

New Fields - Cb'd.

The Secretary would welcome your offer to lead an excursion. He hopes to arrange a visit to one such little known area in the near future. There is much to be seen off the tracks, which so many people seem to stick too rigidly to, provided you don't wander too far into the bush. However the vociferous enthusiasm of certain members usually enables one to locate the main party readily again! More useful botanical discussion could be had on our excursions, and the leader should make an effort to explain what is to be seen before heading off into the bush, and the lunch-break could be used to bring to the party's notice what has been seen. This would be a great help to our less knowledgeable members who are eager to learn, and especially the younger ones we are seeing now.

There is a need too to introduce more discussion of our native flora at indoor meetings where specimens can be shown to very good profit. Such exhibits properly labelled would be welcome at any meeting, to discuss after the main business.

#### THE AUCKLAND SCENE

My comments on the lack in Auckland of suitably labelled live collections of the native flora is gradually being remedied in one park, Albert Park, though most trees there are "exotics". The Mount Smart Domain Rockery has a high fence now and locked gate. The varsity collection remains the only clearly labelled native collection of trees and shrubs but vandals still take their toll and very childishly think it funny to play with the labels. Every ingenuity is needed to try and beat these people, and it is a pity police and park rangers are never in evidence. Much of it is no doubt a result of the young people of Auckland having so little to do if they are not sports-minded. The botanist can always be thankful in having so much to do and see, and it is a pity more young people are not attracted to the hobby.

September saw the first constitutional meeting of the Auckland Junior Naturalists, of which there are three branches, and in which the Society takes a close interest. Not far away in Hamilton Mr P. Devlin has done an excellent job in this field, and we can expect to see some very competent biologists as a result of his efforts and those of helpers spurring the young folk along.

No further developments have materialised on the proposed further prospecting for copper on Coppermine Island. The issue has died down somewhat, but we still need to be on our guard. With the Newsletter you will find a copy of the Petition drafted in Whangarei seeking the protection of our valuable off-shore islands. Please add your signature and those of friends sympathetic to the cause and forward to the address shown. Members in Whangarei have done a good job in

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### The Auckland Scene - Ct'd:-

bringing before the public the need for conservation. A possible threat to the Waio Limestone Scenic Reserve north of Whangarei has been resolved. An offer to strip the rocks and plant ornamental trees was very wisely discarded, and such vandalism under the guise of "beautification" is to be deplored. This reserve is the only remaining piece of weathered limestone left after quarrying. A parking area and picnic ground is to be laid out adjacent to it.

In its Review of Scenic Reserves throughout the country it is to be regretted that the government did not enlist the aid of naturalists capable of evaluating the true biological value of the reserves. Beyond very brief mention of the commoner tree species or scrub, little is recorded, and it is up to us to report on these matters in the case of any reserves known to us to be of special importance. Any information should be forwarded to the Commissioner of Crown Lands without delay, so that the correct decisions can be made. There is no doubt this review has been largely neglected by us.

The almost complete lack of native exhibits in the Auckland Museum was reflected too in the recent School Sciences Exhibition held there. With the exception of a few creditable efforts in the Junior Section, there was a very noticeable lack of botanical exhibits. This is particularly disconcerting when a recent review of future requirements in science in New Zealand has shown a big deficit of biological scientists! Apparently there will be quite enough physicists, chemists and mathematicians. This shortage of biologists is to be seen in the universities, the main outlet formerly having been in teaching, but now all-important primary industry needs researchers, and they are in short supply - we can ill afford to be without when our economy depends on production from the land.

With the hope of reviving some interest from city children in their native heritage, Mr and Mrs Fisher did much good work in arranging the Native Flower Show at the Ley's Institute, with most enthusiastic support from school heads. The passing of the Cheeseman show has been regretted by members who did so much to organise it. To overcome any possible objections this time to "ravaging of the bush," all collecting was done under supervision - most of it in the Fisher's own piece of bush. A very creditable effort.