

the purpose of examining the country between that place and Ohope, with a view of reporting on the best line of country on which to employ the people of the Ngatipukeko tribe in making a road between those places—a distance assumed to be about six miles.

It is the desire of the Government to have formed a passable track for horsemen rather than a completely formed dray-road. This, it is thought, may be done by breaking down occasional banks, and improving the present surface, rather than by any great amount of cutting and filling or bridge-making. It is desirable that you should first inspect and report on the line, setting forth in your report what work will be requisite, and accompanying it with an estimate of cost. Major Mair, it is expected, will be able to give you valuable assistance in finding the best line of way, and in your transactions with the natives. Pending the answer to your report on the whole line, it will be convenient if you at once, on having determined the direction of the road, give out to the natives by contract the work on the first mile of it from either end, bearing in mind that the whole sum to be spent on the road will not exceed four hundred pounds.

It is not desirable that the work should be done by daily pay, nor yet by contract, at per foot or per yard. It would be better to divide the line into portions lying between natural features, such as rivers, &c., and determine upon a round sum for the completion of each piece so arranged.

It is the desire of the Government to employ the Ngatiawa and Ngatipukeko people on this work, and at the most economical rates. The natives should be given to understand generally that the roads to be made are quite as much for their own advantage as for that of the Europeans. In this case, I am, however, aware that the road must traverse much confiscated ground.

The work should be left as much as possible to the management of the chiefs, as if they were doing it of their own accord, and for their own benefit. You will, of course, have to be satisfied that it is done according to your agreement with them before it is ultimately paid for.

The continuance of the work must depend on the economy which can be practised in its execution.

Lieut.-Colonel St. John, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

DONALD M'LEAN.

No. 122.

Copy of a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel St. JOHN to the Hon. D. M'LEAN.

SIR,—

Whakatane, 12th December, 1869.

I have the honor to report as follows on the line of road I have selected from Whakatane to Ohope :—

1. At present the track runs along a steep goat track on the face of the rocks forming the western side of Kotu Point, then proceeds along a ridge, a narrow saddle track, and runs steeply up to the culminating point of the range, where it drops down to Ohope in a series of steep descents. The ground about here being very broken, the gullies deep, and all the spurs ending abruptly in almost precipitous faces. It was therefore necessary at this part to endeavour, by winding in and out of gullies and round shoulders, to gain a gradient which would give a general gradual upward slope.

2. Starting from Whakatane, I have had cut the line along the side of a small stream, which falls into the flat behind the remains of Simpkins' house. The soil is here all rocky, but the stone splits easily, and breaks up with a plane fracture on exposure to air. A part of it will have to be blasted, as also a shoulder of rock, eight feet thick, which bars the entrance. This gully is twelve chains in length. This summit reached, the line turns to the S.W., avoiding the big hill, and by a plateau and ridges almost level, runs along the left bank of the Wairere Stream. This has to be crossed where it joins a swamp, and a long siding leads down to it and upward again to another plateau. The swamp can be partly drained, and will be crossed by a culvert. At the 181st chain the watershed between Whakatane and Ohope is reached. From this the dip into the latter plain is very rapid, the sides of the hills sloping steeply down into a circular hollow, where springs feed the little Ohope Stream. By taking the road by sidings along the flanks and shoulders of the hills, I drop down gradually into the bush lining the bank of the stream, and emerge at the cliff at Ohope.

The native idea with respect to the amount of money for the work is as yet fanciful; in fact they do not know what can be done in that line. I have estimated the value of their day's work at what they get as wages when working here for Europeans, 2s 6d per day. When the soil is rocky, as in the case of the first part of the river, I reckon that as the rock is of a character which breaks up easily, each man can do one cubic yard per diem; when the soil is loose I reckon four cubic yards per diem per man. I have explained my views to them, and they have agreed to start to work.

They are very anxious to obtain a small advance, and I beg to recommend it be granted to them, as they are in a great state of destitution. If possible it would be advantageous to pay them partly in flour, as here they have to pay for it £1 per cwt.

To complete the means of communication between Tauranga and Opotiki, I beg to suggest the establishment of a wire and punt at the Ohiwa. At this place the Arawa, who are receiving Government pay, absolutely refuse to put on the ferry anything but a small canoe, which can only take two men besides the paddler, and in any rough weather only one. Whenever it blows, this ferry is actually dangerous. It has been reported several times to the Civil Commissioner.

I append my estimate of the work to be done, and the price I propose should be given.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Auckland.

J. H. ST. JOHN.