

A U C K L A N D B O T A N I C A L S O C I E T Y

HON. EDITOR: Marguerite W. Crookes,
19 Coronation Road,
Epsom, S.E. 3.
HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. P. Hynes, 'Phone 89-207
54 Calgary Street,
Mt. Eden, S.2.

The first News Letter of 1956 finds the Society already with two out of Auckland excursions to its credit. The first - the most ambitious the Society has so far undertaken - was to Arthur's Pass. It is by no means easy to arrange for an excursion at such a distance but by hard work and careful planning our Secretary managed to smooth out all the difficulties that such a venture inevitably encountered, and as will be seen from the description with which she has so kindly supplied us, the members were able to get the maximum of pleasure and profit from their short stay.

ARTHUR'S PASS

by: P. Hynes.

January, 1956.

Our party of 34 members spent a happy week in mid-January at Arthur's Pass, the best known part of the Southern Alps. Arthur's Pass was chosen for this study of alpine flora on account of the high number of species growing there, access to them is comparatively easy and also because accommodation was available in the village for a large group.

The weather was good and every day was used to advantage. Through the kindness of Miss P. Sexton some copies of a species list taken from 'Vegetation of the Upper Bealey River Basin' Laing and Oliver, Trans.N.Z. Inst. Vol. 59. 1928, were distributed and these were most helpful with identifications in the field and thereby arrested the desire to gather plants which are very necessarily protected in that area.

After an exceptionally mild winter there was very little snow on the tops and due to an early summer many of the flowers on the lower levels were almost over. The small everlasting daisy, Helichrysum bellidioides, which forms a gay border of blooms all along the roadside was then bedraggled and the so-called mountain lily, Ranunculus lyallii was almost finished. We had also missed the mass of blooms of the large daisy, Celmisia coriacea, in the Senecio Meadow. Overhead we occasionally saw the scarlet mistletoe, Elytranthe colensoi, but the red debris of fallen petals under the beech trees told a story of their past beauty. However, we found recompense in the lovely Gentians, Euphrasias, Curisias, Parahebes etc. which adorned the wayside and later we found that the season was just right for the higher alpenes.