

Between the mouth of the stream and the Putikituna (a branch stream and large Native clearing), the point to which we attained, there are sixty-four of these rapids caused by slips, but at only one—Marchemo, about seven miles and a quarter up stream—had we any great difficulty in forcing our big canoe onwards. And I am satisfied that a moderate expenditure in cutting a passage through the timber in the slips would result in opening a way by which a steam-launch carrying up to about 8 or 10 tons could travel at all times.

Above each of these blocks of timber in the stream the water was invariably deep, showing that the lowering of the surface necessarily following on the cutting away the logs would not injuriously affect its usefulness for navigation. The stream scarcely altered in size or appearance so far as we went, and I believe, from my knowledge of its size and appearance twenty miles higher up, at Ohura Road, it would continue to be available, after snagging, for navigation for several miles beyond the point we reached.

Our intention was to have gone on to Kohuratahi Stream (the nearest point to Kohuratahi Improved-farm Settlement and Ohura Road), about two miles and a half past the clearing to which we arrived; but, as the time of some of the party was limited, and as a large block of snags filled up the stream at the clearing, we decided to take the canoe no further. Mr. Murray and I, however, went on past the block of snags, and found the stream beyond was deep and still, similar in character to that we had passed, and we are both of opinion it continues much the same for miles. All that is required to make it available to, say, Kohuratahi Stream is to cut a channel 25ft. to 31ft. wide through the blocks of timber, dragging the timber so cut away to the sides and securing it with wire to prevent its being floated back in floods. The work should be done in March and April, when the stream is at its lowest, and the cost would probably not exceed £500. This represents but a trifling sum for permanently opening nearly sixteen miles of the stream, and thereby assisting the settlement of a large area of inland country; and the only further maintenance necessary would be the removal of timber or *débris* occasionally brought down from slips after extreme rains and floods. Taking into account the heavy cost per mile for metalling the Ohura Road, and the slight probability for many years to come of the metal being extended from the present end—about nine miles from Stratford—to Mangamomona Valley, I would strongly recommend that this second roadway or outlet (Tangarakau Stream and Wanganui River) be opened at once, the more particularly as the estimated cost is so small, while the advantages it possesses are very great, the steamers being most available in winter, when the road—where not metalled—is almost impassable. The middle of Whangamomona Improved-farm Settlement, and of Kohuratahi Improved-farm Settlement, is about fifty miles from Stratford, and without a metalled road the distance would render the cost of transit of produce prohibitive, and so endanger the success of the settlement; but transit by water would considerably reduce this cost, and give the settlers an alternative outlet, one available at times when the other would be closed.

The £500 above mentioned does not include the cost of improving Wanganui River between Pipiriki and Tangarakau. The Wanganui River Trust Board propose to at once spend upon this work a sum of between £300 and £500 of the funds they have in hand, but a further amount will certainly be required to complete the work. The opening of the river above Pipiriki will not only benefit the lands in Taumatamahoe Block, but also in Mangapukaka, Raoraomoaku, and Oratawa Blocks, which are Crown lands, and it also may be of service to the lands further up the river, even to Ohura Stream.

When passing up and down Wanganui and Tangarakau we had a look at the Whangamomona Stream (a tributary of Wanganui), and Heao Stream (a tributary of Tangarakau). Neither of the streams seemed of value for water-carriage, being choked with snags, and possessing too little water.

I presume that in opening up Kohuratahi Improved-farm Settlement, the Whititangi and Kohuratahi Roads will be made to their junction, in the interest of the settlement. An extension of Kohuratahi Road to Tangarakau Stream—about one mile—will not add much to the expense, and will give the settlement access to navigable waters.

G. T. ROBINSON,
Road Surveyor.

Wanganui, April, 1896.

The Wanganui River was about 2ft. 6in. above low summer level, and the Tangarakau River about 1ft. 6in. above the same.

As on the lower Wanganui River, the upper river from Pipiriki to Tangarakau, a distance of thirty miles, is roughly described as a series of rapids formed by shingle-bars, with intervening pools of water, frequently of considerable lengths and depths. Immediately above Pipiriki there are several rapids in the first five miles, on which the rise is very great, but above that the rapids have mostly easy currents and fair depths of water. This good water certainly extends as far as the Tangarakau, and is reported to be nearly as good up to the Ohura River confluence, a further distance of twenty-six miles.

The river varies from 3 chains to 6 chains in width, and, as a rule, is bounded on both sides by solid papa banks, in many places, and for miles at a stretch, rising into high cliffs, forming perfect gorges.

The Tangarakau River as far as Putikituna, a distance of fourteen miles, consists of bars and pools, as on the main river—with this difference: that on the Tangarakau River the rapids on these bars are all caused by the channel being blocked up by snags, more or less closely packed. These snags, or accumulation of timber, have slipped down from the adjoining cliffs. Almost invariably where traces of a slip can be detected on the steep hillsides, there an accumulation of timber is found in the river, causing a rapid. The snags are usually only of moderate-sized timber. By their appearance, most of them seem to have come down in the great flood of 1891. The lengths of these bars measure up to 5 chains, though as a rule they are not over half a chain long.