

four different seasons. The meeting concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Millener, after which we repaired to supper.

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We are indebted to Mr. Brian Hamken and Mr. Rewi Moynihan for the following careful and detailed account of our trip to the Noises:

NOISES TRIP

Saturday 3rd March 1951. Leaders: Brian Hamken, Rewi Moynihan.

At the kind invitation of the W.E.A. Natural History Club a very pleasant and profitable day was spent at Otata, the largest island of the Noises Group. The attendance was so good that a few late-comers were unfortunately turned away as the launch was loaded to capacity according to its marine survey. Under sunny skies the launch cruised via Islington Bay past Motutapu and Rakino Islands, to the South-west beach of Otata Is. where, at the anchorage, all were safely rowed ashore under the capable direction of Capt. Price, but a few sterns were wet in the process.

Maps of the island prepared by the co-leader Mr. Moynihan were handed round to assist in our survey of the island. After one or two false starts the main party finally moved off up the valley behind Capt. Wainwright's bach. Interesting plants noticed on the way up to the plateau included large trees of whau (Fentelea arborescens), Macropiper excelsum, Geniostoma ligustrifolium, patches of Adiantum affine, the whole of this area being dominated by Meliccytus ramiflorus. Before climbing up from the valley floor there is an old spring which, although unattractive, would be valuable for castaways.

The upper plateau some 200' high is now covered by mixed shrubs 7 - 10' high. These have developed after a *Danthonia*-flax association which followed burning off in about 1934. Some of our members remember an intermediate strip of *Danthonia*, bracken, and flax covering scattered with Leptospermum, pohutukawa, Hebe salicifolia, and Coprosma robusta & Geniostoma. Now the shrubs have nearly coalesced to form a rapidly growing community. To the north and west of the plateau bracken still dominated. Also found on the high flat was a prostrate Pinealea, broomrape (Orobanche), Scirpus nodosus, and Wahlenbergia.

Following a survey of the Gulf from the trig (224') and

looking at the queue of ships in the Rangitoto Channel we followed the top of the southwest cliffs through pohutukawa-karo forest. The extreme size of the karo, some at least 12" in diameter, was frequently commented on. On the open cliffs, the stiff shore Asplenium flaccidum (var.) grew.

Lower down on the cliffs in the spray zone were a number of salt-meadow plants found in the rocky crevices, e.g. Mesembryanthemum australe. The only Astelia present (A. banksii) was at home along the more open area near the cliff. A few Pseudopanax crassifolium and P. lessonii were on this eastern side of the island.

Our leaders had the use of a species list containing the names of some 80 ferns and flowering plants, prepared by the Auckland University Field Club from its 1950 and previous visits. The list proved valuable in assisting in an intelligent examination of the flora and a series of such lists covering many such areas around Auckland could be invaluable.

The party which landed and included some of the Field Club as well as the W.E.A. Natural History Club in conjunction with Auckland Botanical Society was able to add at least 10 new names to the list, as follows: Coprosma rhamnoides, Olearia furfuracea, Tetragonia expansa, Wahlenbergia gracilis, Nothopanax arboreum, Orobanche sp., Lycopodium billardieri, Paspalum sp. Fruits collected for the coming autumn Cheeseman Memorial Native Flower Show: Astelia banksii, Macropiper excelsum, Pittosporum crassifolium, Entelea arborescens, Meliccytus ramiflorus.

In a general sense the plants of this island showed the special characterization of the flora typified in the off-lying islands of the coasts of New Zealand, e.g. the presence of enormous leaves and in some cases such as karo (P. crassifolium) very large fruits.

Geologically speaking Otata Is. and the surrounding islands are a continuation of the greywacke beds of Waiheke Is. and Rakino Is. which continues on to Tiri Is., Kawau Is. and Cape Rodney, whereas Whangaparaoa Peninsula is made of the Waitemata beds. At a short distance from Otata Is. and the neighbouring Motokoropapa Is. there is a marine shelf from 4 to 5 fathoms from which the sea floor drops down to depths ranging from 10 to 17 fathoms.

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