

high exhausted and starvation stared the hapless emigrants in the face. An advance party on snow-shoes pushed ahead over the mountains, braving snow and ice and wintry blasts to obtain relief for their suffering companions. Before reaching New Helvetia—now Sacramento—several of the party died from cold and hunger and exhaustion, and the others, freezing and starving, were compelled to eat their flesh.

Captain Butler, of Butler's fort, near Sacramento, and others nearer the coast, on learning of the terrible fate impending the snow bound travelers, fitted out relief parties and sent them to the rescue. This timely action saved most of the sufferers, but out of the original eighty-seven persuaded into taking this death-trail across the Basin, thirty-nine perished from cold and starvation. The survivors, when found, had been subsisting for weeks—horrible extremity!—upon the bodies of their dead companions. Such was the sad fate of the Donner party. The last one rescued was a German, who became a ferocious cannibal, was picked up in April 1847.

FROM THE ISLANDS.

At the annual conference of the Australasian mission held at Tamaki in 1896 it was decided that the Wairarapa district should be the place for our gathering this year.

Tamahau Mahupuku, an influential chief of Papawai, though not a member of the Church, was desirous of the conference being held on his premises. Those in charge granted his desire, and he almost immediately set to work making preparation for the accommodation of the vast crowds which assemble upon such occasions.

For the past few months the place has presented an extremely busy scene; a spacious frame building of three compartments, which is to be used for large gatherings so prevalent among the Maori people, has been in course of erection. The portion in which our meetings were held was put in shape for the Saints to occupy by April 2nd. In the afternoon of April 3rd the house was formally opened by all partaking of a feast. The estates were spread in true Maori style—upon the floor—and to the music of a brass band the company took their places. There was an immense collection of the good things of the land, and all present appeared to do justice to what was placed before them.

Our conference began on April 4 and continued three days. The first meeting was called at 10 a. m.

Seated with President Richards were the following Elders from Zion, T. J. O'Brien, James C. Allen, J. K. Nelson, T. S. Browning, H. B. Halee, Joseph Markham, David H. Packard, H. L. Bradford, Walter Bunot, Parley A. Waters, Jacob E. Teeple, Hyrum Cook, John H. Ellis, W. S. Diamond, George Jarvis, R. A. Fenton, Joseph A. M. Johnson, J. N. Lambert, David Lindsay, W. C. Csetleton, S. E. White, Hans Peterzen, Charles J. Petersen, James Steadman, Hans B. Jensen, R. S. McKinnon and G. L. Anrus. It was estimated that between 400 and 600 Saints were in attendance, with perhaps 200 outsiders.

The audience was called to order and joined in singing the opening hymn. In the prayer, offered by President Richards, the building was dedicated to the Lord. After the singing of the second hymn, our worthy president arose and greeted all who had assembled, and expressed pleasure for the favorable circumstances under which we had met. He explained the object of our annual conference, and in a general way reported the condition of the mission. Since his arrival in the mission in June, '96, he had visited all except one district, and found much good being accomplished by the Elders. During the past year 374 additions had been made, 137 of that number being Europeans and 237 Maoris.

Elder Parley A. Waters, president of the Hauraki district, had only presided there for two months, and had not had the privilege of visiting all the Saints. He spoke upon the necessity of each one of us having a personal knowledge of the personality and attributes of the Father and Son.

Wiremu Takamu, counselor to the president of the Tamaki branch, spoke upon the apostasy and restoration, giving special emphasis to the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Elder John H. Ellis, president of the Manawatu district, reported the Saints of the various branches throughout his district as being in a fairly prosperous condition. A number of baptisms had been performed during the past year.

Afternoon meeting, 2 o'clock.—Two children were blessed and the Sacrament was administered.

There being quite a number of Europeans present from the surrounding settlements, it was thought best to have the speaking done in English and interpreted in Maori so that all might be instructed.

Elder W. O. Castleton was the first speaker. His remarks were confined chiefly to the early persecution of the Saints of the latter days.

Elder Gideon L. Andrus spoke of the authority which had again been restored to earth, and upon the first principles. Elder Richards interpreted for both speakers.

The European portion of the audience was supplied with Gospel tracts. This being the first Sunday in the month, and Fast day, it was observed by Salute and Elders in the appointed way.

Evening meeting, 7 o'clock.—Elder Jens R. Nelson, president of the Wairarapa district, said that he and his companion had not only endeavored to care for the Saints, but had visited many of the outsiders, and believed that good would be the result. He encouraged the Salute to cultivate the spirit of charity for each other.

Walter Niwaka, counselor to the president of the Nuhaka branch, congratulated the Saints of the Wairarapa district for the manner in which they had assisted in providing for those who had come to the conference. He spoke in a very interesting manner on the atonement and Church organization.

Elder James O. Allen, president of the Mahia district, reported his district as being a very large one, and the majority of the Saints endeavor

ing to live up to the requirements of the Gospel. He spoke upon the subject of the Holy Ghost.

Aporo Kumeroa, president of the Papawai branch, referred to the remarkable manner to which many of the Elders had been blessed in acquiring the Maori language. He felt to rejoice that his language had been carried to Zion by the returned Elders.

During the day two European meetings were held at Carterton, at which Elder Fenton presided. The speakers were Elders Cook, Browning and Diamond. The attendance was not large, but those who were present were very active and appeared to be much interested.

Second day.—Elder Walter Bunot, president of the Wairarapa district, reported the district over which he presided, and spoke upon the subject of baptism.

Rewi Maaka testified to the truthfulness of the remarks of previous speakers. Referred to some of Christ's parables, and gave interpretation thereof. He spoke of his recent visit to the King of the Maori king, where he had met two Maori prophets and explained some of the Gospel principles to them.

Elder Joseph Markham, president of the Bay of Islands district, compared the Church of Christ as it existed in former days, with the latter-day organization, showing both contained like officers and gifts. Referred to the numerous churches in existence, and explained how all could know for themselves which is the true one.

Afternoon meeting, 2:30.—Elder T. S. Browning, president of the Canterbury district; President Richards interpreting, said there is but one God to whom we owe reverence, and but one way to regain the presence of our Heavenly Father. The scriptures contain an account of the acts of Christ and His Apostles, and by studying them we may become acquainted with the laws and commandments we must obey if we expect to obtain salvation.

Elder Hial B. Halee, president of the Whangarei district, related some of his experiences while traveling among those who had not yet rendered obedience to the Gospel, and spoke upon first principles.

Elder T. J. O'Brien, president of the Hawke Bay district, said it is within the reach of each one of us to know which is the Church of Christ, and urged all to seek for that knowledge.

Te Hata and Te Kani and Remi Mokena commented upon the remarks of previous speakers and each bore his testimony to the truthfulness of the Gospel.

Three meetings were held in the evening. The local Priesthood met in one of the rooms adjoining the meeting house and was represented as follows: Elders, 28; Priests, 3; Teachers, 8; Deacons, 4. President Richards addressed the meeting on the power and object of the Priesthood, and showed how it had been handed down from God through His servants. He gave much good advice to those present.

Questions relative to the conference of 1896, Fast Day, authority in connection with different degrees of the Priesthood, and the way in which