

Crown property. It is this: When we sold to Mr. McLean, the boundary was the margin of the lake. Since then large tracts of land have been raised by earthquakes. The Government, without consulting us, had sold to Europeans lands which ought to have been ours. We have protested against the sales. We have not received compensation whenever we have raised this question. Government officers have produced the deeds of sale of lands bordering on the lakes where it is stated that the lake is the boundary. True, the then lake. The margin of the lake is changed since the deeds were signed. This is our grievance against the Government." There is no doubt that the purchases made were intended to touch only the then lakes. However, as years have passed since the cession and sales to Europeans of these reclaimed lands, and peaceable occupation having been permitted, I declined to enter into the matter.

I was informed that the lower as well as the upper lake is fast filling up. A conveyance with pair of horses containing ladies lately crossed the south end of the upper lake, there about half-a-mile wide, the water being only knee-deep.

I spoke to Piripi and others about what I had heard from Mr. Gill, that a European, through his lawyer, had complained of certain Maoris having taken away his fishing-nets while he was fishing on the lakes. They denied having done so, and said they would not do so to any one. What they had done was to notify that persons trespassing for the purpose of shooting wild fowls on the lakes would be prosecuted, and that they had repeated applications since for permission to shoot and sell in Wellington. They had, however, refused permission, as the lakes were held in partnership between them and the Government. They did not object to a person desirous of having a day's sport only for private use. They also objected to the wholesale and reckless destruction of birds by the use of large duck-guns, where many are wasted. Being wounded they get away and die, total extinction being the probable result.

I left Piripi in a friendly way, and judged from his demeanour and his proposition to get the consent of all concerned to the sale, as indicative of a withdrawal of his past opposition, and that he understands that sooner or later the Maori mana must pass to the Crown. I would add that Piripi claims to assert authority over eighty of the owners of the lakes. I am satisfied now that Hiko is dead that his influence is paramount among the Natives who claim to own the Wairarapa Lakes.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

E. S. MAUNSELL.

I omitted to state that Piripi informed me no opposition would be made to the opening by Europeans of the lake when next closed.—E. S. M.

No. 40.

To Mr. Gill.

Pirinoa, 24th January, 1884.

FRIEND, greeting! Your letter of the 17th January to me and Raniera has been received, in which you say that you have been informed that the people living on the cultivated land on the shores of the Wairarapa Lake suffer from the overflow of water. It is well that they should let you know. Do you tell those pakehas to come and let us two know when the river is blocked up, and we will consent to its being opened. It was not closed by the Maoris. If the pakehas had come and spoken to us about it we would have agreed to the river being opened. The Europeans know that there are no Maoris doing anything there now. Sometimes when the river is stopped up some of the Europeans come and ask that it may be opened, and we (two) consent; but when the Maoris are catching eels and fish, we do not; though when the overflow increases I then tell the Maoris to open it. The Europeans know all about this. We, the Maoris, are very kind to the Europeans who are living there. We (two) agree to what you say, that when Mr. Bryce returns to Wellington you will see him about having a meeting, so as to give the Maoris an opportunity of meeting him and so settling this matter. This is very good; but I think that the meeting should take place at Greytown.

Enough about that. I have received your letter of the 18th December, 1883, respecting the list of names for the 200 acres at Maringiawai. I am waiting for Tunuiarangi to come to my place, when he and I will settle what names are to be in the grant. When that is settled satisfactorily it will be forwarded to you. Do not feel concerned at the delay, it will not be long before it is settled. That is all. Long life to you in the new year.

From your friend.

PIRIPi TE MAARI.

No. 41.

SIR,—

Greytown, 28th May, 1885.

In reply to your telegram asking my views in regard to the Wairarapa Lakes question I have the honour to state that there are two courses open how to deal with the case—viz.: (1.) To move the Native Land Court to sit and thoroughly inquire into the rights of those whose names appear on the registered list, and define the value of each interest; and also to ascertain the value of the interests acquired by the Government and allot the same. (2.) To open the lake whenever it closes and causes overflow of the surrounding country, disregarding any opposition that may be offered.

The interests acquired were those of the principal chiefs, who were acknowledged by the Maoris as the proper persons to deal with the fishery-rights; and I think if such interests were ascertained the Government would come out very well. Much care would have to be exercised in getting the necessary evidence to prove the mana of Hiko, Arihia, and Wiremu Kingi to deal under Maori custom with these lakes, and also that there should be a sum of money provided to cover expenses of witnesses. Hiko, Arihia, and Hariata Amoake (sellers) had a large mana over the sand-spit, extending from Kiriwai on the south to Okorewa on the north, therefore the Government has a large claim over the spit, which, as defined by the Court, would enable the Government to do whatever it pleased with it.