

present is an opportune time to touch upon some of the incidents which came in the way of the men who were identified with the project in its earlier stages.

The inauguration of the "Public Works Policy" of Sir Julius Vogel, in 1870, may be taken as the starting point of railway-construction works in New Zealand. Prior to that date the Provincial Governments of Auckland, Canterbury and Otago had embarked on a railway policy of limited extent, and some of the works had actually been carried out; but as regards the North Island Main Trunk Railway practically nothing had been done. Under the provisions of "The Immigration and Public Works Act, 1870," the Central Government took



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charge of railway construction. Surveys of the various routes proposed were made, and the construction of certain lines determined upon; but very little in the way of actual construction was accomplished until the arrival of Mr. James Brogden, of the firm of John Brogden and Sons, a firm responsible for much of the railway works in the early days of the colony. On the 10th August, 1872, a contract was entered into with Messrs. Brogden for the Auckland to Mercer railway, and with this section the Main Trunk Line may be said to have had its beginnings. It is interesting to note that at this time a scheme of combined railway and steamer service with the lower Waikato was seriously considered. The idea was to use the railway from Auckland to Mercer, then to take steamer to Ngaruawahia, and again take to the railway at this point. The advocates of through railway communication prevailed, however, and the Line was gradually carried forward until it reached the frontier line of the King Country at Te Awamutu, 100 miles from Auckland. Regular traffic to this point was begun in July, 1880. By this time the idea of constructing a through line to connect Auckland and Wellington by rail had assumed definite shape. In the Public Works Statement of 1881 the following passage occurred:—"Unsurveyed intervals of 120 miles on the west, and 160 miles on the east, separate the extremity of the Waikato line at Te Awamutu from Waitara (Taranaki) and Napier respectively. The Government will lose no opportunity which may present itself of obtaining such information with regard to the intervening country, as will enable the best mode of completing this main arterial line to be determined." This contains no reference to a possible central route. Evidently, therefore, the idea at that time was to construct either an East or West Coast line. In 1882 the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Act was passed, which authorised the raising of £1,000,000 for the construction of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, but this Act also is silent as to the route to be adopted. The unsatisfactory relations existing between the Europeans and the natives, and the determination of the natives to maintain the King Country as a preserve for their own race, were, however, obstacles to the further progress of the Line southwards. Construction work, even in the Waikato,

was at one time not considered any too safe, and a portion of the Line southwards of Mercer was carried out under quite unusual conditions. The Government considered it desirable to increase the defence force in the Waikato, and it was decided to effect the twofold object of having an additional armed force available in the district, and at the same time pushing on the construction of the railway. Thus, the Engineer Volunteer Militia, about 200 strong, was enrolled. These men marched under arms to the works, piled their muskets and took up their more prosaic picks and shovels, and then returned under arms to camp, where a sufficient amount of military drill and discipline was exercised to assure their being available for defence purposes in case of necessity. Their work was of course directed by the Railway Engineers, but they were under the command of military officers. The system worked very well, and the work done by the men was quite satisfactory.

#### THE NATIVE DIFFICULTY.

In the history of the Main Trunk Railway mention is always made of the native difficulty, and it may not be out of place to digress here and trace the origin of this difficulty and study its features and results so far as they affected the progress of the railway. The active hostilities of 1865 may be said to have come to an end with the battle at Orakau, a native village a few miles from Te Awamutu. Here Rewi, the famous Ngatimaniapoto fighting chief, with 250 brave but poorly armed warriors of his tribe, without water and with very little food, and surrounded by 600 British soldiers, well armed, resisted all attempts to take the pah by assault, and when called upon to surrender, after three days hard fighting, jumped on the parapet and defied his enemies, uttering words which have since become famous, to the effect that the fighting would go on "for ever, and ever, and ever."

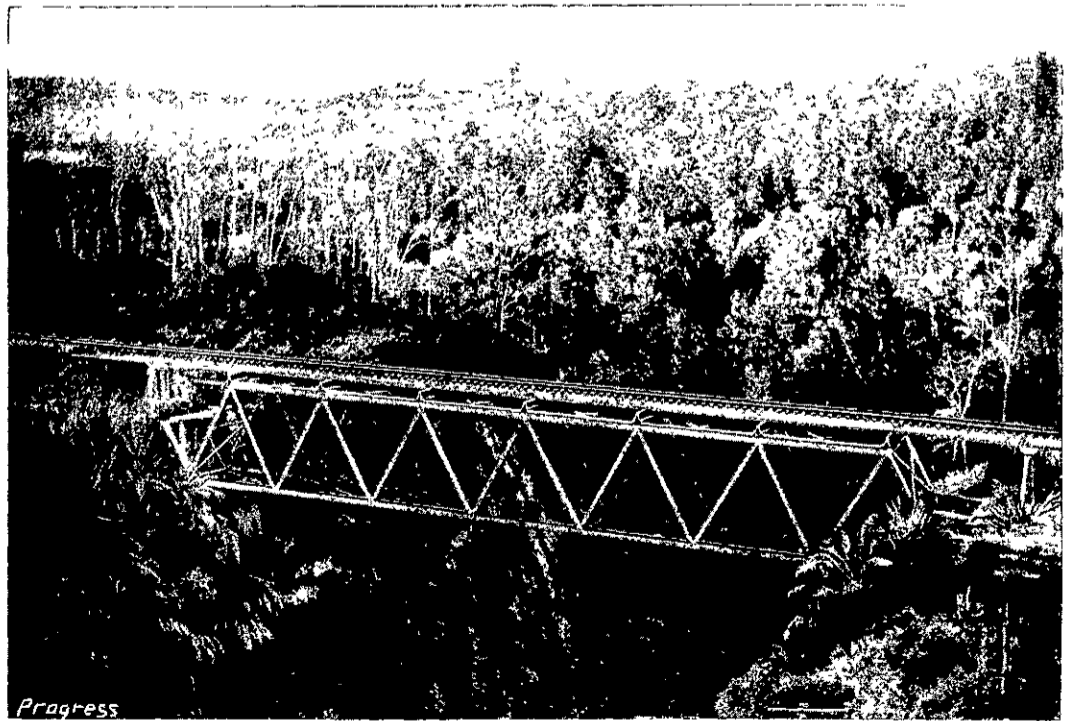
One result of the war was the agreement between the two races upon a frontier line, beyond which the European and his law were not to go, but where the Maoris were to retain their own rule and customs. This line extended from the Puniu river, near Te Awamutu, on the north to Pukearuhe, in Taranaki, and ran down near Ruapehu on the east to some place not very well defined, in the upper Rangitikei, which was the southern boundary. On one point the Maori was firm: he would sell no more land to the European, and only by special permission of the chiefs were a few favoured white men allowed to travel through his preserve. This attitude of passive resistance was maintained without advantage or injury to either party, until Te Whiti, the prophet, by his sensational preaching and claims to divine powers, attracted a large following to Parihaka. Te Whiti had seen

some civilisation in his youth; he had acted as chairman on a survey under Mr. Hursthouse, the present Chief Engineer of Roads; he had been educated by a missionary, and was a keen student of the scriptures. The story of his alleged superhuman powers attracted the tribes from all parts of the island, till over 2,000 natives were assembled at Parihaka. They were promised that the lands confiscated after the war would be restored through the influence of the prophet, but little harm was done till a crisis was brought about by the action of some of the natives, who, under Te Whiti's orders, boldly began to plough the lands occupied by some of the settlers, evidently with the object of asserting their right to the land. This arbitrary



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action forced the hand of the Government; a force of armed constabulary and volunteers was dispatched to Taranaki, roads and redoubts built, and offending Maoris arrested, and some lodged in prison; but, as this mild form of martyrdom was rather welcomed by them, and prisoners were becoming too numerous, they were restored in numbers to their homes. The Government force finally took possession of Parihaka without bloodshed, and the prospective rebellion was nipped in the bud. The effect of these incidents on the native mind was to bring forcibly home to them the hopelessness of pursuing further the policy of resistance and obstruction to the progress of settlement in the King Country, and their long-maintained objection to the construction of the railway through this stretch of country was overcome by the Native Minister, Mr. John



NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER TOI CREEK 37 MILES 54 CHAINS FROM MARTON JUNCTION; ONE STEEL GIRDER SPAN OF 156 FT., TWO TIMBER SPANS OF 26 FT., AND TWO 11 FT.; 187 FT. FROM CREEK BED TO RAIL LEVEL.