

Our thanks to Mr. Gudex for telling us of his very rewarding trip. He certainly makes one wish to visit the area, and regret that it is not more accessible.

### A Trip to Neavesville

By M. C. Gudex.

This is an account of an expedition which Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Gray of Tirau, Mr. A. C. A. Caldwell and I made on November 11, 1962.

Leaving home at 7.30 a.m. we travelled on the Thames Highway until we came to Marototo Road (not far beyond Paeroa). After driving along that for several miles, we examined a bush-clad area to find if it was suitable for an F. & B. field day. (It was, and the subsequent outing was voted a great success).

Returning to the Thames Highway we drove on to the Puriri-Neavesville Road, and travelled along it until we reached the foot of the big hill. There Mr. Caldwell and I transferred to Mr. Gray's powerful farm truck; plenty of horse-power and a high clearance were certainly needed to take us up and over the Coromandel Range to Neavesville, for the road rises from 200 ft. to 1500 ft. above sea level in less than two miles. We had obtained permission to travel along the private road, which starts about the 1300 ft. level, but had to watch for bulldozers that were repairing it for logging trucks.

The lower part of the bush on the west side of the range is now a scenic reserve. It has a typical lowland flora comprising nikau, titoki, tarata, putaputaweta, kohe kohe, rewa rewa, rimu, miro, pate, puketea, kawa kawa, poroporo, hange hange, mahoe, mapau, large-leaved species of Coprosma and a profusion of tree ferns.

Between the 900 and 1500 ft. levels (still on the west side of the range) the bush is drier, being more open and therefore exposed to wind and sun, and this condition is accentuated at the top of the Neavesville track, on an uneven plateau about 1950 ft. above sea level.

Notable components of the upland flora are Griselinia littoralis, Pseudowintera axillaris, Quintinia serrata (plentiful and in full bloom), Ixerba brexioides (just coming into bloom), Dracophyllum latifolium and D. strictum. This flora resembles that of the higher parts of Mt. Pirongia, Mt. Karioi and the Mamakus.

Around Neavesville on the east side of the range, the bush was burnt or felled long ago but there is much regrowth and an

induced heath comprising manuka, kanuka, Gahnia xanthocarpa (up to 12 ft. high), terrestrial species of Astelia, four species of Lycopodium, bracken, Paesia, Cordyline banksii, various sedges and terrestrial orchids.

As we did not go into the depths of the gullies, we saw only one species of Hymenophyllum. Interesting finds included: Loxoma cunninghamii growing happily beside a large patch of Gnaphalium keriense in full bloom, a tree of Dacrydium intermedium 25 ft. high, Phebalium nudum; Meterosideros albiflora still in bloom; Nothofagus fusca and N. truncata; kauri; Ascarina lucida; Phyllocladus glaucus; Gymnelaea montana; Persoonia toru; Neopanax simplex; Eugenia maire; Pittosporum kirkii.

The total number of native species for the Neavesville part of our day was 135. The earth sculpture, the geology and the historical associations of this area are as interesting as the botanical.

Neavesville is now deserted with only a few relics to show that it was once a rip-roaring town. There is still some of the machinery of the old battery and there are several tunnels by which the gold-bearing rocks were reached.

The hotel and the miners' huts have gone, but foxgloves, seedling apple and cherry trees show "where once the garden smiled."

A distressing sight is a grave surrounded by a broken palisade with willows growing up through it. Surely an Historical Society could restore the palisade and remove the willows.

A rare diversity of landscape is provided by deep ravines, many waterfalls and a series of peaks reaching a height of more than 2500 ft. - Pakirarahi, Kaitarakihi, Motutapere and the Pinnacles - and not far away to the east is the "unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea."

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#### Recent Publications

Two publications of considerable interest have recently become available. For the benefit of members they are briefly reviewed.

Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand by A.L. Poole and N.M. Adams. Published by the Government Printer, Wellington.

In a leaflet regarding the book, issued by the Government Printer, it is stated as follows:

"This book has been designed especially to assist the many people who lack a formal botanical training yet are deeply interested in New Zealand's trees and shrubs and want to be able