

hour upon the restoration of the Gospel and the first principles thereof. After the close of our services they said not a word upon religion, nor did they offer any comment upon the sermon they had heard, but after conversing upon other subjects for a short time they showed us to the 'whare', on which we had to sleep, and bade us "good night."

After breakfast the following morning we separated from Brother Johnson and started upon our return trip. It was decided to go by way of the coast and endeavor to preach to the people at the different villages along the way, instead of traveling by the way we had come. The first night brought us to a camp situated on the banks of a river, near where it empties into the ocean, and where the people had gathered from the surrounding country to catch and dry their winter supply of fish. We were received with loud cries of welcome, and immediately invited to remain the night. They knew we were "Mormons," and requested us to hold services before supper. In an address of an hour's duration President Bingham explained our faith and expounded the principles of our religion. Although the people listened attentively to all that was said and seemed to be well satisfied with what they had heard, they showed no disposition to investigate.

During the next two days' journey we were unable to find any one desirous of hearing us, and instead of resting and preaching on the Sabbath, as we had hoped to do, we were compelled, through having no place to stop at, to travel over the roughest piece of road on the whole journey. We crossed one river ninety-one times during the day. At night, however, we obtained another chance of explaining to a good-sized audience why we are here and what we have come for. We got back again to our district the following Tuesday, and after attending the dedicatory exercises of the new meeting house recently built by the Saints of Waipatu, and which is a great credit to the people, we traveled on to the other end of our field of labor to attend the semi-annual conference of the district, which was held at Tolaga on the 22nd and 23rd of March. The Saints take great interest in their conferences, and this one was no exception to the general rule. Not only were our meetings interesting, instructive and enjoyable, but great preparations had been made to ensure its success in other respects. A dining room eighteen feet wide by eighty long had been erected a short distance from our place of meeting. The building did not have a very inviting appearance from the outside, being constructed of willows and rushes; but upon entering it one was filled with admiration at the exquisite taste displayed by those in charge. The ground was laid with a thick layer of ferns, and these were covered over with native mats, thus making the tread as soft and noiseless as though walking upon a Brussels carpet. The frame-work of the roof, consisting of willows woven in an oval shape, was covered with light canvas, thereby affording plenty of light and air. A table accommodating seventy persons ran along the entire length of the

room and upon its snow-white spread a sufficient quantity of dishes had been placed in neat order. The food consisted of almost everything to be had in these parts, and was greatly enjoyed by all present. Although we had heard it whispered that the Sunday dinner would be something above the ordinary, we were hardly prepared for the surprise that we received upon seating ourselves at the table. Not only were the floral decorations much finer than before, but we were presented with a menu equal to that of a first class hotel at Christmas. All the whites of the town had been invited to dine, and every one pronounced it the finest dinner ever served in the bay.

The conference was admitted by our president to be the best district conference he had ever attended upon the island. The following week conference was held in the Poverty Bay district and passed off satisfactorily. After this we proceeded on to Nuhaka, the place appointed for the general or yearly conference. There were upwards of a hundred natives in our company besides the Elders, and as we rode up the narrow lane leading to the village we were met by an old man carrying a long pole which he held in front of us, causing us to halt. As he walked slowly into camp with us following the forty odd natives who had been drawn up in rows before the gate of the yard surrounding the meeting house, they performed the "haka" (a song and dance of welcome) and we were received in true native style. We were here met and cared for by Brother and Sister O. C. Dunford. The former is the President of the district, and the latter the principal of our native school at this place. The following day the Elders and Saints arrived from the south, and although the majority of the Elders were strangers to those of us who had previously arrived, we were soon made acquainted and were indeed a happy company.

The conference convened Saturday morning at 10 a. m. with the following Elders on the stand: President J. S. Bingham, Jos. S. Dame, J. N. Heywood, J. P. Beck, O. D. Romney, John H. Burton, Joseph S. Groesbeck, O. C. Dunford, P. P. Thomas, O. Andrus, C. W. Taylor, E. Atkins, John S. Groesbeck, J. G. Kelson, R. G. Meikle, Joseph Roskelly. President Bingham opened with a short address explaining the object of the gathering.

The following districts were then represented by the respective Presidents. Waikarapa, J. N. Heywood; Manawatu, Joseph S. Groesbeck; Heretaonga, J. P. Beck; Mahia, O. C. Dunford; and Poverty Bay, J. S. Dame. These reports occupied the morning session and showed the Saints to be in a good condition generally. In the afternoon session the Waikau district was reported by O. D. Romney. Elder Burton then addressed the congregation upon the duties of those who had embraced the Gospel. One of the natives followed with a spirited address. The remainder of the time was occupied by Elders J. G. Kelson and John S. Groesbeck, each of whom bore a strong testimony to the truth of the work. Their speeches were interpreted by J. P. Beck. In the evening there was a Priesthood meeting in one building and the females and those not

bearing the Priesthood met in another. In the women's meeting fifty-one of those present bore their testimony to the truth of the Gospel. While these meetings were in progress the three new Elders who had arrived in Auckland the previous week reached us. After resting in Auckland a few days they took steamer for Gisborne, where they landed Thursday and then came on here in company with the Elder who had remained behind to meet them.

The following morning, as we assembled for prayers, the fresh arrivals had the pleasure of pressing their noses against the velvety 'hus' of several hundred natives who were all anxious to "hongi" with the 'kaumatua houe' (new Elders). This being the first Sunday in the month, as is the custom here it was observed by all the Saints as fast day. The entire time during the morning meeting was occupied by Elder Heywood, who after dwelling at some length upon the emblems of the Lord's Supper, which had just been administered, spoke upon the restoration of the Gospel.

Te Whatahara, an educated and intelligent native chief, was the main speaker in the afternoon. His remarks were appropriate and interesting, and were listened to with rapt attention by all present. Elders Rasmussen and Roskelly followed with short addresses. J. P. Beck again acting as interpreter. The speakers of the evening were Elders Groesbeck, Douglass, Gibson, Meikle and two of the natives, all of whom strongly exhorted the Saints to faithfulness.

At the first meeting of the third day the mission report for the six months ending January 31, 1891, was read, showing a total membership of 3411, 318 of whom are Europeans. The baptisms performed during the same period numbered eighty-six. A great interest is taken in the Sabbath schools, there being fifty in good running order in the land, with a total membership of 1448. The remainder of the time after the reading of the report was occupied by Elders Beck and Romney. At the close of this meeting the Elders were requested by President Bingham to assemble in their private apartments, and receive their appointments, as follows:

Waikarapa district, O. D. Romney and Joseph Roskelly; Manawatu, Jos. S. Groesbeck and P. P. Thomas; Tauranga, L. J. Hawks and J. H. Thorpe; Hauraki, Ephraim Johnson and Hans Madson; Poverty Bay, Oscar Andrus and L. C. Rasmussen; Waikato, H. D. Haight and T. C. Stanford; Hawk's Bay, J. H. Burton, J. G. Kelson and William Douglass; Waipatu, C. W. Taylor, R. G. Meikle and Wesley Gibson; Whangarei, M. Bennion and George Hales; Mahia, O. C. Dunford and wife, E. Atkins and J. M. Hixon; Bay of Isles, J. P. Beck, J. M. Hendry and John S. Groesbeck; Australia, H. S. Cutler, L. D. Young, Wm. Bromley and Heory Dalling. Elders J. S. Dame, J. N. Heywood, T. C. Young and J. S. Nye were released to return home.

Elder Dame and President Bingham occupied the remainder of the session.

The closing meeting in the evening was given over to the Saints for the bearing of testimonies, and thirty persons took advantage of the opportunity.