

satisfactorily, and a second payment of one hundred and twenty pounds ten shillings made to them on account of the same, leaving a balance of one hundred pounds for that part from Otahi to Umuroa, which was stopped by Heremaia and party, but which is now being done, and will, I hope, be finished this month. Heremaia has withdrawn his opposition, and is now carrying the mail from Opunake to New Plymouth, a policy I have adopted to draw them off from their isolated habits of keeping aloof in the bush.

The additional work recommended by Mr. Smith on the road across the Opunake township, and near Punehu, is also commenced; and when the whole of the contracts between Umuroa and Waingongoro are finished, the Chief Surveyor (Mr. O. Carrington) will inspect the work and report upon it, if you consider it necessary, before the balance which will then become due is paid.

That part of the road which is finished does credit to the natives who undertook the work, and the testimony of travellers who have passed over it bears witness thereto, as all speak very commendably of the work; but unless some attention is paid to the line when the wet weather sets in, the drains which have been opened where necessary will in all probability choke up, and render such parts impassable. Of course, all new lines of road opened for traffic involve a yearly expenditure to keep them in repair, and I would respectfully suggest for the consideration of the Government whether it would not be advisable to employ a few natives constantly to attend to the road, giving each a defined district to attend to.

At the river Oeo there is a very heavy side cutting both sides, and a good road was made, but since the contract was finished the bank below the road on the south side gave way, when the disruption took with it about half the width of the road, and made it very dangerous for a cart to pass. Soon after it occurred, a Patea settler (Mr. Joseph Hawkins) came through from Patea, on his way to New Plymouth, with a cart, and fortunately passed without an accident; and Hone Pihama, who considered Mr. Hawkins had incurred too great a risk in passing the place, immediately sent a party to fill up the chasm which had been made, sufficient for carts to pass for a time. An outlay of twenty-five pounds is absolutely necessary to repair the damage caused by the disruption, which I recommend for approval to avoid danger to travellers along the line. Mr. Hawkins was a new Plymouth settler, but having bought land in the Patea district, he purposes settling there, and on Tuesday last I met him at Opunake, with his wife and family, taking them to Patea. He spoke of the dangerous state of the road before referred to at Oeo when he came up from Patea, and expressed a hope that something would be done to it.

Having satisfactorily concluded my business south of Umuroa, I left that place Wednesday morning and came on as far as Mokotunu, where I went inland to Wakarewa to arrange for a meeting of the Ngamahangas the next day to decide the question about commencing the road from Stony River southwards.

The following day a number of Natives assembled, with the principal chiefs, and after a long discussion about various questions, they agreed to commence the opening of the road as soon as I can accompany them to traverse the line—across their block to Waiweranui, close to Warea—which I hope to be able to do next week, after I return from attending a meeting which is to be held at Pariaka on Monday next and following days.

After the Pariaka meeting was over last month, I gave Mr. Rundle, the contractor for the erection of the bridge over the Stony River, notice to go on with his work, and soon afterwards he went, accompanied by His Honor the Superintendent and the Chief Surveyor (Mr. O. Carrington) to look at the site, and whilst there the Superintendent unfortunately engaged a European to clear the road at the approach to the bridge site; and whilst the European was there, Te Motu and three others came along accidentally and told him to discontinue the work, which he did, and came at once in to the Superintendent to report it. The Superintendent came with him to me, when I explained to him it was a pity he should have put a European to do the work without speaking to me, and requested them not to do anything more to it, as it would only create jealousy and opposition, and that I hoped to get the work done by the Natives.

I should not have referred to this matter only that there has been an article in the “Taranaki Herald” making more of it than there was any occasion for.

It is desirable that the ford at the Waingongoro should be made available without delay by making the road down to the river on the Patea side. When I was in Auckland you told me you intended the Ngatiporous to do it.

I have, &c.,

R. PARRIS,

Civil Commissioner.

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Auckland.

PATEA.

No. 32.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. W. Fox to Major NOAKE.

Government Offices, Wellington,
24th November, 1869.

SIR,—

The bearer of this, Captain Morrison (late of the Taranaki Militia, and otherwise engaged in the Government service for some years past), has a knowledge of engineering and practical construction of roads. You will please to give him charge of the work, referred to in the enclosed papers, at Patea