Jenson's Travels.

LETTER NO. [illegible]

Thursday, December 19th, 1895. After breakfast we Elders walked from Greytown about two miles to the village of Papawai, situated near the Ruamahanga river, in the open Wairarapa village. Here we were met by Bloods and conducted to the largest dwelling house in the village, which we placed almost at our disposal during our remain there. One of the best rooms were assigned to Elder Gardner and myself in which we could attend to our writing and other business without being disturbed much. The large meeting house in the village was also placed at our disposal for meeting and sleeping purposes; and really all the native families slept there during the conference. Almost immediately after our arrival, I commenced my historical labors, the records of the Wairarapa district and of its respective branches having being brought here for my perusal. After attending an interesting prayer meeting with the natives in the large meeting house, we retired and enjoyed a good night's rest.

Friday December 20th. The Elders and native conference visitors began to arrive, some drove up in fine carriages, others came on horse back and some on foot. Whenever a fresh visitor came in sight, it was announced through the village by some woman calling out "haere mai, haere mai, etc.," in the top of her voice, and immediately on their arrival they were shown their quarters. Of the Elders the following arrived: James S. Abbott, Edgar O. Best and Wallace C. Castleton by train; Horace W. Burton, Heber C. Jex, John H. Ellis and H. Lee Bradford on horse back, and George Jarvis and John Clayton on foot. This increased the number of Elders at Papawai to fifteen. I spent the day culling historical matter, assisted by Elders Bowles and Bird. In the evening after prayer Hamuera Tamahon Halmpaku, the head chief of the village, who ranks as one of the best informed Maori chiefs living, made a long speech of welcome; it was replete with fine sentiments and expressions of his great friendship to the Elder though he is not a member of the Church, but an investigator of our principles. When Mormonism was first introduced in the Wairarapa village he was one of its bitter opponents, on one occasion he gathered all the sick and maimed of his village together and brought them to Te Ore Ore, where the Elders were holding meetings and demanded of them as a sign and a proof of their being sent of God to heal all his sick. When he was questioned in regard to his faith and the nature of the promise "These signs shall follow them that believe," etc., he explained to him, he returned rather cool-billed, and after that he commenced to grow less and less bitter, until he finally became an admirer of some of the principles taught by the Elders. A short time ago, when a sort of testimony meeting was held under the auspices of the Church of England, and a number of the members of that Church expressed their belief in the principles advocated by said Church, Mr. Tamahon got up and declared that he would not say that. He did not feel so sure that the Church of England was the true Church nor that its doctrines were correct, for he was investigating "Mormonism," which to him seemed more consistent with the Bible. Elder Gardner responded to the chief's speech in a manner that pleased him and all present very much. He followed with a short speech translated by Elder Gardner, and finished up with singing a Danish song. By special request I also gave a few words, and the Hawaiian "Aloha O," assisted by some of the other Elders. Splendid spirit prevailed.

Saturday, Dec. 21st. In company with Elder George Bowles I made a trip in a buggy to Greytown, where I had a long conversation with the editor of the "Wairarapa Standard." After returning to Papawai I resumed my historical labors. About noon Elders Wilford F. Neweker, Thomas J. O'Brien and David Lindsay arrived by rail from the Eketahuna district, accompanied by quite a number of native from said district, Elder William L. Dimond also arrived during the day. We were now blessed Elders from Zion at Papawai, and no more were expected for the conference. The day being warm, nearly all the Elders, myself included, went to the Ruamahanga river and took a refreshing bath and swim in its cooling waters.

Sunday Dec. 22nd. Our three days conference commenced in the large meeting house at Papawai. Besides a good representation of Saints from the different branches in the Wairarapa district, there were quite a number from the Hawkes bay, Manawatu and Wairoa district, and the following named Elders from Zion: William Gardner, president of the Australasian Mission, and Andrew Jenson, his traveling companion, George Bowles, president of, and H. Lee Bradford, George Jarvis and John Clayton, traveling Elders in the Wairarapa district; James L. Abbott, president of, and Heber C. Jex, William L. Dimond, John H. Ellis and Horace W. Burton, traveling Elders in the Manawatu district; Wilford F. Neweker, president of, and Thomas J. O'Brien and David Lindsay, traveling Elders in the Hawkes Bay district; Lewis G. Hoagland, president of the Mahia district; Joseph W. Linford, president of, and R. Leo Bird traveling Elder in the Wairoa district; and Edgar O. Best and Wallace C. Castleton, missionaries in the Canterbury district. These will attended and interesting meetings were held during the day, commencing respectively at 10 a. m. and at 2 and 7 p. m. George Bowles, Andrew Jenson (through Lewis G. Hoagland as translator) and Apiaro H. Kumeroa were the speakers in the forenoon. President William Gardner occupied all the time in the afternoon; and the speakers in the evening were Arapata Meha, Lewis G. Hoagland, and Andrew Jenson (with George Bowles as translator). After the regular evening meeting the chief Tamahan delivered another speech in which he propounded a number of questions in regard to certain principles of the Gospel; these were successfully answered by President Gardner, who in explaining them spoke with freedom and ease, and seemed to give entire satisfaction to the chief and all who were present. Some of the native brethren also spoke. A good spirit prevailed in all the meetings, and the general verdict was that we had had a most excellent time during the day and evening.

The day was very warm—the warmest day of the season so far in New Zealand.

Monday, Dec. 23rd. Not celebrated the month's anniversary at the Feilding South Saint's birthday in New Zealand by continuing our conference at Papawai and holding long over-time meetings. Present were Te Ngoe, Hone Tuti Waitaiaro (also called John A. Jarvis) one of the assistant president of the Jerusalem branch