

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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The Annual Meeting of the Auckland Botanical Society was held at "The Chimes", Symonds St., on March 1st, 1961. After the Report and Balance Sheet had been read and approved, the meeting proceeded to the election of officers. Mr. R. Lediard accepted the position of President and Mrs. W. Fisher shouldered the exacting burden of the Secretaryship. We are glad to know that our Keen Treasurer, Mr. F.M. Warren has again been elected to that office. We welcome the new members elected to the Committee - Miss M. Seager, Dr. H. Nelson and Mr. L.H. James. We also welcome Mr. N. Kitchen as a vice-president.

The meeting expressed appreciation of the work of the retiring President and Secretary, Mr. and Mrs. A. Coyle. They will be enjoying a year's trip overseas and the Society takes this opportunity of wishing them every happiness during their travels. We are pleased to think that Mr. Coyle's skill as a photographer will ensure that their trip is adequately recorded.

Following the business part of the meeting we were shown slides dealing with the Society's summer trip to Ruapehu.

BOTANY DIVISION

During the first half of December, it was my pleasure to spend a little time visiting Botany Division, for the purpose of studying herbarium material. The modern, attractive home of the Division is pleasantly located at Lincoln, looking out on one side to the Alps and on the other to the high hills of Banks Peninsula.

The experimental fields of Crop Research Division join those of Botany Division while the new well-lighted building houses officers of both branches of work. It was pleasant to enter the cheerful,

harmonious building, so different from the Division's old home in Wellington, irreverently termed "the rabbit warren".

I thoroughly enjoyed my stay at the Division and it was indeed good to meet old friends - Miss Lucy Moore (my hostess) a foundation member of our Society, Dr. Godley, the Division's genial Head, a past President of our Society, Ruth Mason, another Aucklander hard at work on our water plants, on which, incidentally, she is New Zealand's leading expert, and Margaret Simpson, another Aucklander doing interesting work on Nelson's National Parks. Most of my visit was spent in the herbarium which now contains over 120,000 specimens, increasing at the rate of 5,000 a year. The curator, Mr. Rapson, has indeed a busy time there not only looking after this extensive and continually growing collection but also with the 3,000 odd specimens that are usually sent in each year for identification. The gardens and glass houses of the Division contained many things of interest over which one would have liked to linger - to give one example - Dr. Atkinson's experimental collection of that provoking New Zealand family the Ranunculaceae.

I was much impressed by the kindness and goodness of everyone to me. All were more than ready to seek out anything of possible interest to me in the fern line - I remember particularly, Ruth Mason who wandered in to Miss Moore's home at half past ten at night after a hard day's collecting, absolutely festooned with specimens of an unusual *Blechnum* that she 'thought I might like to take away with me in the morning.' It was delightful to be made so welcome at the Division and I was much impressed by the amount of quiet unobtrusive but extremely valuable work that is being done there. I left with the pleasantest of memories and the hope that it will not be my last visit.

On Wednesday April 5th we all enjoyed an illustrated talk by Mr. R.S. Lediard on the Tongariro National Park. With the assistance of our President's beautiful photos we were able to follow the routes taken by the members during the Society's summer excursion to Ruapehu and also admire special studies of flowers and berries and vegetation that were more particularly studied by members.

Though at first unpromising, the weather for our Cascades excursion (April 15th) soon cleared and we had a really delightful day in one of the most beautiful of Auckland's kauri reserves. The bush consists of kauri and mixed forest characteristic of our Waitakeres, but one or two special plants might be mentioned.