

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper

CONFERENCE IN NEW ZEALAND.

TAMAKI, New Zealand,

April 12, 1895.

With pleasure I embrace this opportunity of writing a few lines hoping that they may be of interest to the many readers of the News.

The Saints and Elders in this mission had looked forward with pleasurable anticipations to the time when the annual conference for the northern end of the mission would be held at Kawa Kawa. It came, many Saints met, it has passed and its influence has been felt for good. It was to be followed by other conferences in the south, and to these the Saints now also looked forward with much anxiety. The first of these was to be held at Te Muriwai, in the Turanga Muri district. On the 5th of March, Elders Palmer and Johnson sailed from Auckland, on board the steamship Monowai, for Gisborne and Napier. It was an imposing and interesting scene as the stately vessel moved slowly away from the wharf, amid the waving of handkerchiefs and cheering farewells of the vast concourse of people on shore. The huge boat was soon in mid-ocean and was gliding smoothly over the briny deep at the rate of fifteen knots an hour. In less than twenty-four hours we reached Gisborne, having sailed more than 300 miles. Here we were met by Elders Fisher and Teeples, who kindly conducted us to the Maori Pah Kaiki. There we met many of the good Saints amongst whom Brother Palmer had formerly labored. The customary hongi was freely and affectionately indulged in, and tears of joy flowed freely.

Kaiki is a Maori village located about one and a half miles from the city of Gisborne. Here we announced a European service, rented a hall and invited the people. The evening upon which the meeting was to be held, President Gardner arrived from Auckland. At 7:30 p.m. a company of Elders went to fill the appointment. Immediately before that hour, a false alarm of "fire" was given, and all the people on the street rushed to the scene. Thus all were attracted and as a result but one man came to our meeting. No services were held. Whether this scheme had been prearranged we do not know.

The time for the Te Muriwai conference was now near at hand. Accordingly we rode on horseback a distance of twenty miles to the place of meeting. On the evening of our arrival there we held a meeting with some outside natives. They allowed us to use their church and nearly all of them came to hear us. After the usual opening exercises Elder Gardner addressed an attentive congregation for an hour and a half on the principles of the Gospel. His testimony was accompanied by the Spirit of God, and he testified by his power that the Gospel had been restored in latter days, and that Joseph Smith was called of God to set up His kingdom.

On the following morning, March 16th, the conference began. But few

Saints had yet arrived, consequently the first meeting was but slowly attended. But the promise made in Matthew 18:20 was fully realized, for though there were but few present the Spirit of God filled the room, and the servants of God spoke under its influence to the edification and encouragement of all present. The Saints from all parts of the district kept coming during the whole day, until there was a splendid representation from each branch. In each of the succeeding meetings the Spirit of God burned in the bosom of those present, and the testimonies borne by Saints and Elders were convincing, being dictated by the Spirit of Jehovah. The Sacrament meeting on Sunday afternoon was especially spirited. The Lord's Supper was administered to all the Saints, each one partaking, thus indicating that the spirit of brotherly and sisterly love existed in their midst. Elder Gardner gave some valuable instructions which we trust the Saints will all remember and put into practice.

After the meeting there were two candidates for baptism. These were accompanied to the water's edge, and Elder O. H. Embley officiated. They were confirmed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and received the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Thus two more were brought into the fold of Christ, and we felt to thank God for this manifestation of His approval.

In the evening we all met in capacity of testimony meeting, which lasted until nearly midnight. Many earnest and faithful testimonies were borne by our dusky brethren and sisters, each testifying to the goodness of God and the truthfulness of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Thus ended another successful Maori conference, and we trust that the teachings given there may be productive of much good.

There were present from Zion, President Gardner, Elders Palmer, Fisher, Embley, Jorgensen, Scott, Teeples and Johnson. On the following day these brethren and the Saints separated, the former starting on their way to Te Mahia while the latter went to their several homes.

The conference at Nuhaka was to commence on March 23rd, and after three days' ride on horseback we reached that place. More than 150 natives had met to attend the conference. Extensive preparations had been made and a spirit of unity prevailed throughout. The first meeting commenced a 10 o'clock a.m., Elder Hoagland, presiding. The spacious Maori church was filled to overflowing and yet some were on the outside who could not gain admittance. The Spirit of God was poured out upon us in rich abundance. Both speakers and hearers were filled with that same Spirit and all present rejoiced in the blessings of the Gospel. The principles of eternal life, as revealed in the latter days, were plainly portrayed from scripture, and the testimonies of the Elders seemed to force conviction on the minds of those who listened. Eight services, including one Priesthood

meeting and one testimony meeting, were held during the conference. In each the Spirit of God reigned supreme, and all felt that it had been good to meet together. The Saints had been encouraged and strengthened and we trust that when they return to their homes they may be better able to live the lives of Saints and be more diligent in keeping the commandments of God.

The Te Mahia district in which the conference was held is the largest in the mission, there being about 550 members. As a rule they are faithful and many additions are constantly being made.

After the regular conference was ended a general Priesthood meeting was held, in which President Gardner instructed the brethren in their offices and callings, giving them such teachings as would tend to give them a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities which rested upon them. They had received authority to administer in the various ordinances of the Gospel. It was the duty of every officer to set such an example before his brethren and sisters as they would do well to pattern after. All evils indulged in should be abandoned that he could go before God and feel justified in asking Him for His approval and assistance in performing any sacred ordinance. The instructions were of such a character as to awaken in all a firmer realization of their duties and the sacredness of the charge entrusted to them. Elder Palmer also addressed the Priesthood for a short time, exhorting all to diligence in the performance of every duty.

Thus ended another conference. We feel safe in saying that much good will result from this gathering of the Saints. Two baptisms were also performed at this conference and two children were blessed.

On Monday morning, March 25th, Elders and Saints again separated. Elders Hoagland and Johnson rode to Wairoa, a distance of twenty miles, to make an appointment for a European meeting. The remaining Elders came on the following day. There being so many of us together it was decided that President Gardner and Elder Palmer should go to Whakapau to hold a meeting if possible with the outside natives of that village (village.) The chief received them kindly and entertained them over night, but wanted nothing of the Gospel.

According to announcement we held European meeting at Wairoa. Notwithstanding it was the same night on which all the other churches in town held services, we had a splendid turnout of interested and attentive hearers. After the customary opening exercises, Elder Johnson was called upon to address the congregation. He spoke upon the subjects of "Apostasy" and "Restoration." The deepest interest was manifested and after the close of the meeting a number came forward and asked questions. The various ministers instructed their converts to go home immediately after their own services and not linger about the hall in which the "Mormons" were convened. They failed, however, in keeping all away. Judging from the spirit manifested in that meeting it would seem that the seeds sown there have