

1885.
NEW ZEALAND.

NOTES OF NATIVE MEETINGS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

NOTES of a MEETING between the Hon. Mr. BALLANCE and the WANGANUI NATIVES at Ranana, on the 7th January, 1885.

Major Kemp read an address of welcome: "An address of welcome from us, the chiefs, and the whole of the Wanganui people. We welcome you, the Hon. John Ballance. You have come in the clouds of your ancestors, which have descended upon you this day. Welcome, Mr. Ballance, Minister for both Europeans and Maoris. We are very thankful to you for this your first coming among us. Your predecessors came to us in the darkness of night, in the days that have gone by. You have come in peace, your garments shining as the snow on the mountain—a symbol that the white hawk of the sky and the beast of the earth will dwell together in harmony. We, your servants, are pleased that you have come, borne upon the waves, in order that the eyes of the halt, the lame, and the blind may see you. We welcome you also, Mr. Ballance, as one of the Ministers administering the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, under whose shelter we live. Submission was made by the chiefs and all the hapus who assembled at Waitangi on the 6th of October, 1840, as well as by all other chiefs of New Zealand, and by which submission we are still bound. May peace be with us all."

Mr. Ballance said: Major Kemp and chiefs and people of Wanganui, I have to return you my sincere thanks for the honour that you have done me to-day. I recognize in this reception personally good will towards myself and feelings of loyalty to the Queen. It did not require that Major Kemp should say in his address that the people of the Wanganui River were loyal. I knew that before. I did not come here to promote loyalty, because that already existed. When I received from Major Kemp an invitation to visit the people of Wanganui at Ranana I recognized two things—first, that no Native Minister had visited the people of Wanganui River before, and next I felt that, as the Government of which I am a member had just taken office, it was my duty to come and see the Natives and talk over with them the affairs which are common to the welfare of both races, as a friend and as a Minister of the Crown, and I shall have the pleasure and the privilege of speaking to you in both capacities. I hope that before this meeting is ended we shall be able to express our views fully and freely to each other on the affairs which relate to the interests of both. I again thank you for the warm feelings which you have shown towards me.

On the 8th January the Hon. Mr. Ballance met the Natives in the runanga-house.

Major Kemp said: This tribe has invited the Native Minister to come here. I myself was down at Wanganui when the invitation was sent, and returned here. You are the first Minister that has accepted an invitation to come up the Wanganui River. My people asked me to send the invitation, and I did so at their request, and they told me not to mention to you the object for which they desired you to come here. The subjects, numbering eight in all, have been written down, and will be brought before you for discussion. I will speak on other matters—not those that have been written down to be brought to you; they are so lengthy that I will leave them for others to address you upon. I have always taught the people of Wanganui to aim at the ends sought by rich Europeans, but now I have changed my opinions, and I think it is best that the people should only act in accordance with law. I think that all the lands should be subdivided, and the title of each person ascertained; not that I wish to prevent sales or leases of land, but I think that if it is intended to sell the land it should be cut into small blocks and sold to private individuals, because it is population that will bring prosperity to this Island. Previous Governments have assisted the speculators to obtain large blocks of land, ten or even twenty thousand acres each. As a result of this, the European who acquires the land goes away, and takes the rent to some other place; then this land becomes like a spring of water flowing towards him—he derives benefit from a great distance. I think now that if this practice is continued we shall never receive any benefit from it. Companies have done the same thing—they have acquired large blocks of land—and that is why we have always objected to companies, who, if they acquired our lands, would leave us landless. I think, therefore, that we should avoid companies altogether, and negotiate with the Government: they are the most responsible power in New Zealand, and the guardians of great and small. Now that the late Government have gone out of office, a new Government has entered with the new year, and with a new policy. There has always been a Minister called a Native Minister, but the practice hitherto