

B. H. Macmillan

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Myosotis australis
var. *lytteltonensis*

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIETY

Our Society started with an avowed interest in native flora, and considering the amount of work that needed and still needs to be done in recording the present distribution of our flora, this was a very natural starting point. However, man has always lived in a changing environment—evolution, the physical main spring of our existence, demands that this be so; and it was inevitable that some changes should occur, if not in the aims of the society, then at least in the ways these aims should be accomplished.

The full study of any species of plant requires more than just a detailed description of a range of specimens. A knowledge of its place in the community in which it occurs is the final goal, and this requires identification of the other living organisms of the community, be they native or adventive. We have recently become a botanical society, in name at least. Should we not therefore extend our activities to cover a study of adventive as well as native flora?

The studies suggested above are more in the province of the professional botanist, but our Society could serve a useful purpose if we recorded the present distribution of plants in Canterbury in as many areas as the time and efforts of our members will permit. This would seem to be a duty that we owe to the botanists of the future, see the note by the Rev. Kyle in Volume 1 of this Journal. How much greater value such a record would be if voucher specimens were prepared for each species and deposited in some suitable herbarium. Some of our members already have the start of such a record, and, in fact, the Society holds collections made by Mr J. Martley, and Mr J. Thompson. The question arises as to where such a collection can best be housed. Three possible herbaria come to mind, the Botany Department, University of Canterbury, the Botany Division, D.S.I.R., Lincoln, and the Canterbury Museum. Perhaps we should endeavour to establish our own herbarium, but place and expense would at the present, at least, present difficulties.

So much for what we might do in the way of practical botany. What of the objects of our Society in the field of preservation? New Zealand already has large areas set aside as reserves, though mainly mountainous and bush covered areas, and cases could be made for setting aside further areas of tussock grass land, of scrub, of river beds and flats, and of swampland. In this field the Society should support, in every way possible, all groups with similar views to our own, in urging further Government action, but unless there is a public awareness of the value to society as a whole of reserves, then they are unlikely to survive. Mounting sectional interests unopposed by strong, well-informed, public opinion, could erode substantially our present reserves. What has been established by one Act of Parliament can as easily be revoked by another Act. Another aspect to be considered is the use of reserves. The mere gazetting and subsequent closing of an area as a reserve is not sufficient. A prime need is for an educated public, who will use the reserve as a source of

relaxation and pleasure, who can enter at their own will, when and where they wish, but, and this is paramount, who will not leave behind them a trail of damage and litter. Recently, I have seen two people carrying bags and picking up litter as they walked along bush trails. Neither was a New Zealander.

Can our Society actively help in forming public awareness of the inestimable value of our national parks and reserves and their proper uses - spread enlightenment among the uninitiated?

Ross Elder
President

E D I T O R I A L

New Scenic Reserve

We extend our thanks to the Lands and Survey Department for the gazetting of a new Scenic Reserve.

This Reserve is situated in the Borough of Lyttelton and consists of some 17 acres. Some of the land is taken from that which was set aside in the early days for a rifle range. The balance has been acquired from the Lyttelton Harbour Board.

The terrain is steep, mostly covered in bush, contains many cliffs, and is on the shady side of the Port Hills. It should be the home of many interesting plants. The Reserve has been adequately fenced.

To find the Reserve, travel the Sumner Road from Lyttelton to Evans Pass. Some two to three hundred yards beyond the plane table at Windy Point the road bends. At this point are two gates. It is the second gate that leads directly into the Reserve.

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