

With regard to opening the lake by cutting a channel through the sand-spit when closed, I think as the Government has a legal right in such, being as it were a co-owner with owners, it would be justified in doing so, and if those who offered opposition felt aggrieved thereby they could take legal proceedings in a Court, and then the question can be tested as to whether or not the rights or mana which they assert to hold under the Treaty of Waitangi have or have not passed away, the lakes being held under Crown title and subject to be dealt with under the law. If this course were pursued I think it would get rid of the feeling that exists that the interests of the Crown can be ignored, and the importance which is attached to the question would be much reduced, and consequent sale will result.

I find that Piripi te Maari has acted with duplicity, and that he does not intend to assist in settling this long-vexed question. He has, on the contrary, joined with others in getting an agreement signed by the owners not to sell to the Crown, and hold the lakes to themselves intact. Had the Government taken steps while Hiko was alive, this lake question would have been settled then. Now, a number of doubtful owners, men who bowed before Hiko, have established through the Court a legal status as owners, and have resorted to trickery and attempted extortion.

I have, &c.,

E. S. MAUNSELL.

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No. 42.

SIR,—

Tupurupuru, 14th March, 1886.

I have again the honour to address you on the Wairarapa Lake question, and to inclose extract from a letter written to me by one of the settlers, which shows that unless the Government are able to make immediate arrangements with the Natives for the opening of the lake, the settlers must inevitably lose all their winter feed for stock and suffer grievous damage.

Mr Gill, of the Native Department, frequently assured me that Piripi te Maari had on more than one occasion solemnly promised him that on being requested by the Government the Natives would always permit the lake to be opened in time to prevent any serious damage being done. Great damage has already accrued to the settlers, inasmuch as the grass now covered becomes quite rotten even if immediately relieved of water, and is consequently unfit for stock until next spring. Immediate release of the water would, however, prevent this damage being extended by the fast rising water, and I would strongly urge an effort being made by at least reminding the Natives of their pledge to the Government.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Native Minister.

W. C. BUCHANAN.

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No. 43.—(24,590 acres.)

LAKES purchased by Maunsell in 1876 for £800 from (1) Hiko Piata, (2) Hemi te Miha, (3) Ruihi te Miha, (4) Ani Hiko, (5) Arihia Ngawhawha, (6) Wi Kingi Tutepakihirangi, (7) Hoani Rangitakaiwaho, (8) Ngairo Takatakaputea, (9) Hariata Amoake, (10) Te Waka Tahuahi, (11) Wi Paraone Pahoro, (12) Paiura Watarauhi, (13) Hemi Epanaia, (14) Hori Taha, (15) Hohepa Aporo, (16) H. M. Rangitakaiwaho, (17) Komene Piharau. One hundred and twenty other shares added to the title by the Native Land Court in November, 1883 (£1,200 is the offer for these interests, or £10 each). Piripi's promise to open the lakes when applied to, dated the 24th January, 1884, attached. Power is conferred upon the Government to construct drains by sections 186 and 187 of "The Public Works Act, 1882." If question of drainage is arranged there is no hurry about the purchase.

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No. 44.—FRIDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 1886.

PIRIPi TE MAARI and Wi Hutana waited on the Hon. the Native Minister to present to him the answer of the committee of owners of the Wairarapa Lake with regard to opening the Lake to prevent floods.

The deputation handed to the Hon. Mr. Ballance a letter containing the decision of the committee, which was to the effect that the Natives would give up two out of four months, which from time immemorial they had devoted to catching eels in the lake. The months they would give up would be April and May, retaining for themselves February and March. Mr. Ballance, in reply, said that he desired to convey to the deputation and the committee, and all the Natives concerned, his thanks for the generous proposition they had made, and for acceding to his request to appoint a committee of the lake owners to go into the question of opening the lake. The concession they proposed to make without any money payment was from their point of view a reasonable one. He would however suggest that they should give their careful consideration to his proposal for the purchase of all their interests in the lake. He did not desire to force them to an immediate decision, but thought it would be to their interest to sell. A suitable reserve in some other part of the Wairarapa might be made for them as part of the payment.

Piripi, in reply, said he thanked the Native Minister for the words he had spoken to them, which he would convey to the other Natives interested. They would give very careful consideration to the Native Minister's proposal to purchase the remaining interests in the lake; but he would ask that there should be no dealing with individual owners until the whole of the owners had had a meeting on the subject and decided to sell.

Mr. Ballance said the request made would be complied with, and he would instruct the land-purchase officers accordingly.

The deputation then thanked Mr Ballance again for the manner in which he had received them, and expressed their pleasure at the interview.

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