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## IN WAIRARAPA DISTRICT.

GREYTOWN NORTH, Wairarapa, N. Z.,  
January 9th, 1896.

June 17th, 1895, Elders and members of the Priesthood of Wairarapa met at Greytown North to determine the time and place for the Semi-Annual conference of the district, and to reorganize Papawai branch Elder Aporo Kumeroa was nominated, sustained and set apart as president. Two other members were called to the Priesthood as teachers. The December conference was then discussed and it was decided on December 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1895, a conference would convene at Papawai, it being a convenient place, near the railway station, a central place of the Wairarapa, the home of Wairarapa's leading chief, and the residence of many outside natives. Hikurangi, a large meeting house was procured it being the most suitable place for such a gathering.

Elder William Gardner, president of the mission was present. All were delighted to think we would have Brother Gardner with us. A letter of introduction was given him to Tamahau, the chief, as they were strangers to each other. The following day Elders Gardner, Bowles and Bradford went to Papawai, where they met the chief. They received a cordial welcome and a pleasant conversation ensued. After conversing with Papawai's chief for a short time they bade him farewell until permitted to meet again.

Some time after this a church of England minister died and being an influential Maori, hundreds gathered to "Tangi" (cry) over his remains. Among the many was Tamahau, who listened to what was said during the funeral services. Many who believed as the deceased did, spoke in oratorical style concerning the faith of their departed friend who died a strong member of the church of England. Tanoahau finally arose, said he was a member of the same faith but unlike the former speakers was not prepared to say he would live and die belonging to the same creed. He was investigating to know which of all the denominations was true. To a congregation of more than a thousand he said: "I desire to inform all present at this large gathering that I have voluntarily given to the Mormons the use of my large meeting house (Hikurangi) and many other dwelling houses, so as many as desire to gather there may be accommodated. Church of England, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army or whatever faith it is will receive a hearty welcome. You learned ministers and men versed in scripture, come. My desire is to listen to the Mormons. The Latter day Saints are gaining great favor among the Maori people as they

are increasing in numbers and becoming more popular than ever before." His speech was lengthy, but time and space would not permit me to give it in full, suffice to say, it was timely and to the point in every particular, causing many to ponder over what they had heard concerning the Papawai gathering.

You can rest assured that the Wairarapa saints were delighted when the news reached their ears of Tamahau's speech. It engendered a feeling within them to make the conference one to be remembered by all who would gather. Presidents of branches exhorted their flocks to be energetic in all things pertaining to scripture, to learn as thorough as possible the hymns, in order that the singing should be a grand success, so all might know of Wairarapa's talented singers. Among other hymns practiced was a favorite of many in Zion—We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet—The song had been translated in their own tongue and was printed upon the cards for the occasion. The native children were taught a special song, or hymn, I'll be a Little Mormon. It was to be sung in English, although it was a difficult task to pronounce properly the English, yet they were determined to master it.

Saturday, December 21st. Coach loads were seen coming from the railway station. In a few short moments the dusky skinned men and women were arranged in good old nature style to hail the visitors. When the passengers had alighted they slowly wended their way into the large spacious meeting house. The guests were followed by those who had welcomed them by shouting "Mau mai—Haere mai ra." No sooner were they within, until all began pouring out their whole souls giving vent to their altruistic emotions. They all joined together in their memorized chorus known to Europeans, Elders and Maoris as "tangi" (crying). The many that participated in the familiar greeting, would have caused one strange to Maoridom, to imagine he would prefer hearing Home Sweet Home played as a funeral march. It was remarked by one that it would be a capital idea to box some "tangi" up in a phonograph and take it to Zion. When sufficient tears were shed addresses of welcome followed. Tamahau the chief of Papanui began by telling all, they were thrice welcomed. His address, or Maori oration was made more impressive by him trotting forward and back carrying a beautiful war club known among the natives as "te mere." The multitude of people seemed to be feasting upon his eloquent speech. The response was by a noted chief who held his hearers spell bound during the entire time of his speech. Sunday, while the people were gathering, the bell was ringing and the beautiful

flag with the words "Rongo Pai," (Gospel) painted upon it was fluttering in the breeze. The following Elders from Zion were present: William Gardner, Andrew Jensen, George Bowles, H. Lee Bradford, George Jarvis, John Clayson, L. G. Hoagland, F. W. Nebeker, J. Abbott, Joseph Lindford, E. O. Best, Thomas O'Brien, H. C. Jex, R. L. Bird, John Ellis, William Diamond, W. C. Castleton, Horace Barton and David Lindsay. At 10 o'clock the meeting was called to order by Elder George Bowles. The congregation united in singing; Thomas O'Brien, conductor of singing; prayer by F. W. Nebeker; hymn 164 was sung by all. Elder Bowles greeted those present and spoke of the necessity of all assisting by their faith and prayers; told how essential it was for all to enjoy the spirit of God during the entire time of the conference. Those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness would have their desires gratified if they were animated by the same spirit. The necessity of banishing worldly thoughts was emphasized. Wairarapa's report showed 51 new members had been added during the past year. Many had true faith in calling the Elders to administer to the sick. The brief report showed the prosperous condition of the fore mentioned district.

Brother Gardner introduced Elder Andrew Jensen, historian. Elder Hoagland interpreted for him. Brother Jensen greeted all present in behalf of the Prophet and Apostles whom he said were truly servants of God as he was personally acquainted with them. He spoke from actual knowledge. He referred to Elder Greenwood who, twelve years ago, baptized the first Maoris in Wairarapa. In behalf of the Kanakas he greeted the Maori Saints. There were 5,000 Saints living at Sandwich Islands, known to the Maoris as Hawaii, the place of their ancestors. From the Saints at Samoa he brought greetings to the natives of New Zealand. The progress of the work in Denmark and other missions of the world was dwelt upon briefly. During his five years traveling in Zion he had visited 600 cities of the Saints.

The President of the Papawai branch then arose, greeted all in the name of the Lord, complimented the many who had gathered from different districts to listen to the words of the servants of God; trusted the words they had heard would sink into the hearts of all and desired that what they might yet hear would be remembered. His report of the Papawai branch was good. In his closing remarks he commented upon remarks of former speaker and closed. Congregation sang hymn 24. Prayer by Rapa Tiu. At the 2 p.m. session, President William Gardner was introduced and