

A MEMBERS' EVENING.

The meeting on December 18th took the form of a members' evening when contributions were made without previous arrangement.

From Mr. B. Aston's garden, the President, Dr. Cone, brought a large sheaf of interesting specimens including foliage of three South American beeches, one evergreen and two deciduous, all grown by Mr. Aston from seed; Macropiper excelsum var. psittacorum from the Poor Knights, and from the same islands Arthropodium cirrhatum of unusually large size; a pink-flowered manuka from the Far North, not inferior to Capt. Keatley's beautiful form; flowers of the tawari (Ixerba brexioides) from a plant six feet high; Muehlenbeckia astoni from the original collecting; and the climbing Senecio sciadophilus.

Dr. Allan exhibited (1) Rubber made in New Zealand from the roots of the Russian dandelion (Taraxacum kok-saghyz) grown in the Hutt Valley; (2) Tapa cloth from Fiji in various stages of preparation from the original paper mulberry (Broussonetia papyrifera-Moraceae) tree bark; (3) A volume of "Characteres Genera Plantarum". Prepared by the Forsters, father and son, after their return from Cook's second voyage and appearing in 1776, this volume contained the first published descriptions of New Zealand plants; (4) A volume of Forster's "Prodromus" (Florulae Insularum Australium Prodromus) published in 1786 and containing descriptions, mostly short and vague, of some 170 species of New Zealand plants.

Dr. Allan also displayed in a large portfolio some beautiful engravings of New Zealand plants. With Banks and Solander on Cook's first voyage came the artist Sydney Parkinson. His sketches which were to accompany Solander's descriptions of New Zealand and Australian plants were worked up in England and at the expense of Sir Joseph Banks copper plates were prepared. Those were put aside and the New Zealand pictures were never published, though a few years ago the Australian drawings finally appeared. The prints we saw were selected from sets taken off from the Banks and Solander plates for the New Zealand Government when T. Kirk was preparing his Flora. One set was used by Choosoman when he was preparing the Manual, and one incomplete set is now in the possession of the Botany Division of the Plant Research Bureau. The sheets we saw had been labelled by Kirk with the then-current names, not the names Banks and Solander had used.

Dr. Newman, by a coincidence, had also brought along a set of plant pictures in the form of photographs of unfinished sketches. These had turned up, without any information attached to them, in Prof. Kirk's room. They were immediately reminiscent of the Banks and Solander plates, and the artist's signature on one "Sydney Parkinson pinxit" went a long way to confirm the suspicion that they were photographs of the original (pencil?) sketches upon which the engravings were based. Also they were labelled with the Banks and Solander names. They have since been compared, and match in detail the corresponding Banks and Solander plates -- so the meeting was the means of clearing up that point.

Mr. Beddie displayed fine flowering specimens, one of a garden cross between Senecio greyi and S. rotundifolius, one of the Mt. Matthews Hoheria sextatylosa which has crenate, not incised juvenile leaves.

Miss Jean Livingstone told of a recent field trip. With three days leave from Wellington several W.A.A.F.'s had spent two nights in a ranger's hut on the Dun Mountain, and had had a good look at the mineral belt vegetation of the summit, returning via Wooded Peak and the Maitai Valley. Photographs and specimens illustrated interesting species, e.g. Notothlaspi australe covered with disproportionately big white flowers, Pimelea saxatilis and the little nameless Astelia, both endemic to the Dun, Mysotis monroi, and Columisia hieracifolia. Special mention was made of the gorse on the Dun Saddle, at the exceptional altitude of 3,000 feet.

Miss Hilary Wilton brought a very beautifully prepared herbarium of D'Urville Island plants, including specimens of Hebe urvilleanum a "new species" very recently described by Dr. Cliver.