

*By Mr. Gill:* I knew Wi Kingi Tupakihirangi. We belonged to different hapus. He was not a chief of my hapu. He was a chief of Wairarapa, connected with me. I heard that £400 had been given to Wi Kingi to be paid amongst owners of upper lake, *i.e.*, to the people who claimed with or through him.

*Paiura Watarauihi* called (sworn): I do not know much about these lakes. I have no interest in these lakes. I was not aware that I had an interest when I signed.

*Henri Hepanaia* (sworn): I have no interest in the Wairarapa Lakes; none whatever. I have three children—Te Hiwi, Te Oti, and Katerina.

*Ani Hiko* (sworn): Am daughter of Hiko Piata. Have interest through my father in Wairarapa Lakes. I signed deed produced. I know that my father had a greater interest and right than any other man. I know Ruihi te Mihi had an interest in both lakes. There are several chiefs, as stated by Manihera—thirty. Mine is the mana from my father. I do not know if Ruihi te Mihi has an equal interest with Manihera. I knew Arihia. She was related to me. She has an interest in both lakes. She had a greater interest than Manihera. I knew Hariata Hamoake. She had an interest in both lakes. I cannot say to what amount. I knew Te Waka Tahuai. He is dead. I do not know how he derived an interest in these lakes. I do not say he had no interest, but I do not know how he derived it. I know Wi Paraone Pahoro. I do not know what his interest is.

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No. 39.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

THE Native Land Court sitting at Greytown in November last investigated the title to the Wairarapa Lakes. At first there seemed but little promise of the case being carried through, owing to the opposition wishing the application withdrawn or adjourned. However, in the end the work was carried on successfully, and an order made registering 139 persons as owners of the lakes (upper and lower).

Credit for carrying on the inquiry is due to Paraone te Pohoro and Mahupuku, an intelligent and well-to-do Native. Both of these men had to pay money largely to carry on the work. The Natives who obstructed the passing of the lakes through the Court in October, 1882, again used their strength for the same purpose, and would have been successful but for two of their principal chiefs deserting their cause—Piripi te Maari and Raniera te Iho. Both of these men informed me that had they been treated frankly and fairly in the past transactions they would not have acted as they did. I came to an understanding with them on the first day of the case being before the Court. They acted straightforward throughout. These two men have authority over a large section of the owners, and with them will rest, in a great degree, the final settlement of the waters of the lake passing to the Government.

Before leaving Greytown I had an assurance from them that should the lake be closed before the question between themselves and the Government was settled, and the settlers suffer therefrom, they would, on hearing from me, do all they could in letting off the water. [See letters written. The lake having filled.] On my part I promised that early in the year, after the feeling of many of the owners had softened, that I would represent to you the advisability of their meeting you and arranging on a final settlement. I think the time for this has now come, and would respectfully refer it for your consideration.

29th January, 1884.

RICHARD JOHN GILL, Under-Secretary.

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No. 39A.

SIR,—

Greytown, Wairarapa, 20th April, 1885.

I have the honour to report that, in compliance with the request of the Hon. the Native Minister, I proceeded on Thursday, the 16th instant, to Tauanui, Lower Wairarapa Valley, to see Piripi te Maari on the subject of the purchase of the Wairarapa Lakes.

Piripi is the leading Native in the lakes question, and I informed him that the Government had decided on purchasing the interests of individual owners who wish to sell, and that it would be better if he would agree and induce his party to do so, Government being prepared to deal liberally towards them, and to allow them reserves.

Piripi said: "I cannot agree, so far as I and my tribe are concerned, just now. I would like to meet the Native Minister in the presence of all owners and talk the matter over, and it is likely a decision would be arrived at to sell in a body to the Crown; but, should the Native Minister not be able to meet us, I, who am a member of the Native committee, will bring the question before it, as the committee represent the people, and get an opinion from the committee. I will not take upon myself the responsibility of agreeing to the sale. I would rather meet the people face to face."

I told Piripi I would, according to my instructions, proceed to acquire all the shares I could. I said I had visited him to tell him this, lest he should be aggrieved at what might appear to him a stealthy act, and, as it were, ignoring his influence. He replied that a meeting had been held, when all decided not to sell. That none wished to sell except Karaitiana Korou, of Masterton, who, with his relations, had no interests. Their names were inserted in the order of the Court through false evidence, and he warned me not to pay money to Karaitiana. I said Maoris as a rule at these meetings were like a flock of geese, when one cackled others followed, but when they were separated it was different. Hence probably those whom he most relied on would not resist the temptation of receiving money for what was of little or no value to them, merely Maori mana. He admitted this was so. On my saying that the lakes would be open to them as to the pakeha for fishing purposes, he replied that there would be no fishing-ground if the Government drained the lower lake, which could be done at Kiriwai, the southern extremity of the land-spit.

In the course of our conversation Piripi said, "Now, I will tell you. I have not as yet done so to any one connected with the Government. The principal cause of our opposition to the lakes becoming