

should be ascertained as far as possible, and that when the lake flooded beyond that boundary on to European land, that the Government should be allowed to open it; also, that Government should release the Proclamation and all demands over the lake in regard to payments made to Hiko and others in consideration of their being allowed to open it. It was agreed that the question relative to the reserves on the west side was to be left in abeyance, at the Minister's suggestion, and the opening of the lake to be the first matter for arrangement. The Minister stated that he would have to refer the question to the law officers and Parliament. The agreement was drawn up, but before the question could be gone into Mr. Ballance's Government went out of office, and the new Native Minister (Mr. Mitchelson) declined to have anything to do with it, and ignored the rights of the Natives to consideration.

*Hoani Paraone Tuninarangi* (sworn): I live at Hinana. I used when a younger man to live at the mouth of the lake. I do not remember when the settlers first wanted to open the lake. Never heard that the lake was opened at any time without consulting and paying the Natives before the River Board took the matter in hand and ignored the Natives. The earthquake raised a great deal of the land near the lake and improved it for grazing; it is excellent land for that purpose. This land belongs to the Natives. The reason why they claim it is because it was not sold in 1853. The low-lying land adjacent to the Turanganui Block would probably be about five thousand acres. I know the Turakirae Block. There is probably the same extent of low land in that block of equal quality. Could not state actually how much there is in both blocks. The land in question would be worth about £4 per acre. All that I know of the matter is what the old people told me about the *tohu o te Awapuni* (flood-line). I know some of the principal owners of the lake. The control over it was vested in several persons. Te Kai o te Kokopu was the greatest chief that I heard of, but I do not know the name of the hapu he derived his right from, but he belonged to a number of hapus who had a right to the lake. Hiko was under Te Kai o te Kokopu, and only of the same rank as others. Other chiefs who had interest in the lake were Raniera te Iho, Wi Tamihana Hiko, Tutepakihirangi, Hamaiwaho, Hohaia te Rangi, Ngairo, Ngawhawha, and others. The hapus of these chiefs also had a right. Hemi te Miha was of equal rank with Hiko, Piripi te Maari; Paratene Matenga, self, and Te Wataharo are also of equal rank with him. These people did not join in the sale. Raniera te Iho was alive then, and he did not join. Heard that Wi Kingi got £400 through the sale of the lake. Did not hear the reason why it was paid to him, but believe it was for his interest in the lake. The lake was not opened in former times; it was allowed to burst open of its own accord. An arrangement to open the lake would be made with the people who were at the mouth of the lake at the time. Did not know that Hiko had the sole right to open the lake, or to sell that right to any one. "*E tino mate nui kua pa ki nga tangata Maori*" through the opening of the lake by the Road Board. In some years the Natives have caught fully twenty tons of eels, and in others ten tons. We supply other places with eels as far as Ngatiporou (East Coast, beyond Gisborne). We are unable to get the same quantity of eels now as formerly; the Natives only procured about a ton this year through being interfered with by the River Board. Matainoke is about a quarter of a mile from the bridge at Paharakeke. The flood-line goes from there to Okoura along the low-lying ground; from Okoura it goes to Rahoruru by Tauanui. It is about half a mile from there at its nearest point, from there it goes on to Otunuku, a low ridge, and from there to Arapawanui, and on to Turanganui.

*By Commissioner*: I am not acquainted with the position of the flood-line on the Kahutara Block, nor yet on the Turakirae or Tauherenikau Blocks. Think that £4 would be about a fair value of the land below the flood-line, although it is covered by water for several months, and is injuriously affected thereby for about six months in the year, as the pasture is not of much use till the spring-time, after the land has been flooded, up till the end of April. The land is improved by the flooding, but the grass is killed through it being submerged so long. The spring-time is when the pasture is at its best. Te Kai o te Kokopu was an influential man in his own locality, extending to the mouth of the lake at Okourewa, and the other chiefs I named were influential men in their own localities. I did not mean it to be inferred that Te Kaio te Kokopu was the paramount chief of the district, but that each chief had superior control over matters in their own respective localities. Hiko was admitted to be the principal chief over his own locality and hapu, and the other chiefs controlled their own affairs in a similar manner. What I meant with regard to Hiko's position was that, although he was the principal chief over his own people, he had no superiority over other chiefs and hapus. Te Kai o te Kokopu was the owner of the locality about the mouth of the lake at Okourewa. Te Tawiro and Te Kaio te Kokopu were near relatives, but I do not know whether they were children of the same parents. There was a wakatauki amongst the Natives that illustrates the position of the matter—namely, Ko Tawera, "*he tangata ki te Ngutuawa o Wairarapa*"—i.e., that he was the principal chief at the mouth of the lake. Ko te Maari "*te tangata ki te Matamata ki Ngaiwi*" (that Te Maari was the chief of the land at Ngaiwi). When Maraea Toatoa, the daughter of Te Kai o te Kokopu, married Iraia, the son of Te Hamaiwaho, the former gave Te Hamaiwaho the mouth of the lake. The gift of the mouth of the lake to Te Hamaiwaho led to a number of people in the Upper Valley coming to fish at Okourewa, at the mouth of the lake. When the fishing-settlement was established at Te Pahi o Ngaitahu, Te Hamaiwaho's hapu (Ngaitahu) went to live there, and I lived with my people in this locality. Never heard that any person disputed the right of Te Hamaiwaho to make this gift. The first attempt to trample on this gift was Hiko's sale in 1876. Te Hamaiwaho did not return Okourewa to the former owners. The part that he restored was at Te Kawakawa, but Okourewa has been retained till the present time. Wi Kingi Tutepakihirangi was a man who possessed a considerable interest in both the Lower and Upper Lakes. If Wi Kingi stated in evidence before the Trust Commissioner (Major Heaphy) that Hiko's was the superior right, I do not concur with this statement. Wi Kingi and Ngairo Takatakaputea had a co-equal right to the lake; and if Piripi te Maari stated before the Commissioner to the contrary, I do not agree with him. If Wi Kingi stated that Hiko had a superior