

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO THE

FORMATION OF A ROAD BETWEEN WANGANUI AND TAUPO.

(Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated Wednesday, 23rd August, 1871.)

That there be laid upon the Table of this House, "A copy of all Correspondence, Maps, and Plans in the possession of the Government relating to the formation of a Road between Wanganui and Taupo."

(Mr. Bryce.)

WELLINGTON.

—
1871.

FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE FORMATION OF A ROAD BETWEEN WANGANUI AND TAUPO.

No. 1.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 19th July, 1870.

I do myself the honor to forward herewith, for your information, copy of correspondence between myself and Mr. Field, on the subject of the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

Mr. Field claims payment, at the full rate of two guineas per diem, for time which is not, I think, fairly chargeable to the road. For example, Mr. Field came to town on one occasion for his own pay and that of his men, and waited some ten days before it arrived from Wellington.

The professional fee of £2 2s. per diem is charged for the whole of this period. Mr. Field was instructed to stop out of the men's pay an equivalent for time lost in obtaining supplies from town and packing them to the camp. The same rule ought to apply to Mr. Field, who was paid at a much higher rate, and part of whose time was spent in packing supplies.

Referring to your letter of 30th May, I have the honor to report that I have seen Mr. Hales, and that he is willing to undertake a general inspection of Mr. Field's work in the early part of next week. When Mr. Hales' report has been received, the Government will be in a better position to decide on Mr. Field's tender to complete the work by contract.

I have, &c.,

W. BULLER,

Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 18th July, 1870.

Referring to our conversation of yesterday, as to the time the rest of the Mangawhero-Taupo road line would take to cut through, I beg to trouble you with these few remarks.

The question depends on two things: 1st, the weather; and 2nd, the distance it may be desirable to travel along the dividing ridge before descending to the plains. As regards the first, I think we may reasonably hope that we may be favoured, as we are at present, with at all events a little fine weather, after the almost continuous rain of the past two months; and, as regards the latter, I think it probable that we may have to keep on the hill-top till above Pihaua or Rangiwahaea.

It seems to me, however, to be so lamentable to be losing this, the only fine weather we have had for months, that, if the Government would prefer it, I would be willing to take the risk on the above points, and to complete the cutting of the line by contract, as follows:—

If the Government find the labour, I would undertake the work for thirty pounds (£30); or for forty-five pounds (£45) if I find the labour. I make this offer on the following conditions, viz:—

1. That the matter be decided at once, so as to enable me to get what I can done before the weather changes.
2. That, if I find the labour, I am not expected to employ Natives.
3. That, should the Government want any further information or returns, the papers relating thereto shall be sent up to me, in order that the work may not be hindered by my having to come down to town to supply them with what is required.

I shall be obliged by your communicating this offer to the Government, and giving me an answer with as little delay as possible.

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

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD.

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 18th July, 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of this morning's date, offering to complete the cutting of the Mangawhero-Taupo line by contract. Your letter shall be forwarded to the Government by first mail. Meanwhile, I am not prepared to incur the responsibility of any further expenditure.

You will of course understand that, from the time of the suspension of the work, your fee of two guineas per diem ceases.

I understood you to-day to say that you claimed payment (at the rate of two guineas per diem) for the whole of the time lost in town. Whether the Government will allow such claim or not, I cannot say. My own opinion is, that, under the arrangement which I made with you, on behalf of the Government, you are only entitled to be paid for days on which you were actually engaged on professional work.

FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO FORMATION

I remember your remaining in town, on one occasion, for many days, waiting to receive your back pay from Wellington. I do not suppose that the Government will consider you entitled to the professional fee of two guineas per diem for time lost in that manner.

Time spent in the preparation of the sketch map can of course be legitimately charged for professionally at the same rate as the field work.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
W. BULLER,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 2.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,— Colonial Defence Office, Wellington, 26th July, 1870.
I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, and to inform you that the Defence Minister has approved your recommendation with regard to the non-payment of Mr. Field's professional fee during the time he was in Wanganui, &c., and as Mr. Field is now off pay, the question of continuing him at contract work will remain in abeyance until after Mr. Hales' report has been received, when it will be considered.

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

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

No. 3.

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

SIR,— Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 23rd July, 1870.
I have the honor to forward, for the information of the Government, correspondence between Mr. Field and myself, and a copy of my instructions to Mr. Hales, in the matter of the Mangawhero-Taupo road works.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. BULLER,
Resident Magistrate.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,— Wanganui, 18th July, 1870.
I duly received your letter of this day's date, and need hardly say I feel much surprised and hurt at its contents. I am so, because I am conscious of having deserved such totally opposite treatment, having from first to last done my very utmost to expedite the works and save expense on the Mangawhero-Taupo Road. I have toiled at the work and gone on with it in the face of difficulties which I can safely say would have caused any other engineer in the Colony to throw it up altogether, or at least to ask leave to discontinue it till he could carry it on under more favourable circumstances. Only the interest which, as being in a manner its sponsor, I naturally felt in the work, induced me to persevere with it under such adverse circumstances as have lately attended its prosecution; and those who have been with me can say whether or no I have shrunk from any labour or personal inconvenience by encountering which I could hasten its completion.

When you were kind enough to offer me the post of engineer to the work, and inquired on what terms I would undertake it, I not only abstained from making any extra demand in consideration of the seven weeks I had spent in exploring the country without remuneration, but named a rate of pay less than is usually charged by engineers and surveyors for their services.

It was not at my request, or by my own wish, that I was appointed Paymaster, and my constitutional dislike to handling other people's money, and having to render formal and complicated accounts of it, would have led me at once to decline to act in such a capacity, but for my desire to further the work in every possible way.

I have never come down to town unless compelled to do so by business arising out of the work; and on the only two days on which I have remained in town after that business was completed, I have abstained from charging for the time, notwithstanding that the detention arose in the one case from illness and in the other from my having lost, on my way home, a pocket-book containing papers connected with the paymastership, which I sought for, and found next day.

It appears to me perfectly clear, therefore, that I am entitled to be paid for the time consumed in town, or in journeying to and fro, on paymastership business, as the Government could never be justified in saddling me with extra work, involving several weeks' time in all, unless they were prepared to include it in the general terms of remuneration, or some other special ones respecting it had been agreed to between us beforehand.

Your memory has misled you when you say, "I remained in town several days, waiting to receive my back pay." If you reflect a moment, you will recollect that I came to town as Sub-Paymaster, to draw the money for which a requisition had gone down a fortnight previously, and which was wanted to pay the men, who were clamouring for their wages, but which had not been forwarded.

Again, for time spent in going to and fro, and in town, for the purpose of furnishing returns or information to the Government, I consider myself clearly entitled to be paid. Unless the Government were prepared to pay me for such time, the papers connected with such subjects ought to have been

sent to me at the road, so as to afford me the opportunity of answering them without leaving or delaying the work. The Government cannot be justified, any more than a private individual would be, in wasting a professional man's time, and expecting him to bear the loss.

I cannot, therefore, suppose the Government will indorse the view your letter expresses, or implies, on the above points, and feel sure, when it comes to be inquired into, their sense of justice will cause them to see and admit that I am right in this matter, as well as in that of my original estimate of the cost of the work, which you represent them as having understood to include a number of things to which it did not refer, and to some of which it could not possibly refer.

W. L. Buller, Esq., Wanganui.

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

Enclosure 2 in No. 3.

Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 22nd July, 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt (yesterday) of your letter of 18th instant, in which you express yourself much "surprised and hurt" at the contents of my letter of that date, and state that you have toiled at the work (on the Mangawhero-Taupo line) in the face of difficulties which would have "caused any other engineer in the Colony to throw it up altogether," and that you persevered in it under such adverse circumstances because of the interest which you "naturally felt, as being in a manner its sponsor."

I may state, at once, that this matter is not one of sentiment with me, but simply one of business.

Whatever interest you may have taken in the road as its "sponsor," &c., I can only look at results, and (as I stated to you personally) it does appear to me that we have got a very inadequate amount of work for the time and money spent.

I have no wish to "hurt" your feelings, but I must perform my duty to the Government, however unpleasant it may sometimes be.

I have not seen the work you have done, nor do I consider myself qualified to form a judgment on a matter requiring some professional knowledge and experience, and it is due to you that the work should be inspected and reported on by a competent engineer.

I think it right to inform you that Mr. Hales has been appointed by the Government to that duty, and that he will be accompanied by your late assistant, Alfred Edgcombe, who will be able to point out the pegs or marks, and to give other necessary information.

Mr. Hales starts to-morrow morning: I mention this as you may desire to be present at the inspection.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

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

Enclosure 3 in No. 3.

Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 23rd July, 1870.

I have the honor to inform you that your returns and reports have been received by the Government, and that I yesterday received the following telegraphic instructions from the Under Secretary:—

"Government directs that Mr. Field be dismissed, and no payment made to him until he gives more satisfactory reasons for his failure to carry out his promises to Mr. Fox, in respect of the Mangawhero-Taupo works."

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

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

P.S.—Referring to my letter of yesterday, I have now to inform you that Edgcombe met with an accident last night and is unable to accompany Mr. Hales. His place will be taken by the Native constable Heremia.

It may be advisable, on your own account, that you should be present at this inspection, but this is a matter for your own consideration.

W. B.

Enclosure 4 in No. 3.

Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. HALES.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 22nd July, 1871.

I have the honor, by direction of the Government, to request that you will, with as little delay as possible, make a general inspection of Mr. Field's work on the Mangawhero-Taupo line of work.

Mr. Field's first instructions were to form a bridle road along the line recently explored and reported on by him, and to superintend the execution of the work by the Government road parties; the road to be at least eight feet wide in the cutting, and to be made at once practicable for pack-horses.

When the road parties were afterwards disbanded, Mr. Field was instructed to engage two men and to proceed with the cutting of the line. He was to blaze his way through the bush, selecting and fixing the line, taking levels, and marking the gradients in such a way that any road party could afterwards follow up the line, and construct the road without any professional aid.

The Government is anxious to be informed whether this work has been performed in a satisfactory and efficient manner.

You will be good enough also to report whether, in your opinion, the cutting of the line for a distance of some thirteen and a half miles was a fair and reasonable amount of work for the time bestowed on it—a period of nine weeks.

Alfred Edgcombe, Mr. Field's assistant, has been ordered to accompany you, to point out the work, and to render all the information in his power.

Mr. Field has been apprised of the intended inspection, in order to give him an opportunity of being present if he should desire it.

W. H. Hales, Esq., C.E., Wanganui.

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

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 27th July, 1870.

I have the honor to forward, for your information, further correspondence received from Mr. H. C. Field on the subject of the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

It may be true that Mr. Field had "for some years the reputation of being the second fastest leveller in England," and that he was celebrated for the "rapidity of his field-work and the accuracy of his estimates." Unfortunately for the Government, however, in the present case he has given no proof either of rapidity of work or of accuracy of estimate.

With regard to Mr. Field's objection to Mr. Hales as not being professionally competent to make the required inspection, I would simply observe that Mr. Hales has, for several years past, held an important official post with satisfaction to the Government and with credit to himself. He has been called on by the General Government to inspect far more important works than Mr. Field's bridle track; and he is at present engaged, on behalf of the Provincial Government, in superintending the erection of the Wanganui Bridge, the largest engineering work of the kind ever undertaken in the Colony.

It is unnecessary for me to comment on Mr. Field's denial of any promise made to Mr. Fox; but I would call attention to one of Mr. Field's reports (already forwarded), in which, if I remember aright, he admits having told Mr. Fox that the whole work would not occupy more than six or eight weeks.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

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

Enclosure 1 in No. 4.

Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 23rd July, 1870.

I duly received your favour of yesterday's date, and fully acquit you of any personal ill-feeling towards me in the matter of the road. I should be sorry indeed if you should for one moment suppose that I considered you had exceeded your duty. I am quite aware that, after the infamous slanders that have been circulated respecting me and my work, while I was enduring hardship and privation in the prosecution of the latter, the Government, or you as their representative, could hardly, in justice to themselves or to me, do otherwise than cause the line to be inspected and reported upon; and I am so far from objecting to such an inspection, that I only regret that it has not been entrusted to some one who had been brought up as an engineer. I have personally no objection to Mr. Hales, and have no doubt that he will give a just report, to the utmost of his ability; but I think professional questions should be judged by professional men, and that it would have been more satisfactory to the Government as well as to myself that the inspector should be some one who could show, if necessary, that he was duly qualified and entitled to call himself a Civil Engineer.

As regards what you express as your opinion or impression, only a professional man, fully informed as to all the circumstances of the case, could properly say whether the Government had or had not got an adequate return for the time and money expended.

It was as a business or professional matter that I felt hurt at your letter. I have always prided myself on my rapidity at field work and the accuracy of my estimates. For some years before I left home I had the reputation of being the second fastest leveller in England; and during the eight years that I have been Town Surveyor, the price at which a contract has been let has never exceeded my estimate, excepting in a single instance, and then it was for one length only out of four into which Ingestre Street was divided, and to the extent of 2s. 6d. per chain.

It was no fault of mine if you or Mr. Fox supposed my estimate to cover a number of things never included in an engineering estimate. Nothing transpired at the time to show that you had so misunderstood it; and the smallness of the sum named, and my reply to Mr. Fox when he asked me how I arrived at it, would, I should have thought, have dissipated any such erroneous impression. The time occupied by the work was prolonged through circumstances utterly beyond my power to foresee or control, and of course the cost was somewhat increased thereby; but the substantial accuracy of my estimate, (which, from its having been formed merely by overlooking the line from a distance often of several miles, was necessarily a rough one,) is proved by the fact that, in spite of all drawbacks arising out of the employment of Native labour and other matters, out of thirty-four miles of continuous track which had to be formed, and which I estimated at £350, eighteen (besides the repairs at Huripau, and some bits of extra work) were actually completed for less than £220, and that in such a manner that Mr. Booth blamed me for allowing so much pains to be taken with the line, and compared it to "a road through a gentleman's park."

Edgcombe was only taken on a few days before the Natives were discharged, and as a mere field

hand, who had to stand still while I ascertained, day by day, the formation of the ground and selected the line, and would be quite unable to explain the lay of the country, the reason why the track was taken in certain directions, and the manner in which I proposed to deal with various parts of it, all which would be necessary to enable Mr. Hales to form a correct opinion on the subject. I think it, therefore, not only best but necessary that I should accompany Mr. Hales, to give him such information, and am obliged to you for suggesting that I should do so. I saw him yesterday afternoon, and learned that he could not start for several days, and have requested him to let me know when he is ready.

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

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

Enclosure 2 in No 4.

Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 25th July, 1870.

In reply to yours of the 23rd instant, I beg to say that, except that of doing my best to carry out the work properly, implied in my accepting the post of Engineer to the Mangawhero-Taupo Road, I never made any promise whatever to Mr. Fox respecting it; and that one I have faithfully performed.

At the time I received your letter I was engaged in writing one to Mr. Fox, pointing out exactly how, and as far as possible to what extent, the work had been prolonged, and the expenses (both those included in my estimate and those extraneous to it) increased in various ways.

I will accompany Mr. Hales, whom I have seen on the subject; but we cannot go for some days, owing to the river being flooded, and Mr. McGregor's canoe being down at the Wangaehu Bridge, to take up to the new house he has built, articles too heavy or bulky to be conveyed by pack-horse.

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

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

No. 5.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—

Colonial Defence Office, Wellington, 1st August, 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, covering two letters from Mr. H. C. Field, dated 23rd and 25th July, 1870, relative to the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

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

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

No. 6.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. FOX.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 23rd July, 1870.

I have been extremely sorry to be told by Mr. Buller that you were under the impression that I had misled you as to the cost of the Mangawhero-Taupo pack horse track, and the time necessary for its completion. That the time I named has been far exceeded is perfectly true, but this has arisen from circumstances that I could neither foresee nor control, and which have to a comparatively trifling extent affected the cost of the work as referred to in my estimate. That estimate, owing to its being formed overlooking the country often from a distance of several miles, was necessarily a rough one; but still, from the allowances I had made for contingencies, it was substantially accurate, and had the work been done in the manner I described in my subsequent conversation with yourself, in which I explained my grounds for believing that such a length of track could be formed for so small a sum as £350, the whole would have been completed in very little more time than I mentioned.

I have, in my reports, from time to time referred to the various sources of delay and additional expense, but I think it will be best to explain, in a condensed form, the whole state of the case, in order that you may see how any misunderstanding has arisen, and how the total cost of the work has been increased.

The increase, as I have above intimated, has been almost entirely on things extraneous to my estimate. When an engineer furnishes an estimate for any road work, he names merely what he considers a fair contract price for its actual execution, and does not include the time occupied by himself and his assistants in laying off the work and preparing the necessary data and specifications for it, nor any that is likely to be taken up in superintending and inspecting the work during its progress. The estimate is for the work, and the work only. My estimate was of this usual character. I supposed, when I wrote my report, that the work would be entrusted to some member of the Government Engineering Staff, and I gave a minute description of what appeared to me to be the most practicable route, in order to enable such engineer to readily find and follow it; but I never dreamed of including his salary, or that of his assistants, in the estimate. Still less did I include the salaries of overseers to superintend gangs of Native labourers, or of Native Chiefs for supplying such labourers, for the simple reason that not only would it have been most unusual for an estimate to cover such matters, but that, at the time my report was written, such a thing as the employment of Maoris on the work had never occurred to me. It was not till some days afterwards that, on Mr. Buller's asking if I would be willing to act as engineer to the work, and my replying that "if the Board would spare me I would do either that or contract for the whole, including the selection and superintendence of the line," Mr. Buller said, "The Government could not let the work in such a manner, as the vote of

the Assembly had been for the employment of Natives in road making." I said at once that such an arrangement would add to the cost of the work, though I could not at the time have any idea of the extent to which it would do so; but nothing transpired, at that or any other time, which could lead me to suppose that you or he understood the salaries of the officers engaged on the work to be included in my estimate. Had I had the slightest notion that either you or he had so misunderstood it, I should at once have undeceived you. And I cannot imagine how the smallness of the sum I had named as sufficient for the cutting of such a length of track, and my explanation of the manner in which my estimate was arrived at, by showing that there was no margin for salaries, failed to dissipate the misunderstanding.

I will now point out the sources of delay and increased expense.

1. From so many of the Wanganui Natives being away with Kemp and Topia, those who remained at home were wanted to do the necessary work about their kaingas, and being mostly old men, young lads, and those who were disinclined for active exertion, were by no means the sort of labourers that were required for road work. It was so difficult to obtain them that some of those actually employed were Ngatiraukawa from the neighbourhood of Manawatu, another was a cripple, and latterly they sent up an European as one of the party from Matetera. A large proportion were mere boys, some of whom I refused to pay as men, though I was obliged to pass others in consequence of their having served as men during the operations against Titokowaru. They were not, however, capable of doing fair men's work, and of course the progress of the line was delayed by the engagement of such hands. The chief who was to supply the next gang, came up twice to try and get the hands then engaged to go on with the work on his account, as otherwise he could not make up the required number.

The same cause which made it difficult to procure labourers made it equally so to maintain them. They constantly left without notice, to attend to their own affairs, and it was a matter of perfect uncertainty when they would return.

The first gang consisted of a chief and nine men, but the chief did no work. They were to have begun on the 17th January, but did not do so till the 20th, and on the 29th, on receiving news of a death at their pa, they all left, and remained away several weeks, reaping their wheat and other crops. During their absence I was obliged to set my son and the overseer to do their work, while I selected the line and cut it through by myself. By the time they returned, I had got so far ahead with the leading line, that, in order to enable them to come up with me, the engagement of a second gang was authorized. This was about the 20th to the 25th February, but the new hands arrived so slowly that it was some way into March before they all came, and then some of them only stayed a few days.

At the end of March they nearly all left to gather in their maize and potato crops, and during April, except for a few days that I induced some of them to remain when they came up to receive their previous month's pay, I had actually only from three to six at work, instead of the twenty who ought to have been there.

The restriction imposed by the Government, to the effect that the labourers should be supplied from the hapus interested in the land over which the work was being done, increased the above difficulties by narrowing the field of selection, and thus I was obliged to retain hands whom I knew to be physically incompetent or lazy, because I had no hope, if I discharged them, of getting others in their stead, the engagement of them not resting with me.

2. Natives are infinitely inferior to Europeans as labourers, both in respect of speed and style of work. The time they waste in smoking, resting, and talking, is enormous, and as a rule they are disinclined to exert themselves. Those I had to deal with were generally so unwilling to work, that the European whom I mentioned as having been sent up as one of their party, afterwards told me and an overseer, that on his arrival the first thing the Natives did was to show him how little work they were doing, and caution him not to do more lest more should be expected of them.

There were some steady men, however, among them, and these stayed till the last, and it was a fact that, as the overseer and others engaged at the same time can corroborate, we got more and better work done by six men during the last fortnight, than we could accomplish with twenty men and boys in a similar time a few weeks previously.

3. The defective commissariat arrangements of the Natives were a great and perpetual source of delay. At the outset, I suggested to Mr. Buller that the Natives, if they were to find themselves, should be engaged, as surveyors here find it advisable to engage them, for five days only in each week, leaving them Saturday (and Sunday if they choose) for pig-hunting and procuring supplies. The Natives, however, insisted that Sunday would suffice to procure potatoes, &c., and that pigs were so plentiful that their dogs would probably catch as many as they would need close by the work, and that they could make up any deficiency in the mornings and evenings. They were therefore engaged for the whole six days per week, and the result was considerable loss of time. From the number of dogs the Maoris brought with them, and their permitting the animals to range about on their own account, the pigs near the work were, as we moved on, either killed or driven so far off that, when meat was wanted, the men who went in search of it were often a day or two, and had to travel a long way in procuring it. It was no use to remonstrate with them on the subject. They considered they were the chief sufferers in having to go short of food or carry it so much farther, and could not apparently understand my objecting to the loss of time. Of course I stopped all days or half-days devoted to pig-hunting, but the understanding that they could kill what pigs they could near the work caused constant loss of time.

If the dogs found a pig half a mile off, one or two of the men would set off to secure it, and would be in no hurry to return. In fact, as they scorned any but the very best, they would often kill several pigs before they came back, and then return empty-handed, saying they were all "no good." The difficulty of feeding the party was increased by the women and children who accompanied the labourers, and by the number of Natives who came up from time to time to see the road. In fact, when Mr. Booth came up, in March, to inspect the work, the Natives wanted him to allow them the Saturdays on pay for the purpose of procuring food, and the arrangement of allowing three of them a day each week with this object had to be made. The improvident manner in which Maoris consume food when it is plentiful, also considerably increased our difficulties in this respect.

4. The work was prolonged considerably by the different views of myself and the Natives respecting it. I only wanted to make the track practicable for pack-horses, according to my original proposal and the tenor of my instructions. The Natives, on the other hand, wanted a road they could gallop their horses along, and persisted in grubbing every little stump, so that Mr. Booth compared the track to "a road through a gentleman's park." Of course the line is the better for it, but it occupied time not provided for in my estimate. As I was engaged far off marking off the line, I could only blame the overseer (whom I afterwards discharged) for allowing this extra work, but could neither prevent nor undo it.

5. Some little extra work was done by my order, in the shape of drainage; and where, from the formation of the ground, I saw that the permanent line must be identical, or nearly so, with ours, I had the gradients taken out so as to suit the former, and save ultimate expense by a little increase of the present cost.

About ten days' time was occupied in carrying the line over a bad gully, which, at the time I sent in my report, I thought we could avoid, but which, when I came to lay off the line, I found I must either cross or involve myself in far heavier work. A delay which occurred in sending up the money to pay the men also prolonged the work. While I was detained in town waiting for the money, the whole of the work I had previously marked out was completed, and on my return (it was just at the time when we had the full complement of twenty hands), in order to keep the labourers from standing idle, I marked off some more in what was evidently the direction the permanent line would have to take, before I had had time to burn off and examine the ground, so as to discover that I could have got a shorter, cheaper, and sufficiently easy line for the pack-road.

The work on the line we took proved to be very heavy, and as the bulk of the men left just as we got to the difficult part, the time occupied in the work was prolonged by fully a fortnight. I had actually for some days only three men at work on by far the heaviest side cutting on the whole line. The time occupied was fully trebled by the above hinderances.

Notwithstanding all the above drawbacks, out of the thirty-three or thirty-four miles of continuous track which had to be cut, and the cutting of which I estimated at £350 in my report, about eighteen miles, besides some repairs, were completed (as an examination of the account of the money paid to the Natives will show) for less than £220 (about £12 per mile), a result which, I submit, conclusively proves the accuracy of my estimate.

Mr. Buller talks of some enormous total expenditure, but I can only say if there has been anything of the kind, I know nothing of it. It is true that, owing to the continual hinderances above mentioned, the time occupied in cutting the completed portion of the line was so prolonged as to run up the amount of the officers' salaries to a very disproportionate sum, and that, by compelling the remainder of the line to be selected and cut through in the depth of winter, the cost of that work has been greatly increased; but still I cannot account for such sums as Mr. Buller mentions, and feel sure that he (and possibly you too) is under some misapprehension on the subject. The amount of officers' salaries on the completed portion of the line was about £210, making its total cost about £430, which is at the rate of about £24 per mile;—no great price for a pack-horse road, eight feet, and in many places ten feet, and even twelve feet wide, through a country previously deemed impassable. The above sum of £210 includes my pay for nineteen days, during which I was occupied with business arising out of my being appointed Sub-Paymaster for the work. This is hardly fairly chargeable to the road, and if it be deducted it brings the cost of the line down to less than £22 per mile.

The actual cost of cutting the leading line beyond this point has been £151 7s., which is at the rate of about £11 per mile. This however includes the pay of the Natives sent up by Mr. Booth to act as guides; an amount which if struck off reduces the cost to about £10 per mile. The ordinary contract price charged by surveyors for cutting mere survey lines through bush and scrub, such as the road line passes through, is £8 per mile, and more where, as in this case, the work is so far from any town or settlement that the provisions of the party have to be carried long distances on pack-horses and men's backs. Survey lines generally run straight for long distances together, and comparatively little care is required in laying them off; while a road line, on the contrary, necessitates a careful preliminary examination of the ground, so as to curve it to suit inequalities or arrive at practicable crossings of streams, and has to be cut along hill faces and the descents to streams in such a way as to give the gradient lines.

When these things, and the facts that the line is still further fixed by marks on trees, and on steep faces by spade cuttings, so as to determine the exact position of the gradient levels, and that the work has been executed in the depth of winter, I think any reasonable person must admit that it has been very cheaply performed. Had it been done in summer I could have accomplished it in about two-thirds of the time, and of course at about two-thirds of the expense; but even then, as any one who takes the trouble to reflect and calculate can see, it could not be included in my estimate, as it would leave an utterly insufficient margin to cover the widening and levelling of the line.

I have mentioned the time occupied in connection with the paymastership. Part of this was taken up, of course, with the mere paying and accounting, but the bulk of the loss of time arose from the restrictions accompanying the appointment. Mr. Buller's signature was required to all estimates for advances and to all vouchers before I paid them. I had therefore several times to come to town to see Mr. Buller and obtain his signature, and was on one occasion detained several days awaiting his return home, and on another, five days waiting for the money to pay the men's wages, the estimate for which I had sent down to Wellington a fortnight previously, but which had not been remitted.

On three occasions I had to go to town to consult Mr. Buller about matters connected with the work. They were:—

1. When the labourers left to attend the funeral without fixing a time for their return.
2. A fortnight later, to urge Mr. Buller if possible to expedite their return, and get a second gang to make up for the lost time.
3. In March, when the men who had been hired on the understanding that they were to be paid at the end of each month, but who had received nothing, were clamouring for their wages, and threatening to leave if they were not settled with; Mr. Buller being at that time Paymaster.

Six days in all, were consumed in this way. On three occasions returns or information have been required by the Government, and in each case, instead of the papers being forwarded to me at the road (as I consider they ought to have been), so as to enable me to fill them in and return them without delaying the work, I have been fetched down to town from distances respectively of twenty-seven, thirty-five, and forty-one miles; and as, on the second occasion, I was delayed by floods both going and returning, the total loss of time in this way has amounted to fifteen days, besides what was consumed in furnishing the reports and returns, and preparing the sketch map which accompanied the last ones. All these losses of time, as you will see, are in regard of matters utterly apart from my estimate, and could not be included in it. Most of them are not even fairly chargeable to the road, though I gather from Mr. Buller that, for want of knowledge of the circumstances, you have been taking the lost time into account, and so unduly swelling the apparent total cost of the work.

I hope that this explanation will suffice to show how the misunderstanding has arisen, and how the time has been lost to the prolongation of the work and increase of the total cost; and that when you have read and considered it, you will do me the justice to acquit me both of having misled you and of all blame in the matter.

The Hon. W. Fox, Premier, Wellington.

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

No. 7.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. Fox.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 25th July, 1870.

On looking over the letter which I had the honor to address you on Saturday, I notice two or three things which I think it may be well to make clearer.

1. As regards the time occupied on the completed track being "fully trebled" through the drawbacks arising from the employment of Natives, &c.

During nearly the whole time the road was in progress there were supposed to be twenty Maoris employed, but in reality, as the returns and accounts will show, there were on an average only nine actually at work. This it is obvious would at once more than double the time occupied. Twenty really able Natives, finding themselves, would, under any circumstances, be far inferior (owing to their want of experience in road work) to the dozen Europeans, backed by a commissariat organization, whom I described as the basis of my estimate; but by referring to the time lists I find that, of the twenty Maoris engaged, seven were boys varying apparently from about 14 to 17 years of age, one was a cripple, two (besides one of the boys) were far gone in consumption, and two others were small, slightly built men, unfit for such work. This, coupled with their disinclination to work, and the loss and waste of their time from the various causes I specified in my letter, reduced the amount of work done in a given period by fully one-third. In other words, the nominal twenty, and real nine Natives, were only doing as much work as six good Natives, or four good Europeans, would have accomplished in the same time. Nine Natives drawing pay for doing the work of six, obviously added fifty per cent. to the proper cost of the mere work, bearing out my statement, that, with European labour, I could have completed for about £150 what has cost nearly £220. As these nine, however, represented a nominal twenty, the time occupied was, as I said, fully trebled, and, of course, the extraneous expenses, officers' salaries, &c., were increased in this latter ratio.

2. As regards the prolongation and increased expense of the work arising from the time needlessly expended in pig-hunting: it constantly happened that two men were engaged for a couple of days in getting meat, which, if they had kept their dogs at home, they could have got in an hour or two in the morning or evening, and which, when procured, only lasted their party three or four days. The average number of hands actually at work being nine, every time this occurred it was equivalent to prolonging the work by about half a day; and although the men's own time so lost was stopped, yet the total cost was increased by a sum of £1 11s. 6d. for officers' salaries, and what was still worse, it was a loss of half a day of fine summer weather, which had to be made up again in the depth of winter.

3. When I said that £24 per mile was "no great price" to pay for the road, I did not mean to imply that it ought to have cost so much. My own estimate and figures, in fact, show that it could have been completed by European labour for about half that sum. The meaning I meant to convey was that, considering the splendid country the road will be the means of opening up, and the importance of obtaining so direct and easy a line of communication with the interior of the Island, the road, even at £24 per mile, was cheap to the Colony.

I thought it better to go more fully into the above matters to prevent any misunderstanding respecting them, and therefore troubled you with these further remarks; and, hoping they will suffice to disabuse your mind of the erroneous ideas imputed to you by Mr. Buller,

The Hon. W. Fox, Premier.

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

No. 8.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. Fox.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 28th July, 1870.

There were some special circumstances affecting the Natives' disinclination to work, which need to be stated to complete your knowledge of the facts relating to the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

When Mr. Buller arranged with the chief of the hapu owning the land, respecting the supply of a working party at 5s. per day, he unquestionably intended that the twenty labourers should all be able-bodied men. The hapu however could not, I believe, under any circumstances, supply so many; and at that particular time, even after sending up the inefficient mentioned in my last, the chief had to

make up the number from distant tribes, and latterly by pressing into the service a white man connected with a woman of the tribe. My power to discharge any of the hands was disputed, and it was by no means clear that I possessed any except through the chief, who was rarely on the spot. This, and the uncertainty when I should get others in their place, and even whether I could get them at all, prevented my discharging hands whose work was not equivalent to their pay, and put me completely in their power. The rate of pay was the same for the idle and industrious, the ablest or most inefficient, and, there being little or no fear of discharge, there was no inducement to exertion, and the modicum of work done by the laziest became more or less a standard for the whole. The only hands to whom the 5s. rate of pay did not apply were the very young boys, whom I refused to accept on those terms. These were engaged at 3s. per day, with the proviso that, if they worked well, their pay should be raised to 3s. 6d. or 4s. per day. In every case, they either at once or in a few days at farthest entitled themselves to the highest of the above rates: in fact, they did more work, not only than most of the bigger lads who were getting 5s. per day, but than several of the grown-up men. Finding this, I, in an interim report sent to Mr. Buller early in March, suggested that I should be authorized to offer increased pay, to the extent of 1s. per day, to the 5s. hands, but was afterwards told by Mr. Buller that the Government would not sanction it. I had nothing for it, therefore, but to make the best of a bad bargain, and trust to the overseers to get as much work out of the Natives as they could.

On one occasion we had for a few days twenty-one labourers. On my mentioning this to Mr. Buller, he said that as this was in excess of the number authorized by the Government, one must be discharged. I explained this to the chief, and suggested a very idle big boy as the one who had better be got rid of. Very naturally, however, one of our best hands, who belonged to another tribe, left instead.

I mentioned that lately six men did as much as twenty had done previously. This arose partly from a change of overseers, and partly from a sort of piece-work arrangement. While I was myself in charge of the hands for a few days, in the absence of the overseer (who had gone to attend a cavalry training), I took advantage of their being engaged in building an eel-weir in their spare time, to try the effect of marking out a little more work than they would ordinarily have done during the day, and letting them go as soon as it was finished. Having thus an inducement to work, they completed the job by about 2 p.m.; and having, after some days, got them thus into the way of working faster, I was able gradually to increase the daily quantity and still get it done early.

I think you will now be able to understand exactly the nature and difficulties I had to contend with in carrying out the road; and to see how the cost, actual and incidental, was increased by the summer being wasted, and the latter portion of the leading line having to be selected and cut through in the winter.

In order to expedite this last work, and prevent the Government time being trenched upon through the necessity of getting back to camp by daylight, I got my assistants to dispense with the dinner hour and make 4 p.m. the time for leaving off work.

The Hon. W. Fox, Premier.

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

No. 9.

MR. FIELD to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 3rd August, 1870.

As I am informed that, notwithstanding the fact that I was engaged by the Premier to take charge of the Mangawhero-Taupo Road, and that, throughout, his name and that of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary have been those constantly associated with the work, you are, nevertheless, the officer within whose department roads are included, I have the honor to lay before you the following statement of the difficulties under which the work has been executed, and which have increased its cost to a considerable extent, and added very largely to the incidental expenses arising out of it.

As there is said to have been some misunderstanding respecting my original estimate of £350 as the cost at which a practicable pack-horse track could be cut through from Wanganui to the Taupo Plains, it may be well at the outset to explain that that estimate, like all engineering estimates, was for the work, and the work only. In my reports of November 13th and December 31st, respecting the practicability of the road, I described very minutely the route which, from my examination of the country, I considered it should take. I did this in order that the Government Engineer who might be charged with the selection and laying off of the track might be able readily to find and follow the apparently most practicable line; but I never dreamed of including his salary and that of his assistants for the time to be occupied either in that way or in superintending the work, nor did anything transpire at the time to lead me to suppose that my estimate was understood to cover such unusual items. Still less did it include the pay of overseers to take charge of gangs of Native labourers, or *douceurs* to Native chiefs for supplying such labourers; since, at the time it was written, such an idea as employing Natives on road work had never occurred to me. I simply stated what I considered would be about a fair price for the actual work if done by European labour, whether by the day or contract. Had I had the slightest reason to suppose that my estimate was misunderstood as including matters like the above, I should at once have corrected the mistake; and can hardly conceive how my conversation with Mr. Fox, early in January,—in which I explained that my estimate was based on the belief that a dozen good men, accustomed to bush and spade work, and backed by a small commissariat organization, could in fair summer weather cut the track through in about eight weeks,—should have failed to remove the erroneous impression, if he really entertained it.

The first intimation I had of the employment of Natives was, when Mr. Buller asked me if I would be willing to act as engineer to the work. On my replying that if the "Town Board would spare me I would do either that, or contract for the whole work, selection and all;" Mr. B. rejoined that "The work could not be let in that manner, as the Government were bound to have it done by Natives." I said

at once that such an arrangement would increase the cost, as overseers would be required to look after the Natives, and the latter, having no experience in road work, would not do it so fast or so well as Europeans; and he replied that he and the Government were quite aware of this, but that it was part of their policy to employ Natives in this way. I believe, however, that he, like myself, had at that time no idea of the difference it would make in the expense and time occupied.

The causes and extent of the prolongation of the work may be stated as follows:—Owing to the bulk of the Wanganui Natives being away with Kemp and Topia at the time the work was in progress, those who remained (and who consisted chiefly of the aged, very young, sickly, and indolent,) were required to do the necessary work about the kaingas. This made it very difficult to get Maoris for the work, and, when got, they were constantly leaving to attend to their own affairs, and many of them were not the proper stamp of men for such work. The Natives employed were not engaged by me, but were supplied, to Mr. Buller's order, by the chief of the hapu owning the land traversed by the road, and to whom the hiring was restricted by the Government.

Nine labourers (including three boys) formed the first working party. At the end of ten days they all left to attend a funeral, and stayed away till all the grain crops of the hapu were harvested. Before they returned, the increase of their number to twenty had been authorized by the Government. It was of course intended that the twenty labourers should be all able-bodied men, but the working party actually supplied included seven boys of from fourteen to seventeen years of age, a cripple, two men far gone in consumption (one boy ditto), and two small, slightly built men, quite unfit for road work.

Under any circumstances, the hapu could not, I believe, supply anything like the required number of able men, and at that time, even after sending up such inefficient as the above, they had to make up the twenty by pressing into the service men from other tribes (who were actually Ngatimaniapoto, from beyond Rangitikei), and latterly a European connected with the hapu.

It is only fair to the chief who supplied the labourers to say that I believe he did his best to procure them. I know he and his deputy were sometimes two or three days scouring the country to get as many men; and the chief who was to supply the next gang found it so utterly impossible to do so from his own people, that he twice came up to try and arrange for those at work to continue so on his account. Men in fact were not to be got.

I refused to receive some of the smaller boys, except at a lower rate of pay, but had to pass the others on account of their having served as men in the Native Contingent.

Except these small boys, the whole,—whether industrious or lazy, able men or sickly boys,—were engaged at 5s. per day.

As I did not engage them, my power to discharge them was disputed, and it was by no means clear that I possessed any except through the chief, who was rarely on the spot. This, and the uncertainty when I could get others in their place, or whether I could get others at all, prevented my ridding myself of hands whose work was not equivalent to their pay, and put me completely in their power. In fact, from the uniform scale of pay, and the small fear of discharge, there was no inducement to exertion to counterbalance the natural indolence of Natives, and the small amount of work done by the laziest became a sort of standard for the whole. The European whom I have mentioned as being employed, afterwards told me and the overseer that, on his arrival, the Natives called his attention to the small amount of work they were doing, and cautioned him not to do more, lest more should be required of them. We could not make up for the defective quality of the labourers by increased numbers, as, on our having for a few days twenty-one hands at work, I was ordered to get rid of one, as being in excess of the number authorized by the Government. The small boys had been engaged at 3s. per day, with the promise of 3s. 6d. or 4s. if they worked so as to deserve it. This worked so well, that in an interim report sent in at the end of February or early in March, I suggested that I should be authorized to offer increased pay to the extent of 1s. per day to the rest of the hands, but was afterwards told by Mr. Buller that the Government would not sanction it. I could therefore only make the best of a bad bargain, and trust to the overseers to get as much work out of the Natives as they could.

The married men brought their wives and families with them: this, and frequent Native visitors, caused an undue amount of food to be required; and as, except pigs and a few eels, the whole of it had to be brought from Wanganui, much time was lost in procuring it. From the beginning of March they were allowed time on pay, at the rate of three men one day per week, for the purpose of fetching food; and, by the terms on which they were engaged, they claimed the right to kill any pigs they could while at work, an arrangement which caused constant loss of half-hours and hours. Much time, again, was unnecessarily lost in regular pig-hunting. This arose partly from the extravagant way in which Natives consume food when it is plentiful, partly from the fact that they scorned any but the very best pigs and killed at least three or four for every one they ate, and partly from their practice of letting their dogs range about on their own account, killing or driving away all the pigs within reasonable distance of their camp. It repeatedly took a couple of men two days to get as much meat as would serve the party for three.

With such drawbacks as the above, you can judge whether I am going beyond the truth when I say that the working party was not doing, in a given time, more than two-thirds of what an equal number of able Natives working steadily would have done. Out of the twenty Natives employed, however, we had only an average attendance of nine, which at once again more than doubled the time occupied in the work. In short, the nominal twenty, and real nine, only did, in the period from 17th January to 6th May, as much work as six good Natives, or four such Europeans as are usually employed on roads, would have easily accomplished. As nine Maoris were being paid for doing the work of six, it is evident that 50 per cent. was added to the fair cost of the work; and as the nine represented a nominal twenty, it follows that the time occupied (and with it the incidental expenses, officers' salaries, &c.) was increased in the ratio of six to twenty.

Some extra time was consumed through the Natives (who wanted not a mere pack-road, but one along which they could gallop their horses) persisting in grubbing every little stump, instead of merely cutting it off close to the ground. Of course the track is the better for it, but it added to the cost, as

well as occupied unnecessary time. As I was on ahead, selecting and laying off the line, when this needless work was done, I could only blame the overseer (whom I afterwards discharged) for allowing it, but could neither prevent nor undo it. A little extra time, again, was consumed by my orders in draining some parts of the road, and in taking out the gradients flat enough to serve for the permanent road, where the formation of the ground showed that that road must be identical, or nearly so, with our line. We had also to cross one awkward gully, which, from the necessarily cursory and imperfect view I had had of the country at the time I wrote my reports, I fancied we could have avoided, but found on laying off the line that I must either cross it or involve myself in far heavier work. A delay which occurred in remitting the men's pay from Wellington, by detaining me in town till all the work marked off was finished, and so compelling me, in order not to keep the men idle, to mark off more in what was evidently the direction the permanent line would have to take, involved us in about a fortnight's extra work, as, had I had time to burn off and examine the ground before laying off the line, I should have seen that I could have got a shorter, cheaper, and sufficiently easy line for the pack-road in another direction.

It was the delays arising from the above causes which prolonged the work of the road till the beginning of May; and as, from the harvesting of the maize and potatoes, I had had during the previous month (except for a few days that I induced some of the hands to remain when they came up for their March pay) only from three to six Natives at work, and there was no hope of getting more till the feasts and meetings arising out of the taua's return were ended, it was decided to discharge the few remaining hands, and set me free to select and lay off the remainder of the line. The summer, however, had been lost, and we have had to do this latter work in such dreadful weather, that for more than eight weeks we had to dry our clothes every night. This work, under such circumstances, took half as long again, and cost half as much again, as it would have done in fine summer weather; but still the expense of it has not been anything unreasonable, as I shall presently show.

The above have been the principal causes of delay and increased expense, but there have been others as well. When I was made Paymaster for the work, the appointment was coupled with restrictions rendering Mr. Buller's signature necessary to all estimates for money required, and to all vouchers before they were paid. The time lost in journeys to and fro to obtain these signatures, and the delay above mentioned in remitting the money from Wellington, added so much to what was necessarily occupied in paying and accounting, that in all, nineteen days of my time were consumed in paymastership business. In an interim report shortly after I was appointed, I pointed out the inconvenience and absurdity of making a person thirty miles away from bank or post office, paymaster, and requiring a gentleman in town who never saw the work to certify to the time of the men engaged on it and the money needed to pay them; and the arrangement was modified as regarded the signatures to estimates, but as no further sums were remitted to me, the alteration made no difference. On three occasions I had to come to town to consult Mr. Buller about matters arising out of the work, which occupied six days more; and on three others I have had to undertake similar journeys to fill in returns or write reports, which I could just as well have filled in or written on the spot, if the necessary papers had been forwarded to me by the messenger who fetched me down. As I had to come longer distances on these occasions, and on one of them was delayed by floods going and returning, fifteen days have been needlessly consumed in this way. In all, forty days of my time, besides what was taken up in preparing the papers, have been occupied with things which have not advanced the road a yard, and which I submit cannot fairly be charged against it, from an engineering point of view. During part of the time, too, my men have been kept standing idle through my absence.

As regards the expense of the work, out of about thirty-four miles of continuous track included in my estimate of £350, about eighteen miles have been completed for about £220 for the actual work, a result which,—considering the drawbacks I have mentioned, as arising from the employment of Natives, &c.,—I submit, proves conclusively the fairness of my estimate. With European labour it would have cost about £150. The officers' salaries, which I have shown were more than trebled by the delays, were about £210, making in all about £430 as the total cost. This however includes the nineteen days of my time occupied in paymastership business, and if this be deducted, it brings down the cost to less than £22 per mile at which a pack road eight feet, and in many places ten feet, and even twelve feet wide, through a country hitherto deemed impassable, and which opens up so fine a district, and gives such direct and easy access to the interior of the Island, cannot be considered dear to the Colony, though it is more than the work would have cost if done in the ordinary way.

The selection and laying off of the leading line beyond the end of the finished work has cost £151 7s., which is at the rate of £11 per mile. This, however, includes the pay of the Natives whom Mr. Booth sent up as guides, and if this be deducted, it reduces the cost to about £10 per mile. The contract price ordinarily charged by surveyors for cutting survey lines through bush and scrub, such as the road traverses, is £8 per mile; and more where, as in the case of the road, the work is so far from a town or Native settlement as to necessitate the conveyance of everything required for long distances on pack-horses and men's backs. Survey lines run straight for long distances, and comparatively little care is necessary in laying them off. A road line, on the contrary, requires a thorough and careful preliminary examination of the ground, so as to curve it to suit inequalities of surface, and arrive at the best crossings of streams, low saddles of hills, &c.; it has also to be cut along hill faces and the descents to streams in such a way as to give proper gradient levels, and (as in this case the work was to be done by Natives) these last had to be more exactly defined by marks on trees, and on steep faces by spade cutting, sometimes for considerable distances. Although, therefore, the work has cost more than it would have done in summer, yet I do not think any one can consider the expense unreasonable, and, as I intimated at the outset, it forms no part of my estimate.

I did my utmost to keep down the cost, working whenever it was possible for men to do so, and even inducing my assistants to forego their dinner hour, and leave off work at 4 p.m. instead, in order to prevent Government time being trenced upon through the necessity of getting back to our camp by daylight. The risk I was running of losing my permanent appointment as Town Clerk and Surveyor through the undue prolongation of the work; the loss I was sustaining, both in respect of my salary

for the above offices, and through the interruption of my private practice; and the hardships that I have had to encounter since the beginning of May, added to the interest which, as the explorer of the line, I naturally took in it, and the consciousness that, from the employment of Natives, &c., my estimate was being exceeded, were quite a sufficient guarantee that I would not allow more time to be expended on the road than I could well avoid. Except in regard of the trifle of extra work above mentioned as done by my order, I am not fairly responsible for a penny of the increased expense, or an hour of the prolonged time. Both have arisen, as I have shown, mainly from the work being mixed up with the carrying out a certain line of policy under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, and partly from adherence to certain Government routine hardly applicable to such work, and thoughtlessness or want of experience in road arrangements on the part of higher officers than myself.

I can, if necessary, bring evidence in support of the facts above alluded to, and also as to whether I have ever shrunk from any toil or personal inconvenience, by encountering which I could expedite or improve the work; but I hope that the above will satisfy you as to the causes of delay and increased expense, and that, when you have read and considered it, you will do me the justice to acquit me of all blame in the matter.

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Wellington.

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

No. 10.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 6th August, 1870.

Having looked over the correspondence respecting roads, laid before the General Assembly, I have to call your attention to the following remarks thereon, as bearing on the questions at issue between myself and one or more members of the Government, and on that of my having done my duty in regard of the economical construction of the Mangawhero-Taupo pack-road.

As regards my estimates. The origin of the misunderstanding seems to be Mr. Fox's memo. of January 31st, in which he speaks of £300 as the probable cost of the work, and six weeks as the time it is likely to occupy. This memo. is dated three or four weeks after my conversation with him respecting my report of 31st December, which may account for the error it contains. If you will refer to my report of November 13th, you will see that I there named £250 as the probable cost of the road, to which, in my report of 31st December, I added £100, making £350 instead of £300. As regards the time, neither report specifies any, but the following will, I think, satisfy any reasonable person as to the time I was likely to name in our conversation respecting it. In my report to the Kaimanawa and Wanganui Association, dated October 15th, I said it would take "a properly organized party of a dozen good hands two to three weeks to cut a pack-track to the point Mr. Monro and I had reached about twenty to twenty-five miles from Kennedy's, of which distance about seven miles is grassy land, and most of the rest fern. Mr. Monro and I had actually succeeded in taking a pack-horse nearly the whole of this distance in eight days, by merely opening pig tracks and old Native tracks sufficiently to enable the animal to push its way through them, without doing a particle of earthwork. In an interview with Mr. Fox, at Jones' Library, in the beginning of November, I mentioned this, and said that "if the rest of the country was such as it looked to be, and as Mr. Gotty had described it, a similar track could be cut through the rest of the way to the plains in three weeks."

In a telegram from Mr. Fox to Mr. W. Taylor, a few days later, Mr. Fox alluded to this, and asked me to report on the line, which I did on November 13th. Having thus given six weeks as the probable time before I wrote the report in which I named £250 as the price, you can see the absurdity of supposing I should name the same time in January, when I had seen reason to add another £100 to the estimate. Mr. Buller's letter of January 12th bears strongly on this point. Its date shows it to have been written directly after our conversation, in which, from the utter uncertainty as to the time the work would be prolonged through the employment of Natives when Native labour was so scarce, it had been necessary for us to fix rates of pay for myself and the overseers at per diem; and if Mr. Buller had expected the work to last only six weeks, a time often occupied in a moderately large private or Native survey, he would not have approved the terms I had proposed, on the ground that I should "sacrifice my private business as a surveyor during my absence." It is a pity my report of November 13th is not printed with that of 31st December, in which it is referred to, and which is not properly intelligible without it. In fact, in its absence there is nothing to show what was the exact nature of the work proposed by me and authorized by Mr. Fox, nor what my estimate really was.

2. In the published correspondence there are a number of estimates for roads from different engineers and others, viz., Messrs. Smith, Bold, Ross, Ormond, St. John, Morrison, Heale, Clarke, and Stewart. In no one instance are the salaries of officers for laying off and superintending the work included in those estimates, and in no one instance is there any attempt made to construe the estimate as covering such things. Why, then, should so monstrous a construction be put upon mine?

3. Mr. Buller's telegram of 14th February, and my letters of 5th, 14th, and 26th February, 1st, 5th, and 12th March, and 2nd, 16th, and 19th April, show the difficulty there was in getting and keeping the hands; and Aperahama's of 27th March, and mine of 12th March, show the difficulty of getting up food. My letters of 25th March, and of 5th February and 19th April, refer respectively to the unnecessary work we were involved in through the delay in remitting the money, and the hindrance to my pushing on with the leading line, through the small number and consequently slow progress of the Natives, and the necessity of my keeping near enough to superintend them. Mr. Booth's telegram of 5th April refers to the same things, but he jumbles the two together, and makes nonsense of what I said by giving the one cause as a reason for the other effect. It also confirms the pains that had been taken by drainage, and fascining or corduroying soft places, to make a good job of the road. He also mistook, by nearly two miles, the commencement of our continuous work.

4. The letters of Mr. P. Smith, of 26th October, Mr. Bold, of 13th November, and Mr. Heale, of 21st March and 17th June, show the difficulty of selecting a line of road and estimating its cost from flying inspections; and Mr. Heale, though he describes routes and gives rough estimates, just as I did, still insists, in his letter of 21st March, on the necessity of ascertaining thoroughly the details of the formation of ground before laying out a road over it, and estimates the cost of such an examination as is required for this purpose at £3 to £4 per mile over and above the actual cost of laying off the line afterwards. Your own letter of 5th October to Mr. Smith also alludes to the time required to explore a line.

5. As regards the cost of the Mangawhero-Taupo Road, as compared with others referred to in the correspondence,—

Mr. Ross, on 5th November, estimates the cost of a road 14 feet wide, through fern and scrub, similar to the bulk of the land traversed by our finished line, at £3 per chain, or £240 per mile. Our line, at the same rate, should cost £137 10s. per mile.

Mr. Ormond, on 4th July, speaks of forty miles of road as having been completed by Poihipi for £450. Mr. Bold's letter of 21st June shows that the Natives only did twenty-eight miles of the distance for the above money, which is at the rate of over £14 per mile. No description of the road, or country traversed, is given, but passages in other letters seem to show much of the latter to be level, grassy, pumice land; and Mr. Bold's telegram of 13th November describes "the principal part of the work" as consisting of some "side and scrub cutting between Opepe and the lake." This, too, is in a locality where Native labour only costs 2s. 6d. per day, instead of the 5s. we have to pay.

Colonel St. John, on 12th December, gives estimates for a road 7 feet wide, and the work appears, by a letter of 7th March, to have slightly exceeded the estimate. The total cost of 267 chains was £350, or about £105 per mile. The road referred to, however, has on it about 1,550 cubic yards of cutting per mile, while ours has only about 650 cubic yards. Reducing the price of Colonel St. John's figures in this proportion to make it agree with ours, we get £44 per mile as the cost of his 7-foot road as against our 8-foot one, and this with Maori labour at only half what it costs in Wanganui.

Mr. Heale, in his letter of 27th June, expresses views on the subject of present and permanent roads precisely similar to mine in my report of 13th November, and he estimates the cost of a 14 feet road through a level pumice country, about half bush and half open, at £250 per mile, (to which he afterwards adds, on the whole, £1,250 for bridge, &c.) a rate which would bring the fair cost of our line to £143 per mile, or more, considering the difference of soil.

Mr. Clarke, we find, from his letter of 24th June, agreed to give Maoris £150 per mile for a road, 16 feet wide, through bush on pumice land; and he employed two engineers, in addition to this, to lay off and superintend the line, and allowed their assistants 10s. per day, while mine only got 7s.

Mr. Stewart's telegram of 6th April shows two miles and three-quarters of "light work, through open country," to have been only "partly done" for £100.

In strong contrast to all the above, our line has only cost about £12 per mile for the actual labour, or £22 per mile inclusive of officers' salaries for the time occupied by the work.

In reference to all the above works, there is a certain amount of vagueness in the letters, &c., which might possibly lead to some trifling error in the calculations, notwithstanding the pains I have taken to make them accurately; but the case of the contract from Waingongoro to Rawa, as referred to in Mr. P. Smith's estimates of October 28th and Mr. Parris' letter of June 24th, affords conclusive data. The road is through vegetation precisely similar to that traversed by our finished line, but the ground is more level and there are no large rivers to ford, and no necessity, therefore, for expense in approaches to fords. The road is twelve miles long, 20 feet wide, and has about 5,000 yards of cutting on it; and the contract was let at Mr. Smith's estimated price of £391 10s., which I concur with Mr. Heaphy in regarding as a fair one. We find from Mr. Parris' letter that thirty-six able-bodied men were over ninety days doing this work; while my mixed gang of nine able and sickly men and boys completed eighteen miles of road, 8 feet wide, and with nearly 12,000 yards of cutting, besides a strong bridge of 15 feet span, drains, fascine work, and some bits of metalling on it, in seventy-seven working days. An examination of the prices gives a similar result. The average value of the work done under the contract by each Native on the Waingongoro-Rawa Road was 2s. 5d. per day; and, from what Mr. Parris says of their dissatisfaction at the smallness of their earnings, there will probably be a difficulty in getting them to take any more work at Mr. Smith's valuation. Taking the worth of my people's work at the £150 for which I consider it could have been done by Europeans, we find the average value of each hand's daily labour to have been 4s. 4d., which, I think, affords a pretty fair indication whether I and those under me kept the hands up to their work, and how far my views as to the expediency of employing Maoris by day or contract, when time is an object, are borne out. It is true that the Natives at Waingongoro were only receiving 2s. 5d. for 2s. 5d. worth of work, while mine were receiving about 4s. 10d. for 4s. 4d. worth; but the evident doubling of the time occupied on contract work, and with it the doubling of the officers' salaries, would have covered this difference several times over, and if Mr. Parris' suggestion of giving the Waingongoro people a gratuity of £58 10s. is acceded to, they will have received as much, in proportion to the value of their work, as my Natives.

I have gone into the above calculations, not merely because I have a personal interest in the matter, but because I think that a Government which adopts so largely a public works policy should be able readily to contrast results from different localities and under different systems.

The Hon. D. McLean, Defence Minister.

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

No. 11.

Mr. HALES to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

Report on the Mangawhero-Taupo Road.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 12th September, 1870.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter dated 22nd July, I have the honor to report that I have examined the greater part of the work executed under the direction of Mr. Field on the Mangawhero-Taupo line of road.

The formed portion of the road seems to have been laid out and constructed simply to serve as a pack-horse track, and without any intention of making it form part of the permanent dray road that will have to be constructed at a future date; consequently the line has been taken over the country where it is easiest cleared, without the nature of the ground having been studied, or care taken to secure easy gradients. It is not at present practicable for pack-horse traffic, as slips have occurred in several of the cuttings, and a great portion of the track between the Upokongaro and Mangawhero streams is so soft that horses passing over it sunk to the knees in mud.

In reference to the survey line, I may say that it has been cut through the bush for a distance estimated at thirteen miles: no levels have been taken, but the direction and approximate levels of some of the proposed cuttings have been marked by notches cut in the trees, and in several instances by being traced on the ground with a spade. It would not be possible for a road party to carry out Mr. Field's ideas with regard to these cuttings, unless that gentleman went over the ground with the workmen and pointed out to them what he required to be done. This is a matter of little importance, however, as, if it is intended to form the remaining portion of the road in the same manner as that already done, any intelligent workman who has been accustomed to road making could set out the gradients and execute the work. Roads constructed in this way involve no engineering principles, consequently the services of a professional man will not be required.

I consider the work done in cutting the line through the bush to be a fair amount for the time expended on it and number of hands employed.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM H. HALES,

Superintendent of Roads,

Wanganui and Patea Districts.

Walter Buller, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.

No. 12.

Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 7th October, 1870.

Although the whole work which I have lately done in continuing the Taupo Road towards the main plain has been undertaken merely in consequence of my own determination to push the line through, I think it may be as well to send you a report on the subject for the information of the Government.

I started with Mr. Hales, Mr. Porter, and my son, from Kennedy's, on the morning of the 6th ultimo; Lockett, who was to have accompanied me, having failed to make his appearance. On reaching Mr. McGregor's station at Te Mai, we found the Mangawhero too high to ford, and were detained a day and a half in consequence. Mr. Porter (who went up merely to see the land at Te Mai) and I went round by a Native track over the hills, which avoids the two lower fords, but which could only be made practicable for horses at a great cost, and could never become available for carts, though it may be useful to foot travellers during slight floods, owing to its saving all but the shallow ford.

On the 8th, Mr. Hales, my son, and I went on to Putaringa, and the former said he could not spare time to go further. I however induced him to go with me next day to a hill-top, to which I had previously taken Mr. Booth, and which affords a partial view of the remaining portion of the Mangawhero Valley, traversed by the road, and of the ridge along which the pack-track runs towards the plains. It rained all next day, and on Sunday Mr. Hales started downwards, while my son and I went upwards. The rain lasted the whole of the latter part of that day, and the whole or nearly the whole of several following days. In fact, up to the 24th, we had more or less rain or snow every day, though nothing like the bad weather we met with in May and June. We continued the line along the Whaurimu ridge to the dividing ridge between the Mangawhero and Wangaeahu Valleys, and then followed the latter ridge to near the Whaokura Hill, which immediately overlooks the Matahitira Plain. From hence and other points further on, I obtained what I had previously sought in vain, viz., a general knowledge of the ground between the lower end of the plains at Matahitira and that of the main plain at Kerioi. I found that Haimona and Komene were correct in saying that it would not be wise to take the road down to the lower plains, though they had given a wrong reason for it. At or just below Kerioi, the Wangaeahu enters a wooded gorge which runs for about a mile and a half or two miles in a south-easterly direction, and then turning to the south-west opens out into what has once been a broad flat valley, extending southwards for about six miles further. This basin is partially occupied by large grassy flats, and partly by koromiko and scrubby bush, with patches of fern here and there. In the course of ages the river has cut itself a winding channel (now a bush gully) within this basin, to a depth, at Matahitira, of fully 300 feet, and the streams which join it from both sides flow through similar ravines, leaving the plains as detached terraces above them. This is evidently the reason why the Native track from Korimiti crosses the river at Matahitira, and then runs eastward through the Murimotu Bush towards the head of the Turakina; as, had it gone along the plains, it would have had to cross a succession of these gullies.

I found that, in other respects, the information I had got from the Maoris was very inaccurate. The Wangaeahu does not curve nearly so much to the westward as they represented, and there are two bends instead of one. There are also evidently three or four streams between Mekemeke and Kerioi,

instead of one only, as they stated. As it evidently would not do to descend upon Matahitira, I continued to cut along the dividing ridge to the low saddle near Mekemeke, over which it is evident the permanent road must pass. This saddle is about 200 feet below the general level of the dividing ridge, where we follow it, and fully 500 feet lower than the high, broken bush land called "Kaharoa," or "Maungarea," over which the tracks from Karatia and Ranana run. Beyond the saddle, I did not think it wise to traverse the ridge, as it rises to Mekemeke (a high, wooded hill), and then trends towards the north-west till it reaches the Kaharoa, so that the only possible inducement to follow it farther would be to effect a junction with the proposed Ranana line, if the latter had passed near to Mekemeke, which, however, I find it does not, but keeps to the northward of Kaharoa altogether.

Beyond the saddle, the line can be taken in several ways, each offering certain advantages, and attended with certain drawbacks:—

1. It could run from the saddle along the gully which descends from it towards the Wangaehu, and then follow up the actual valley of the river to Kerioi. On this line there would be easy gradients and abundance of gravel, but it seems to go too much to the eastward and to descend to a needlessly low level, and may necessitate fording the Wangaehu twice or more.
2. It might cross the river and pass through the Murimotu Bush to a part of the main plain which seems nearer than Kerioi. This, however, would take us still farther to the eastward, and probably over ground where no gravel could be obtained.
3. And probably the best the line could apparently be taken so as to wind round Mekemeke, and then crossing a gully and the ridge beyond it, strike the river at the lower bend, and follow it to Kerioi.

This is by far the most direct route, and is free from the objections to which the others are liable, but it would be necessary to ascertain if it is practicable before beginning to cut it.

In fact, all three routes ought to be traversed before deciding on the one to be adopted, but as I had to return to make up the town accounts to the end of the year, I could not stay to examine them. I, however, cut a track down to the river to see what it and its valley were like. The river is a comparatively insignificant stream (40 or 50 feet wide, and mostly only knee deep), but runs with enormous velocity, the fall being evidently considerably more than 100 feet per mile; and is evidently liable to high floods. It must diminish in size very rapidly as we ascend it, owing to the large amount of water flowing into it from both sides, so that if we have to ford it, it will be no serious drawback (except, of course, as regards the floods), the bed being shingly, with large boulders at the actual rapids. The gully is wooded throughout, a large proportion of the timber apparently being totara, growing on level or tolerably level ground, at a moderate height only above the river. Epiha, whom I met at Georgetti's on my way down, and who seems to be one of the chief owners of the Otumauma Plain, a little above the present end of the line, told me that from here the road could keep on the west side of the river through open, level bush, right up to Kerioi. If he is right, it will only take a few days to run the line through when I go up again (which I shall do as soon as the weather is favourable and I can spare time); but I find the Natives really know the ground so imperfectly, that I place very little reliance on their statements respecting it.

By watching my opportunities, I succeeded, during my stay, in getting such bearings of the principal points as will enable me to construct a nearly accurate map of all the part of the country traversed by the road. I have not had time to plot the work off yet, but on trying the bearings on my sketch map, I was surprised to find the latter so correct. Mekemeke, the farthest point I have yet been able to fix exactly, is only about a quarter of a mile further from town and about half a mile more to the eastward than I have shown it on the sketch map, showing that my guessed distances are not much astray.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD.

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

No. 13.

Mr. BROWN to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Government Buildings, Wellington, 29th July, 1870.

I am requested by the Hon. Mr. Fox to return you your letter of the 26th instant, and to inform you that Mr. Fox declines to receive a letter containing the insulting insinuation underlined in it; that Mr. Fox neither knows nor cares what your political opinions may be; and that you will be so good as to confine your correspondence with the Government, for the future, to official matters, and address it to the official department under which you are employed.

I have, &c.,

W. R. E. BROWN.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

No. 14.

Mr. BROWN to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 16th August, 1870.

I have been requested by the Hon. Mr. Fox to return to you your letter of the 9th instant. I am unable to treat correspondence sent to me in my official capacity, and in reply to letters sent by me officially, otherwise than from an official point of view.

I have, &c.,

W. R. E. BROWN.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

No. 15.

Mr. BOOTH to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 8th October, 1870.

I have the honor to report that on the 16th ultimo I started from Ranana to explore the country between that place and Murimotu, for the purpose of finding an available horse-track from Ranana to Taupo. I was accompanied by Captain Wirihana and twenty-two men, as also by Mr. Halcombe and Mr. J. Buller, who went to see the country.

On entering the bush about two miles from Ranana, we commenced cutting a track to the left of the one at present in use, which leads over the Parakeka Range. By cutting a siding for about five miles a great deal of high ground is avoided, after which, by an easy gradient, the road ascends a ridge which it follows for about two miles, and then descends, by a siding, to a flat of considerable extent, crossing which, we come to a steep hill called the "Ngaihinekohara." Our guides were at a loss here for a long time, but eventually we cut through two gullies which fortunately led in the right direction and parallel with the path over the spur. We then ascended and kept along a ridge until we came to an old camping ground above the Mangaeturoa River; cut a siding down the face of the hill, and approached the river through a swampy flat; found a good ford—across a slab of a kind of coarse limestone—very wide, not much more than ankle deep. On the left bank of the river is a large block of splendid land called Tupapanui. Came on another camping place. Wanganui Natives very frequently visit this place to shoot pigeons.

After crossing the flat we again ascended a ridge, along which we kept for a considerable distance, and then ascended a higher hill called the Puketoi, from which we got our first view of Tongariro and the plains. We succeeded, after a long search, in finding a suitable descent to a lower level; which took us without further difficulty to the Mangawhero River. The ford here was very good and the approaches easy. After leaving the Mangawhero we found the country much flatter, and had no difficulty in finding a track, and at length, eleven days after leaving Ranana, we reached the Murimotu Plain, at a place called the Tomokanga. Our general course since leaving Ranana had been about N.E. by E. About three miles from the Tomokanga is Karioi, the place where Mr. Field says his road is to enter the plains. From the Tomokanga there is a good bridle track to Taupo: Natives say it takes them seven or eight hours to ride.

We stayed one day at Murimotu for the purpose of obtaining a supply of food, and then started homeward. We now cut the track throughout, clearing on an average about eight feet in width, and there is no portion of the line which has not been thus cleared.

I estimate the distance from Ranana to the plains, by the track we have cut, to be about twenty miles. The Native track at present in use is estimated at thirty-five miles. The time occupied in this work was three weeks, or eighteen working days; number of men, twenty-two. It will be remembered that the whole distance is through forest, and the line of road goes through country, parts of which were entirely unknown excepting to one old man, who had only been on one or two hunting expeditions.

I am very well satisfied with the amount of work done by the men. I found an excellent assistant in Captain Wirihana. No time was lost through bad weather, as, when we were once wet through from the dripping of the leaves, it was better to go on than stay. Each man, besides his daily work, had to carry his swag, as we never stayed two nights at the same camp.

The work still required to be done before the road will be available for pack-horses will be very considerable, namely, to cross-cut and remove all the large timber trees at present lying across the path: to cut away the large roots; to make side cuttings, and to bridge the small streams.

The average cost for this work, at per chain, I estimate at 5s. through the whole line of road. Some portions will not cost more than 1s. 6d. or 2s. a chain, whilst others will cost 15s. to 20s. a chain. If, therefore, my estimate of the distance (twenty miles) be correct, the cost for the work to be done will be £400. The whole cost of the road, including tools, will be about £500. At the same time, it is my duty to point out to Government one great drawback to the construction of this road, and that is the want of metal:—with the exception of boulders in the valley of the Mangawhero, there is not a pebble to be found on the line of road.

By clearing the underscrub half a chain on either side of the road, light and heat might be let in, which would be an immense improvement, but would add very considerably to the expense.

The opening up of this road will be one of the greatest boons ever conferred on the Wanganui Natives, as they will be able to make use of land which has hitherto been locked up, or has been used only very rarely for hunting purposes.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

No. 16.

The Hon. D. McLEAN to Mr. BOOTH.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 10th October, 1870.

MAJOR KEMP has written about a road from Ranana to Murimotu, and says that Wirihana and you have found one. Report on the road, where it leads to besides Murimotu, and probable expense, by contract with Natives, of clearing trees to make it passable for horse traffic; distance from Ranana to Murimotu, and full particulars.

J. Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

DONALD McLEAN.

No. 17.

The Hon. D. McLEAN to Major KEMP.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 10th October, 1870.

I HAVE seen Mr. Gisborne, the Minister for Roads, and he agrees that the road you propose should be improved by contract. Mr. Booth will be written to on the subject. How many miles of road are there from Ranana to Murimotu, and where would the road lead from Murimotu?

Major Kemp, Wanganui

DONALD McLEAN.

No. 18.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BOOTH.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th October, 1870.

I HAVE to acknowledge letter reporting on country between Ranana and Murimotu, and express satisfaction of Government therewith. Work within your estimate of £500 to be done by piece-work by Natives interested in the several portions of the land, doing by contract road over their portions respectively. Please report your arrangements when made. Also arrange for a party under your direction to explore a line from Mangawhero, where Field's road ends, to termination of the bush towards Taupo. No time to be lost in setting these works going.

J. Booth Esq., R.M., Wanganui.

G. S. COOPER.

No. 19.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 2nd November, 1870.

As some statements have appeared in the Wanganui papers to the effect that Mr. Hales had expressed some opinion more or less unfavourable to the road to Taupo *via* Mangawhero, I took an opportunity of speaking to him on the subject, and found he had kept no copy of his report. Mr. Buller, with whom I had also some conversation on the subject, said that the statements in the papers were not correct: that the report was generally favourable, but that something was said expressive of doubt as to the possibility of forming a good road, though whether it referred merely to the actual line of the pack-road as cut, or to the locality generally, he was not certain. He seemed surprised that I had not been furnished with a copy of the report, and to think that the omission had probably arisen from the press of business attending the transfer of the department from the Hon. Mr. McLean to yourself.

I should, of course, wish to know what really had been reported, as I am certain that any doubt as to the possibility of constructing a good road (on any other ground than the want of gravel on some parts of the line, a defect which I pointed out in my report of last December, and which is universal all through the broken bush country between the coast settlements and the plains,) must have arisen from some misconception which I could probably explain; and I shall therefore feel obliged if you will furnish me with a copy of Mr. Hales' report.

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

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD.

No. 20.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 7th November, 1870.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, and, in compliance with your request, to inclose a copy of Mr. Hales' report of the 12th September, on the Mangawhero-Taupo road works.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

No. 21.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 12th November, 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Under Secretary's letter of the 7th instant, covering copy of Mr. Hales' report, and to thank you for your prompt compliance with my request.

I am glad to find that the newspaper assertion as to Mr. Hales having condemned the road, and a rumour which has been current here—to the effect that he has advised the Government not to proceed with the work—and which had obtained more or less credence from nothing having been done in the way of further construction during the late fine weather, appear to have been destitute of foundation.

At the time the report was written, the continued rains had made slips and mud so universal on all roads hereabouts, that even on the main road to Wellington several carts per day stuck fast and had to be dug out.

Mr. Hales' statement, that "The line has been taken over country where it is easiest cleared, without the nature of the ground having been studied," would have been more nearly correct if the

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 Rangiwahaea 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.

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.

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.

We proceeded on horseback to a point near the Huripari Gorge, at which place Mr. Field and I left our horses, and went to explore a part of the Upokongaro Valley, which had been reported to me as almost level country, and therefore a better line than the Huripari one. I found the valley level, as had been represented, but intersected from side to side by the deep gorge, with precipitous banks, through which Upokongaro runs. The gorge crosses the level flat about twelve times in two or three miles: the only alternatives, therefore, would be either to bridge the gorge at each crossing, or to follow the windings of the stream, which would necessitate making heavy earthworks at each turn of the stream. Either of these alternatives would necessitate a greater outlay of money than the Huripari Road, which, for a horse track, is perhaps the most economical that could be found.

Joined our party in the evening at Pukohu, after a hard day's work. Went on to Mangawhero, where we slept.

15th.—Left Mangawhero at daylight. Rode to Wetaweta, the end of the made portion of Field's road. Made up our several "pikaus," and sent back the horses to Wanganui by one of the men. Continued to follow Mr. Field's cut line the whole of the 15th and 16th.

17th.—Detained in camp on account of heavy rain.

18th.—Ascended dividing ridge between Mangawhero and Wangaehu Rivers.

19th.—Reached end of Field's cut line at 9 a.m. Continued along dividing ridge. Cut our way with billhooks. Country very much broken.

20th.—Winiata, who has a good knowledge of the leading features of the country, went on at daylight to explore. On his return we left the dividing ridge, and went in the direction of Pihana, a ford used by Natives on the Wangaehu River, which place we reached, after a most fatiguing walk, at 12 a.m. on the 21st. Found the ford impassable for horse traffic, the current being neck deep and extremely rapid; and, as there was no freshet in it, it is not likely to be fordable at any time.

The only other ford known to Winiata is the one in the plain by which the road from Ranana enters from the bush. It would have taken us another day and a half to have reached the point at which Ranana Road comes out, had we gone the bush. We reached Rangiwhaea (Winiata's residence), at Murimotu, on the evening of the 21st.

22nd.—Went at daylight to catch horses, and rode to the entrance of the bush. Returned to Wanganui by Ranana track. Reached Ranana on the evening of the 23rd.

In forwarding this report I have the honor to make the following observations:—

1. Mr. Field says he never intended that the line he has marked out and partly cut should be used as a permanent road, so that the question as to whether or not it is possible to make a permanent cart road or railway remains yet to be answered, and before such an answer can be given it will be necessary, according to Mr. Field's own confession, to make an entirely new and more careful survey, and that the present line would be useful mainly as showing the general lay of the country. Therefore, keeping the object of the Government in view—"That lines of road through new country are to be laid off with the view of eventually converting them into permanent lines,"—the road in question is a failure.

2. I do not consider Mr. Field has dealt fairly by the Government. He made certain representations to the Hon. the Premier with respect to the road, which induced Mr. Fox to put the work into his hands, and at his own estimate of cost. The question as to whether his professional fees were included or not in that estimate is a matter of little moment, as the cost of making a bridle track by the route we have just travelled would, without professional fees, cost more than three times the amount estimated for.

3. Mr. Field had never actually explored the country through which he proposed to take the road, further than to a certain hill not far from the Mangawhero River, from which he saw a grass plain, but which, on after inspection, proved to be many miles from Murimotu, and on this (right) side of the Wangaehu River. His visit in my company to Murimotu, last week, was the first visit he has made to the plains. He could not, therefore, possibly know the nature of the country beyond the point which he reached, much less to estimate the cost of making a road through that country.

4. Keeping in mind the ultimate object—a permanent road—there are three several parts of the country which are very broken—spurs and gullies running from leading ridges at right angles to the road line. These obstacles might possibly be overcome by more careful survey and skilful engineering; but the question remains to be asked as to whether an easier and more direct, and therefore more inexpensive, line cannot be found? The Native owners of the country say there is a much more direct and most easy line to be found on the left bank of the Wangaehu River: Winiata and the Mangawhero Natives have long spoken of the latter route as being the most likely to form the best permanent line.

Under these circumstances, therefore, I would recommend that no further expense be incurred on account of Mr. Field's road, until other parts of the country have been explored and reported on by persons competent to give an opinion thereon.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH,

Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

No. 24.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 7th January, 1871.
I have the honor, by instruction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, and in reply to inform you that the Government concur in your recommendation, that no further expense be incurred on Mr. Field's line of road to Taupo, until other parts of the country have been explored with a view to finding a more available line.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER,

Under Secretary.

James Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

No. 25.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 2nd January, 1871.

In accordance with my promise, I have now the honor to forward you a copy of the map of the country between Wanganui and Taupo (showing roads and Native tracks), which I have prepared from prismatic bearings to known points and from the best known authorities, and which may be relied on as being accurate, certainly within far less than a mile, as regards the position of any place shown between the Town of Wanganui and Ruapehu, Taupo Lake. The mountains and adjacent country are laid down from Hochstetter, corrected by the Auckland trig. survey; the Wanganui River, from Mr. Brewer's survey; the Upper Turakina and Rangitikei country, from Mr. Swainson's map; and all the country along the Mangawhero and Ranana routes, from my own bearings, which last are taken to Turakina, Ruapehu, Hauterangatahi, and Mount Mitchell, (a Government trig. station overlooking the Mangawhero, just outside the Wanganui block,) for the former; and to the three first and Kokotinga for the latter. I completed the series of bearings for the former and took those for the latter when I went up with Mr. Booth, just before Christmas.

You will see, from the map, how direct a line of communication to Taupo, and to the valuable country which lies between the mountains and the Upper Wanganui, is afforded by the Mangawhero Valley; and the lowness of the level throughout may be judged of by the apparently indisputable fact that "Heao," a hill on the east side of the Mangawhero, a little below our first crossing, is visible from Tapuaeharuru, at the north-east extremity of Taupo Lake. I had heard that it was so, and when I went up with Mr. Booth, I took the opportunity of inquiring as to the fact from an elderly Native (Wiremu Tamihana Tarake) who was staying at Mr. McGregor's station, and was born, and has spent the best part of his life, within three miles of Heao, and who was lately at Tapuaeharuru with the force in pursuit of Te Kooti. He assured us that he saw it distinctly, and as the hill, though by no means so high as some others near it, is—from its peculiar form, and the position of two enormous rata trees on its very extremity—almost unmistakable, and as, from Tapuaeharuru, it would show right over the low saddle at the sources of the Wangaehu and Waikato, I have not the smallest doubt he was correct. The fact is, that, by following the Mangawhero, we pass easily through the line of high hills (varying from 1,500 feet to 1,800 feet high) about twenty miles inland, and continue to rise gradually till, on reaching the point at which we cross over to the Wangaehu basin and the detached plains lying along it, there is scarcely anything left to ascend. The rise, in fact, from the Ranginunia gully to the saddle at its head, over which the road would pass, scarcely, if at all, exceeds 1,000 feet, and from thence the line can be kept nearly level to Pihana. When I went along this part of the line with Mr. Booth, I purposely let him and the Natives go first, because, though the ground in question will be far easier to deal with than some other places which we have passed, I wished him to form some idea of the difficulty attending the first selection of even a practical pack-road through an utterly unknown region, and how far I was correct in saying, in my report of 13th November, 1869, that it would be almost impossible to select the proper line for the permanent road till a track had been formed which would serve as a basis from which to examine the ground, and by which food could be taken up. At present, a few hours travelling with a pack-horse, and about sixteen or seventeen hours' journey along the cut line, takes us to a point five miles beyond where I got to at first with twenty-eight days hard toil. This last spot is shown by the small red cross just at the south of the Matahitira Plain, which, from the length of time we had been travelling, and the impossibility of getting cross bearings to check our position, leaving us to over estimate the distance we had gone, and the similarity of the Whaokura hill to the Murimotu one, both in its appearance and position relatively to the plain, added to the fact that the existence of any plain this side Rangiwahia was unknown, my companion mistook for the last.

The bursting of the gun on which we were dependent for food, obliged us to return without actually descending to the plain, and this kept us in ignorance both of the mistake and of the fearful chasm in which the Wangaehu runs, and which makes these lower plains impracticable as a road line, even at Pihana. This chasm is nearly 150 feet deep, and the ford so deep and bad that it is necessary to keep on the western side of the river right up to the "Tomakanga," where the Ranana track emerges on the plain. It was mainly to cover this unexpected addition to the length of the line, that I, in the papers that I had the honor to forward to you in July, added £150 to the original estimate. Now that I have been right through, I find the extra cost will not be so much, as, by using the Parapara and Ranginunia flats instead of the ridge, we not only get a far better level, but save part of the cost of the ridge route originally allowed for: we should also be following the permanent line. Indeed, in many respects, the alteration is a great improvement, as we not only make a straighter course, but we effect a junction with the Ranana line many miles nearer here than we should otherwise have done. In fact, if we had crossed at Matahitira, and then run up along the plain on the east side of the Wangaehu, as I had intended, we must sooner or later have taken another line up the west side, to afford direct communication with the plains and country to the west of the mountains. The map will show how unlikely it is that any better route could be got by diverging to the eastward and striking for the head of the Turakina, as the Natives suggest. The Matatera Natives, with whom the project, I believe, originates, were employed on the present line, which has been formed nearly to their tribal boundary, and has enabled them to let or sell nearly all their land in that locality; and it would no doubt be a very good thing for them to get the Wangaehu and Mangawhero Valleys opened also. I do not, however, for one moment believe that a better line can be got in that direction, if indeed there be a practicable one—(when Mr. Hogg thought of attempting to reach Kaimanawa by that route, in October, 1869, these very people would not guarantee that his party of more than a dozen good men could make a track passable for pack-horses along it);—and, at any rate, even if it should be shorter to the actual plains, it must be many miles longer to Taupo, and, like the Ranana route, must pass, nearly throughout, over a country in which it is useless to look for gravel. This necessary article is only to be found in the valleys of the main rivers which flow down from the mountains. There is not a speck of it in the lateral valleys, which take their rise in hills consisting entirely of white clay, varied with a blue cement. So far as my expe-

rience goes, the Natives really know little or nothing of that part of the country. A few of the older men can identify the hills and streams when they see them, but cannot tell what lies on either side of them but out of sight; and everything in the way of information or description I have ever got from them, except on the spot, has proved so incorrect that I now attach very little weight to their words. Their statement that a war-party once reached Te Pukohu from the plains in less than two days may be perfectly correct, but it by no means follows that this could be done now, or that a road could be taken that way. The circumstance, if it happened, occurred fifty years ago, before pigs were introduced, and when large tracts of country were covered with fern (which, of course, would be burned off, or have tracks broken through it, preparatory to such an onslaught), which are now entirely overgrown with scrub and scrubby bush.

The Wangaehu, as a rule, has too deep fords to be crossed by pack-horses. A prospecting party, in September, 1869, tried to reach Kainanawa by following its valley, but had to turn back, on account of its unfordable character, when they had got a very little way above its junction with the Mangawhero, and long before reaching the bush; and, as you will see by my report of 31st December, 1869, Mr. Pilmer and myself reached it a few miles higher up, and then returned to Mangawhero, deterred by its apparent impracticability. My son and I found a good ford, on 24th September, between the Parakariki and Otumauma Plains, but it lay so much out of our course, and there was such a deep descent to it and ascent from it, that I decided not to use it unless compelled; and on describing it to an Otumairi Native, who is part owner of the locality, a few days ago, he evidently knew the place, and called it by a name—Te Onepu—which so exactly expresses a large bank of volcanic sand on the western bank, that I have little doubt he was correct in saying that it cannot be depended on, for that often, after a heavy flood, it washes out so as to be quite impassable; in short, I am quite certain that if at first the road should be taken any other way, Mangawhero must ultimately form the main line of communication between Wanganui and the interior. The only difficulty, as I said from the first, consists in the selection of the line, and this solely because the hummocky nature of the ground, and the bush and scrub which cover it, render it very troublesome and tedious to ascertain its exact formation, and the country affords no food for an engineer party, except a few pigs, birds, and eels.

There are two streams—Kiwitahi and Huripari—which will require to be bridged at a high level, and two others—Otutapu and Wetaweta—which it would be desirable to deal with in a similar manner; but beyond these, there will be no difficulty worthy of notice in constructing a good cart road to the plains. There are, in fact, only two or three points where there would be such an amount of judgment required in laying out the line, as to make the work interesting to an engineer fit to be entrusted with it. Of course, from the very nature of the ground, more side-cutting would be required in proportion to the length of the road than in a level region, but all of it would be in short lengths, and the bulk of it very easy. Such long and heavy cuttings as are to be met with on most of the roads hereabouts, would be utterly wanting on the Mangawhero line, the earthworks on which will look ridiculous after the three side cuttings between the town and where we turn off from the Wanganui River.

As a conclusive answer to the assertions that have been made, to the effect that the pack line was impracticable, and that a good road could not be formed in the same direction, I may mention that when Mr. Booth and I went up the other day, we found that the Mangawhero settlers had actually begun widening the pack-road, so as to make it passable for drays. I do hope, therefore, that the Government will lose no more time in pushing on with the work.

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

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

No. 26.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 12th January, 1871.
I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, and to inform you that the Government do not at present intend to incur any further expense on account of your line of road from Wanganui to Taupo.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

No. 27.

Mr. BOOTH to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 24th January, 1871.

In reference to the Ranana-Taupo Road, I have the honor to report that, last week, as soon as I had received the requisite authority to obtain tools from the Government store, I started from Ranana, at which place, on my arrival, I held a meeting with the Ngatirangi hapu, owners of the country through which the road is to pass. I explained to them the specifications as supplied to me by Mr. Blackett, Engineer-in-Chief, and which I have the honor to enclose. It was impossible to get the Natives to contract for the work by the piece, excepting at the exorbitant rate of £3 a chain.

I told them that this road had been asked for by the Natives themselves; that the making of it would not be of any present advantage to the Government; but, on the other hand, the opening of this road would not only facilitate their communication with Murimotu and Taupo, but would render their land, which is now valueless, of great value. They said they were anxious to have a road, but that they did not understand taking work by the chain or piece; that they were willing to work by the day, and that they wanted 5s. a day; but that if I offered them 4s. a day they would take it, and at that rate 100 young men would be ready to commence work on the morrow. (I was told privately

that they would take 3s. 6d. a day.) I said I had no authority to employ them by the day, but that my instructions were to the effect that the portions of the road were to be contracted for by the hapu or hapus claiming the country through which the road would pass, and that I was prepared to give them £16 a mile for the first twelve miles, which would be at the rate of 4s. a chain. They one and all refused to take the work on the terms offered: they asked me, however, to meet them again on Monday (yesterday) morning, which I did, but no new proposal was made on their part. They repeated that they had never done piece-work, but that they were willing to work for 4s. a day. I cautioned them strongly against throwing away this chance of Government assistance in opening up much valuable country: they were still obstinate, however, and proposed to work by the day.

I am told that a great number of Natives, Wanganuis and Ngarauras, are most anxious to obtain work, but as the country through which the road passes belongs to the Ngatirangi hapu, who only number about twelve men, they cannot do anything until the Ngatirangi have come to terms. Under these circumstances, therefore, I returned to town, and await further instructions with regard to the road.

It must be kept in mind that this road is entirely for the advantage of the Natives—excepting perhaps in case of more fighting at Taupo, when a party of Natives could be sent across with baggage.

It will be recollected that my estimate for the making of that road was at the rate of £20 a mile for twenty miles—£400; but on my last journey through the bush, I found the distance to be twenty-five miles. I therefore proposed that the work should be done for £16 a mile, which would still, according to Mr. Blackett's account, be more costly than roads of the same description in the Middle Island.

If the younger men are employed, under efficient overseers, they may do the work at the sum estimated for, but unless I could be constantly on the ground myself, I would not trust them to do it.

The question therefore is, whether it will be more advisable to offer the Natives 3s. 6d. a day, and get as much work done as possible for the £400,—leaving them to finish it, if any work remains to be done, at their own expense,—or to let the work stand over until they are willing to do it by contract.

Major Kemp—at whose request the Government consented to make this road—is very much disgusted at the greed shown by the Ngatirangi. He is anxious that the Government should not condemn the road on that account, but that the money set apart for that purpose should be kept back for awhile, until the Natives, as he expresses it, “come to their senses.”

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate.

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under Secretary, Wellington.

No. 28.

Mr. BOOTH, R.M., to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 25th January, 1871.

I have the honor to report that the Ngatiapa Natives, Aprehama Tahumuarangi, Piripi, and others, residing at Wangaehu, are well acquainted with the line of country between the Wangaehu and Turakina Rivers, and their statement—confirmed by Natives from Taupo and other parts of the country—is, that a much better and more direct road than the one laid off by Mr. Field is to be found between those rivers. These Natives have been engaged, during the last two months, in surveying a block of land, but they have sent to inform me that their services are now at my disposal whenever I wish to explore the country in question.

I think it is probable that Mr. Field's line of road can be made available as far as the first crossing of the Mangawhero, from which place a Native track leads to the Wangaehu. I do not know the nature of the country between Mangawhero and Wangaehu, as I have not explored it, nor yet whether a suitable ford can be found.

In case the Government do not wish to push the Ranana-Taupo Road on at present, I have the honor to request that I may be instructed to explore and report upon the country between the above-mentioned Wangaehu and Turakina Rivers.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate,

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under Secretary, Wellington.

No. 29.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 20th February, 1871.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo; and, in reply, to authorize you to go on with the formation of the horse track *viâ* Ranana as soon as possible, as well as the exploration of the continuance of Field's line suggested by you.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

James Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

No. 30.

Mr. BOOTH, R.M., to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 30th January, 1871.

I have the honor herewith to forward Mr. Field's claim for salary from the 1st April to the 17th July, 1870, amounting to the sum of £197 8s. I have declined to certify to the accounts, as the

tools which were left in Mr. Field's charge have not yet been handed over to me. I have been twice up the country for the purpose of taking them over, but on each occasion the majority of the tools were missing.

It will be seen, by the pay sheets, that reference is made to time spent in Wanganui. Some of this time he is, I think, entitled to, as he was ordered into town to prepare returns for the General Assembly. Please send instructions as to the settlement of these accounts.

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 31.

EXTRACT from Telegram from the Hon. W. FOX to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

Patea, 4.30 p.m., 22nd April, 1871.

BOOTH returned to Wanganui. Has discovered excellent road to Taupo, with first-rate crossing of Wangaehu only. Just six miles of Field's line will be available. I think Field ought to be paid nothing whatever. He has entirely deceived the Government.

No. 32.

Mr. BOOTH to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 6th February, 1871.

I have the honor to report that, when Mr. Field laid off his line of road up the Mangawhero Valley, Koriniti Natives, in anticipation of food being required, planted a quantity of potatoes at a place called Parapara, near the end of the present cut line.

It is satisfactory now to state that the Natives have determined to cut a horse track from the Wanganui River to the Parapara, and thence to Murimotu, where they have land. They have cut a line where they propose to make the road, and they do not ask for any assistance from Government, with the exception of the loan of some picks and shovels with which to do the earthworks. They also wish me to explore the country through which the proposed bridle track is to be taken, and to report on the same to the Government, as they are in hopes as good a road may be made as the one first proposed to be made from Ranana.

G. S. Cooper, Under Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 33.

Mr. COOPER to Mr. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 17th February, 1871.

In reply to your letter of the 6th instant, I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Gisborne, to authorize your issuing six picks and six shovels, now in your charge, to the Native chief Haimona, of Koriniti, for the purpose of making a road to Murimotu.

You must take care that these tools are only used for the purpose for which they are issued, and that they are duly returned or accounted for when the work is finished.

James Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

No. 34.

Mr. BOOTH to Mr. COOPER.

SIR,—

Ranana, 21st February, 1871.

I have the honor to report, with reference to the Ranana-Taupo Road, that after I had sent my last telegram I saw several of the chief owners of the land through which the road was to pass: they were all anxious to have the road made, and expressed their willingness to accept the terms offered by the Government, but at the same time advised me to come up the river and hold another meeting with the whole of the Ngatirangi hapu. I left town accordingly on the 15th instant, and on the 18th I held a meeting with the Ngatirangi, at Ranana, and another at Hiruharama yesterday.

I found on both occasions that all the young men of the hapu, as well as all the working men of neighbouring tribes, were most desirous to be employed on the road at the contract rates proposed by Government, but that the older men (who have got an absurd idea that if the road is made the land will soon slip out of their hands) were opposed to the road being made at all, and with this object they reiterated the demand previously made for 5s. a day, at which rate of pay they said that every old man and boy would go to work; and that, if the Government wished to make the road in question, it would give them (Natives) what they demanded.

As about one hundred young men had agreed to go at once to work by contract, there was much dissatisfaction felt at this opposition on the part of a few, and the talk lasted the greater part of the day, at the end of which the opposition were divided into two parties, one of which refused to work, or allow any others to work, excepting at the rate of 5s. a day, and the other party were opposed to making the road at all, as trouble would be sure to come of it. (It was made known, in the course of the day, that a letter had been sent to Tahana from the Maori King, ordering that any European or Native engaged in making roads was to be murdered.)

Owing, therefore, to the prejudice and fear of half a dozen weak-minded men, the liberal offer of the Government has been rejected, against the better judgment and eager desire of all the young men of the tribe.

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH.

Wanganui, 26th February.

P.S.—I have just seen Major Kemp, at whose earnest request the Government consented that this road should be made for the convenience of the Natives, and he is very much put out at the idea of these Natives agreeing, in the first place, to have the country explored and the road surveyed, and now refusing to have the road made when a considerable sum of money has been already spent on it; but he says he feels quite sure that pressure has been brought to bear on the old men by the Hauhaus, and earnestly requested me not to report to Government their refusal to have the road until he should have an opportunity of questioning them himself on this matter. I told Kemp I must send a report, but I would also send his statement. Kemp's suspicions are against Tahana and Topia, on account of the King's letter.

Tahana went up the river whilst I was at Ranana. We had had a meeting, and it was decided that the road should be made. When Tahana heard of it, he said to me, "Why, does not the murder of the Pakeha (Mr. Todd) at Waikato satisfy you, that you and your Maoris must wish to do this work and be murdered also." Two days after this the road was refused by the Ngatirangi.

JAMES BOOTH.

No. 35.

HAIMONA and others to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

To MR. McLEAN,—

Putiki, 24th February, 1871.

O Sir, salutations to you, who are the parent of men and of work.

Mr. Booth has returned from Ranana. The road at Ranana has not been agreed to. He came to Koriniti, and has explored the country for a road between that place and Murimotu.

This is my word to you about the money (set apart) for roads. Do not you take the money (set apart) for my roads (and appropriate it to another purpose); rather do you show your good feeling to us who are doing the work of the Queen. The road on the Mangawhero, laid off by Mr. Field, will be joined by this from Koriniti. This is all.

From HAIMONA,
TE POARI,
KOMENE.

No. 36.

MR. BOOTH to MR. COOPER.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 25th February, 1871.

I have the honor to report that, on my way down this river from Ranana on the 21st instant, I was stopped by the Natives at Koriniti, who requested me to explore the country through which they propose to make a line of road to Murimotu and Taupo. I accordingly explored the country, and find that a leading ridge runs from Koriniti without a break until it descends into the Mangawhero Valley, and, crossing the river by an easy ford, it ascends a saddle in the leading ridge between the Mangawhero and Wangaehu Rivers, where it joins Field's line of road at a place called Parapara. The Natives, fifty of whom are now at Parapara and other places on the Mangawhero, say that if Field had crossed the Mangawhero at this point, he would have found a much easier and flatter country on the other side. I am doubtful, however, about the river being fordable. If on further exploration I find that Mr. Field's line can be taken across the Wangaehu at this point, the road from Koriniti to Parapara will answer every purpose of the proposed Ranana Road; and there will not be a quarter the work. It will, likewise, from running along a ridge, have the advantage of being dry. The Natives also are more deserving of encouragement, having laid off part of the road and done some of the cutting at their own expense. Haimona, the Koriniti chief, is most desirous that part of the money granted by Government for the Ranana-Taupo Road should, now the Ngatirangi have rejected it, be appropriated to the purpose of making a good bridle track from Koriniti; but Government will not, of course, be able to give any answer to this request until it is found whether or not Field's line can be made available as far as Parapara. With reference to further exploring of the latter line, I have to state that I have written to the chief Winiata, who will, I expect, be here in the course of four or five days, when I shall explore the country in question.

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH.

No. 37.

MR. COOPER to MR. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 10th March, 1871.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Fox, in the absence of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your two letters of the 21st and 25th ultimo, and, in reply, to inform you that no attempt will be made to push the Ranana-Taupo Road through the Ngatirangi country.

With regard to the proposed road from Koriniti to Murimotu and Taupo, the Government await the report of your exploration with the Chief Winiata before taking any steps in the matter.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

J. Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

No. 38.

Mr. BOOTH to Mr. KNOWLES.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 25th April, 1871.

I have the honor to report, with reference to the Mangawhera-Taupo Road, that on the 14th ultimo I held a meeting at Matatera with the Ngatiapa owners of the land through which it was said a good road line might be made. Two Natives, Piripi and Neha, who said they knew the country well, were of opinion that the best line after crossing the Wangaehu River was to follow up a stream called the Mangamahu to its source, which is close to the plains. They said an old war track went in this direction, and that it was comparatively level. These men made extravagant demands for pay to act as guides. I did not, therefore, engage them. They also spoke of compensation in case the road was carried through their land. I said I knew nothing of compensation, and certainly the Government could not say anything in the matter, being entirely in the dark as to whether a road could be made there at all.

On the 17th March, having engaged Winiata, of Murimotu, as chief guide, and three other Natives to accompany the expedition, we started from Wanganui, and first explored a portion of country between Upokongaro and Mangawhero, in order to avoid, if possible, some very deep gullies through which Mr. Field has cut his road line, and which, at this season of the year, are all but impassable for a horse without a rider. I concluded that unless we could find an easier line it would only be wasting time to lay off a road beyond that point.

I am proud to be able to report that we succeeded beyond my expectation, and found a good and easy line from the Wanganui River to Mr. McGregor's farm on the Mangawhero; distance about eleven miles.

After leaving McGregor's we kept in the valley of the Mangawhero for four or five miles, but have managed that the road shall avoid two of the three crossings taken by Mr. Field.

At a place called Wetaweta we left Mr. Field's line for good, and struck off up a leading gully, in a north-east direction, towards the Wangaehu River, which is about five miles distant from the Mangawhero. We found a perfectly practicable line, and an easy descent into the Wangaehu Valley, and a ford across the river which was 2 feet 6 inches deep.

On the left bank of the Wangaehu is some level land covered with fern, scrub, and grass, and at the junction of the Mangamahu, two miles lower down, is a grass flat of several hundred acres. As we had been informed that the old war track went along the leading ridge on the right bank of the Mangamahu, we determined to try it. On ascending a high hill, we could see from the top of a tree that the ridge appeared to run directly to Tuhirangi, on the Murimotu Plains, at which was the place we had determined to approach the plains. We followed the ridge, therefore, for three days, but did not make much progress, on account of the density of the scrub. At the end of this time we found, much to our disappointment, that we could get no further in that direction, our progress being stopped by the watershed of the Mangamahu, which was formed of five or six deep gorges, which ran in a direction almost at right angles to our line of road. We had therefore to retrace our steps until we again opened up the Wangaehu Valley, from which we ascended another low, flat-topped ridge, which we had previously remarked, and in two days, after hard work cutting our way through thick scrub, we reached a conspicuous hill called Maunga-Karetu, and from thence we found, to our great satisfaction, the same ridge (changing its direction from N.E. by E., which it had held from Wangaehu, to N.N.E.) continued unbroken until it gradually descended into the plains, at a place called Okotinga. After reaching the plains the road will continue on the left bank of the Wangaehu until it reaches the "One tapu," or desert. There are several streams running from the mountain, which have to be crossed, but they are easily forded, and all have shingly bottoms.

This proposed line reaches the plains fifteen miles to the eastward of Mr. Field's line, and is consequently so much nearer Taupo.

I estimate the distance from Wanganui to Murimotu to be from thirty-seven to forty miles, but it is quite possible that I am mistaken, as nothing is more difficult than to estimate distances through a rough country which has no sign of a track of any kind.

Our journey has been a most laborious one, owing to the nature of the country and the thick undergrowth, the season being too far advanced to burn. There is little or no large timber on the line of road, and there are no streams or gullies to cross excepting those already mentioned. There being no pigs on the ridges we ran very short of food, but persevered until we got out where we got supplies. We returned by way of Ranana, having been absent from home about five weeks.

In conclusion, I have the honor to request, if Government approve of this report, that an Engineer may be instructed to go with me over the line of road, on whose report the Government will be able to act.

The Under Secretary, Public Works Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH.

No. 39.

Mr. KNOWLES to Mr. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 1st May, 1861.

I do myself the honor, by direction of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of

your letter of the 25th ultimo, in which you report the exploration of a satisfactory line of road from Wanganui to Taupo, and to inform you, in reply, that your recommendations will be submitted to the Chief Engineer on his return from the South.

James Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
JOHN KNOWLES,
Under Secretary.

No. 40.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 26th April, 1871.

I had hoped that on Mr. Booth's return I should find that authority to him to discharge my claim against the Government had been forwarded during his absence from home.

As however I have just learned from him that he has had no instructions on the subject, I take the liberty of reminding you of it, and requesting a settlement, as it is somewhat inconvenient to me to be kept longer waiting for my money.

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

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

No. 41.

Mr. FIELD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 29th May, 1871.

I wrote to you more than a month ago, requesting your attention to my claim against the Government, and as,—possibly from your having been, as I understand, absent from Wellington at that time,—I have received no reply, I beg to remind you of the matter.

Not only is it inconvenient to me to wait longer for the money, but I feel that the delay in the settlement is most unjustifiable, after the infamous manner in which I have been treated by the Government, or some of its officers, without the smallest reason.

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

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

No. 42.

Mr. KNOWLES to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 1st June, 1871.

In reply to your letter of the 29th May, I beg to inform you that your letter of the 26th April was at the time referred to the Acting Chief Engineer for his report thereon, but that, owing to pressing engagements down South, I regret to say that he has not yet been able—nor will he be able until he returns, in a fortnight or so—to give the matter his attention.

No further delay than is absolutely necessary shall take place in my informing you of the result.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
JOHN KNOWLES,
Under Secretary.

No. 43.

Mr. KNOWLES to Mr. FIELD.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 17th July, 1871.

With reference to the correspondence that has taken place in reference to the claim which you make for services rendered in connection with the superintendence of the track from Wanganui to Murimotu, I am now directed by Mr. Gisborne to inform you that, after careful inquiry and consideration, the Government decline to entertain your claim, or to make you any further payment on account of the service on which you were engaged, but which you did not perform.

H. C. Field, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
JOHN KNOWLES,
Under Secretary.

No. 44.

Mr. BOOTH to Mr. KNOWLES.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 26th August, 1871.

Having heard privately from Wellington that there was a difficulty in obtaining the services of an Engineer for the purpose of exploring and reporting on the line of road lately reported on by me, viz., that between Wanganui and Taupo, I went, on Wednesday last, to consult with Mr. Carrington, at Patea, and he says that he will be able to spare one of the surveyors from his staff in the course of ten days or a fortnight. He says the person he would send is a first-rate bushman, able to make a sketch survey of the line of road, and to give an estimate of the grades required.

The gentleman above mentioned is now finishing some work which will take him about a fortnight, after which he will be at liberty. If no other arrangements have as yet been made by Government for the survey of this road, I would respectfully request that instructions may be sent to me to employ a competent person recommended by Mr. Carrington, so that, when the weather does take up, there may be no further hinderance. In anticipation of fine weather, I have sent to Murimotu for my guide—the chief Winiata—whom I expect shortly.

J. Knowles, Esq., Under Secretary, Public Works Department.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH.

No. 45.

Mr. KNOWLES to Mr. BOOTH.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 4th September, 1871.

In reply to your letter of the 26th ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Gisborne to inform you that no authority can be given to explore the line of road lately reported on by you, without the name and qualifications of the gentleman to be employed have first been submitted for consideration.

I trust the telegram I sent to you on the 1st instant will have been in time to prevent the engagement of the proposed guide.

J. Booth, Esq., Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
J. KNOWLES,
Under Secretary.
