

WAIPIPI. - 15th. APRIL.

J. BEEVER.

Our Indian summer of early April ended and cold south-westerly squalls greeted those members who made this trip. However, we had no showers while we were out of the bus and the rather small bus load enjoyed an interesting and varied day.

Our first stop was on the farm of Mr. MacDonald at Waipipi where he has a small reserve of native bush with a magnificent gully of king ferns. He had slashed a track through scrub and soon we were down the bank and admiring them. Crookes and Dobbie quote six to twelve feet as the length of the fronds of Marattia salicina. One frond here measured eleven feet six inches, plus or minus six inches, and there were many others equally large so that at first glance from above they looked like pongas. The whole stand stretched for about two chains along a pleasant clear creek.

The canopy of old puriri trees covered many smaller trees, notably kohekohe, but except for some trailing supplejacks the undergrowth was fairly light. However, numerous seedlings were showing and given little disturbance the undergrowth may thicken up. Some kohekohe were bearing numerous seed capsules and the five beautiful large orange seeds in a bed of green and white were a novelty to many of us.

Other ferns present on the forest floor were the usual selection including Pteris macilenta, Cyclosorus penniger, Asplenium falcatum and an Asplenium lamprophyllum which may have been a hybrid, for though it did not smell of wintergreen, neither did it show any sporelings.

Then on to Kariotahi beach on the coast across the peninsula from Waiuku township. Here we had lunch tucked up warmly sheltered behind small headlands. The beach is a typical long black west coast strand, backed by 100' high cliffs of consolidated ironsands, firm and hard but not really sandstone. The cliffs, sometimes steep but often gently sloping down a talus slope at the bottom, are a northward extension of the iron sands worked by the N.Z. Steel Co. south of Waiuku, and are brown with the oxidation of the iron content and carved into curious convex and concave shapes by the wind in exposed places.

At first there did not seem to be much of interest, but as usual more diligent searching produced a large number of plants. There is a large variety of native flora accessible without much difficulty and it would be a good place for schools to use in conjunction with Moore & Adams, "Plants of the New Zealand Coast." as sand dune, cliff and shore plants occur near each other. Many of the species in the book were noted including Phormium tenax, Tetragonia trigyna (N.Z. spinach), Cassinia retorta and Coprosma acerosa largely on the upper areas of the cliffs.

Nearer the beach where it was easier to search we found many smaller plants, Samolus repens and Selliera radicans the twins of damp shore banks, Pimelea prostrata, Disphyma australe (ice plant), Lobelia anceps, Cotula coronopifolia, Lilaeopsis orbicularius and Calystegia

soldanella with its exotic relative the common convolvulus. Over much of the shore vegetation scrambled Muehlenbeckia complexa while the small Cyathodes fraseri filled in bare patches and the larger C. fasciculata formed scrub patches in some areas.

Ferns were not numerous but Asplenium lucidum, although apparently damaged by salt winds, seemed to thrive nevertheless. Similarly some large clumps of the Green Bay species of Blechnum capense showed some similar leaf damage and occasional specimens of Adiantum cunninghamii grew to moderate size. Marchantia macrocera, a liverwort, covered a seepage below a bank while Cyperus ustulatus and Leptocarpus similis, the jointed rush, were in other damp places.

Larger plants were Pseudopanax lessonii laden with green fruits, and Cortaderia splendens, toetoe, with its typical drooping heads. Near the shore Astelia banksii was growing well and in full flower.

The Cortaderia splendens was of special interest as Mr. Mead had an article on it in the latest March Newsletter, commenting on Zotov's creation of it as a new species in September 1971. So this trip was the first time our Society had seen the species with its new name and we were fortunate that Mr. Mead was with us to draw our attention to it.

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Articles submitted for publication in the next issue of the Newsletter should reach me not later than mid-October. They may be either handwritten or typed but any illustrations should be drawn in Indian ink, or Xerox copied, the same size as required in print.

Editor.