

per annum—as assessor some years ago. I construed this complaint as a hint if he was reinstated he would consent. I understand by the Wairarapa (East and West Lake Blocks) deeds certain chiefs are entitled to annuities. Hiko has large influence, and has been hitherto the guardian of the fisheries, the district having been supplied with eels by his immediate followers. It may not be impolitic to reinstate him. I would submit this to the consideration of the Government. I informed him that the Hon. Native Minister, Sir Donald McLean, would return shortly to Wellington, and he had better make his complaint “in person” to him.

As the sum—£800—offered by me is considerably within the full amount I am authorised to offer I deemed it wise, in order to obtain the co-operation of the chiefs, to offer them bonuses in completion of the purchase, subject to the approval of the Government, naming no sums as yet. I did so as, in the cases of divisions of money, those who have only nominal interests obtained an equal share with the chiefs. It is getting customary that all interested in land share and share alike without distinction; in fact, in many cases the chiefs have fared less than any; therefore, if some sums were secured in this case, there would be a guarantee that the chiefs obtained a fair proportion. I would suggest that Hiko receives £50; Hemi, £30; Rainera, £25; Wi Tamihana, £20. There may be another £25 required in this way—say, in all, £150—which would make a total of £950. This would render the purchase of these lakes very moderate.

I left the Natives at Tuhitarata Pa in very good spirits. They were glad, they said, to hear that the Government did not wish to take away their rights unjustly, and they have agreed that the above-named chiefs shall accompany me as a deputation to wait upon Sir Donald McLean on his return to Wellington, which I look upon as a favourable omen. I told them I would ask the Government to allow them their travelling expenses on the occasion.

In conclusion, I would remark that, from what I have learnt from Natives and settlers, the Wairarapa Lakes will eventually yield a magnificent estate (land) for the Government, as it is rapidly filling up with the immense quantities of muddy sediment deposited over the lakes during the floods, which occur throughout the district periodically, and Natives say that every earthquake that occurs the bottom becomes upheaved, and consequently shallower. On the western end of the spit a permanent passage can be secured, as the surf does not break there so heavily as it does on the eastern end, the present outlet; and also, there being a clay stratum underneath, old Natives say that during the times of their forefathers the lake was not closed until a violent earthquake caused an upheaval, which closed it. I mention this information I gain as it may be worthy of investigation. The area of the lakes is considerably extensive.

I have, &c.,

E. S. MAUNSELL.

No. 19.—REPORT on the PETITION of MANIHERA TE RANGITAKAIWAHO and Others, of Wairarapa.

THIS is a petition from Natives of the Wairarapa, complaining that their lake, Wairarapa, has been improperly purchased by the Government Commissioners, inasmuch as the majority of the chiefs and their hapus objected to the sale of the same. They state that, in land-sales, this lake has always been set aside as a reserve for the Natives.

I am directed to report as follows: That the Committee are satisfied, from the evidence they have taken, that the majority of the owners of the lake have not joined in the sale, and they are of opinion that it would have been better that the title should have been investigated by the Native Land Court previous to the completion of the purchase; and the Committee are further of opinion that the petitioners, and any other Natives who may allege a claim, ought to have an opportunity of proving their title, if they are able to do so, before the Native Land Court.

29th September, 1876.

JOHN BRYCE, Chairman.

No. 20.—To the Honourable the House of Representatives of Her Majesty's Colony of New Zealand, the humble petition of us, the undersigned, sheweth:—

1. That most of your petitioners are settlers residing around the Wairarapa Lake, in the district of Wairarapa, and that others reside in the Lower Valley district, in the district of Wairarapa.

2. That most of your petitioners hold lands abutting on the aforesaid lake, and which lands are during several months in the year covered with water, and rendered unfit for use through the overflowing of the said lake.

3. That about two years ago your petitioners and others held a meeting at Featherston, in the said district, at which a resolution was passed, and a copy thereof subsequently forwarded to the then existing Government, praying that steps might be taken by the Government to extinguish the rights of the Natives in the said lake, so that your petitioners and others might be enabled to open and keep open the said lake.

4. That the then existing Government purchased the fishing and other rights claimed by the Natives in the said lake through one Hiko, a Native chief, and others, the representatives of and managers for the Natives in the matter of the said rights, but since then certain other Natives have claimed the same rights in the said lake.

5. The Native claimants lastly referred to petitioned your honourable House in the matter.

6. That the Native Affairs Committee of your honourable House advised your honourable House that the claims of such Natives should be inquired into, and it was decided that the Native Land Court should inquire into and investigate such claims.

7. That the said last-mentioned Native claimants sent in their claims to the Native Land Court lately held in the Wairarapa district, but afterwards applied for and obtained an adjournment of the consideration of such claims on the ground that no plans showing the lake and the adjoining lands had been prepared.