

A. D. MEAD.

We reached our lodgings at Otorohanga at 9.30 p.m. on Friday evening, October 22nd and during the night listened to the rain falling steadily. At breakfast next morning it eased and when we entered the bus at 9.a.m. the sun began to break through the clouds. While Auckland and many parts of the North Island had the week-end spoiled by rain, we enjoyed good weather right through.

On Saturday we visited the Pureora forest. Pureora itself is a dome-shaped mountain 3825 ft. high, on the watershed between the Ongarue River headwaters and the Mangakino tributary of the Waikato, but the forest being milled is on plateau country round the base of the mountain. A substantial block with a road through it has been reserved from milling. During the morning we ambled along the roadside and in the afternoon followed a bulldozed track into the forest, which is a dense bush with tall timber trees ( rimu, matai, miro, totara, kahikatea ) with a dense understory and a floor of deep humus with luxuriant cover of ferns and seedlings. We did not attempt a listing of species, but were on the watch for plants with which we are less familiar in Auckland. Among these were an epiphytic Senecio in full flower but too high to identify, Griselinia littoralis, Pittosporum ralphii with its handsome dark red flowers, Dacrydium bidwillii, Meliccytus lanceolatus, Weinmannia racemosa, Dicksonia fibrosa, Polystichum vestitum and Todea superba. On leaving the milling township to return, we deviated a short way on a side road to visit a stand of the rare and local Pittosporum turneri. A short walk took us across an old clearing being colonised by Dracophyllum subulatum to the brink of a swampy creek where we found several young plants of P. turneri, but a full-grown tree seen on a former visit by some of our members eluded us. Hymenanthera angustifolia was also found.

On Sunday our objective was the forest adjoining the National Park station, but on the way we branched off at Owango to run through a road traversing a splendid piece of forest reserved from milling and running down to the Whakapapa River. We did not have time to enter the forest on foot, but it appeared to be much the same as that at Pureora, at approximately the same elevation, with an abundance of tall timber and a dense understory. It would be well worth a leisurely visit. We found Gaultheria oppositifolia, with its beautiful raceme of bell-shaped flowers, on the bank of the river.

Arriving at National Park we lunched on the station platform, then took a short walk through part of the bush on the ridge immediately to the west. This is a typically sub-alpine forest with a deep moss and humus floor. The dominant tree is kamahi ( Weinmannia racemosa ); others are Libocedrus bidwillii, pokaka ( Elaeocarpus hookerianus ), Coprosma foetidissima, Pseudowintera colorata and Astelia nervosa ( formerly cockaynei ) known in the Waitakeres by one plant only. Among the ferns Leptopteris (Todea) superba is plentiful.

On Monday on the way back to Auckland we deviated from the main highway to visit the Gudex Memorial Park in the Maunakawa Scenic Reserve, six miles east of Cambridge. From the trig (1260 ft.) we enjoyed

extensive views in all directions, of which the most dramatic were to the west, where we looked down on the rich Waikato plain a thousand feet below, with Cambridge laid out like a map and Mt. Pirongia as a backdrop; and to the south with Karapiro Lake and Maungatautari. The cleared summit with its views, the Gudex memorial, the flowering trees on the site of the former sanatorium and the bush margin, proved sufficiently interesting to many to occupy the available time. There is a forest reserve on the western slope of the mountain and some of us walked a little way into it, not as a party but in separate small groups. One group reported a stand of Libertia and of Asplenium lamprophyllum; another found the ferns and ground plants very delightful, though not much different from those of the Waitakeres; they came across a large puketea with numerous seedlings scattered around. A third group was rewarded by a rich patch of Corybas trilobus and C. macranthus, with many plants of the latter in flower. When the bus drew up on the summit on arrival, Mr. Butler immediately found on a tree on the roadside a large specimen of Drymoanthus adversus, with numerous flowers, which orchid (under its former name of Sarcochilus) was a great favourite of Gudex.

Michael Gudex was headmaster of the Hamilton High School for many years and as a keen amateur botanist he explored and listed the flora on many of the hill blocks in the middle Waikato, frequently led parties into the bush and inspired an enthusiastic following. After his death a monument to his memory was erected on this hilltop.

After an early lunch we got away quickly to avoid the traffic jam which usually develops on the southern highway later in Labour Day. A vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Warren for his enjoyable programme of visits.

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#### OUR WEST COAST TRIP. 28th. JANUARY TO 3rd. FEBRUARY.

As on previous occasions the report of the trip has been compiled by several members to distribute the work involved. We trust that the report will lose nothing by reason of this, but will be found interesting and informative to those who were unable to join the privileged 40 who made up the very happy party.

#### Friday - 28th. January.

A little excitement occurred in the initial stages through a taxi having a flat battery and thus causing a delay to the pick-up bus at the Victoria St. meeting point. However there was no further delay and we were able to board our plane almost immediately on arrival at the airport. The flight was a good one, except that cloud south of Auckland interrupted our view of the country over which we were passing. On reaching Nelson in fine weather, we found our bus awaiting us, driven by one Bob Walbran, who proved subsequently to be the best driver we have had on any of our trips. Not only was he very knowledgeable regarding the country through which we passed, but also superb in handling a big bus in tricky situations.