

By the Coroner—Sergeant Hill recalled :—The men all wore medals, that is the privates and non-commissioned officers. They had no medals, they had been stripped off the coats, stripped off as by force. There were no rings on the fingers. I am aware my brother and Color-Sergeant Ellers were in the habit of wearing rings. Dr. Hope was in the habit of wearing rings. There was none on him when his body was brought in.

J. HILL,
JOSIAH FLIGHT, Coroner.

This Deponent, William Burtenshaw, on his Oath, saith :—I am a corporal in the Commissariat Transport Corps. I know Sergeant Ellers perfectly well, and private Kelly. I was in charge of the Commissariat Transport Carts yesterday, there were two Carts from Poutoko to Tataraimaka. I had four drivers. I am not in charge of the escort but of the carts and drivers. I was on the beach near the river (Oakura), about a mile over the river when I saw an escort of soldiers coming towards me, and two mounted men. I could not say whether they were officers or not they were about eight hundred yards from me when I saw them. I heard a volley fired from the bush. I saw the splash of the balls in the water. The shots came from higher ground than our men were, from inland, and I saw the splash of the balls in the water; immediately afterwards I saw two soldiers lying dead or wounded on the beach. I ordered my drays to turn again towards home and I and my party retired leaving the two drays and twelve bullocks on the beach. There were six bullocks to each dray; six bullocks and a dray were left and six bullocks and a dray were taken by the Natives and one load. One dray was found on the beach when we went back, and I was told the Natives had taken the other. It was about three hours after we left the drays till we returned to where we left them. The dray that was taken contained five bags of flour, a sack of potatoes, and some small cases containing spirits, three oilskin coats belonging to myself and the two drivers. The load in the other cart was beer and ginger beer for the canteen and sundry other articles. I could not say whether the escort we met were armed. We were armed, the drivers loaded their arms on the beach after we heard the firing. We did not fire. I saw on the beach one native who fired at me. I saw no other natives. I saw other natives on the beach, I suppose from eighty to a hundred, that was before the one fired on me. My party did not fire a shot our ammunition was spoiled in crossing the river. No gun had been fired before the volley I have spoken of. I heard more firing, a good firing was kept up for about ten minutes by natives. I saw a native hold up a kind of flag, and I was fired at after that. I saw a native fire from behind a grey horse at me; the horse was coming towards town, a ball passed between me and another corporal. I started from Poutoko at eight o'clock, the escort consisted of four soldiers and a corporal, also myself and four drivers, making ten in all. I did not see any Maoris about the bodies of the soldiers lying on the beach. The shots did not come from the cliff. I meant by bush, fern, or small brushwood. I was acting under general instructions, they were to take charge of the drays, contents, cattle, and men, and to take arms and accoutrements. We did not load our arms till we heard the firing as it is dangerous to carry loaded arms in the cart. I had received no particular caution that day or previously. It is only recently that the carts had an escort. I was warned by Major Logan never to come to Tataraimaka without an escort. It was about six days ago that I received this caution or order. The horse I saw was saddled but without a rider. I suppose the escort was intended to defend us from attacks from Natives. We had no official notice that an attack might be expected. The natives followed us back to the river. After they fired at us they had a kind of red dress. We did not fire as we retired. Our ammunition was spoiled on crossing the river going back. I have been stationed at Poutoko about three weeks. I have seen through an opera glass the native stockade on the ridge to the left front of the Poutoko Redoubt. I sent back four drivers from the Redoubt to the carts, and they returned home with the bodies. They are all now at Poutoko. They all crossed the river with me and have reported themselves since.

By Mr. Fenton :—The only road is on the beach where the sea flows over above or below high water mark, according to the state of the tide. After the volley was given I saw two men with red coats and belts on lying on the beach. I had seen them before the escort was meeting us, where I saw them there is a bend in the land. That is where the escort was when I heard the volley. I told Corporal Stene of the 57th regt. that something was up. He said the other escort was discharging their pieces. I then ran to the right down on the sand towards the water, and I saw two soldiers lying on the beach apparently dead or wounded. The firing was still going on. I saw no more soldiers. I then retired. I saw natives up in the scrub on the land off the sand, about a hundred or a hundred and fifty yards from the two soldiers. The soldiers were on what we consider to be the road.

By the Jury :—I could not say if the attacked escort returned the fire. I am sure the two men were not lying on the beach before the firing. I was forty or fifty yards from the native when he fired at me. There was no act of hostility whatever committed by me or my party towards the natives before I was fired on, nor did we return the fire or fire a shot. I am sure it was a native who fired at me.

WM. BURTENSHAW, Corporal, C.T.C.
JOSIAH FLIGHT, Coroner.

Charles Mansfield Clark, on his Oath, saith as follows :—I am Adjutant of the 57th regt. I produce a telegram which was received at Poutoko at half-past eight on the morning of the 7th of May, which contains the statement of one of the escort, which left Tataraimaka on the 4th of May.

Robert Parris, on his Oath, saith as follows :—I am Assistant Native Secretary. I know nothing myself of the death of the parties before mentioned. I was at Poutoko on Monday, the 27th of April. As I was leaving town I saw Mr. Fleming, who accompanied or followed me so far as I remember to Poutoko. On arriving at the redoubt he asked me whether it was safe for him to proceed to Tataraimaka. I told him from a report I had heard the previous day I was afraid it was not safe. I don't remember that I cautioned any other person that day. I have answered on my Oath. The report that I alluded to was that the natives had threatened to do something, but what I could not exactly say. They had threatened to commence hostilities. To native reports a good deal of uncertainty always attaches, but at the moment in question I considered it my duty to go to the district on account of that report. I went of my own accord. I was not requested to do so. On account of the reports I had heard I could not at all tell what was likely to take place. I thought it possible that hostilities might commence that day as it had been threatened. From reports I had received I could not tell how they would commence. It was quite possible that they might commence hostilities by murdering Mr. Fleming. I did think the natives might commence hostilities by murdering Mr. Fleming if he went on to Tataraimaka. Whilst I was at the Poutoko looking towards the beach opposite the Wairau in