

WAIKANAE.

For our excursion to Waikanae on the 1st of March, for which we were favoured with a beautiful day, we were joined by some of our country members from Levin. As we approached by train we could see our hunting ground plainly. On this particular estate the bush-covered ridge tops rising above the well-grassed gentle slopes below, stand in contrast to other parts of the coastal strip where the hills are bare and eroded.

We entered the bush close behind the railway where a tongue reaches to the road following down a stream from which the water is piped. This lowest piece of bush is kohekohe forest, typical we may presume, of the cover that formerly extended across the coastal plain from the hills to the beach. Kohekohe (Dysoxylum spectabile) is the dominant tree and in places forms almost a pure stand. The broad glossy green leaves and dense compact crowns of the kohekohe form a solid canopy beneath which we walked through a rather gloomy glade. Blechnum filiforme was common creeping on the ground and Asplenium spp. were numerous. There were a good many nikau and in places the palm seedlings were coming up like grass. A bright spot of light reached the ground where a tree had recently been felled. A couple of exotic weeds, Solanum nigrum and Sonchus oleraceus, had sprung up quickly in the new clearing and grown to exceptional size.

We followed up the stream and then struck up the ridge on our left hand. Miss Neumann who very ably led the party had not only arranged for us to go on to this estate but had also explored the way first and found this route. The bush was varied. Of the 110 species noted on the trip the majority belonged to this mixed forest of the lower hillsides. Pukatea (Laurelia novaezelandiae) usually hung with kiekie (Freyinetia banksii) was growing near the stream. On the ridge we found a shrub of Mida salicifolia with noticeably undulating leaves. The commonest Asplenium was a form also seen in Field's Bush. It might be described as a coarsely divided form of A. bulbiferum without bulbils. It seems to me to be nearer to A. lamprophyllum which, however, is supposed to belong to the far north only. This fern is worth growing in the garden and keeping under observation.

Where the steep hillside began to flatten out towards the summit we entered the hill forest proper, where filmy ferns became abundant and podocarp trees were dominant. Some large miro and rimu were standing with branches spread high above the level of the shrubby trees around them. We gave up the idea we had started with of following around the head of the gully and returning down a different ridge to the bottom, and just turned back down the same track. About halfway down Mrs. Young slipped and twisted her foot breaking bones in the ankle. Mrs. Young has had long experience of rambling in the bush. She says herself that she doesn't know quite how it happened, just a slight stumble, but broken bones were the result of it.

Gradually the party gathered around Mrs. Young who remained very calm in her disaster. None of us had experienced such an accident in the bush before but many of us remembered what had been learned in First Aid classes. Bandages and handkerchiefs were produced, splints made, and leg and foot bound firmly. Theories of stretcher-making were put to the test. Two rangiora poles about 6' long and 2 to 3" in diameter were used with two men's jackets and a groundsheet. It was tried out first with an able-bodied stalwart, and then Mrs. Young was put aboard and the strenuous journey down to the road started. Mr. Parsons who was able to take charge of the situation and to whom we are specially grateful, had scouted a quicker and easier way down. Miss Neumann went ahead to summon doctor and ambulance. The stretcher party descended slowly but steadily thankful for dry ground underfoot and warm weather. Mrs. Young remained cheerful in spite of the obvious discomforts of the primitive stretcher added to the pain of the broken ankle. Finally we reached the road where ambulance and doctor were waiting.

It was months before Mrs. Young could walk without crutches, but all will be glad to know that she is about again, though the ankle has still not completely recovered.

This whole unfortunate experience passed over comparatively easily for the rest of us, but we all hope that it is not repeated!

Greta B. Cone.

During her enforced idleness Mrs. Young has done good work for the Society by making a preliminary index to the matter contained in the Bulletins up-to-date. This will be of considerable use to Editor and Secretary and can be made available to members seeking back references. We are grateful to have this rather tedious job carried out so carefully.