

word "formed" had been substituted for "cleared." Ground covered with dense vegetation must be studied, to a certain extent, to ascertain even where it will be most easily cleared, but my object was in all cases to get a good practical pack-road with as little earthwork as possible. Fully half the time, in fact, spent in tutting the line was occupied in its selection. The misapprehension, I have no doubt, arose from my pointing out to Mr. Hales, as we went along, the direction the permanent road would have to take, as well as several portions where, in going to and fro along the line after it was formed, I had gained a better knowledge of the ground than it was possible to obtain in its normal state, and had seen that the track was capable of improvement. The remark, however, shows that infinitely better levels can be got for the permanent road than those of the pack-line.

There is an apparent discrepancy in the part of Mr. Hales' report in which he first says, "it would be necessary for me to point out the work to the labourers," and then, that "the services of a professional man would not be required," as "any intelligent workman accustomed to road work could set out the gradients" from the markings, given. The marking of trees is by no means an unusual mode of defining the levels with sufficient accuracy for a rough track of this kind, and a person like Mr. E. Lockett, who was overseer of the Natives last March and April, could at once set out the work by the marks. One unaccustomed to them would, of course, need to have their meaning explained to him either on the ground or by a specification, and of the two the former would be the best. In the event of the remainder of the work being carried on under a stranger, I shall be happy to point out the work to him, without charge.

So long as the gentlemen by whom I was engaged on behalf of the Government evinced a disposition to impute to me dilatoriness or negligence in the prosecution of the work, and appeared unwilling to carry out the agreement they had made with me, I have felt compelled to insist on what I felt to be my due in the matter, as well as precluded from making any further proposal to the Government in respect of it. Now however that Mr. Hales' report has set the former point at rest, and the disposition I have alluded to seems ended, I beg to say that if, at the outset, I could have contemplated that the employment of Native labour would have prolonged the work so far beyond the time which, under ordinary conditions, it would have occupied, I should have named a lower rate of remuneration; and that I therefore intend to complete cutting the line through to the main plain at Kerioi or Rangiwhaea without further charge, and will even leave to you the question of reimbursement of my outlay for labour in so doing. When I went up with Mr. Hales, so confident was I that a just report would set the matter right, that I continued the line for between six and seven miles, and there is apparently about five or six miles more to be traversed between the present end of the cut line and the main plain, which I hope to complete shortly, and, in fact, should have done so ere this, but for being detained in town by a question as to the validity of the recent Town Board election.

I will also do myself the honor to forward you a copy of a small but approximately accurate map of the country between Wanganui and Taupo, which I am preparing, and which will show all the routes which, so far as I can ascertain, are known to the Natives, or are supposed to be practicable. Mr. Swainson's map, lately printed by the Government, is incorrect to the extent of from fifteen to eighteen miles in the position of Taupo Lake, Ruapehu, and the country immediately to the southward of the latter, in their relation to the Town of Wanganui. Places which are actually from twelve to fifteen miles asunder, are also shown on that map as close together. The latter error no doubt arises from the Rangitikei Natives, who went as Messrs. Hogg and Swainson's guides, having given wrong names to the places passed; but I should wish to fix them correctly on my map before sending it.

The Hon. W. Gisborne, Minister for Public Works.

I have, &c.,  
H. C. FIELD.

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#### No. 22.

Mr. BOOTH, R.M., to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

(Telegram.)

Wanganui, 27th December, 1870.

HAVE to report my return from exploring country between Mangawhero and Taupo. Mr. Field's line impracticable for road purposes, especially as it is desired to make the line permanent.

The country between Mangawhero and Wangaehu is very broken. The ford impassable for horses—was neck deep and extremely rapid. The only suitable ford is in the open, and to reach it the road would have to join the one from Ranana, making a great increase in the length of road. The cost of survey alone would come to more than Mr. Field's estimated cost for the whole of the work. Mr. Field sent his report and estimate of cost of making road without having gone over the whole of his proposed line. He supposed he should enter the plains at "Matakira," which turns out to be but a grassy opening on this side of the Wangaehu, and many miles from the plains. Natives say the shortest and most practicable line is to be found between Turakina and Wangaehu Rivers. I will report fully by first opportunity.

The Hon. W. Gisborne.

J. BOOTH,  
Resident Magistrate.

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#### No. 23.

Mr. BOOTH, R.M., to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 27th December, 1870.

I have the honor to report that on the 14th instant I left this place, accompanied by Mr. Field and four Natives, to proceed to Murimotu (Taupo) by Mr. Field's proposed line of road. One of the Natives who accompanied me was the young chief Winiata, of Murimotu, who had come to Wanganui, at my request, to accompany the expedition as guide.