

the country and that no fencing has as yet been put up, the traffic may be taken almost anywhere; but at the Waitotara there will be about 40 chains of cutting to protect. A bed of gravel has been found within a few hundred yards of the side cutting on the south side of the river, and I recommend that this cutting, some 20 chains long and which has just been finished, should at once be gravelled. This, I think, could be cheaply and expeditiously done, if let by contract. The other portions of the earthwork will not be ready for gravelling until the end of next month. From the Waitotara to the Okehu stream the present tracks will serve very well until there is time to complete the permanent way, on which there will be no cutting of any importance.

At the Okehu there will be about 40 chains of earthwork, which will, I expect, be finished by the Wairoa Rifles, who are now at work upon it, in about five weeks; from thence to the Kai-Iwi a good track about 100 chains in length, being the centre of the permanent line of road, has been opened and improved. I think in this district that there will be little difficulty in getting gravel within a reasonable distance of the road.

At the Kai-Iwi the earthworks on the approach to the river on the Patea side will be unimportant, but not so those on the Wanganui side, where a considerable amount of work will have to be done before the road can be made available for ordinary traffic.

As you are aware, steps are being taken to erect bridges over the Okehu and Kai-Iwi streams, tenders for which purpose will be immediately called for.

With the exception of the approach to the Patea on the south bank, I am in hopes that the force at present employed will be able to finish the work already laid off, in time for the gravel to be laid before winter, but the party of Armed Constabulary under Mr. Forster is much too small for the work necessary to be done at Patea, and more especially as there is much yet to be done at Oika, on the Whenuakura River.

Referring to the southern approaches to the Kai-Iwi, some few weeks since I proposed to the Waitotara Board, through its chairman, Mr. E. Lewis, that it should construct the bridges over the Okehu and Kai-Iwi streams, the Government in exchange undertaking to remove earth of equal value on the proposed new line of road from Wanganui to Kai-Iwi, less the gift of fifty pounds promised by Mr. Peet towards the erection of a bridge over the Kai-Iwi. I was principally desirous of entering into this arrangement that there might be no delay in making the approaches on the Wanganui side, and to protect if possible the Government from being compelled to undertake this work or else have the road closed. I regret to report that the Board, after consideration, has declared its inability to accept my proposal, and thus a considerable amount of work has to be undertaken by a force hardly strong enough to complete that which legitimately belongs to it.

In a day or two I propose to proceed to Hawera to lay off work in the neighbourhood of the Tangahoe and Inangahape streams, to be done by contract by the settlers in the district, and as soon as the works previously referred to are completed I intend, subject to your approval, to let nearly all the work connected with the completion of the permanent line of road, and which will consist principally of clearing fern and flax and rounding up, by contract.

I may here remark that when the present cuttings are all completed there will be little more to be done, between Patea and the Kai-Iwi, beyond cutting the permanent line of road and rounding it up.

About 16 yards of metal to the chain, which would give a depth of gravel of 9 inches and a width of 9 feet, would be sufficient to protect the earthworks.

Major Noake, Commanding Patea.

I have, &c.,
WALTER J. MORRISON. Captain.

MEMO. OF EARTHWORK IN CHAINS REFERRED TO IN ACCOMPANYING REPORT.

Approaches to River, Patea	..	...	42 chains
Whenuakura	...	...	30 "
Waitotara	...	...	28 "
Okehu, in progress	...	...	25 "

Also in progress, Kai-Iwi and Okehu Bridges, and laying off road between Patea and Hawera.
Patea, 15th March, 1870. W. J. MORRISON, Captain.

No. 37.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. COOPER to Major NOAKE.

SIR,—

Colonial Defence Office,
Wellington, 24th March, 1870.

By direction of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, forwarding a report from Captain Morrison on the progress of the road-works at Patea, and remarks thereon.

In it the building of a punt for the purpose of transporting road-metal for a portion of the approaches to the river at Patea, and the purchase of two carts and two first-class horses, with necessary harness, and that about sixty chains of cutting at Waitotara should be metalled, and the work done by contract, as well as forty chains of earthwork at Okehu, are suggested by Captain Morrison, and recommended by you. You also inform the Government that the Waitotara Road Board have declared their inability to accept aid in the construction of bridges over the Okehu and Kai-Iwi stream, thus leaving the work to be done by the General Government.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that Mr. Gisborne approves the purchase of a punt at a cost of fifty pounds; also the purchase of the carts, horses, and harness, as well as the metalling necessary to protect the newly-made cuttings on the road, which should be done by contract.

With reference to the Waitotara Road Board declining to build the bridges over the Okehu and Kai-Iwi