AGAINST AMERICANS

High-handed Action of French Officials Against United States Citizens.

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American Boated Religious Liberty by the French in the Society Islands—Mormons Among the Sufferers.

Elder J. W. Damron, of Millard county, and W. A. Seegmiller, of Sevier county, were arrested some time from a mission to the Society Islands. They tell the interesting story the Latter-day Saints and other Americans on the islands are continue to engage in religious worship there, notwithstanding the treaty with France which guarantees to Americans full religious liberty. The arbitrary and unlawful action has been taken by the French governor against the protest of the American consul. The following, from the San Francisco Call, gives a fair statement of matters touched upon therein. Further information is given in our editorial column:

People are telling to be very innocuous on the Society Islands. The missions who are suffering for the Mormons. For over forty years they have had a large following in Tahiti and in the Tuamotu group. Now the French governors are working to expel the missionaries and are succeeding in their ends through means of fine, imprisonment and banishment.

Four Mormon missionaries arrived yesterday on the schooner Tropic Bird. They were J. W. Damron, W. A. Seegmiller, his assistant, and Acting Elder T. Jones. The fourth was J. A. Gilbert, a Josephite or member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both sects of the Mormon Church are being persecuted with equal severity.

"Our troubles began last November," said Mr. Damron. "The World should know of the action of these French governors, yet I hesitate to tell you the story, for fear that it might increase the severity with which my brethren are being treated."

He held a horrid consultation with Mr. Seegmiller and Mr. Jones. He then decided to tell of some of the circumstances, but such became so indignant and so in earnest that he disclosed his whole tale of woe.

We have labored among the natives for a long time without restraint. In fact, Governor Tabania, the executive officer of the Tuamotu group, encouraged us, as he said the natives who were under the Mormon teaching were more reliable and less given to drunkenness than the others.

But about a year ago last May the French government changed the governors and put in Governor Papion at Tahiti and Governor Martin at Fakarava, the capital of the Tuamotu group.

Up to that time the Mormons had grown in strength during forty years. Then a change came. The two governors were not openly hostile at first, but they gave little evidences of unfriendliness by their disinclination to receive the missionaries.

When the schooner Evangeline arrived last November their opposition became open. This vessel was brought into San Francisco by the "Hongkongese" branch of the Church, who are known in Tuamotu as the Latter-day Saints. They intended to use it to carry missionaries from one island to another.

Governor Martin refused to allow the vessel to carry the French flag, which practically prohibited it going among the islands. The American consul in vain urged the governor to change his mind. He refused to do so. He then ordered the vessel first, though, that the vessel should not be used in transporting missionaries from island to island. Again he was forced by the American consul to revoke his orders.

This, of course, incensed Governor Martin highly. He then prohibited Mormons from holding any religious services or teaching a school on pain of fine, imprisonment and banishment. That is the state of affairs today.

Mr. Damron declares that the cause of the persecution is that Governor Papion and Governor Martin, who are advised by Governor Papion, desire to have only the Protestant and Catholic religions taught to the natives. He says that when his people went to Governor Martin with a petition asking the liberty to worship, the governor told him he could not recognize any faith not recognized in France. Mr. Damron said:

This is the only excuse he would give for his cruel actions. He has nothing against our religion, as that they were Mormons, and there are many Protestants, Catholics and Jews in France.

We have always complied with the law. When the word in the schools I asked Governor Tamaru for instruction. He told me not to worry people, for they had been long enough under government. As for preaching and teaching, he said for me to go ahead as long as I did not interfere with any established sect. These instructions I have always complied with.

Nevertheless, I have been treated heavily and unjustly. When I have arrested I have been insulted, and it has been impossible for my people to obtain justice.

We are not the only sufferers, though. There has been trouble for the Seventh-day Adventists. They had a school in connection with their church. The school was in a very flourishing condition. Not only was their preaching stopped, but they were closed to discourage their school. The reason given was low sums that we had received.

The closing of the schools was opposed by Mr. Damron. He says that he was in Governor Martin's office when they took up a claim for the school in their dwellings, with their school in the lookout. The answer was, "Not if we know it," the man said.

The I asked that we be allowed to continue our schools but a petition was sent to Paris for President Carnot to sign. We were told that it would not be heard from. This was signed by us. We were told that it would not be heard and we did it as we paid.

Why, several Mormons were ordered to get out of ownership papers. They were given three months to settle the company. They were asked that I the order was not obeyed they would be fined and imprisoned and then banished.

The great injustice came on April 6th. From all the islands the Saints assembled at Takaroa for their annual conference. This they had done for forty years, and during the time preparation had been made for a similar that there would be no opposition.

At the last moment a letter was received forbidding the holding of the conference. The police and military governor were ordered to see that it was not held, and were left to report the names of those who should disobey the order. It was then discovered that the American Elders were particularly wanted by and personally responsible for any disobedience.

Mr. Damron said that the conference would have been improvised and numerous, the natives being so in earnest. Nothing was left undone to make it a success. Some had come from their work, and returned to American vessels was immediately hired to carry everything anything that could be obtained in private dwellings were provided.

The leaders were originally sent to Tahiti to Papeete, and from the capital of the Tuamotu group. The Catholics and Latter-day Saints came over. The Mormons suffer from the disadvantage of a broad front. They live in the Tuamotu group, some day to Mr. Damron, there are over 50 Catholics, "Protestants" or "Latter-day Saints." Lots of them are 100 Protestants. In Tahiti the natives, for one, are mostly Protestants.

Mr. Damron said his two assistants are all men of marked intelligence. Mr. Damron was native to Utah. He is a business man, with a substantial home in Salt Lake City, wife and seven children. They are going back to Utah in a few days.

Will Go to Saltair.

The officers of Salt Lake county have made arrangements for an excursion to Saltair on Friday, the 21st inst., when an enjoyable time is anticipated.

Conference in New Zealand.

TARANAKI, New Zealand, April 12, 1895.

Editor Deseret News:

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 anticipation to the time when the annual conference for the northern end of the mission would be held at Kawa Kawa. It is a place the Saints met, it was passed and its influence has been felt for years. It was to be before the other conferences in the south, and to them the Saints also looked forward with much anxiety. The first of these was to be held at Te Morewa, in the Turanga District. On the 5th of March, Elders Dowsett 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 Tenolen, who abide in the district in the Maori Pah Kuiti. 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.

Kaiti is a Maori village located about one and a half miles from the city of Gisborne. Here we summoned a European service, raised 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 the hour, a bell rung to announce "fire" was given, and all the people on the street rushed to the scene. Dowsett were attracted and we found a tent, the one used for a meeting. No services were held. Whether this scheme had been prearranged we do not know.

The time for the Te Morewa conference was now near at hand. Accordingly we rode on horseback a distance of twenty miles to the place of meeting. In the evening we met arrived there we held a meeting with some outside natives. They allowed us to use their church and dwell among them. Some 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. He testimony was accompanied by the spirit of God, and he testified by the power that the Gospel we have received is taken direct from heaven and that Joseph Smith was called of God to set up the kingdom.

On the following morning, March 16th, the conference began. Half-two Saints had yet arrived, consequently the first meeting was not nearly attended. But the presence made up in quantity what they lacked in quantity. Matthew 18:20 was fully realized. Some of the Saints there were but few present the spirit of God filled the room, and the servants of God spoke with its influence to the edification of the Saints present at all present. The Saints from all parts of the district kept coming during the whole day, and there were a very large number from from each branch. In each of the surrounding meetings the Spirit of God burned in the minds of some present, and the testimony came to light, and Elders were convicting, being guided 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 showing that the spirit of humility and contrition was exalted in their minds. Elder Gardner gave some valuable instructions which we trust the Saints will all remember and profit by.

After the meeting there were two candidates for baptism. These were examined by President Cogan and Elder Gardner, and were found to be worthy. Elder Gardner baptized the two, and confirmed members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we rejoiced in laying hands on the new born of the H. J. Church. Thus two more were brought into the fold of Christ, and we trust they will be faithful to the end. We left the Saints in good spirits, and we trust they will be faithful to the end. We left the Saints in good spirits, and we trust they will be faithful to the end. We left the Saints in good spirits