

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE

is the shortest distance (about eighty miles). I have been to Rotorua Lake in command of pack-horses, and, after leaving Maketu, there is no feed of any kind except dry grass; this road is very easy for packing, &c. I have gone in one day from Maketu to Rotorua with pack-horses; it would take three days to get to Lake Taupo.

From Napier to Taupo (about 110 miles). I have ridden it in three days, but in driving cattle or packing it would take quite four days to Lake Taupo; there are two or three good feeding places upon this road, but the track is very hilly, and more bush upon it than the Maketu road. From Wanganui to Taupo, about 146 miles, and by the river, about 176 miles. From Rangitikei River, distance about 150 miles. The distances have been given to me by Mr. Sinclair, General Government Surveyor. There is another road from Tauranga through Europe, but I have never travelled it. The road that I would prefer in travelling would be the Maketu road, except that it is inferior as regards feed to the Napier road.

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT F. WAY, Lieut. A.M.

No. 117.

Copy of a Memorandum from the Hon. D. M'LEAN to Mr. HEALE.

Auckland, 23rd October, 1869.

MR. HEALE is requested to furnish a report on the different lines of road leading from the Bay of Plenty to Taupo; the advantages and disadvantages of each line; the number of rivers to be crossed; the facilities for obtaining metal and timber; the quantity of bush to be cut through; the extent of water communication where it exists; and such other information as may be important before deciding on the permanent main line of road to the interior.

DONALD M'LEAN.

No. 118.

Copy of a Report from Mr. HEALE to the Hon. D. M'LEAN.

Auckland, 28th October, 1869.

REPORT ON THE AVAILABLE ROAD LINES BETWEEN THE BAY OF PLENTY AND TAUPU.

The practicable lines may be limited to three:—

- 1st. From Matata (Richmond) by the valley of the Rangitaiki River.
- 2nd. From Maketu by Rotorua.
 - 1st. By Rotokakahi and Ohaki.
 - 2nd. By Rotokakahi and Orakei Korako.
 - 3rd. By Parikaranga and Te Niho o te Kioere.
- 3rd. From Tauranga by do. do. do. do.

The two last roads would join at Rotorua about 25 miles from Tauranga and Maketu respectively, and they would then be the same for two-thirds of their whole length.

The first line has the advantage of passing through a level, dry country, with easy slopes, and requiring very few bridges or cuttings; but its disadvantages are so great as, in my opinion, to put it out of competition with the others.

- 1st. It starts from a small and indifferent harbor.
- 2nd. It traverses exceedingly barren lands, where the dry pumice is often very soft; and
- 3rd. It is flanked all along by the Urewera Mountains, and will therefore be subject to danger as long as the Urewera tribes are hostile.

The second line from Maketu has been so far made to the south end of Rotorua as to be an excellent road for horsemen, but it would require practically to be re-made before it would be available for wheeled vehicles; and, as Maketu can hardly be called a harbor, the road from Tauranga would also require to be made, and the Matapihi Ferry is so extreme an inconvenience that, to render such a road really available, it would have to be carried round by Hairini, by which route the distance from Tauranga to Maketu would be almost as great as from Tauranga to Rotorua, and all along this line of nearly 50 miles (from Tauranga to Rotorua) there is no natural feed for horses, except a little round Maketu.

From Rotorua to Lake Taupo three roads are now in use—

1st. One proceeding to Rotokakahi, thence to the east of the Paeroa Range, passing on to the homestead of the late Captain St. George, near Ohaki. By this route it would be easy to avoid crossing the Waikato, but it is circuitous, and presents no counterbalancing advantage.

2nd. From Rotokakahi, by the Rotoreka, crossing the Waikato by Orakei Korako. This line is pretty good, except near the Waikato, where the hills are lofty and steep. Still I do not think it would be found difficult to select a pretty fair, though circuitous, road; it would be out of the question to cross the Waikato on this line except by ferry, and the current is so rapid, and the eddies so strong, as to make it very undesirable, even for that.

3rd. By Parikaranga, crossing the Waikato at or near Te Niho o te Kioere. This I consider by far the best line:—1st, since it runs through the best grass country in the district; 2nd, as the least broken; and 3rd, because it crosses the Waikato in a straight reach where a punt would work perfectly well; and lastly, whenever political circumstances admit of the re-opening the Waikato and Taupo Road, this road will join it, and cross the Waikato as that formerly did by a bridge, for which there are remarkable facilities a short distance below Te Niho o te Kioere.

The third line direct from Tauranga to the west side of Rotorua, in my opinion (founded on considerable enquiry on the spot), is beyond comparison the best. I have not, however, been completely through the forest. The only serious objection to it, apart from the political questions which may be involved, is the length of the cutting it would require through the forest (fifteen or sixteen miles), but it must be borne in mind