

In reply, I am to inform you that Mr. E. S. Maunsell has been instructed to negotiate without delay with the Natives for the purchase of the Wairarapa Lakes, and that his efforts to settle the question will be materially aided by the settlers adopting a conciliatory course towards the Native owners whilst the negotiations are pending. I am further to state that Major Atkinson regrets to learn that settlers residing in a Native district, should pledge themselves to do an act which they state may probably lead to a dispute with the Natives the consequence of which may be more or less serious, and wishes it to be clearly understood that such action can in no way be countenanced by the Government.

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No. 15.

H. Halse, Esq., Native Secretary, Wellington.

Greytown, 27th February, 1875.

PLEASE send paper and instructions *re* Wairarapa Lake. Am I to negotiate for the whole, and what limited amount to go to.

E. S. MAUNSELL.

For Hon. Major Atkinson's instructions.—H. HALSE, 2nd March, 1875.

By the direction of Hon. Major Atkinson I wired to Mr. Maunsell to negotiate for the purchase of both the Wairarapa Lakes, and report the price he considers fair and reasonable before closing with the Native owners. I also asked him to name the papers called for.—H. HALSE, 3rd March, 1875.

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No. 16.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th March, 1875.

I have the honour, in compliance with Mr. Halse's instructions, to report that after due inquiry I find a considerable area of land within the boundaries of the Wairarapa Lakes, and not ceded to the Crown, will be rendered available for grazing purposes if the lower lake is opened at certain periods, and in the manner proposed by the settlers interested in the purchase of the Native claims and rights to those lakes. The extent of the reclaimed land may be computed, as far as I can learn, at about 2,000 acres beyond what the Government have already sold.

Under these circumstances, I consider a sum not exceeding £1,200 a fair price to be paid to the claimants for the whole of the land under and on the margin of those lakes, the purchase of their fishery-rights to be included. Possibly the Natives claiming may accept a considerably less sum. This, however, can be ascertained during the negotiation.

One of the claimants—Te Manihera—is now at Waikato. I would suggest that, as he may not return to Wairarapa for some months, only a portion of the purchase-money, sufficient for the fishery-right—say, £400—be paid during his absence, the remainder to be paid when he joins in a deed for the land aforementioned, his claim being for a portion of such only, and not for the fishery.

I would submit that two deeds be prepared by the Law Officer—one for the fishery-right, which I can at once proceed in negotiating, the other for the purchase of the land, and all pertaining to the lakes.

The recent action of certain settlers, already brought under the notice of the Government, has created a considerable degree of excitement in the Native mind, and will be the means of rendering the negotiations difficult.

I have, &c.,

E. S. MAUNSELL.

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No. 17.

Mr. Maunsell.

18th March, 1875.

I AM directed by Hon. Major Atkinson to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, in which you report that, as there is a considerable area of land within the boundaries of the Wairarapa Lakes not yet ceded to the Crown which will be available for grazing purposes if the lower lake is opened, and as the extent of reclaimed land may be computed at about 2,000 acres, a sum not exceeding £1,200 will be a fair price to be paid to the claimants for the whole of the land under and on the margin of these lakes, their fishing-rights to be included.

In reply, I am to state that Major Atkinson regrets to approve of the payment of so large a sum as £1,200 for the land likely to be reclaimed, and hopes that by judicious management you will succeed in bringing the negotiations to a successful issue for a much smaller amount.

H. H.

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No. 18.

SIR,—

Greytown, Wairarapa, 24th March, 1875.

I have the honour to report that I interviewed the principal chiefs who claim the Wairarapa Lakes, at Tuhitarata, on the 19th and 20th instant, relative to the surrender of all their rights to the Crown in those lakes. They evinced a sullen reticence during the first day's interview in the expression of any opinion upon the subject of sales. They appeared much aggrieved at certain remarks Mr. Charles Pharazyn had uttered—viz., in the event of their opposing the opening of the spit enclosing the waters of the lake that the Militia and Volunteers would attack them. I cannot vouch for the authenticity of this statement; my principal authority is Raniera te Iho.

On the 20th I interviewed Hemi te Miha and Hiko, the recognised Lower Valley chiefs, at Mr. McMasters's residence. I offered £800 for the whole lakes, inclusive of the fisheries. I only received an undecided reply—viz., that they would consider it; but, at the same time, they were suspicious as to the reasons why the offer of purchase was made by the Government.

I made this offer, as I found previously to my visit the feeling in the district was decidedly opposed to the sale; but Natives informed me if Hemi and Hiko agree there will be no further opposition through the district. Hiko complains that he was unjustly deprived of his salary—£50