

A.D.P.

Friday.

We left Auckland just after 5.30 p.m. and apart from a slight hold up soon after leaving the motorway, made very good time to Mangakino, with a short watering stop at Ngaruawahia. We arrived at the Maraetai Lodge in Mangakino at about 10.30 and after sorting out our rooms we were provided with a very welcome cup of tea.

Saturday.

Friday's cloud had cleared and we set off in brilliant sunshine, taking the road which runs down the west side of Lake Taupo, stopping to take pictures at a lookout at the far end of the lake near Tokaanu. On the way we had good views of Mt. Ruapehu well covered with snow. We took the road over the Te Ponanga saddle at the back of Tokaanu, passing the power station on the way. It was interesting to note the almost complete dominance of gorse on the areas cleared during the works associated with the power project.

Our first stop for botanising was at Hinemihi track, an ancient Maori foot track that crosses the Te Ponanga saddle to Lake Rotoaira. The full name of the saddle is "Te Ponanga O-Te Heio Hinemihi" which means something like - The Sweet Smelling Perfume of Hinemihi. Hinemihi was a girl who travelled from Tokaanu to Lake Rotoaira, to meet her future husband, Tutetawha 1, Grandson of Tuwharetoa. According to folk-lore when she reached the summit of the saddle, Hinemihi rested and anointed herself with sweet smelling perfume. When she continued her journey she scattered the perfume along the track - hence the name of the saddle.

Here we saw among other things Pittosporum colensoi (in flower), plenty of Pseudowintera colorata, Knigtia excelsa, Pittosporum eugenoides, Coprosma foetidissima, some patches of Clematis paniculata, the beautiful fern Leptopteris hymenophylloides and the giant moss Dawsonia superba. Quite a lot of planting has been done to heal the scars resulting from the construction of the road, one hopes with species that are all naturally present in the area.

Our second stop was at the Te Porere reserve. We walked down the track and soon crossed a narrow wooden bridge over the Wanganui River, a beautiful spot with masses of Ourisia macrophylla together with Grapphalium kerriense growing along the banks close to the water.

We lunched in a pleasant sunny grassy spot just beyond the bridge and afterwards walked on through low tea-tree scrub as far as the lower redoubt on the battlefield of Te Porere. It was here, on 4th. October, 1869, that Te Kooti and his followers were defeated by a combined Maori and European force. The earthworks were built as an outpost to the main position on the crest of the plateau above. Celmisia gracilentia and a Wahlenbergia were found on these earthworks. Our most exciting find, however, was on our way back along the track - growing under the tea-tree were some fine specimens of Botrychium australe var. australe, one of the fronds being close to 10" long

and broad.

Our third track of the day was the one to Lake Rotopounamu from the Te Ponanga saddle road. Here Mr. Warren was delighted to find the other Botrychium, B. australe var. millefolium with its very finely divided fronds. There were many fine Leptopteris hymenophylloides and filmy ferns in abundance, including Cardiomanes reniforme, Hymenophyllum dilatatum, Hymenophyllum demissum, Hymenophyllum flabellatum, Hymenophyllum rarum. There were plenty of Asplenium bulbiferum and some A. bulbiferum var. tripinnatum. At the first beach we found a solitary specimen of Elaeocarpus hookerianus. A little further on Miss Barr noted Nothofagus fusca and Asplenium hookerianum. Both Pseudowintera axillaris and P. colorata were seen, the latter bearing masses of flower.

Sunday.

Another fine day after some rain in the night. We drove to Taupo where, at the Napier turnoff, we picked up two members of the Waipahihi Botanical Society who were to be our guides for the day, Mr. K. Young and Mrs. W. Cuming, both members of the board of management of the Waipahihi Botanical Reserve, Mr. Young being its chairman and president.

We set out along the Napier road, soon passing the Opepe reserve to which it was good to hear that some 150 acres were recently added. Just past here we saw an area of forest which Mr. Young told us had been planted in ponderosa pine because it was thought to be hardier than Pinus radiata and more suitable for the climate of the area. The planting proved to be a failure and trees forty years old looked to be in very poor shape. It was just being cut over, burnt and replaced until recent developments in the chip board industry. Now Carter Holt are harvesting the ponderosa pine, using portable chip mills, the chip then being taken to Napier.

On the opposite of the road many thousands of acres were planted in Oregon pine. They did very badly and were subsequently oversown with Pinus contorta which grew well, but as soon as the Oregon pine received shelter and shade from the P. contorta it went ahead and is now topping the contorta in many places. Its anybody's guess what the end result will be.

We passed both the old and the new Rangitaiki Taverns, the latter surrounded by a small afforestation scheme being undertaken by the Taupo Borough Council.

We came to the new part of the road which has shortened the journey from Taupo to Napier by about an hour, stopping for a short while at the lookout over the magnificent Waipunga Falls for people to take photographs. A little further on we pulled in to a picnic area alongside the Waipunga stream. It had some bush remaining on it which proved to be most unusual and interesting and would have merited longer study. One of the first things that caught our eye were the festoons of the pretty little Clematis parviflora, with its sweetly scented yellow flowers. Among other plants of interest were an unusual looking Podocarpus, thought by Mr. Young to be a cross between P. hallii and

P. nivalis, Pennantia corymbosa, Melicope simplex, Hoheria sexstylosa, Meliclytus lanceolatus, Coprosma tenuifolium, Podocarpus spicatus with both juvenile and adult foliage, Blechnum penna-marina, Polystichum vestitum and large areas of Gleichenia cunninghamii. On the opposite bank of the river there was a large group of the rather local tree fern Dicksonia lanata, which often has no trunk or only a very short one.

After lunch we retraced our steps and took the access road to the Kaimanawa forest park. This is an area of about 65,000 acres of beech forest, milled for fence posts, but never for timber. All milling has now been stopped and the area is being opened up to the public.

Some fine plants here of both Leptopteris hymenophylloides and the Prince of Wales Feathers fern Leptopteris superba, which has been called the most beautiful fern in New Zealand. Another fern of interest was Blechnum vulcanicum which, although not confined to volcanic regions as the name suggests, is rather local north of East Cape. We also found a shrub which we do not see in Auckland, namely Coprosma microcarpa.

Some of us were fortunate enough to see several kakas. We had heard their calls and were making all sorts of queer noises to try and attract their attention. In the end curiosity got the better of them and three flew around way above us, decided that we were harmless and certainly not as interesting as we sounded, and quickly flew off again.

At several points along the track we saw small plants of one of the native nettles, Urtica incisa. Where the track comes out onto a forest road there was a very dramatic group of the mighty cabbage tree Cordyline indivisa, giving the area an almost tropical appearance.

We returned to Taupo and paid a quick visit to the Waipahihi Botanical Reserve. Some wonderful work has been done here in this 85 acre reserve, all of it voluntary. We drove round the Scenic road, passing some beautiful flowering rhododendrons and azaleas set against a background of native bush, much of which has been planted. One of the most interesting spots is the rock garden near the entrance where many New Zealand alpine plants are thriving. In flower were the tiny Myosotis colensoi, some very healthy looking plants of the Chatham Island forget-me-not, Myosotidium hortensia, a small Hebe, H. raoullii with its pretty lavender coloured flowers, Viola filicaulis, Myosotis eximia and a mass of Helichrysum bellidioides. Two small shrubs which I had never seen before were Pseudowintera traversii with its new growth of an interesting reddish tint, and Cyathodes colensoi.

We said goodbye and a big thankyou to our two guides and returned to Mangakino, this time taking the pretty run alongside Lake Whakamaru.

Monday.

We left the lodge at about 9.30 a.m. having thanked our host, especially for the very ample meals we had had during our most comfortable stay. We stopped at Maraetai 1 dam and had time to

walk out onto the dam which was finished in 1952. We noticed the booms which are necessary to catch the water weed and prevent it from passing through the turbines. Further on we drove over Maratai 11 and later over the bridge crossing the Mangakino Gorge, reputed to be the highest road bridge in New Zealand.

Our botanical stop was at Mr. Parker's 232 acre farm at Pukeatua, at the back of which is a reserve on the lower slopes of Mt. Maungatautari. This was most interesting, dominated by massive tawa, the undergrowth being very unusual and consisting mainly of Macropiper excelsum, small pukatea (Laurelia novae-zelandiae), titoki seedlings, supplejack, tree ferns, ferns such as Leptopteris hymenophylloides, Blechnum discolor, Asplenium bulbiferum, A. lucidum, A. lamprophyllum, Cyclosorus penniger some with trunks up to 2' high, Lastreopsis hispida and masses of filmy ferns carpeting the ground. Other plants noted in smaller numbers were matai, rimu, poroporo, nikau, Aristotelia serrata, Brachyglottis repanda, Knighitia excelsa, Litsea calicularis seedlings, Parsonsia heterophylla, Paratrophis banksii, Freyinetia banksii and a single specimen of Alseuosmia macrophylla with masses of its sweet scented flowers. The only orchids seen were a Corybas sp. and Earina mucronata in flower - in fact we saw virtually no orchids during the whole weekend. Of note was the almost complete absence of Coprosmas.

Having thanked Mr. and Mrs. Parker for their hospitality we returned to Auckland, stopping for lunch in the attractive Memorial Park in Te Awamutu. Rain started soon after lunch and we arrived back in Auckland in a downpour.

Mr. Beaver asked us to thank Mr. Warren and Mrs Purdie for all the work they had put in to make this such an interesting and enjoyable weekend, and Harry our driver for safely ferrying us around.

WHANGARURU NORTH HEAD is situated on the east coast of Northland, 12 miles south of Cape Brett. It lies on the end of a peninsula which forms the eastern margin of Whangaruru harbour. The Whangaruru North Head Lands and Survey farm, which is part of the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park, consists of 644 acres on the southern tip of the peninsula.

I was interested to read in Mr. A. Esler's report on the vegetation of the above area of the occurrence there of Fuchsia procumbens, the little native fuchsia which has trailing stems bearing upright flowers and large red berries and which is now widely grown in our gardens. Mr. Esler says that it is known from about 20 other localities but he doubts if it occurs elsewhere in such profusion. On the eastern slopes it forms extensive patches under pohutukawas, in scrubland and on forest margins.

Another plant he mentions is the rare, small flowered native convolvulus Calystegia marginata, growing here mostly with blackberry. Psilotum nudum occurs less than half a mile outside the reserve and may well be in other places in the area.