

the Natives wanted the boundary fixed at Turikapou, so that they might retain their old fishing-ground. The spit from Kiriwai to Okourewa has not been sold. If Hiko included it in his sale the Government would have a right to it, but it was stated that the Government only acquired the fishing-rights of Hiko and others. The reason why the Natives did not insert a description of the boundaries claimed by them was because they were afraid that it would be the means of having their claims dismissed.

Commission adjourned till the 24th instant.

FRIDAY, 24TH APRIL, 1891.

Commission resumed at 10 a.m.

*Duncan McMaster* (sworn): I live in the Lower Valley. My property is close to the lake. Have lived there for many years. It has been necessary to open the lake at different times to release the flood-water. The Natives were always consulted before the lake was opened. It was usually in the summer months that we consulted the Natives, because it was their fishing-season. Money was usually paid to them by the settlers to induce them to consent. It is possibly about seven or eight years since this practice commenced—after the Native Committee was formed. From £15 to £40 were the amounts paid. The amounts varied according to circumstances. Some years, when the lake was full and the end of the fishing-season was near, the amount paid was less than on other occasions if the lake was not so high and the fishing-season had not commenced. Do not remember any occasion when the Natives consented to the lake being opened when they were engaged fishing. I have a faint recollection of the earthquake of 1855, but was very young then. Could not describe the effect it had on the land adjacent to the lake.

*By Commissioner*: I do not know what arrangements were made before the period I alluded to, but the lake used to be opened occasionally by the settlers. I used to assist on such occasions, but cannot say whether any money was paid. If any arrangement was made it would be made by either Mr. Hume or Mr. Mathews. The earthquake took place in 1855, I fancy, but cannot speak positively, as I was only a youngster. I suppose that it was after the land was raised that parts of it became improved. Have heard that before the earthquake the lake was much deeper. I know that a place called Hikurangi, in the Tipua Block, was raised after the earthquake. Remember riding over the land with my father, and noticing the change. Have not seen the whole of the Tipua Block covered with water of late years, but I know from traces of drift-timber being left on the top of the sandhills that the floods were much higher in former years. January was the month the lake used to close, and it frequently remained closed for four months. I think it has closed as early as September in some years, but could not name any year when it took place in that month. I am not acquainted with any other part of the country bordering the lake excepting about the Tipua Block.

*By Mr. Pownall*: I do not mean it to be inferred that no negotiations took place before 1883, but that I do not know of any such arrangement. I think that Mr. Mathews and others used to make arrangements with the Natives about opening the lake. I have not been a member of the River Board during the time I allude to. I am not a member now. Have heard from my father and others that land has been raised by the earthquake on the western side. I stated that the settlers gained increased land for grazing purposes after the earthquake. The sediment deposited by the lake and the river has raised the land. Have not been down the western side of the lake, but heard that it was raised by the earthquake. Another part that was raised was at Hikurangi. That was all that I heard of. My father acquired some land on the banks of the lake. It is dry when the lake is low: 400 acres was the quantity that he purchased. It is more improved now than it was when first acquired; there is more pasturage on it. Cannot say whether the sale to my father was after Hiko's sale or not. I do not know when the land along the margin of the lake was sold to the settlers. I do not know the extent of land flooded. The flooding of the lake affects land up the Ruamahanga. The Messrs. Bidwell take part in opening the lake. The flood-water of the lake backs up the Ruamahanga for some distance, up as far as Otaraia. The land owned by the Messrs. Bidwell Brothers that is flooded by the lake is the Maramarau Block.

*Hemi te Miha* (sworn): I am an owner of the Wairarapa Lake. I remember when Mr. McLean first came to buy the blocks on each side of the lake. I pointed out the boundaries of the land to Mr. McLean. We went on to a hill on the east side of the lake, and I pointed out the land and the boundaries of the blocks it was proposed to sell. The tahakupu o te whenua (high-water mark) was the boundary we pointed out to Mr. McLean. We could see the boundaries from the hill where we were standing. We told him that the high-water mark (line) was to be the boundary. We could see the boundary alluded to from where we stood, and the same boundaries could be seen from there at the present time. I am not familiar with the Tauherenikau sale nor yet of the Kahutara. The sale of the Turanganui Block commenced at the Hurupi on the coast, and ascended that stream to a gully, and from there it went on to a hill (name unknown), and thence to the Turanganui Stream; from thence to the Motuhouhou; thence to Rahoruru; thence to Wangaeahu, and on to the Aorangi Range; thence to Pukewhinau, and thence to the Mangaroa Stream; and down that stream to Paharakeke Stream; and down that stream to (Te Tohu o te Awapuni) the high-water-line, and along the high-water line to Okourewa, and thence to Te Hurupi. The flood-line of the lake was well defined on the Turanganui Block. The reason why the flood-line was adopted was because that was the boundary of the main land. It was the Natives who fixed the boundary at the flood-line. Mr. McLean suggested that the boundary of the lake should be the boundary, but he gave way to the contention of the Natives that the flood-line should be adopted. The boundary of both blocks were both fixed at high-water mark. The other persons present besides myself and Mr. McLean at the sale, whose names I recollect, were Wi Tamihana and Mr. John Russell, but there were many others as well. Mr. Russell is still alive. The ridge that we pointed out to Mr.