

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY.

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LECTURES and EXCURSIONS.

The opening evening of the session, Wednesday June 12th. took the form of a film evening, the films being obtained through the energy and enterprise of Mr. L. H. Millener.

The first film took the form of a study of the kauri forest, and pictured the different processes of milling. Members were privileged to see the working of an industry which seems naturally destined to pass away, since our once mighty kauri forests are now reduced dangerously close to vanishing point.

The second film "The River" was introduced by Dr. Cumberland, lecturer in Geography, Auckland University College. In spite of extremely short notice, Dr. Cumberland gave us a brief talk on erosion, dealing more particularly with local problems. While emphasizing the seriousness of the erosion question, and underlining the damage already done or likely to be done, Dr. Cumberland pointed out that owing to the great physical difference between the two countries, erosion in New Zealand need not be combated as in the U.S.A. by gigantic engineering enterprises involving colossal expenditure, but rather dealt with by securing the intelligent co-operation of individual land holders. He mentioned the valuable work already done by co-operation with land-holders of the Canterbury Plains.

Following the address, the members were then shown "The River", a striking film whose fine photography was accompanied by appropriate music and an impressive commentary. The film dealt with the Mississippi whose terrible floods have figured

in our news in recent years--devastating floods caused as a result of man's abuse of nature, his destruction of fertile river flats through reckless planting, and later his destruction of innumerable forests by equally reckless lumbering. We saw gentle trickles, that beneath the sheltering trees made their way gradually to the valleys below, becoming amid the wreckage of the slaughtered forest, first rushing streams and then raging torrents, tearing down the hill sides, sweeping away precious soil down to the bare rock and carrying forth unnumbered millions of tons of precious plant food to the Gulf of Mexico, flooding the great Mississippi till it carried ruin and death for hundreds of miles along its banks. A brighter note was struck at the close of the film, when re-forestation schemes and great dams held hope of repairing the damage that ought never to have been perpetrated .

The moral of all this came home very clearly to all who have seen our own too frequently bare and barren deforested hillsides.

Finally the meeting adjourned to supper with the feeling that it was unfortunate that the film could not be more widely shown, and inspired by gratitude towards Mr. Millener whose complicated and intense efforts to procure it for us had made possible a very thought provoking evening.

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On Wednesday, July 3rd., Dr. H. H. Allan lectured to members on "Botanical Aspects of the 'Golden Hind' Trip". This trip, whose object was not primarily botanical, occupied about seven weeks. Starting at Preservation Inlet, the "Golden Hind" made its way past places whose names speak so expressively to us from the past--Coal Island, Revolver Bay, Useless Bay, then on to Dusky Sound, past Seal Island, Cascade Cove, Supper Cove, then the ship sailed through the historic Acheron Passage, pausing to nose up Wet Jacket Arm,--on into Breaksea Sound, with Sunday Cove and Vancouver Island, and finally into Doubtful Sound, with First Arm, Crooked Arm, Deep Cove and the forbidding Precipice Bay.

The trip was a thrilling though somewhat tantalising one for Dr. Allan, who was carried ruthlessly past many an intriguing spot that shouted for Botanical exploration; but the