

point between the Rangitikei and Wangaehu Rivers; and further, the valley, which is wide, has beautiful flats on both sides of the river, running perfectly straight about due South for a distance of nearly twenty-two miles. Both sides of the river banks are covered with beautiful timber, consisting of totara, matai, and white pine. On the left bank over the range the country is open and grassy, extending a long way over towards the Rangitikei River, and dotted with bush. This will make a fine grazing country. On the right side of the valley the flats rise one above the other in terraces and recede towards the range, behind which the country towards the Wangaehu is very broken and covered with bush. Both sides of the valley are very favourable for the construction of a good road, but the left side is the best of the two.

The horse track is cut through the first and second patches of bush, and the line through the open staked out with flags; and from the south of the second opening down to Mount Prospect the horse track is also cut. At Mount Prospect the track crosses the river, where it is about twenty-five feet wide. It continues down the right side for about six miles, and crosses again to the left side, down which it continues all the way to the boundary of the block. That part from the crossing at Mount Prospect down to the second crossing will be abandoned and be continued wholly down the left side, to where it will cross over to the Wangaehu River, which portion has yet to be examined and decided upon.

The other tributaries which flow in from the East have low banks and hard shingle beds and seem to be easily forded.

To cut the horse track through to the open on the Wangaehu would take three men a month, and would cost about £35. I would have continued the cutting of the horse track, but our provisions would not hold out long enough to do so. We were every day getting further from Captain Birch's, to whose place there is a very bad track; there was also the uncertainty of getting provisions when I sent, as he was often out of them, and the man has had to return without; and as all the friendly Natives had left the Taupo and Patea Districts, it was extremely dangerous for a man to travel alone with a pack-horse, as Te Kooti's scouts were known to be prowling about the deserted pas. I therefore decided to cut our way through to Wanganui and begin from this end; we could get regular supplies of provisions, and at a lower rate.

When the track is properly opened up, a man will walk from Wanganui to the plains in sixteen hours. A thousand pounds expended in making a few chains of side-cutting at different places, and in removing fallen trees and other dead timber, would enable a horseman to ride the distance in a summer's day very comfortably. There are no obstacles whatever to be surmounted. The valley is just similar to what we all know the Turakina Valley to be at the lower end from Mr Lethbridge's up.

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To Edward Churton, Esq.,
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