

The meeting then adjourned for dinner, and on resuming,

*Aperaniko Taiawhao*, having given the usual salutations, said he had been a monitor of the Church since a lad. It was not the Government who had put a weapon in his hands to strike his relatives with; he did it himself to retain his independence. The Government was not the cause of the fight at Moutoa, nor was he the cause himself. He became a servant of the Government, being made a Magistrate, and afterwards he was made a captain, the Government having formed a Native contingent, and Kemp and he were in command for five years. When the sky was clear they returned to their homes, he returning to his duties as Magistrate and monitor. He did so for years, and Kemp went to Tongariro and stopped his Europeans, and in consequence of that he (*Aperaniko*) had had no duties to perform for five years. Kemp and his Council took all the duties. He told this to the Government, and hoped they would take it into their consideration.

*Major Kemp* followed by saying that all the subjects in which they were interested, and for which the Native Minister was invited, had been satisfactorily settled except one in which he was personally interested, and which he asked should be carried out, and that was the road from Ranana to Murimotu. The Government had already spent money in surveying it, and the Natives did work on the road. It was hardly more than a track, but had always been used by the Natives. At present it followed the range, but if it was passable for vehicles wool would be brought to Ranana instead of being taken to Napier. He asked the Minister to have the road made passable in order to benefit the district generally. It could be made use of in conveying railway material to the interior, because when it reached the plains it was level until the line was reached.

*Mr. Ballance* then rose and replied to the various speeches made. He said: I have listened with great attention to the speeches which have been made to-day, and I think I am fully informed upon the various subjects which have been brought before me. I must say that they have been presented with great clearness and moderation. There is nothing objectionable that has been said to-day by any of the chiefs that have spoken; I do not say that all can be granted, but of course there will be things said that will receive consideration and that perhaps will have to be refused. I believe, however, that on the main questions we are agreed. Major Kemp, I think, hardly understood my reference to the local Committees appointed by the owners of the land. I did not mean that these Committees should have power to dispose of their land in large blocks. Their duty would be to say when they wished their land sold, and, when they came to that conclusion, it would be for the Board on which the Natives would be represented to sell their lands in accordance with the laws of the colony. They would not have the power to sell the lands in large blocks to speculators, the law would prevent that. Their land would be sold in accordance with laws which would be fairly understood by the whole of the people: those laws would not differ in different districts, but the same law would apply over the whole colony. The danger therefore anticipated by Major Kemp need not be apprehended. I should like to say (enforcing what I said before as to the power of the people to regulate their own affairs under the laws of the colony) that, shortly before Tawhiao went to England, he and the leading chiefs of the Waikato signed a petition to the Government to prevent the sale of drink in the King country. That petition was immediately answered by the Government, and a Proclamation was issued in accordance with the petition prohibiting the sale of drink throughout the whole length and breadth of the King country. You will see, therefore, that the laws of the colony are sufficient in most instances if they are only applied and asked for. Where they are not sufficient, then, on ascertaining the wants of the people, the laws can be made sufficient. I would like to say one word with regard to the steamer. A short time ago a petition came from Father Soulas, of Jerusalem, asking for the establishment of a mail between Wanganui and Jerusalem and the intervening settlements. That request was granted, and the mail is now running between Wanganui and Jerusalem, delivering letters at all the various settlements as they go up and down. The mail, I think, now goes once a fortnight. If the steamers are put upon the river I have no doubt we shall be able to establish a weekly mail, and that will be a still greater convenience to the people living in the different settlements. Hakaria referred to the railway leaving Marton, and said that he desired that the railway should be commenced immediately. In answer to that, the survey is being pushed on with great energy, and we hope, in the course of two months or so, to be able to accept the first tenders, and about the same time we hope to receive tenders for the portion of the line commencing at Te Awamutu. I was pleased to hear the reference which was made by Peehi and Winiata to the road from Manganui-te-ao to the railway-line. I understood from both those chiefs that they were favourable not only to the railway but to the construction of a road from the railway to the Wanganui River; but they desired to consult their people before they came to any decision with regard to the road. That was a very reasonable request. Now, I wish to ask them to call their people together and discuss the matter, and send me down a letter giving me the result of the meeting. I hope they will not lose any time, as our desire is to hasten the construction of the railway in every possible and conceivable way. *Aperaniko* has referred to his services rendered to the colony in various capacities. I was very much pleased to hear him recounting his services in conjunction with Major Kemp. It has always given me great pleasure to hear old chiefs recounting the deeds they have done on behalf of the Government of the colony. *Aperaniko* asks that his services shall not be forgotten. I can only reply that they are not forgotten, and shall not be forgotten. Major Kemp has referred to the surveys of Native lands, and he thinks that the surveys should be done through the Committees. I think the proposal is a very good one, and that the Committees should be asked to advise with regard to land going through the Court. He also referred to townships established on the lines of railway, on Native lands, and of course I think that the Natives themselves should have a large voice in saying where townships should be upon land of their own, and I will bring that question before my colleague, the Minister for Public Works, who will have this question under his control. Now I will refer to the subject which Major Kemp has referred to, and one which is of great importance to this settlement, the question of the construction of a road from Ranana to Murimotu. I may say that I am very anxious for the making of that road, so that the produce of Murimotu may be