

MISCELLANEOUS.

WAIKATO DISTRICT, NEW ZEALAND,
CONFERENCE

PUTATAKA, Waikato,

New Zealand, March 4, 1895.

Putataka or Port Waikato is a picturesque little village, situated at the mouth of the beautiful Waikato river. The village is elevated and overlooking the river, a good view of which can be obtained by looking eastward, the forest-covered mountains looming up in the distance. Across the river on the north side, the great sand hills, a characteristic of the New Zealand western shore, greet the eye.

Putataka is also of historic interest. Here the learned Maori school, Archdeacon Maunsell, had a Maori school and church for years. The old residence is still standing, though in a very dilapidated condition. Here also are the barracks where British troops were quartered for some time, it being the base of supplies during the great Waikato war. This was also the shipping point for the whole district until the completion of the railroad from Auckland to Mercer and Huntly.

Putataka has a pleasant and home-like appearance, and was the place selected by the Saints for the Waikato district conference. Arriving there on the evening of February 28th, we found ample preparation being made for the accommodation of the Elders and visiting Saints, who were very nicely provided for by the Saints of the Huriwai branch.

Saturday, March 2nd, conference was called to order by Elder E. J. Palmer. There were present, Elders W. Gardner, president of the Australasian mission; E. J. Palmer president of, and J. K. Nelson and P. A. Waters, traveling Elders in the Waikato district, C. B. Bartlett from the Bay of Islands district; J. H. W. Goff from the Whangarei district; J. M. Folkman from the Hauraki district, besides many of the branch presidents with their counselors and other officers and Saints.

After the opening exercises, Elder Palmer addressed the congregation, referring briefly to the restoration of the Gospel, and the great blessings we enjoy by being privileged to live in this day, which prophets and righteous men desired to see, and bore a strong testimony that this is the Gospel of Christ. Paora Hopere reported the Ngaruawahia branch in good condition, and spoke of the inconsistency of those who seek for signs. Elder C. B. Bartlett then spoke upon divine authority.

In the afternoon, Pomare Matekino reported the Weraroa branch as being in fair condition, and bore his testimony to the truth of the Gospel. Elder J. M. Folkman spoke on the fall of man, and of the atonement of Christ. Te Awa Pouri reported the Puke Tapu branch; said he had been a member of the Church many years, and his faith had been strengthened year by year.

Sunday, March 3rd—In the forenoon Elder J. H. W. Goff was the first speaker. He showed why the Saints are a peculiar people, and referred to the obligations the Elders are under to preach the Gospel. Wi Hoete reported the Huriwai branch as being in good condition;

compared the organization of this Church with that of former days. Elder J. K. Nelson spoke of the necessity of living up to the requirements of the Gospel. Elder P. A. Waters bore testimony to the truth of the Gospel we have embraced. Anatipa reported the Karakiriki branch as having some who are firm in the faith. Brother William Marshall reported the Whangapa branch as being in good condition, and the Saints doing their duty. Pouaka Paki bore his testimony to the truth of what had been said.

In the afternoon Elder William Gardner referred to his travels among the people and the progress of the work of the Lord in this land; said many were being added continually to the Church to fill the places of those who fall away; urged all to lay aside their vices which destroyed body and soul, have faith in the ordinance for the healing of the sick by the power of God, and not place their confidence in "ohunga maori" (sorcerers). He closed by imploring the blessings of God upon all connected with this conference. Karena Kerei spoke a short time referring to his youthful teachings, of his embracing the Gospel, and said his one desire was to remain faithful to its teachings.

A testimony meeting was held Sunday evening, at which eight of the native Saints spoke, bearing testimony to the truth of the Gospel. The Saints gave Elder Gardner and Palmer an affectionate farewell, the latter being released from his labors in Waikato and will soon return to Zion. This was answered by a few words of advice and counsel all tending to strengthen the Saints in their faith.

A good spirit prevailed during the conference, giving evidence that the Saints were feeling well and living up to their duties.

This morning Elders Gardner and E. J. Palmer left here for the south, via Auckland, to attend the April conference, to be held at Famaei. Others of the Elders who intend going there will start from here tomorrow.

Ever praying for the welfare of the Saints in Zion, I remain your brother in the Gospel,

P. A. WATERS.

Mission address:
Ngaruawakia, Waikato,
New Zealand.

ONCE A LITTLE KINGDOM.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Jan. 21.—A bill has been introduced in the State Legislature to dissolve the organization of Manitou county. It is alleged that the population is not sufficient to maintain a separate county organization, and that better and more satisfactory results will be gained if the territory is annexed to Leelenaw and Charlevoix counties. Whether or not the proposed change will meet with the wishes of the people most interested will not be known until the Legislature is nearly ready to adjourn, and it is doubtful if the people will even be informed of what is going on until it is too late.

Manitou county is made up of the dozen or more islands which lie off the Grand Traverse regions in the northern

end of Lake Michigan. The largest of the islands is the Beaver, at the extreme north of the group, which extends over a distance of sixty miles, ending at the south with the Manitou Islands with the Fox Islands between. The total population of the islands is about 850, and 700 of the inhabitants live on the Beaver, mostly at the northern end, in and around the village of St. James. The island is twenty miles from the mainland, and from the time navigation closes in the autumn until the ice breaks up in the spring, the only communication with the mainland is across the ice, a dangerous trip, taken, perhaps, once or twice, if the conditions are favorable, during the winter, but in many seasons not at all. The Government might be overthrown, but the islanders would know naught of it until the ice went out. They will be in ignorance of the scheme to dissolve their county organization until well along in April or May.

Beaver Island was once the seat of a modest little kingdom. It had a King and a castle, and if the stories that are still told in the north country be true, the King levied tribute upon the settlements along the mainland and even upon the shipping that passed that way. James J. Strang was the king of Beaver Island, and the people he ruled over were Mormons. Strang was born in New York State, studied law, and after his admission to the bar and his marriage went West. He settled at Voree, Wis., and became a Mormon. When the great body of Mormons went with Brigham Young to Utah after the murder of Joseph Smith, Strang headed a party of seceders, and after a few prospecting trips led them to Beaver Island and founded the village of St. James, naming it after himself. The site of the village was at the head of a land-locked, deep-water harbor at the northern end of the island. This was in 1847. The island was heavily timbered and houses were constructed of logs, put together either without nails or with spikes wrought by the blacksmith. For his own accommodation Strang built a house more pretentious than any of the others, two stories in height, and of the heaviest timbers. The logs were put together with spikes, the doors had heavy wrought-iron hinges and locks, and the lower windows were barred. His place was called the castle, and it was solid enough to stand a siege. Until two or three years ago the castle was still standing. Then sparks from the pipe of a drunken sailor started a fire which destroyed it. The Mormons also erected a tabernacle of logs, as solid as the castle, of which not a trace now remains. The services were conducted by Strang himself when he was at home, but he had a dozen young men as apostles in constant training to take his place when he was away. The services were held on Sunday, and it was not unusual for Strang to attend in his bare feet. The Mormon settlement flourished for two or three years, and in 1850 St. James had a population of 600 or 700. Then Strang had a revelation.

On July 8, 1850, he summoned the people to the castle. They assembled at the appointed hour, and from the balcony he addressed them. He said that he had been visited by an angel of the Lord, and that the angel had directed him to be crowned King of the Mormons, and had instructed him how to make his people happy. When he em-