

we should proceed cautiously. We shall proceed cautiously, and I should like to confer with both Tawhiao and Major Te Wheoro as to the steps to be taken with regard to Kawhia in the future. I shall always be ready to consult with them as to what is best to be done. I do not know what they refer to particularly. If they refer to the survey—the trig.-stations—I should like to say a word upon that. The object of the survey is not to affect their lands; it is to enable the people to have their lands surveyed when they wish to do so, but not before. I will now say one word in regard to railways and roads. The railway has been authorized by Parliament through the centre of the Island, and must go on, that it may benefit the lands through which it proceeds. The only land that will be taken for it will be the land on which the railway will stand, and that will be paid for, unless, when the owners are determined, they may give it for the purpose of the railway. Europeans look upon railways as a great benefit to them, and they are an equal benefit to the Native people. They will give employment to the young, and they will increase fourfold or tenfold the value of their land. I hope you will therefore cordially assist us in carrying on these good works. Tawhiao saw, when he was in England, that railways intersected all parts of the country. Railways have made England great, and they will make this colony great also. No one suffers by them: all are benefited. Tawhiao asked that the management of his lands should be left to himself. I may say one word with regard to this question. It is the desire of the Government to leave the management of Native lands as much as possible in the hands of the Natives themselves. The owners of the lands are the best judges to decide what shall be done with them. Last session, by Act of Parliament, we took in four and a half million acres of land.

*Te Wheoro*: Tawhiao referred to Kawhia, and not to the land on each side of the railway.

*Mr. Ballance*: I understand, of course, that Tawhiao referred to Kawhia; but now I will speak generally with regard to the land for the Natives. It is the intention of the Government to allow the people themselves to manage their land by means of Committees. When the owners of a block of land are found out they will have the power of appointing a Committee among themselves to manage that land, and that land cannot be sold or leased without the consent of the Committee and the people. No private European will then be allowed to come in by a back-gate and get the land away from the people. What shall be done shall be done with the consent of the people themselves. When the people are prepared to lease, then the Government will assist by advancing the money for the surveys, and all they shall ask will be that the cost of the survey will be returned to them. But the law, although it is an important one, shall not be made without the Bill being circulated amongst the Native people. You will have an opportunity of expressing your opinion upon it. The invitation I gave to Te Wheoro I also extend, of course, to Tawhiao. I should be glad to see him in Wellington to confer with the Government during the session on this question. We shall treat him with the kindness and consideration due to a great chief of the people. Your leaders are those who are best able to protect you, and it is the desire of the Government that they should be taken into their confidence. I have now touched upon those subjects which have been referred to by Tawhiao and Te Wheoro. I had intended touching upon more, but I do not suppose that it is of importance to the people that I should go into a very long speech on this occasion. The most important part of my speech is, that we shall consult with the chiefs and the people before we pass laws affecting their interests. I have given you my word that that shall be done in future. I am very glad to meet you all here to-day, and I wish you much prosperity. You will always find me willing to assist you to the best of my ability in everything that affects your welfare. My ambition is that, after I have given up office, the people shall say that I have been a friend to the Native race.

*Tawhiao* said: What I wish with regard to the Acts that affect ourselves is that it may be left with me to make them, because I am the representative of the people. The Government also are the representative of the people. The Government is the cause of all the surveys, railways, and roads. I have heard about the railway. I agree to the railway going through, but it is to be left to me. I will manage it. I own this district. I am the head man here. I am the representative of the land. I truly say I agree to the railway-line going through. It can only go through on my agreement. [Mr. Wilkinson here explained to Mr. Ballance that what Tawhiao meant was that, though Wahanui and others had given their consent, it received his ratification.] I have come from England, where I held a conversation with the representatives of the Government. I wish you to understand my statement about the railway-line—that I want to be consulted about railways and roads. I am giving up every point, on condition I am so consulted. Why is self-government for the Maori race being withheld? Why is it not given to the Maori chiefs to manage things for their own good? Let them have it. Give the chiefs and the tribes a separate Government for themselves. Let them manage their own affairs. Give that to us to-day while the sun is shining.

*Mr. Ballance*: I would just say a few words with reference to what Tawhiao has said. I am pleased to hear him say that he agrees to the railway. It is desirable that we should have the hearty support and co-operation of the Native people in this great work, for I feel assured it will be attended with great benefit to you all. Tawhiao has referred to England, and has seen Lord Derby. The Advisers of the Queen have spoken to him on this question of government. Lord Derby would not speak one word against the Government of the colony. He recognizes as fully as any man in New Zealand that the Parliament and Government of this colony are supreme within the colony. Lord Derby never told him anything contrary to that. I do not say that others may not have said so, for their own selfish ends. We have evidence that Lord Derby and the other Advisers of the Queen never said anything but what was right and proper. Lord Derby knows that the Queen, through Her Government and the Parliament, acts in this colony just the same as she does at Home. The Queen is here as well as in England—that is, her power is here. It is exercised here in her name and by her authority. Tawhiao said he would like to be consulted about the question of railways, &c. I agree with him, and it is my desire to consult him on all questions which affect the welfare of his people, and I hope to see him next session in Wellington, to consult upon these questions. He will find that the Government will always be prepared to