

Enclosure in No. 30.

Mr. PERCY SMITH to Mr. Commissioner PARRIS.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 28th February, 1870.

In accordance with a letter received from the Hon. D. McLean, of the 17th February, inst., I have the honor to report upon the road works under my charge in the Taranaki district.

The portion of the New Plymouth and Patea road, at present undertaken by the Natives, is about 28 miles in length, extending from the Waingongoro River to the Umuroa Settlement; this has been divided into three sections, the first of which was undertaken by the Opunake Natives, the second by the Oeo people, and the third by the Natives of Kaupokonui.

The first section has been completed with the exception of about a mile, and is available for cart traffic; now that the opposition of Heremaia and others to the road has been overcome, there will be no difficulty in completing the remaining mile of this section.

The works on No. 2 section have been completed and the road is open for traffic, whilst the road line in No. 3 section has been cleared a width of 20 feet the whole length as far as Waingongoro, but no cuttings of culverts have as yet been made; the Natives will go on with this portion as soon as they receive an advance upon the work already done. There are, therefore, about twelve and a half miles open for cart traffic from Opunake southwards, and the whole distance to Waingongoro ought to be completed in about six weeks time.

With reference to the requirements of the road over and above the works covered by the first estimate, the Government have already approved of the expenditure of the sum of £20 upon a swampy portion of the road through the township of Opunake, and also a sum of £14 upon drains near the Punehu River. There will also be required an additional sum for the purpose of making a causeway across a swamp in the vicinity of Umuroa, but until the road is cleared and the side drains cut, it is impossible to indicate the sum required to make it good. A sum of £50 has also been approved to be expended upon the road on the southern side of Waingongoro to the Waihi stream, a work which it is very necessary should be completed to make the rest of the road available. In reference thereto, I would beg to suggest for the consideration of the Government, that the Ngatiporous stationed at Waihi would be able to do this work very conveniently from their present camp; a saving of time, and probably of expense, would be thereby effected.

I think it a matter of great importance that the Waingongoro and Taungatara streams should be bridged, as both of them are subject to heavy freshets, and are therefore very dangerous to cross, although the fords at the crossings of the new line of road are very much superior to the old ones on the Native track. Were these two streams bridged, as also Hangatahua (for which the contract has been taken), I think there would be little fear of detention to travellers along the road from the other streams, excepting of course in exceedingly bad weather, when many of them would be impassable. The cost of the bridges would probably, be in the case of Waingongoro about £500 (70 feet span), and Taungatara £350 (50 feet span), that is for permanent bridges, on the lattice girder principle.

It is very desirable that the present road should be continued northwards, as far as Kurukohatu at least, as soon as possible, as the Native track along that part of the Coast is exceedingly bad in winter, and is likely to have a very considerable traffic on it this year. I am unable to make an estimate as to the cost of doing this work, as the line would have to be carefully gone over first.

I have, &c.,

R. Parris, Esq., Civil Commissioner,
New Plymouth.

S. PERCY SMITH, Surveyor.

No. 31.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. PARRIS to Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, April 15th, 1870.

I have the honor to report for the information of His Excellency's Government that having received from the Paymaster-General the sum of twelve hundred pounds for roadworks in the Taranaki and Ngatiruanui Districts the end of last month, made available on the 1st inst. for the current financial quarter, I sent for a leading man from each section of the working parties to come in for the payments promised them by Mr. Percy Smith in January last. On the 4th of the month, Hone Pihama, Ngahina, Manaia (Wi Hukanui), Ruka, and Mira, arrived in town, and the following day they went with me to pay a formal visit to the Puketapu, who had a great feast that day at Oropuriri. After returning, I paid them an advance of five hundred and twenty-six pounds ten shillings, the amount recommended as a second payment by Mr. Smith for the three sections—W. Kingi's, Hone Pihama's, and Manaia's. On Wednesday morning, the 6th inst., I left for the South with them, for the purpose of recommencing the work which had been unfortunately delayed by the non-receipt of money due to them at the time Mr. Smith was removed to Auckland, and two months of the very best season of the year for roadworks lost.

I took Mr. Nelson Carrington with me to put him in charge of the works, and before handing over the money to Manaia's party (£150, the first payment for the contract between Omuturangi and Waingongoro), we rode through to Waingongoro to see the road had been opened. As it was not finished when Mr. Smith left, and on finding the work of clearing the road had been faithfully performed, I assembled the Natives at Kaupokonui to go into the question of the resumption of the work, which they wanted to defer to next spring; but after a long consultation, during which I explained to them that they would want to plant their crops in the spring of the year, they agreed to go on with it, and commenced before I left the district.

The contract taken by Hone Pihama's party between (Rawa) Omuturangi and Taungatara is finished very satisfactorily, and the balance (two hundred and fifty pounds) paid for the same.

That part of the contract taken by W. Kingi's party between Taungatara and Otahi is also finished