

had to accompany him and his gang to point out the line, and show him how I wanted the work done.—By to-night, however, we shall have the line completed to this place, and cut to its full width to the next crossing at Ongahi one and a half miles further on.

The new men are dropping slowly in; five of them came on Wednesday, and two more yesterday. The former, however, came without tools and had to go back for them, so only commenced work yesterday. Some of the new hands are such mere boys that I have refused to give them men's pay, and have only agreed to allow them 3s or 4s per day, according to their working steadily or otherwise. Their relatives seem annoyed at this, but I think the rest approve it, so that no dissatisfaction injurious to the work is likely to arise out of it.

I took the opportunity on Thursday of sounding the men as to the contract project, and found a further difficulty arising out of the work being restricted to the owners of the locality. They at first seemed to like the idea, but when I explained that the contracts would be marked off and tenders from them invited, so that the lowest tenderer would get the job, they at once declined to compete in any such way, and said they were all brothers, and must take the contracts in a body, at prices to be agreed on between me and the whole. It is evident that this would render any saving by the piecework plan almost impossible.

Mr. Booth will be able to inform you as to the style of the country we have now got into, and the practicability of the line as far as we have gone, so that there is no necessity for me to say anything more than I have already done on that score.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD,
Engineer in charge of the Mangawhero Taupo
Road Party.

W. Buller, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.

P.S.—Haimona Hiroti came here yesterday to see Aperahama, and arrange that, as there are only a few old men at present at Koriniti, the hands now at work shall go right through, the only change being that after their boundaries are passed he will take the charge instead of Aperahama.

H. C. FIELD.

No. 58.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—
Wanganui,
14th March, 1870.

I have the honor to forward herewith the accompanying report from Mr. Field.

The Under-Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. BULLER, R.M.

Enclosure in No. 58.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—
Tahuangatu, Mangawhero,
12th March, 1870.

Aperahama returned here on Tuesday with some more men, and remains here still. We have now twenty-one working hands, but as some of these are boys at a lower rate of pay, and the extra man is a Ngatimaniapoto Kingite, whom Aperahama claims great credit for having induced to abandon the error of his ways and serve the Government, I have thought it best not to object to our being over-numbered, though it makes it very hard work for my son and myself to keep work marked out for them.

Aperahama has expressed a wish that the question of remuneration for his services should be left to be settled between him and the Government directly. He represents, what is doubtless to some extent correct, that he is entitled to be paid for his time occupied in engaging men for the work, and arranging for supplying them with provisions, as well as for the days when he is here, of which alone I have of course any account; and I have therefore referred him to you on the subject.

During the week we have made good progress. The road is now completed as far as the third crossing, and the men are working to-day at the ascent from the river to this place; and the ground is cleared, and the line marked out, nearly to the Wetaweta stream, about two miles further on.

I am also glad to be able to report that during the week we have met with four small seams of gravel. Although such an article is more likely to be met with in this locality, where the flats are everywhere strewn with large waterworn stones, than it would be a few miles further on, yet the discovery is important, not only as affording incontestable proof of the existence of a material, the apparent absence of which is the only objection to the line, and affording reason to hope that a regular search for it might lead to the finding of larger quantities, but because what we have met with is sufficient in amount and favourably situated for supplying metal for the approaches to the crossings, which but for this would have had to be carted a distance of from twelve to fifteen miles over hilly ground, or obtained by the equally expensive process of collecting and breaking up the stones scattered over the surrounding lands.

Aperahama spoke to me about an arrangement which he wished to make to put on four men permanently to procure food for the workers, but I turned a deaf ear to it, considering that the means we have already taken of working an hour earlier during the last four days of each week, so as to leave the Saturday afternoon free, and the arrangement which was made when Mr. Booth came up of sparing three boys during the whole of each Saturday for the purpose of taking pack-horses to bring up potatoes or other articles from a distance, were sufficient for the purpose of