

Enclosure 4 in No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. T. KELLY to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Wellington, September 4, 1869.

In accordance with your request, I have the honor to enclose a Memorandum, in reference to the construction of roads in the Province of Taranaki, which appear to me to be desirable to provide for defence of the settlements, and to extend the occupation and cultivation of the country.

As the construction of roads into the interior is one great feature of the policy of the present Government, I have no doubt that no unnecessary time will be lost before the preliminary steps are taken to initiate this great and important work.

Had one tenth of the money which has been wasted on unproductive Native wars been employed in the construction of roads penetrating the fastnesses of the interior; the disaster which the Colony has suffered during the past year would have been rendered impossible.

I hope that we are entering on a new era as regards our dealings with the Native race, and while ever ready to punish aggression by means of organized forces, that we will depend more on the pick and shovel to conquer and hold the country.

The Hon. D. McLean, Defence Minister,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS KELLY.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS NECESSARY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AND THE EXTENSION OF
SETTLEMENT IN THE PROVINCE OF TARANAKI.

Patea to Waihi twenty-five miles.

The road from Patea to Waihi, a distance of twenty-five miles, requires but little outlay to make it fairly passable, if bridges are made over the Tangahoe and Maniwapo Rivers, with the addition of side cutting to make the approaches easy. Simple lattice bridges, such as have recently been in the course of construction in the New Plymouth district, if built on piles of heart of matai or totara, would last with little repairs for many years, at a cost not exceeding £5 per foot forward on roadway. Before the disturbances occurred at Patea the Provincial Government had sections taken of both rivers with a view of bridging them, the General Government at that time being inclined to contribute to the cost, which was estimated at £1,000. No ford can be found on the main line as laid down on the map, as the river bottoms and the banks consist of a soft clay, which soon cuts up and renders dray traffic impossible.

Coast Road, Waihi to Stoney River—fifty miles. Stoney River to New Plymouth—twenty miles.

The coast line from Waihi to the nearest New Plymouth settlement at the Stoney River is from fifty to sixty miles, and could be made practical for ordinary dray traffic at a comparatively small expense. I venture to state that £1,500 would be sufficient for the purpose if the Natives living along the line could be induced to take the work on contract, when laid out by a competent road surveyor. The road from thence to the town of New Plymouth, twenty miles, is made, and the rivers bridged.

Mountain Road, Waihi to Mataitawa—Forty miles.

The construction of a line of road through the forest in the rear of Mount Egmont, from Waihi to Mataitawa, is of importance as a military work, as, if constructed, it would cut off from the interior the disaffected Taranaki tribes under Te Witi. This line would be about forty miles in length, of which thirty-five would be through dense forest. Before the construction of this line was commenced, it would be desirable that the country should be well explored by a competent surveyor, as such a proceeding would tend to greatly reduce the expenditure, and result in the production of a better road. It is often found, in laying off roads in the forest, that if great care is not exercised by the surveyor, unnecessarily steep gradients have to be used. This is especially the case around the base of Mount Egmont, as the land is cut deep by numerous rivers; and great care is required in selecting crossing places to avoid steep banks, which involve heavy cuttings to make a passable road. The forest should be felled for a width of two chains, and a track cleared, free from logs and stumps, a width of twenty feet. According to the cost by contract of similar work at New Plymouth, this could be done for about £60 per mile, and to make the necessary cuttings, culverts, and fords, would take about £40, making a total cost of £100 per mile for a rough dray road through forest land.

Waitara to White Cliffs—Twenty miles.

The coast road from Waitara to the White Cliffs, in the direction of Mokau, requires a small expenditure to make it easier for dray traffic. The beach forms a good means of communication for a portion of the distance, but as little or no work has been expended on the approaches to it, there exists many dangerous obstructions. The expenditure of some £50 in quarrying through a rocky point on the beach would make a greater length of it available at half-tide. There are two rivers, the Urenui and the Mimi, which are great obstacles to dray traffic,—the former owing to the ford being deep, and the approach to it a wide flat of soft mud, covered at half-tide. The latter can only be crossed at the mouth on the beach at low water, and is dangerous in consequence of numerous quicksands. It would cost about £300 each to bridge these rivers, and the improvement of the road would cost about £400.

Road to Waikato and Taupo—Ninety miles.

The line of road from Taranaki to Waikato and Taupo will be found to lie between the Waitara and Wanganui Rivers; and would branch off from the road in the rear of Mount Egmont about midway, and strike about due East at its commencement, afterwards trending to the North-east. As this country is very little known to either Natives or Europeans, it would require to be very carefully explored before any definite route was decided on. As this line would penetrate the very heart of the country,