

of the Huripari stream, and the side cutting down to which is more than half finished. Beyond the stream the line is cut to its full width to opposite Te Pukohu, and wants no more than a little levelling to complete it; and yesterday I was across the Mangawhero at Te Mai, burning off some patches that my former fires had left, and marking off the crossing.

The Maoris had a great misfortune yesterday. Two of them went back to their whare to dinner, and carelessly left too large a fire burning. The result was that on the return of the party in the evening they found the hut and all its contents destroyed.

They have lost their blankets, clothing, food, a double-barrelled gun, ammunition, &c., &c., and are in great tribulation accordingly.

I have seen or heard nothing of Aperahama and the other natives.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD,

Engineer in Charge of Mangawhero-Taupo
Road Party.

W. Buller, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.

P.S.—With our present strength a man will be able to ride through to Mangawhero by the end of next week, or sooner if the second party comes.

Enclosure 2 in No. 53.

[TRANSLATION.]

To Mr. COOPER,—

Matatera, 23rd February, 1870.

Friend, salutations. I write to you respecting the burning out of my men engaged on the road-work. All their clothes were lost; also, a double-barrelled gun, a cheque for £6, fifteen blankets four shawls, four blue shirts, three coats, twelve pairs trousers, ten flannel shirts.

Friends, the Ministers of the Government, I beg your sympathy for us in this matter. Decide quickly, because these men are now quite without clothes. Ended. From your friend,

APERAHAMA TAHUNUIRANGI.

No. 54.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. COOPER to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

Colonial Defence Office,

Wellington, 25th February, 1870.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th inst., covering two interim reports from Mr. Field on the progress of the Mangawhero-Taupo road, and by direction of Mr. Gisborne to request you will be good enough to inform me if the work is being performed by job or piece; as, if not the latter, the Government is anxious that it should be so arranged, if practicable.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER,

Acting Under Secretary.

W. Buller, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.

No. 55.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. BULLER, R.M., to Mr. COOPER.

Wanganui,

28th February, 1870.

SIR,—

I do myself the honor to forward herewith a further report from Mr. H. C. Field.

I have, &c.,

W. BULLER, R.M.

The Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 55.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. FIELD to Mr. BULLER, R.M.

Mangawhero, opposite Te Mai,

26th February, 1870.

SIR,—

Of the new working party one, a mere boy, arrived last Sunday, and another came with Aperahama on Wednesday; two more are promised on Monday, and the remainder in the course of next week.

During this week the Huripari cutting has been completed, as well as that along the ascent to the high broken plateau beyond; about a mile across the plateau has also been finished, and the Maoris are now at work at the ascent to a low saddle, a short distance this side of Te Pukohu. About a mile only of line has been widened, as there were so many roots to grub on the rise from the Huripari that I left the cutting party with Mr. Pilmer since Tuesday, while my son and I went on with burning off and selecting the line up the Mangawhero Valley. This is now done as far as the third crossing of the river, just below a place called Tahungatutu, the ground proving even easier than I had anticipated between the second and third crossings.

Persons can now ride right through to Mangawhero, and pack-horses have gone through for loads of peaches on Thursday evening and this afternoon, though several days will still elapse before the road is completed to this point, there being a considerable amount of pig rootings to level, and tutu stumps to remove on the last two miles, as well as some bits of light side cutting to do on the descent from Te Pukohu to the river, to make the road thoroughly practicable for pack-horses.

I have, &c.,

H. C. FIELD,

Engineer in charge of the Mangawhero-Taupo
Road Party.

W. Buller, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.