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JENSON'S TRAVELS.

LETTER NO. XXXL.

Wednesday, November 20, 1895. Accompanied by Sister Jane Mortensen, who was a fellow passenger with us from Wairoa, Elder William Gardner and I visited her brother Samuel Mortensen who lives across the river in a little town called West Spit. He is the only member of the Church left of a small branch which Elder John P. Sorenson of Salt Lake City raised up in Napier and vicinity in 1880. The branch was organized October 17, 1880 with seven members, and Samuel Hansen as president.

After our morning visit, we took passage in a buss for the Napier railway station two miles distant, where we met Elder Wilford P. Nebeker the presiding Elder in the Hawkes Bay district. We also took a walk through the little city of Napier, which contains about 8,000 inhabitants and has quite a romantic situation on the sea coast. The business part of the town, which has somewhat regular streets, nestles at the foot of a hill that rises almost perpendicular from the sea to a height of over 300 feet. Some of the finer residences are built on the top and slopes of this remarkable hill which is separated from the main land by a swanipy and low country, and the ground on which Napier stands was evidently once a separate island. The people of Napier and vicinity are at present busily engaged in building a Breakwater far out into the ocean commencing at the foot of the hill or bluff just mentioned. Millions of dollars have already been spent, partly to no purpose, as the mighty ocean waves undermine the huge masonry and caused the walls to tumble over into the deep water, but the workmen are now blasting huge rocks from the lull-side which they are moving out on rails and casting into the ocean as an outside protection for the Creekwater proper which is built of huge concrete blocks, each of which weighs about thirty tons.

At 1:30 p. m. Elders Gardner, Nebeker and myself boarded the railway train and traveled twenty-five miles through a beautiful and apparently fertile country to Te Hauke a native village situated in a romantic little valley with a lake in its center abounding with eels of all sizes. Here we received the usual hearty welcome from the native Saints, as there is quite a branch of the Church at this place. Here we also met Elders Thomas J. O'Brien and David Lindsey who together with Elder Nebeker form the missionary strength from Zion in the Hawkes Bay district. The natives at Te Hauke live in comfortable lumber houses, and the Elders whose head-

quarters are here, occupy a neat little room in one of the largest dwellings. The place has also a fine meeting house which is nicely furnished with a stand and seats.

Thursday, November 21. This was letter writing day for the Elders at Te Hauke. The American mail was to leave in a day or two and we all had something to say by the means of the pen to wives, children, fathers, mothers, relatives and friends in the land of the Saints, or in "Zion, dear Zion far o'er the sea." In the evening we attended and spoke in a native prayer and testimony meeting.

Friday, November 22. I worked all day with the district record, assisted by Elder Thomas J. O'Brien. A number of native saints from several of the branches in the district arrived in the evening to attend the conference which had been appointed for the two following days.

Saturday, November 23. After prayer and breakfast I took a morning walk alone upon the green grass-covered hills lying immediately back of Te Hauke. The view was grand and beautiful. The peaceful village, the romantic lake the thousands of sheep grazing upon the hills slopes, the waving grain the cosy groves of fruit trees, weeping willows and shrubbery and the finely graded roads winding through the valley all combined to make a picture at once grand and enchanting and not soon to be forgotten. At 10 o'clock a. m. we commenced our first meeting at which I occupied a portion of the time, Elder Hoagland acting as translator for me. We held another interesting meeting in the afternoon, when Elder Gardner preached to the people. These two meetings were held in the meeting house; in the evening another meeting was held at the large lodging house where most of the visiting natives slept at night.

Sunday, November 24. Our conference was continued, and two interesting meetings were held. Elder Gardner, Andrew Jenson, and a number of the native brethren and sisters spoke. Two were baptized during the day; We also administered to a number of sick persons.

Among the conference visitors was Hohepa Otene Meihana, of Taonoke, who was the first Maori baptized in this part of the country. Most of the people in his village followed his example, and for several years the Tanoke branch, over which he presided, was one of the best and liveliest Maori branches in New Zealand; but he finally quarreled with the Elders, from Zion which led to his excommunication from the Church in 1892, since which the Taonoke branch has gone down, until it has almost ceased to exist. This circumstance

serves as a good illustration of what the influence of a Maori chief means. The Maori people are great sticklers for the rights of their rangatira's or chiefs. Whatever an influential chief does is generally endorsed by his people. Hence if a great chief embraces the Gospel, numbers of his people will generally follow; and on the other hand, as in the case of Hohepa Otene Meihana, if a chief is severed from the Church, it often means the dissolution of a whole branch, or the turning away of most of the people in his village. The probability is that this particular chief will soon return to the Church which undoubtedly would mean the resurrection of the Taonoke branch.

The Hawkes Bay Latter-day Saint missionary district includes that part of the North Island of New Zealand which lies adjacent to Napier. Its coast line commences at Waikare or on the south line of the Mahia district and extends as far south as Cape Turnagain. Inland it extends to and includes Woodville in the heart of the country. The district contains 286 baptized members of the Church or 398 souls including children under eight years of age. It consists of eight branches of the Church, namely, Taonoke, Korongata, Tikokino, Te Hauke, Takapau, Pakipaki, Tamaki and Waimarama.

The Taonoke branch comprises the Saints residing in the native village of that name situated about two miles northeast of Hastings, and ten miles southwest of Napier. The branch has an interesting history, as this is the place where the good work was commenced among the Maoris in the Hawkes Bay country. Hohepa Otene Meihana was the first one baptized here. His baptism took place April 27th 1884, Elder Alma Greenwood, one of the first Elders who introduced the Gospel in its fulness to the Maoris, officiating. Before the middle of August following, over seventy Maoris had joined the Church in Taonoke and neighboring villages. On June 29th 1884, two branches of the Church were organized in that locality with Hohepa Otene Meihana as president of one of them, which was originally known by the name of Pakohai, but was soon changed to Taonoke. The first general conference of the Australasian mission in which the Maoris took a prominent part, was held at Taonoke in January 1885.

The Korongata branch consists of the Saints residing in the native village of that name situated on a small stream about five miles southwest of Hastings, and about twelve miles northeast of Te Hauke. The branch was organized June 29th 1884, on the same day that the Taonoke branch came into existence. Korongata is still one of the best