

I was then asked by Heke Pakeke to resume the survey in the interest of himself and his friends; but, as I knew there would be some strong opposition to that, I ordered it to be resumed with European labour in my absence on the East Coast. I returned after it was completed, and found the various parties interested very sore and jealous of one another, but very pleased when they learned that the survey did not belong to any of the former owners. I told them it had been carried on as a matter of right which the Government possessed to do what they pleased within the confiscated boundaries, which seemed to be much less unpalatable to them than an opposing claimant being concerned in it.

The confiscated land between the Patea and Waingongoro Rivers is in the same position as the latter river, twenty miles of the survey of which, past Te Ngutu-o-te-Manu and far inland, has simply been carried on as a right acquired by the confiscation, and setting aside all tribal rights. It now rests with the Government to authorize me to employ, say, ten surveyors with their parties, and to place 2s. 6d. per acre (say £9,000) at my disposal, as compensation to the former owners, to enable me to settle the question so far as the confiscated lands and reserves between the Patea and Waingongoro are concerned: after which I anticipate no difficulty in dealing in the same manner with the confiscated land north of the Waingongoro, so far nearly as Oeo, where the claims of the Ngatiruanui cease.

I recommend that the labour should be supplied from the Armed Constabulary Force, because it cannot be got in the district, and if it could, it would most likely include men who would not submit to proper control, and who might, by a word or a blow, give offence, and create trouble that would otherwise be avoided.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES BROWN, C.C.

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No. 8.

LETTER from the CHIEF SURVEYOR at Taranaki to the SURVEYOR-GENERAL, relating to a Line of Railway to Opunake.

SIR,—

Survey Office, New Plymouth, 10th December, 1878.

I have the honor to inform you that I am of opinion that the time has arrived for recommending the Government to send an engineer to lay out the proposed line of railway through the Plains towards Opunake. The Natives will probably offer no opposition now, as they do not interfere with us in any way. We shall soon be impinging on land, with the surveys, through which the line may possibly run, and it would be advisable to have it done at once, so that our work could be regulated accordingly.

If I may be allowed to offer my opinion as to the course the line should take, I would state that, after careful consideration of the subject in all its bearings, I have come to the conclusion that the line should be carried well inland, provided a good one be found. The country is unexplored, having been held by a very troublesome tribe of Natives, who hitherto regarded with jealousy the approach of Europeans to the interior; but there seems but little doubt that a good line could be obtained, as, looking over the country from Hawera, it appears to be a plain. There will, of course, be a few more streams to cross, but, if the rivers are of the same character as the Waingongoro, they will be much easier crossed inland than near the coast. The expense of the line would probably be heavier than a coast one, which would run through open land, as in the former case the bush would have to be felled, and the expense of earthwork would be slightly heavier on account of stumps, &c.; but to my mind the advantages of such a route would fully warrant the expense. On the accompanying tracing a green line represents the course that I would recommend, a trial line to be taken from Normanby to Opunake. The dotted green line would strike the Waitara and Wanganui railway farther north, but would cross the Waingongoro much more favourably than near Normanby, as a little further up the river runs only a few feet below the surrounding country, while the valley increases and becomes very deep as you go seawards. The red line from Normanby to Opunake runs entirely through open country, with no heavy engineering difficulties but the Waingongoro Valley; but by its running so near the coast, it will not drain the amount of country that the green line would. It might possibly go nearer the forest line near Kapuni; but, on the other hand, it might be found that the dotted red line would be found the best for the Waingongoro.

The Plains having such a notoriety throughout New Zealand and the neighbouring colonies, I believe the open land will command so excessive a price that the fact of a railway running through them would not make any very considerable increase to the revenue, as there will not be more than 20,000 acres after the reserves for Natives are made. On the other hand the inland line, if made, would, (1.) Put, say, £2 an acre on 40,000 acres, and make saleable 40,000 or 50,000 acres more than if the coast line was taken, which would, if sold at all, go at the lowest rate. (2.) It would rapidly open an extent of country inland which would otherwise lie idle and unimproved for many years. (3.) I believe it would be a good strategic move, as the more inroads that are made into what are termed the Native fastnesses, the less probability of disturbance, as by every such move they feel their case more hopeless. The Natives of this district have always been troublesome, and the colonial forces suffered a severe defeat in this very forest. The more they are made to feel their weakness in an unobtrusive way, the better for the settlement of the country and its future prosperity.

I need hardly refer to the future advantages (when the country is brought into cultivation) of a line with an extent of producing-country on either side has over one running so close to the sea-beach as the red line would. I may state that the views I have expressed are generally held by Major Brown, Civil Commissioner, with whom I have conferred on the subject. One more suggestion I should like to offer, which is, that if the Government think it advisable to try for a line inland, the officer sent should be one who has practical experience in forest-country; for it is well known that one who has not is soon discouraged, and will give up a case as hopeless when the other would carry it through successfully.

I have, &c.,

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, C.S.