IN THE ANTIPODES.

Annual Conference of the Australasian Conference.

HELD IN WAIHARA, NEW ZEALAND.

A Very Interesting Session.—Remarks of the Elders.—Gratifying Growth of the Mission.

Special Deseret News

The annual conference of the Australasian mission was held on April 6th, 7th and 8th, 1894, at WAIHARA, New Zealand. The following named women from Zion were present, viz., President William Gardner, Elizabeth Jane Gibson, William Douglas, L. C. Sorensen, R. Goddard, James C. Fisher, C. R. Bartlett, W. F. Nelson, Joseph C. Jorgensen, M. C. Nelson, L. G. Hoagland, R. H. Hollingsworth, Elder Reed, George Rowles, James Barrow, H. E. Scott, J. Johnson, C. H. Embley, T. J. O'Brien, J. C. Allen, L. Bradford, R. L. Bird, D. H. Parkes and H. C. Jez. Reuben C. Neely, president of the Auckland branch, was present.

Conference was called to order by the president of the mission at 10 a.m., and opened with singing hymn 104; prayer by Elder William Douglas, and hymn 99.

President Gardner greeted the Saints and Elders who had assembled from various parts of the mission to worship God. He rejoiced to be present at this conference and felt the responsibilities of such a position. He spoke upon his early experiences in New Zealand, when meeting in Waikato some years ago, and the strange feeling that came upon him when he was pleased to see the spirit of love and union manifested at the opening of conference, and earnestly exhorted the Saints to live righteous and upright lives that they might receive the blessings promised to them.

Elder L. C. Sorensen, president of the Taranaki conference, after giving a brief report of the district, continued the counsel given by Elder Gardner. He testified that, after many years of slander, misrepresentation and persecution, the law had turned in favor of the Latter-day saints. The work of God is extending and the power of the adversary has been weakened. He testified that the fulfillment of prophecy in the establishment of the Church of God in the latter days. Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was clearly explained, and its literal fulfillment was found in the rise and fall of kingdoms, until God established His Church by direct revelation through Joseph Smith the Prophet.

Elder William Douglas reported the condition of Te Matai conference, in which were seven branches of the Church, most of which were in excellent working order. Energetic efforts had been made in teaching the Gospel unto the outsiders, many of whom were very friendly. Bible classes would not listen to the saving message. The prevalent evils among the Maori people were commented upon, and the Saints were earnestly urged to forsake all evil and live exemplary lives.

Hohepa Wenaga, a native Elder and influential chief, bore his testimony to the Gospel and the faithful labors of the Elders of Israel among his people.

The first meeting of conference closed by singing hymn 100; prayer by Elder L. G. Hoagland.

The afternoon meeting commenced at 2 p.m. The congregation joined in singing hymn 89; prayer by Elder Te Keya, of Moerewa; hymn 103.

Elder Wesley Gibson, president of Hawera district conference, spoke of the condition of the Saints, believed that many of the weak branches had been strengthened and that the members were increasing in kindness one to another. He commented at some length on Paul's counsel to the Hebrews (Heb. vi. 1, 2), showing that the same principles were now being taught to all the world by the servants of God. Labouring Saints believed and accepted these doctrines, and must actually observe their covenants in order to be saved in the celestial kingdom of our Father. He earnestly pleaded with the Maori members to observe the words of the Apostle Peter (II Peter i. 5, 6, 7), that brotherly kindness, virtue, knowledge, and Christian charity may characterize their daily lives.

Elder L. G. Hoagland expressed his joy in listening unto the words of the servants of God, and testified that the church at Jesus Christ, established in the latter days, was the true Church of God. The conference of Wairarapa, over which he presides, was stated to be in a favorable condition, though the churches had been disturbed through many of the members attending this third party of the conference. He gave a good explanation of the parable of the ten talents, and closed his remarks by urging the Saints to be alive to every duty.

Elder R. H. Hollingsworth expressed his gratitude in being privileged to labor amongst the Maori people, who were of the seed of Abraham. His life for them was given on account of their kindness to the Elders from Zion. He represented the Napier or Wairoa conference, where he observed that the Saints were improving in knowledge each month, and the Elders were constantly opening new districts. There are seven branches under his jurisdiction. He earnestly desired that the spirit of God may be poured out upon all His Saints and fortified to the saving power of the Gospel of Christ.

The Elder's report of Hawera District, a native Elder Hoani Taiaroa, of Napier, the meeting was dismissed with singing hymn 117. Prayer by Elder Fisher.

An evening meeting was held, commencing at 7 o'clock, which was opened with singing, "O My Father," in Zion's new and favorite tune; prayer by Elder Te Wiimarai; hymn 55.

Elder Jos. Jorgensen, after giving a favorable report of the Saints residing in the Wairoa conference, spoke upon the duties of the members and the necessity of observing the counsel given by the Elders of Israel. He testified to his joy always experienced in meeting in the annual conference.

Elder C. R. Bartlett addressed the conference and rejoiced in the Day of Jubilee thereof, over which he presides. He spoke encouragingly of the Saints living in that part of the vineyard, where eleven branches of the Church were organized. He bore a faithful testimony to the divine mission of Joseph Smith, who had received revelations from heaven to these days for the guidance of God's people. The precious truths of the Gospel were commented upon, and the Saints were counselled to meet the requirements of Salah, that they might receive eternal life in the presence of God.

Ngewaka Poipoi, a native Elder from Te Matai (and Maori orator), was listened to with breathless interest, as he literally reviewed the history of Lehi and his sons, showing how the Nephite (Israelite) the red man through the disobedience of their ancestors. This native Demosthenes most elegantly portrayed the Gospel plan of salvation, and with appropriate gestures, he forcibly commended those having principles and urged all his people to render obedience to the laws of God.

Elder James Barrow, Ataparia Neha and Wiki Hawkowa also addressed the meeting, which was brought to a close by singing the hymn on page 105, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Prayer by Neha Te Ko.

The second day's conference was opened at 10 a.m., on Saturday, April 7th, by singing hymn 22; prayer by Elder Hawkowa; hymn 24.

Elder James H. Weber, president of the Poverty Bay district, stated that the four branches in his conference were doing well, and the covenants of the same were alive to their duties. He gave suitable counsel to the numerous assembled in conference, and the united testimonies were strong in magnifying their calling.

Elder George Rowles felt well paid for his long and laborious journey on notebook to the conference, but exceedingly thankful for all the blessings received by the children of God. He dwelt upon Paul's declaration, "One faith, one Lord, one baptism," contrasting it with the teachings of modern Christianity. He spoke upon the necessity of repenting in all the straight gate and walking in the narrow way leadeth to life.

Elder John Johnson was the only representative from the South Island, but he stated that the members there were united in the spirit of the Gospel. The Saints were not absent from the conference through indifference, but the great distance rendered it impossible for them to attend. A spirit of earnest inquiry was now manifested amongst the Lutherans in the Waimate district and every opportunity is taken to provoke into them the Gospel message. He urged all to seek for the Spirit of God to lead into all truth, stating that it was necessary to live pure and righteous lives to retain our Spirit with us.

Haughton and Hirapana, two native Elders, then addressed the church, after which the congregation sang hymn 130; prayer by Hanui Kawea.

The afternoon meeting commenced promptly at the usual hour, with singing hymn 113; prayer by Taurara Wehikuri; hymn 53.

Elder R. C. Nielson greeted the Saints in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and testified that God had a large number of members in conference, he was reminded of the organization of the Church, sixty-four years ago, with six members. He showed the marvelous growth of the Church, and how Elders had been called to all parts of the world to proclaim the truth. These servants of God went in all humility to all the nations of the earth to call them unto repentance. He rejoiced greatly at the progress of the good work amongst the Maories.

Elder Charles Hardy, president of the Auckland branch, testified to the good spirit often manifested amongst the European Saints in Auckland in years past, and regretted that they were deprived of the special labors of the Elders. The Maories have been greatly blessed with the administrations of these servants of God, and he exhorted the members to faithfulness, lest the Elders be taken from them and sent to a people more worthy.

Elders Nielson, Embly, Wirepu Tuatua and Hatenga Waitaiwhatanui spoke encouragingly to the Saints.

Meeting closed with hymn 73; prayer by Ngamiu Maora.

A Priesthood meeting was held at 7 o'clock, where suitable instructions were given by President Gardner. About seventy members holding the priesthood were present, and much time was spent in answering questions and explaining the duties of the members.

Simultaneously with the above, a sister's testimonial meeting was held in an adjoining "whare," or Maori house, presided over by Elder N. Nielson. Twenty-seven members bore their testimonies.

The third day's conference meetings were commenced at 10 a.m. on Sunday, April 8th. We were opened by singing hymn 115.

Elder R. Goddard, President of Manawatu conference, reported the labors of the Elders in that district. Four branches and three Sunday schools were in good working order, and most of the members diligently performed their duties. He complimented the Saints for their great faith in the ordinance for the healing of the sick; referred also to his labors amongst the Europeans, and his visit to the South Island. He warned the people against the evils of horse-racing, scoffery, whoremongery, drunkenness, etc., referring to the teachings of the Apostles on these and kindred subjects.

Elders Bird, Bird, O'Brien, Bradford and Jez also spoke briefly and bore their testimonies.

Meeting closed with singing hymn 63; prayer by Elder Parkes.

The sacrament meeting was held at 2 p.m., and a very large number of Saints were present. The opening hymn (60) was sung by the congregation; prayer by Te Kauia Hohaia; hymn 125.

The Lord's Supper was administered by Elders Gibson and Douglas.

Elder H. Holden, the mission clerk, read the annual statistical report for the year ending Dec. 31, 1893, which showed a total membership of 1,708, including 341 children. These were organized into seventy-three branches. The number of baptisms during the year were 135, children blessed 105. The mission was subdivided into fifteen districts, in which thirty-three Elders from Zion are laboring.

The general and local authorities of the Church were duly sustained by the conference. Seven native Elders were also called to assist the Elders in their labors amongst outsiders.

Elders Gibson, Douglas and Rasmussen were released from their labors in the districts over which they presided, but in view of their knowledge of the Maori language, and their great ability to preach to the Maoris, it was deemed advisable to retain their services two months longer for speech labor amongst the native tribes who have not yet been visited.

President Gardner closed the conference with an earnest address to the members. He referred especially to the Book of Mormon and Ready Reckoner, both of which are translated into the Maori, and in circulation amongst the people. He made words of encouragement to the Saints, and exhorted all present to greater diligence.

Meeting was dismissed by singing hymn 29; prayer by Hori Te Pouka.

A business meeting was held in the evening, but a most enjoyable time was spent listening to the united testimonies of forty minutes. Elders Smith, Allen and Parkes also addressed the meeting.

Thus closed another essential conference in Maoriland, and the Saints and Elders all retired to bring praises to Jehovah for such a week of his things. The South of God was abundantly poured out and a continued song of praise gladdened every heart.

R. GODDARD,
Clerk of the Australasian Mission.

WAIHAKA, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, April 14, 1894.

NOTES ON THE "HOT TAP."

WAIWERA, a small Maori village in the Te Matai district, presented a lively appearance during the time of the annual conference of the Australasian Mission.

The second day's conference was opened at 10 a.m.