

arranged that there could be no after claims on the part of the other owners by reason of the Crown exercising drainage powers. The first of these could only be followed if the Crown is prepared to show that the original purchase includes the part of the lower lake in question. It would not of course be wise to submit a doubtful title to the verdict of a jury. The second and third both involve questions of policy upon which I cannot express any opinion, neither of them being free from questions which it might be imprudent on the part of the Crown to submit for investigation.

14th September, 1888.

W. S. REID.

No. 58.

WAIRARAPA LAKES AND PETONE LAND COMMITTEE.

*Report on the Petition of Piripi te Maari and 49 Others.*

YOUR Committee, appointed to inquire into and report upon the above petition on the subject of the Wairarapa Lakes, have the honour to report that the time at the disposal of the Committee has not permitted sufficient evidence to be taken to justify it in expressing an opinion on the merits of the petition; but it is desirable that the matter should be fully investigated next session, and that, in the meantime, every inquiry should be made with a view of assisting a future Select Committee in arriving at a decision.

10th September, 1890.

THOMAS MACKENZIE, Chairman.

No. 59.

THE humble petition of us, the undersigned Native chiefs, and owners of the Wairarapa Lake, sheweth:—

1. That we are and have been from time immemorial the owners of the Wairarapa Lakes and the surrounding lands.

2. That the following sales of the adjoining lands to Her Majesty's Government took place—

(a.) The Turakirae sale: This sale was conducted by Sir Donald McLean in 1853 or 1854. The boundary of this sale on the lake side began from Kiriwai, a western point on the sea-shore, and ran right round the western side of the lake to high-water mark. (b.) The Turanganui sale: The boundary of this sale starts from a point called Te Hurupi, an extreme south-western point on the beach, thence to the source of the Hurupi Stream, thence along the Aorangi Range to Te Puka-whinau, thence along the Mungaroa Stream into the Paharakeke Stream, thence to some ridges, the then high-water mark, some three miles distant from the Ruamahunga River, at which ridges a peg was placed, then from this peg to the Ruamahunga as a temporary boundary, thence along that river to the mouth of the Turanganui Stream, thence along the Turanganui Stream to Waipatupatu, and thence to the sea at Whangaimoana, thence along the beach to Hurupi. In this sale one Raniera's land was included and regranted to him. The spit, about two and a half miles, was not sold, because there were old fisheries at both ends of the spit. (c.) The Tauherenikau sale: This sale was of a block of land at the north end of the lake, running right to the high-water mark at the north end. (d.) The Kahutara sale: This sale commenced at a point on the north of the lakes called Te Ruahine, thence to a point called Te Whakahemate, thence in a straight line across to the Ruamahunga River to a place called Te Whakamarumaru, then parallel with the eastern side of the lake to Te Kopu, thence across to the starting point, Ruahine.

3. All these sales and the various points are shown on the plan accompanying this petition.

4. Only the dry land was sold in these sales, all lakes, streams, creeks, and lagoons being reserved.

5. The sales were, in every instance, to the high-water mark of the lake and not further, as the land below that mark was then considered useless to Europeans.

6. In 1855 heavy earthquakes raised the land and the lakes were lowered, leaving large strips of land between their borders and the previous high-water mark, which can be easily defined to this day by logs and other land marks. The boundaries of the sales can also be proved by living witnesses.

7. Since these sales separate sales have been made by divers of the owners to the Crown of portions of the land inside the high-water mark—to wit, the sale of a block called Te Puata, by Te Manihera and others, and other sales.

8. In 1883 our title to the lakes was ascertained by the Native Land Court of New Zealand.

9. In 1876 a chief named Hiko and sixteen others are alleged to have sold to Her Majesty's Government certain interests in the lakes.

10. Her Majesty's said Government, claiming under such alleged purchase, levied a Proclamation on the lakes, under the Native Land Purchase Act, forbidding all alienation of or dealings with the lakes to any person or persons whomsoever, other than the said Government.

11. In 1881 Mr. William Fitzgerald, solicitor, appeared at the Native Land Court, at Greytown, and asked that the interest of the said Government in the lakes under such alleged purchase should be apportioned off. The Court declined to do so on the ground that the Government had not acquired any interests in the lakes or the soil, but had only acquired, if anything, the fishery-rights of seventeen individuals.

12. The certificates of title issued to the owners of the lake only includes the lakes to the present high-water mark.

13. The owners of the lakes are subjected to much annoyance and injury in their possession and occupation of the lakes by the River Board, at Featherston, and other Europeans at times, when the waters of the lake rise, trespassing on their property, and, forcibly entering thereon, and, against the will and consent of the owners, opening the mouth of the lakes, thus depriving the owners of their fishing and proprietary rights without compensation.