

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE

No. 65.

Copy of a Letter from APERAHAMA to Hon. Mr. Fox.

[TRANSLATION]

To Mr. Fox.

Wanganui, 27th March, 1870.

O friend, this is to inform you about the road. Twenty miles of it have been completed, but the rest will perhaps not be done on account of the lack of food for the men, because the place where the food is, is a long way off. We consider that you ought to let us have another shilling a day, that is to say, six shillings a day, and then perhaps the men will be able to work; for the men are much inconvenienced by having to carry food, and their horses are knocked up with having to go and fetch it. But you had better appoint some men to carry food, so that the work of carrying food may be performed by them. However, they will have to be paid. If you agree to our proposal, our road will soon be finished; but if not, it will stop short in the middle. That is all.

From your loving friend,

APERAHAMA TAHUNUIARANGI.

No. 66.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. WOON to Mr. COOPER.

Wanganui,

5th April, 1870.

SIR,—

In the absence of Mr. Buller, R.M., I have the honor to forward herewith a report from Mr. Field.

I have, &c.,

R. W. WOON.

The Acting Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 66.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER.

SIR,—

Mangawhero, 2nd April, 1870.

The Maoris mentioned in my last report as having gone to Parikino have remained there to harvest their corn and potatoes, and have sent me word that they will be back in the course of next week. Several others have since left for the same purpose, and say they will return shortly; and the bulk of the remainder, including nearly all the original working party, who were getting efficient at the work, have gone to make preparations for a meeting which is to be held shortly at Matatera. As by the time the meeting is over we shall have got beyond their tribal boundary, they do not intend to return, and Aperahama promised to send up other men in their stead. These substitutes, however, have not yet arrived, so that I have now only three natives at work, and have written to Aperahama, urging him to engage the new hands at once. It is unfortunate that the men should have left at the present time, as we are engaged on a rather heavy bit of side cutting in the material which I spoke of in my report to Mr. Fox as "hard blue clay" or "clay-stone," but which proves on working it to be rather a sandy cement, which has formed at some time the ocean bottom. It is full of fossil shells, changed into a substance like flint, and large masses of it, often many hundreds of pounds in weight, have become indurated to almost the hardness of granite, so as not only to blunt but actually to break the picks. Our progress, therefore, is very slow. During the last fortnight we have met with several more seams of gravel, and in the upper part of the hill, on the left of the line, between the Wetaweta and Otutapu streams, there is a bed of it several feet in thickness in such a situation that it can be easily worked and carted on to the road.

From the immense quantity of stone and boulders lying about among the fern, and the fact that, as you will see by the specimens of shell and hardened cement which I send herewith, the supposed clay will yield a considerable amount of available material, there will be no difficulty in metalling this part of the road whenever it is formed.

I have now got the line cut to its full width as far as the Otutapu or Mangaowhanga stream, and the ground cleared and the leading line cut as far as the next stream—the Paheru. Both these streams have comparatively easy crossings, and there is very little earthwork between them; so that we shall be able to push on rapidly when the natives return, unless hindered by the weather, which seems breaking. All through the week we have had numerous heavy showers, and on Thursday it rained during the greater part of the day, though we kept the men working between the squalls.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD,

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

Engineer in charge of the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

No. 67.

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

Wanganui,

21st April, 1870.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward two reports from Mr. Field, dated 16th and 19th inst.

The Acting Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

W. BULLER, R.M.

Enclosure 1 in No. 67.

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

SIR,—

Mangawhero, 16th April, 1870.

Some of the men who had left came for their money on Sunday, and Aperahama accompanied them. I took the opportunity of insisting on his at once sending up the substitutes, when he said that,