

tations had been written by Colonel Logan and Sir Robert Douglas,³⁰ the band of the 57th came along too 'so that we were not so compromised as we might have been'. Despite rain the trip up to Parikino (not named) and back went off very well. The Reverend Richard Taylor, one of the 'principal people' invited, was a little more critical having been told to be at the wharf at 8 a.m. and the eventual time of departure, perhaps because of tide, being over two hours later. It is clear, too, that Taylor's knowledge of the river was of some value in Mundle's handling of the vessel.

The extemporised ball that evening, which neither Taylor nor Docker attended, had its moments. Coincidentally, a lady friend of Docker's son was in Wanganui with her sister. As Docker described the incident:

Miss Reed introduced herself to me on board and then ended by asking me to be her partner in the first quadrille and would not hear of my declining. However although the ball was only next door I did not go down to the ballroom so a pair of white gloves were sent up to me which equally failed in moving me.

He missed the climax:

Mr Eaton made a sad faux pas... He had taken too much champagne, as had some of the officers, and dancing with a young lady he fell and pulled her down either under or upon him and as, most unaccountably, she wore no drawers, there was a most fearful exposé.

At this point, as an interlude, there was a little work. Sir Francis, in a later press interview, was at pains to point out that in Wanganui 'Several deputations waited on the Commrs. prepared with information setting forth the claims of the district... and the river was inspected.'³¹ From Eaton's minutes, evidence was heard on 22 August from ten persons including Major Durie and John White (the magistrates), the Reverend Richard Taylor and his son the Reverend Basil Taylor. The secretary duly recorded that the bar was 'continually shifting' but 'might be removed at great cost'. Coal of 'a fair quality' had been found up river but timber 'is at present obtained from Nelson and Picton at cheaper rates than the district timber could be supplied'. The claim that 'Whanganui is the centre of all available land in the North Island' ignored the implications of the Confiscation Act and was perhaps as tendentious as the belief that 'Several fine specimens of gold... [had been] taken from the bed of the river'. The efforts of the next 20 years were to collect but little more.

It is clear from Taylor's evidence that Eaton did not count the Maori deputation who attended. Docker thought it 'a good opportunity to photograph' but the room was too dark. The Maoris