

a letter from you to Mr. Percy Smith, appointing him as surveyor to superintend the work.

Acting upon your instructions, I left New Plymouth on the 12th instant, for the purpose of conferring with the natives along the coast, in order to ascertain if they were willing to assist and co-operate with the Government in opening a line of road through their respective districts.

When you were at New Plymouth I told you that I considered the negotiations had better be commenced first south of Umuroa, and in this view of the matter I commenced with W. King Matakatea and his people, with whom I remained from Tuesday, about noon, till Thursday morning, talking over the question of the road, and also the flax question. At Umuroa, Mr. Kelly, M.H.R., and his brother joined me, and from thence we went on to Opunake, where I assembled all the natives for a discussion of the same questions; after which, in the evening, we went on to Oeo, where, on my arrival, I warned the natives to meet me the next morning (Friday), which they did, and in addition to the road question I explained to them the object of Mr. Kelly's visit to make arrangements with them for working the flax between Opunake and Oeo, which had been sanctioned by the Government.

At Oeo, Mr. Percy Smith and Ropata Ngarongomate joined us, and from thence we went on to Kaipokonui to confer with Manaia (Wi Hukanui) and his brother Reihana te Wharehuia and their followers, a section of Titokowaru's tribe (Ngaruahine) who have been friendly for several years. I explained to them, the same as I had done at the other places, the object of our visit; but, as no one has applied for any part of their district for working flax, my chief business with them was the road question, which at every place where I had conferred with the natives was cheerfully entertained, with promises to assist and co-operate with the Government in the prosecution of the work, which I explained to them would give them employment, to which all were to be admitted who had not been guilty of unpardonable offences, but that the work would have to be done by contract, and each respective district would have to be estimated for, subject to the approval of the Government.

We were at Kaipokonui from Saturday evening until Monday morning, the 18th inst., when we left to explore the district for a road. I took with us three chiefs, and rode across the country to the Waingongoro River, to a point where a main line of road from Patea strikes the river on the opposite bank, and from thence we traversed on horseback the proposed line for the road so far as Umuroa. From Waingongoro to Omaturangi, the tribal boundary division between the Taranakis and Ngatiruanuis, I took a party of natives from Kaipokonui to traverse the line. From Omaturangi to Opunake I took a party of natives from Oeo. At Opunake W. King Matakatea joined us, and pointed out the best line from that place to Umuroa, an arrangement I deemed advisable, to avoid jealousies which frequently arise when natives are engaged for that sort of work on land where they have no tribal rights.

The natives with whom I communicated at the different places mentioned number altogether—men, women, and children—from three to four hundred; and during the conference held with them relative to the proposed road and utilisation of the native flax, there was not an angry word spoken, but on the contrary a cheerful acquiescence manifested by all. But although the proposed undertaking appeared very acceptable to the natives referred to, I wish to guard myself against leading the Government to believe that the same good feeling prevails with those sections of the different tribes who keep aloof from the Government, and with whom there has been no communication: I mean those who are allied to Te Witi, who controls the district between Umuroa and Warea, where I recommend nothing should be done at present if the Government is not prepared to enforce it.

As I was on my way back I received a message from the Chief Tipene Ngatairakaunui, requesting me to go to Pariaka to consult with Te Witi and his people; but in consequence of a number of Titokowaru's people being there, I refused to go, which I have done on several occasions before, and shall continue to do, unless instructed by the Government to visit them. Without doubt they are opposed to road-making by the Government, but whether or not that feeling is strong enough to induce them to resist the work by force, I am not prepared to say; but so long as the working party is strictly confined to natives interested in the respective districts nothing serious would be likely to occur.

A report appears to have reached the Government at Wellington to the effect that much uneasiness exists among the natives, friendly and Hau Hau, at the idea of a road being forced through. Whatever the views of the so-called Hau Hau may be, I myself heard nothing of anything unpleasant during my stay in the district, and certainly there was no uneasiness manifested by the friendly natives.

I have requested Mr. P. Smith to prepare a report and sketch map from his field book, shewing the line of road traversed, together with the rivers, streams, and swamps to be crossed, which I will forward to you when finished.

No further action will be taken in reference to the road until I receive definite instructions from the Government as to whether the work is to be commenced or not. If it is to be commenced, I should require authority to purchase the tools required, as the natives have none themselves.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Defence Minister,
Auckland.

R. PARRIS,
Civil Commissioner.

No. 9.

Copy of Telegram from the Hon. W. Fox to Mr. Commissioner PARRIS, Taranaki.

SIR,—

Nelson, 21st October, 1869.

Reports have reached the Government that much uneasiness exists among the Natives, friendly and Hau Hau, at the idea of a road being forced through between New Plymouth and Opunake.

The greatest care must be taken not to provoke any ill-feeling on this subject, and not to create any distrust in the Native mind as to the objects of the Government. If any symptoms of serious dissatisfaction appear, cease at once to press matters. You will report to me immediately what is doing.

WILLIAM FOX.