

eastward of the Wangaehu. I found that within the belt of very high land which extends from east to west about twenty miles inland, there is lower hummocky country extending to the plains. This is all covered with scrubby bush, but seems to offer no other impediment to road-making. The fall everywhere is towards Wanganui, the leading ridges east of the Wangaehu heading upwards towards the source of the Turakina, and those beyond the Turakina towards the headwaters of the Rangitikei, the watershed in every case being just on the western side of the river.

The accompanying tracing from a sketch map will perhaps enable my description of the route to be better understood.

The Hon. Mr. Fox.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD.

## No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. GEORGE F. SWAINSON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.  
Tutu Totara, Rangitikei, 29th January, 1870.

SIR,— With reference to my Map of Rangitikei, Kaimanawa, and Taupo, lately forwarded to the Honorable the Premier, I have the honor to make the following special report on the Rangitikei route, which was taken on our upward journey.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,  
Wellington.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE F. SWAINSON.

## Report.

THE track (an old Native one) enters the main bush about three-quarters of a mile to the northward of the boundary line, at Major Marshall's, near the Rangitikei River; passing over terrace land for about the first three miles, it descends into Pourewa Valley, through which it passes with a general bearing of N.N.E. to N.E. for about thirteen or fourteen miles.

The track, as usual with Native paths, winds about very considerably, following in many places every bend of the stream. The distance would, of course, be much shortened by survey, whenever a permanent road is laid off. It is, however, perfectly level, and the bush very open. The present track crosses the Ponoewa Stream nine times, but these crossings would probably be avoided. Three or four swampy backwaters, probably the old bed of the river, are the only obstacles requiring to be bridged. Metal can be obtained all through from the bed of the stream. At about the distances mentioned, the track leaves the valley; turning to the eastward, by an easy spur you ascend the hills between it and the Rangitikei River. This hill portion is probably about three miles to the Manga-onoko Stream, which runs into the Rangitikei. From thence to the junction of the Mokohina with the before-mentioned river it passes over a lower and upper terrace, heavily timbered, till it reaches the cliff overhanging the river.

At this point a good side-cutting is required. Crossing the Makohina, a large stream with this peculiarity, that when both rivers are flooded Rangitikei backs up into Makohina, and makes still water,—then about three-quarters of a mile by the edge of Rangitikei, and the track leads again on to the terrace above,—a side-cutting would be again required. On this terrace is first a small open flat, called Pauerawera, and half a mile further a second, of some three hundred acres in extent, named Ohingaiti. Makohina, I consider to be about twenty or twenty-two miles from Major Marshall's, and the whole distance is constantly done in eight hours, even in the present state of the track.

At Ohingaiti you again enter the bush, which is unbroken until you gain the open country at Patea, and the track follows the most leading ridges and spurs the whole way. The general ascent to the summit of the Whakuaue range is gradual, and offers no impediments of streams or ravines. The descent to the Hautapu Stream requires exploring for a better line than that taken by the Natives. The portion of the road from Ohingaiti is comparatively new, having only been made since the disturbances.

I put the distance from Ohingaiti to the Pakehiwi Settlement, at Patea, at twenty-eight or thirty miles. It took our men fourteen hours, driving unladen packhorses, to do it in. The average would be about two miles an hour. From Pakehiwi to Mr. Birch's station, nine miles; and from thence to Napier (Town), seventy-five miles, all through open country.

I consider that £500 would make a first-class bridle-track through the bush. The side-cuttings I have mentioned would be the only heavy work. No streams to bridge or swamps to cross; and although perhaps unfitted for a military line of road, would, until the country is more able to afford it, answer the immediate purpose of opening communication between the West Coast and the interior of the country at a small expense.

GEORGE F. SWAINSON.

## No. 3.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. JAMES HOGG to Mr. EDWARD CHURTON.

SIR,—

Turakina, 26th January, 1870.

I beg to submit to you the following report upon the line of road which I have been exploring between the Taupo plains and Wanganui.

Before leaving Wanganui it was impressed upon me by the directors that it was very necessary, in order to secure the Port of Wanganui, that the most practicable and direct road should be found to open up the Taupo country to the enterprise of the people of Wanganui in the prospect of a gold field being found in the Kaimanawa ranges. Having well examined the country between the Rangitikei River (Patea) and the Wangaehu, and having gleaned all the information possible from the Natives (through Mr. Swainson) both of Taupo and Matatara (on the Wangaehu), I came to the conclusion that the best route in every point of view was that by the Turakina Valley. At the head of the Turakina River the open plains extend further south by about nine miles than at any other