

LABOUR DAY WEEK-END TO TE AWAMATU.

26th October, 1968.

We left Auckland at 6.30 p.m. and after an uneventful trip arrived in Te Awamutu about 9.40 p.m. At the hotel we were given a very nice supper before retiring to our rooms.

We had breakfast about 8 a.m. on Saturday the 27th and boarded our bus, bound for Maungatautari Mt. The weather was dull with misty showers. We proceeded via Hairini and Leamington to Luck at Last Rd., a short way from the Karapiro Dam. At the end of the road we went up to Mr. Walker's home to obtain permission to cross his property. During a particularly bad shower we were allowed to shelter in the woolshed where we donned our parkas and leggings. The weather eased and we started on our way across about two miles of steeply undulating country to the bush margin. The rain and wind which increased as we went made conditions most uncomfortable. Those wearing glasses found it very difficult to see properly.

One track which we followed for a short distance proved to be the wrong one. We returned to the edge of the bush and, following a ridge, found the right track. We thought we would be protected as soon as we got into the bush but the forest was so saturated that the dripping trees and bushes didn't help a bit. The result was that botanising was practically non-existent. Two orchids were seen, *Pterostylis banksii* and *Corybas triloba*. The dominant tree seemed to be tawa. We spent about an hour in the bush and had our lunch at the side of the track - the problem being trying to keep the food dry whilst eating it. We decided to give up and trudged back to the bus where we were a cause of much amusement to those who did not come with us. The weather cleared up on our trip back and we arrived about 2.30 p.m., spending the rest of the afternoon changing and trying to dry our clothes after which we were left to our own devices.

Sunday 28th

At about 9 a.m. we left for Mt. Pirongia. In Pirongia village we collected Mr. Bell who was to lead us on the mountain and after a very pleasant drive through interesting country came to the end of the road at a farm-house.

Through the farm it was an easy grade along a clay road to the bush margin. The weather was reasonably fine and pleasant except for a high wind which did not affect us in the bush. Around the entrance of the track there has been considerable destruction of trees by the owner milling the timber. This should not be allowed any longer and we of the Auckland Botanical Society should do all we can to stop it. The species in this forest have been listed many times and there is no necessity to do it again. The track follows a ridge for about two miles to a spur at about 2600 ft. to which some of our members went along with Mr. Bell, who was most helpful with his knowledge of this area. The ridge is on the northern aspect of the mountain and some wonderful views appear at odd open spaces.

Myriophyllum propinquum ? (In flower)
Potamogeton cheesemanii (In flower)
 " *natans* ? with larger leaves.

Our thanks are due to the leader of the party, Mr. Warren,
 for a very pleasant outing.

KOPU - HIKUAI ROAD

----- 27th January 1969 -----

A full bus of enthusiasts set off on January 27th for the popular annual long day trip of the Society. The day was perfect and we were going to botanise on the Kopu - Hikuai road, cut through beautiful bush over the Colville Ranges.

Turning off at Pokeno, we passed over the plains, miles wide, now prosperous farms drained from the cabbage tree swamps of thirty or more years ago. I looked for a sign of the cabbage trees and saw one clump only left. After taking the Kopu turnoff we were soon in the low hills, steep country clothed in scrub and regenerating native bush, with the pyramidal rewarewas predominating. The towai was flowering and some trees showed up quite red with the new seed heads. Soon we came to the heavy bush and had a short stop to see a large old rata, the roots of which divided to form an arch. It was festooned with masses of *Dendrobium cunninghamii* in full bloom, as well as many other epiphytes.

Further on a rest area is provided, with parking space, tables and seats. Here we had a cuppa and an hour to browse over a small reserve and look-out. Those responsible for choosing this area for preservation surely knew their native botany, as, for a small area, there was so very much to see: *Neopanax colensoi*, *Neopanax laetum*, *Neopanax arboreum* and a large number of *Pseudopanax discolor*, one adorned with a beautiful dragon-fly, fully four inches long, with a fluffy head like a bumble-bee. Mairehau, *Phebalium nudum*, was fairly plentiful and toropapa, *Alseuosmia quercifolia*, which earlier had been a mass of very dark red sweetly scented flowers, was also common. Only one specimen of kauri was noticed. Another surprise was *Pittosporum huttonianum* with the white tomentum on the undersides of the young leaves. *Ixerba brexioides* was there with its companion tree, *Quintinia elliptica*, also *Placocarpus dentatus*, *Corokia buddleoides* and a pretty purple *Hebe macrocarpa*. What a collection for Aucklanders, in one small area! At the summit, an easy walk, a direction finder was placed on the floor of the trig. It was as well that I didn't have to find my way home alone as my sense of direction would have taken me to Wellington, not Auckland. A fine view was obtained of the surrounding bush and hills. Wandering down the path, we came to a delightful little stream, which tumbled over a steep rock face to the bush below. We next walked down the road a short distance and entered the bush by a well defined track, perhaps an old bridle track to Tairua, lined with Fuchsia and Wineberry. On the hills there were many old hoary trees of tawa,