

No. 43.

Copy of a Letter from Lt.-Col. READER to Mr. HALES.

Colonial Defence Office, Wellington,
22nd April, 1870.

SIR,—

By direction of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne I have to ask you to be good enough to undertake the supervision of roads and bridges in the Wanganui and Patea districts now under process of construction by the General Government.

Major Noake has been requested to send you the plans, sections, and specifications of two bridges over the Kai-Iwi and Okehu streams. When you shall have received them and remarked upon them, you will be good enough to submit them to this office, and as time goes on to act in the same manner with any other contracts that you may receive.

W. H. Hales, Esq., Engineer,
Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
H. E. READER,
For the Acting Under Secretary Defence.

No. 44.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. HALES to Lt.-Col. READER.

Wanganui, 6th May, 1870.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 22nd April, requesting me to undertake the supervision of roads and bridges in the Wanganui and Patea districts now under process of construction. I delayed replying thereto until I had received the plans of the two bridges. These not coming to hand for several days, I called on Major Noake at Patea, and was informed that they had been sent on to Wellington.

This day I have received from the Defence Office the specification of the bridges at Kai-Iwi and Okehu, and a specification and agreement for metalling a portion of the road near the Waitotara River, but have not received the plans. As the specification does not mention the dimensions or mode of construction of either of the bridges, nor the amount to be paid to the contractor for the execution of these works, I cannot at present form a very correct idea of their nature or extent.

I have been over and examined all the road-works now in progress between Wanganui and Patea, and am constrained to say that though I shall give all possible supervision I cannot expect (under the present system of carrying on the works) to secure their being executed with cheapness and efficiency. There are several parties of men from the various troops working at different places on the line of road under the direction of their officers, these men seem to work very well; but in consequence of the inefficient manner in which the works are set out, a great deal of labor is unnecessarily expended, and the road, when completed, is seldom of good construction. So much of my time is taken up with the direction of the Wanganui bridge works that I could not leave sufficiently long to set out any portion of the road-works myself. I would, therefore, beg to recommend that the services of some good practical road surveyor be temporarily engaged to set out and level the most important parts of the road; plans, sections, &c., could then be prepared under my direction, and the works executed by the various road parties in accordance with the plans, and in a systematic and economical manner.

There are one or two men resident in Wanganui who have had great experience in road-making; the cost of whose services, if employed, would be more than compensated by the saving of labour alone, and the work would be done in a superior manner.

The report upon the Kai-Iwi and Okehu Bridges will be forwarded as soon as I have received and examined the plans.

I have, &c.,
WM. H. HALES, Engineer.

The Acting Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

No. 45.

Copy of a Letter from Lt.-Col. READER to Mr. HALES.

Colonial Defence Office, Wellington,
11th May, 1870.

SIR—

By direction of the Honorable Mr. Gisborne, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, respecting the road works at Patea; and in reply, to inform you that your suggestion of employing professional aid in setting out the work in a proper manner is approved, and the Government rely upon your using every means in your power to forward the works.

The plans of the bridges and the telegrams respecting the punt should have reached you by this, and will enable you to report upon them forthwith, as no time should be lost after the delays that have occurred, in putting everything connected with the traffic of the country in such a state of preparation for the winter, that the works may be resumed with the least possible loss to the Government in the spring. At the same time, every day of this fine weather should be made the most of, and the greatest force directed on those spots on the road where the rain or floods are likely to do the most damage, if you are not able to complete them.

Again, I can only repeat that the Government rely upon your exertions in expending the means at your command in the most economical and efficient manner.

W. H. Hales, Esq., Engineer,
Wanganui.

I have, &c.,
H. E. READER,
For the Acting Under Secretary.