

BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT AND MAIN LINE FROM
TAURANGA TO TAUPŪ

No. 7.

Hon. Mr. McLEAN to Major MAIR.

SIR,—

Colonial Defence Office, Wellington, 28th October, 1870.

The Government having decided on the construction of roads in the district of Opotiki, with a view to improving communication and giving a freer access to the interior, I have the honor to request that you will take immediate steps to carry out their views.

It is the ultimate intention of the Government to open out a system of roads leading to Waikare-Moana; but, in order to take every advantage of the present season, they have determined to commence subordinate works at once. It will be your duty to determine which will be the most profitable lines to be adopted.

I am given to understand that the completion of the surveyed road running from Opotiki to Otara will be of great advantage to the settlers, by enabling them to cart posts and rails, &c. On this, to be made a cart road, the military settlers can be employed, taking the work by contract. The road to Waioeka, which will not require so much labour, can also be carried on.

It is highly desirable that the Native tracks along the coast eastward from Opotiki should be improved, so as to form bridle roads passable for horses at all seasons. You will therefore offer for contract to the Whakatohea and Ngaitae the line between Opape and Torere. I understand that Mr. Skeet has surveyed the country. With you will rest the adoption or rejection of this line.

With a view to giving access to the valley of the Waimana, the Arawa stationed at Ohiwa can be set to work to cut a horse track from the head of the harbour into the valley, either by Te Punawai or by "Gentle Annie," as you may think most advantageous, on the same conditions as the Torere Road. A line should be adopted here capable of expansion, at a future time, into a dray road.

In the prosecution of these works you will clearly understand that, whether they be carried on by Europeans or Natives, no daily pay will be allowed. In every case the roads will be made by contract. Where Natives are employed you will make arrangements for either the tribe, or the hapus of a tribe, to construct a certain portion for a fixed sum. In the case of the Otara and Waioeka Roads, you may give out the whole of each to one contractor, or, if you deem that such a course will not insure the employment of every one of the settlers desirous of labour, you may divide them into parts, taking care that contiguous portions are being worked at the same time.

Where bridle tracks are in course of construction, you will remember that the avoidance of steep gradients is more to be regarded than an increase of distance caused by following the windings of leading spurs.

For these works you will be empowered to expend a sum of £1,000; and you are hereby authorized to give out tenders, and accept contracts for them, without reference to Government, in order to start them.

I must impress upon you the absolute necessity which exists for commencing without delay the roads above mentioned. You will also be careful, in accepting contracts, to confine the expenditure within proper limits.

For the works indicated I consider that £1,000 ought to be more than sufficient, but you can use the surplus in the further improvement of the coast line towards Raukohero, on the terms indicated above.

There is a supply of tools at Whakatane, which you can obtain for the use of the Natives; and should you require more, you can apply to Major Tisdall, in Auckland, forwarding him an extract from this letter.

Major Mair, Opotiki.

I have, &c.,
DONALD McLEAN.

No. 8.

Mr. TURNER to Mr. BLACKETT.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Tauranga, 24th January, 1871.

I have the honor to inform you that, immediately after receiving your instructions to me to report on the roads at Opotiki, I left in the Government steamer "Luna," and arrived at Opotiki on the morning of the 21st, and at once set to work to gather what information I could, and inspect the works.

The following are the roads for which a sum of £1,000 has been authorized:—The Otara, Waioeka, and Ohiwa and Waimana. The first two are dray roads, 16 feet wide, now under construction; the latter a horse road, shortly to be let by contract to the Arawas stationed at Ohiwa.

Otara Road.

The Otara Road (distance of about 392 chains) has been divided into four sections, three of 95 chains each, and one of about 107 chains. This road commences at the Town Belt, and runs up the Otara Gorge.

Section No. 1 (95 chains) has been let to John Richardson and John Delaney, at the following rate:—19s. a chain for formation, 30s. for each culvert, and 10s. a chain extra where fascines are required.

Section No. 2 (95 chains) has been let to John Rushton at 17s. 6d. a chain, and 14s. for each culvert.