Whitmore.
Wrigg, Harry Charles William	11/7/1898	In consideration of his having, on the 29th day of June, 1867, with Trooper McDonald, voluntarily carried despatches from Lieut.-Colonel John H. H. St. John, then at Opotiki, to Lieut.-Colonel Philip Harington, at Tauranga, through country infested by the Native tribes then at war with the British	Captain Bower.

Defence Office, Wellington, October, 1898.

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS,  
Under-Secretary for Defence.

EXHIBIT No. 30.

RETURN of Recommendations of Various Persons for the New Zealand Cross which have not been acceded to.

Names.	Date of Claim.	Services.	By whom recommended.
Milmoë, Lawrence; Cosslett, Johnston; McLean, Henry; Gill, Michael; O'Brien, William; O'Connor, Michael; Beamish, John G.*	15/7/1868	Defence of Turu Turu Mokai	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Northcroft, H. W., Ensign	1/4/1871	Rescuing Sergt.-Major Duff from the enemy	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Nixon, John, Major	19/8/1872	Assisting his commanding officer to remount his horse under fire	Major Rookes.
Fox, Pokiha-Paranui, Chief	28/8/1872	Exposing himself to fire when warning body of men to remain in rifle-pit	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Gascoigne, Major	20/5/1886	For bravery at Waipu in 1865, Paraparatu in 1868, Patutahi in 1868, Ngatapa in 1868	Major Westrupp.
Scannell, Major	16/3/1898	Conspicuous bravery at attack of Ngutu-ote-Manu	Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell.
Lomax, H. A., Captain	15/3/1898	Gallant conduct at Pangarua Pa	Major Kemp.
Gibbes, Murray, Dr.	10/4/1886	Attending on Thomas Lake, wounded on the 3rd December, 1863, at Mangakaretu, when the main force had left for Tauranga	Major Gascoigne.

\* These seven men were originally recommended for the Victoria Cross, but, as the recommendation did not come within the terms of Her Majesty's warrant constituting that decoration, their claims to the New Zealand Cross were considered and rejected. The applicants received a special free grant of 20 acres of land instead.

Defence Office, Wellington, October, 1898.

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS,  
Under Secretary for Defence.

## EXHIBIT No. 32.

*Despatch reporting Murder of Mr. Bennett White and the Mailman (an Arawa) by the Hauha Maoris; also reporting his proceedings.*

SIR,—

Camp Opotiki, 28th June, 1867.

I regret to report that at 10 a.m. on yesterday, the 27th instant, I received intelligence of Mr. Bennett White, a settler of Opotiki, and the mailman (an Arawa) having been murdered by the Hauhaus on this side of the Waiotahi River. I immediately paraded the Volunteer Cavalry Corps, but found it impossible to cross the river on account of the tide, and had to wait until the afternoon. I also sent orders to Ensign Jeffs, commander of Waioeka Redoubt, to cross the river and establish his force on the road leading from that post to Waiotahi. This he duly performed yesterday without any result. I have not heard what he has done this day. In the afternoon Witiria, a Native chief, came into camp and reported having seen two headless trunks lying on the beach; also that he had been fired upon by a large body of Hauhaus. Consequently, with the Volunteer Cavalry Corps I took fifty men, crossing with the afternoon tide, with a view of driving the Natives from their position into the ambuscade laid for them in the Waioeka Road. It was dark when we got to our camping ground, but this morning we found traces of the rebels having recently been there, and the head of the unfortunate Mr. White frightfully tomahawked. Having ascertained that the Natives had disappeared from Waiotahi (I am still in hopes that they may have fallen into the ambuscade laid for them), I at once made up my mind what to do. The spot where the murder took place confirms the statement made to me by Rakaraka as mentioned in my letter to you dated the 25th instant. They consist of a band of Whakatoeas still up the Waioeka, and up this, fine weather or bad weather, I start to-night, for these reasons: the communication between Opotiki and Tauranga is at present impassable, and no land can be cultivated in safety on this side of the Waiotahi. The perpetrators of this outrage are merely a band of murderous fanatics, and until they are extirpated or swept out of the district, there is no hope of quiet for the settlement. Under these circumstances, and after consulting with Captain Skene, my second in command, in the absence of Major Mair, I have called out the first and second-class Militia to furnish garrisons here, at Waioeka and at Opotiki proper, and march myself with one hundred and twenty men and twenty Natives up the Waioeka this day. The coast between here and Tauranga I am keeping open by patrols of volunteer cavalry. The whole responsibility having been left upon my shoulders for the safety and protection of the district, I trust the Hon. the Defence Minister will approve of the steps I have taken. I have not time to write more fully at present, but will send a full report by next mail.—

I have, &amp;c.,

J. H. H. ST. JOHN, Major Commanding Opotiki District.

The Under-Secretary, Colonial Defence Office, Wellington.

## EXHIBIT No. 33.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, N.Z., 2nd September, 1895.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, covering the petition of Mr. George Johnston Small, of Wanganui, and asking for a report. In reply, I have the honour to inform you that to gain the New Zealand Cross the recommendation must be a spontaneous one on the part of the officer commanding the forces at the time the "act of conspicuous bravery," is supposed to have been performed. Twenty-seven years have elapsed without any such recommendation or favour having been made, and that condition still obtains. The department has therefore nothing before it, and is powerless to act.

I have, &amp;c.,

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS, Under-Secretary for Defence.

The Chairman, Public Petitions, M. to Z. Committee.