

MT. HOLDSWORTH : JAN. 30 - FEB. 1.

Twenty members left Wellington on the Friday night and camped at the foot of Holdsworth. On Saturday everyone climbed up the track to Powell Hut at the bush-line, and most of the party continued on to the top of Holdsworth in spite of thick mist and drizzle. The night was spent at the hut and on Sunday morning small parties sallied forth into the mist, among the tussocks, down the steep rocky faces and into the beech forest below, in search of plants and specimens, and to photograph and take note of the vegetation.

Many of the alpine plants were in flower: edelweiss, gentians and euphrasia (E. cuneata near the hut, E. revoluta further up in the boggy ground); Olearia lacunosa, Dracophyllum uniflorum and Hebe venosa. Down in the forest there was enargia in flower, astelia (A. solandri), bush violet (V. filicaulis) and mountain flax.

Most of the orchids were over on Pig Flat where in season countless thousands of brilliant blue thelymitras (T. uniflora) may be seen - only a few remained at this time. Dendrobium and gastrodia were seen in flower in the bush and Praacophyllum colensoi up in the tussock.

The rather uncommon Celmisia graminifolia was found in the tussock by several of the party, and the rare forget-me-not Myosotis astoni seen a short distance from the hut, for the first time apparently, since its original discovery by Mr. Aston and W. Townson nearly forty years ago.

The bush immediately below the Powell Hut was seen to be seriously damaged by animals. Olearia and Nothofagus spp. were dead or dying and in general little undergrowth remained. With most of the silver beech trees fully grown and few young trees coming on, one scarcely dares visualize what the slopes will be like in a few score years.

It was interesting to observe several stages of silver beech regeneration near Pig Flat, where fires have several times spread up the northern slopes. Manuka-kamahi scrub first covers the burnt slopes. Young beech trees come up through the scrub and eventually form silver beech-kamahi forest, with the dead trunks of manuka still standing.

Quite a number of alpine plants were gathered, and those collected by Mr. Brockie will eventually form a valuable addition to the rock garden he is now making at Otari.

About midday on Sunday the party returned through the bush to the truck, packed themselves in somehow or other and endured clouds of dust rolling into the back for what seemed a hundred miles. But it was worth it!

H.M.D. and A.P.D.

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FAREWELL.

Dr. I. V. Newman who is still away from N.Z. on sabbatical leave from Victoria College has been appointed Professor of Botany in the University of Ceylon. He will return to Wellington in May and leave for Colombo at the beginning of June. We hope to see Dr. and Mrs. Newman at our meeting in May to bid them goodbye and wish them good botanising in Ceylon.