

The Hon. Mr. BALLANCE met the MAORIS of the HAURAKI DISTRICT at Parawai, on the 11th February, 1885.

The Maoris welcomed the Minister by singing a *waiata*, and with the usual speeches.

*Mr. Ballance*, in responding to the welcome, said: I thank you for the welcome which you have given me to-day. I reciprocate the sentiment of the last speaker that the two races are one, and that they are brought to each other more and more every day in those things which make a united people. The question of language is nothing, and will be cured in time; as your young people are educated in the public schools of the colony they will grow up to speak the same language as the majority of the people of this colony. I was particularly pleased with the way in which I was received—in the singing of a hymn. I venture to think that no Minister of the Crown has ever been paid such a compliment before, for I am informed that the name of every member of the present Government was included in that hymn. It was a compliment intended on the part of the poet, and was well sustained by our friends the choir who sung the hymn on this occasion. I can assure you that that is a compliment that I am never likely to forget. One speaker has referred to the question of roads and to grievances. I will not go into matters of business to-day—those questions will be discussed to-morrow, when we have plenty of time; but I should just like to say this on the present occasion: that roads are necessary for the civilization of both the European and the Native, and I hope it will be made clear to your minds that it is not contrary to your best interests that roads should be made through the country. The particular grievances which have been referred to we will discuss on another occasion. I was particularly pleased to meet my old friend, Hoani Nahe, on the present occasion. We have sat in Parliament together. I will venture to say that no Native representative has ever been more faithful or more active in the discharge of his duties, and I regret exceedingly that he is no longer a member of the Legislature. This is the first occasion on which I have visited the Thames. I have often heard of the loyalty of the Native people of the Thames, and I am sure that the one or two occasions on which wrong has been done—on which lives have been lost—are exceptions to the general rule, and do not affect the loyalty of the people as a whole. I say, in reference to that subject, that there is no occasion for violence; that the laws of the colony are ample to redress all grievances, and I bring you this message: that, as far as I am concerned, I am willing to discuss all questions of difference between us with the view of arriving at a just solution of all grievances that may exist. I am glad to meet you all on the present occasion, and wish you all the happiness that may be in store for you. You must all have derived great advantages from the stores of wealth which have been produced from the soil in this part of the country. You must recognize that the advent of the Europeans in this part of the country has brought you all much wealth and much happiness. I am perfectly sure that nothing will arise in the future to disturb the contentment which at present prevails. Once again I thank you for the welcome which you have given me.

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NOTES of an INTERVIEW between the Hon. Mr. BALLANCE and the THAMES NATIVE COMMITTEE, 12th February, 1885.

*Mr. Ballance*: I have great pleasure in meeting the Native Committee of the Hauraki District. The Committee are charged with certain duties and some responsibility, and I recognize the great importance of the Committee in looking after the interests of the people. The Committee may do a great deal of good in curing abuses, remedying grievances, and seeing that no one is injured. I propose, with regard to the surveys, which is a very important thing, surveys of land intended to be passed through the Native Land Court, to have copies of all applications for surveys sent to the Chairman of the Native Committee, so that no case will be brought secretly before the Court without the Committee knowing. I would like the Chairman to represent to the Government the grievances of the people in his own district, and that matters affecting the people should be brought before the Committee, so that they might be transmitted to the Government through the Chairman. With regard to the hearing of civil cases, I propose that they should have jurisdiction up to a certain amount; but that agreement shall not be required before the case is brought before the Committee: that, if one Native sues another for a small debt, he shall be compelled to bring it before the Committee, and the Committee shall decide upon it. There is one objection, that is, it is sometimes difficult to get the whole of the Committee together. It might be desirable that the Chairman and two or three members of the Committee should be appointed to sit upon these cases. Of course there would be no objection to the whole of the Committee sitting, but that would be in cases where it would be inconvenient for the whole of them to come together. I would like the Committee to report also upon cases which are going before the Native Land Court. It is the intention of the Government next session to bring in a Bill to deal with Native Lands. We propose that, when the owners of a block of land have been found out by the Native Committee, that a Committee shall be appointed from those owners of, say, seven members, and that that Committee shall have the power of dealing with the land in the block where there are numerous owners, that is to say, if there are more than twenty owners. That Committee is different from this Committee. Then we shall have a Board appointed for a district, to sell or lease the land. We intend that the Board shall consist of three members, one European, to be appointed by the Governor, the Chairman of the District Committee, and one Native, to be nominated by the Governor. When the local Committee shall wish to sell or lease a portion of their block, they will apply to the Board; and then the Committee would arrange with the Board for the cost of surveys and for roads; and then the Board would proceed to dispose of the land in accordance with the wishes of the Committee. If the majority of the owners of the block objected to the action of the Committee they might, by petition, stop the action of the Committee, and the Committee would have no power to proceed any further. This will give the people power to deal with their own lands, the Government acting as mediator and assisting the Natives, but giving the people them-