

COVENTRY, G. H.

30.10.1900. Ladysmith.

File 73, p. 121.

Mr. G.H. (?) Coventry, field cornet since 1881 of Acton Homes, tells me today he does not think Langalibalele¹ instigated 'boys' of his tribe to get guns, but he knew there was a law that natives could not possess guns without permission, and as the 'boys' had brought guns into the colony and retained them, it was tantamount to Langalibalele's having infringed the law, and he felt he deserved to be punished under the law. He was afraid therefore of bringing them forth when called up to be registered, because he felt punishment was behind registration, which was merely a kind of blind. After he had got onto the hills (mountains) and fired the first shot, he dispatched four messengers to Putile² and other chiefs to say hostilities had begun, and to ask for their assistance. This assistance (which was not given) would have been given, Coventry thinks, but for the fact that the messengers were seen, fired upon, and killed. Coventry was with the volunteers under Captain Lucas. Lucas was soon afterwards removed from Ladysmith, and so convinced were the volunteers he had done no wrong that they at once handed in their arms and disbanded, and no attempt to raise another corps was successful until the siege of Ladysmith over 25 years later. Coventry has lived in this division for 31 years. His age is about 62 I should say.

Notes

¹Hlubi chief involved in the disturbances of 1873.

²Phuthini, Ngwe chief, brother of Langalibalele's mother.