

species on the rock grow also elsewhere but a few belong there, such as, Hymenantha crassifolia, Scleranthus biflorus, Aciphylla squarrosa and Pimelia prostrata. A small shingle slide carried several species all found also on the cliffs nearby but growing in the shingle with characteristic deep roots or underground stems:- Senecio lautus, Cassinia leptophylla, Vittadinia australis, Pimelia prostrata, Coprosma propinqua, Craspedia uniflora (very conspicuous), Agropyron scabrum and several other grasses had densely matted roots.

A few small sand dunes were seen held mainly by Spinifex hirsutus, and Scirpus frondosus. Coarser gravel on the beach harboured some stunted and inconspicuous herbs such as Ranunculus acaulis and Geranium sessiliflorum. A small stream tumbling off the cliffs at one point watered a few delicate ferns and so sprayed the rocks that they were covered with mosses and liverworts.

About midday the party halted and lunched. Some stayed and took to the sea for their botany and others went on to the Head. Here tauhinu has completely replaced the manuka and Poa caespitosa was common. A glimpse of Koangatira lagoon, with its Raoulia covered beach, and time to return. A hurried slog back over the shingle, a ride on a member's small truck and a handsome Agave flowering completed an interesting field day.

R. McQueen.

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EXCURSION TO THE MOUTOA PHORMIUM RESEARCH AREA, FOXTON.

Some 24 members of the Society travelled by Field's express to Shannon where they were met by Moutoa Area transport and taken to the central headquarters and laboratory. There they were joined by a contingent of the Levin Flora Club. Mr. Boyce in charge of the Phormium experimental work and Mr. Wilson the manager of the area and Mr. Swindlehurst his assistant then took over. While being refreshed with lunch Mr. Boyce explained briefly the Phormium experimental work being undertaken. The Moutoa had been taken over by the Government in 1940 as the last of the "natural" Phormium areas which had once extended along the banks of the Manawatu River almost as far as Palmerston North. These areas had all disappeared by drainage and clearing during the vicissitudes of the "N.Z. hemp" trade. Fibre production had fallen to such a low figure that it was necessary to take steps to ensure supplies for the Woolpack and Textile factory at Foxton.

Following a survey which determined the vegetation and its ecological status, the area was being developed as a managed Phormium area. Much had been cleared and planted to selected varieties. Further varieties were being produced by crossing the two species Phormium tenax and P. colensoi to give different fibre characteristics. "Yellow leaf" disease, which was giving trouble was being investigated intensively. Something was seen of the experimental work, the natural areas and the plantations.

A fleeting glimpse was also seen of a pleasant remnant of kahikatea forest on the bank of the river. This forest once extended all along the bank but had been cleared in the early days of settlement.

Refreshed by the healing waters of Shannon the party once again embarked on the Field's express for Wellington. Sincere thanks are owing to Mr. and Mrs. Boyce and to Messrs. Wilson and Swindlehurst for the excellence and smoothness of the arrangements.

A.L.P.

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