

**Welcome by D. Arthur Haycock
Reported by Dorothy L. Behling**

President Haycock greeted the conference participants gathered in one of the auditoriums of the temple visitor's center with the statement, "It was no accident that in those early years of the church, a temple was built here in Hawaii."

He told how Joseph F. Smith, orphaned son of the martyred Hyrum and the faithful Mary Fielding, came to Hawaii as a fifteen-year-old missionary in 1854. President Haycock told of the terrible fever that raged in the young missionary for more than three months and of the gentle care he received from a kind Hawaiian woman. He alluded to the event in 1915 when, after many years, Joseph F. Smith returned as the Prophet and President of The Church to select and dedicate a site for a temple. He recounted the touching story that Presiding Bishop Charles Nibley recorded as he accompanied President Smith to Hawaii:

As we landed at the wharf in Honolulu, the native saints were out in great numbers with their leis and beautiful flowers of every variety and hue. It was a beautiful sight to see the deep-seated love, the even tearful affection that these people had for him. In the midst of it all I noticed a poor blind woman, tottering under the weight of about ninety years, being led in. She had a few choice bananas in her hand. It was her all--her offering. She was calling, 'Iosepa! Iosepa!' Instantly, when he saw her, he ran to her and clasped her in his arms, hugged her, and kissed her over and over again, patting her on the head saying, 'Mama, Mama, my dear old Mama.' And with tears streaming down his cheeks he turned to me and said, 'Charlie, this is Ma Naoheaokamalu. She nursed me when I was a boy, sick and without anyone to care for me. She took me in and was a mother to me.'

President Haycock continued his narrative by telling of the dedication of the hill in Laie for the building of a temple. President Smith died in 1918 during a terrible flu epidemic. He never saw the temple completed. Instead, his successor, President Heber J. Grant, pronounced the prayer of dedication on Thanksgiving Day, 1919. The great love for Lehi's family exhibited by both the Lord and the leaders of His church was next emphasized by President Haycock. He reminded us of the great distance Hawaii was from the headquarters of the church (over 3,000 miles across some of the most treacherous deserts on the continent and then the challenge of a vast unsettling ocean). Yet, in spite of physical hardships, there had been a willingness, even an eagerness on the part of the brethren to come and assist with the work here in the isles of the sea.

He reminded us of the importance of Laie, that it was to the Hawaiian saints a modern Puuhonua, a City of Refuge. This concept he paralleled to those six cities of refuge established by Moses during the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. He continued the parallel by admonishing us to recognize

that, "In our present state of blessedness we live off the efforts of former saints as did the people of Joshua. If we are to be worthy, we must win it anew." He concluded with a plea quoted from a prophecy of President Joseph F. Smith, "Dear brothers and sisters, do not leave this land"...."here will the Spirit of the Lord brood over His saints who love Him and keep His laws and commandments...."