

NOTES ON REGROWTH IN PART OF THE TARARUAS FOLLOWING THE 1936 STORM

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In 1942 various trips were made through areas in the Tararuas affected by the storm of February 1936. A few years ago (1947) a brief journey was made through another such area; these notes are intended to give some idea of the state of the vegetation then and of the changes that had taken place since 1942.

In 1942 a descent was made from Waiopahu to the Makeretu by a spur from the summit. This spur runs roughly west and although many trees were blown down there was not the complete devastation which occurred on slopes facing east. It was seen that on the western side of the Makeretu the damage was very severe; scattered dead trunks were still standing and many of the fallen trunks were visible from a distance. In the Waitatapia valley a spur leading to the ridge slightly north of Taungata was climbed. This faced east and after a hundred feet or so above the river every tree was blown over. In each case the country was very difficult to travel over as the upper branches of the fallen timber were fairly rotten and one could not be sure whether they would hold one's weight or not. A good many of the smaller branches still remained. Fallen branches were often concealed by a growth of *Histiopteris incisa* and there was a certain amount of *Rubus cissoides*.

In May 1947 a journey was made up the Makeretu River and then up the spur immediately south of the stream south of Goat Canyon onto the ridge between Whareato and Panatewaewae. From the valley floor the general aspect of the west side of the Makeretu valley was very different from what it was in 1942. Many dead trunks were still standing but the hillside was clothed in a growth of shrubs, so that the fallen trunks were quite hidden and a casual observer might not have noticed how great the damage had been.

On travelling up the spur it was seen that the battered rimus left standing were still alive. Fallen trunks were of course still present, but the small branches and some of the bigger ones had rotted away making progress through the area considerably easier. The bare ground, often fifteen to twenty feet across, left where trees were uprooted was now covered with vegetation and not noticed, whereas in 1942 it was still conspicuous.

Many fallen trees of *Weinmannia racemosa* had continued growing, many upright branches having grown from the fallen trunks to a height of about eight feet. Some fallen tawa had grown in a similar fashion. Some young trees about six to seven feet high of *Hedycarya arborea*, *Elaeocarpus dentatus*, and *Knightia excelsa* were scattered about and fairly high up the spur there were thickets of *Suttonia salicina* about seven feet high.

In more open parts *Freycinetia banksii*, *Rubus cissoides* and *Metrosideros scandens* were common scramblers. Plants of *R. cissoides* certainly covered much greater areas than they did in 1942. *Microlaena avenacea*, *Uncinia* sp., *Histiopteris incisa* and *Gleichenia cunninghamii* were common. There were a few thistles. There were occasionally shrubs of *Myrtus pedunculata*, and a good deal of *Pseudowintera axillaris* and young miros and tawas about three feet high. One small totara was seen.

There were tracks made by animals up the ridge, presumably by goats, which heavily infested the valley in 1942 and of which a number were seen on this trip. Deer, although present, did not seem to be so common.

Leaves of *Freycinetia banksii* near the tracks were eaten right back. *Microlaena avenacea* and sometimes *Uncinia* sp. had been grazed. On a small slip there were some plants about eighteen inches high of *Dacrydium cupressinum*, *Carpodetus serratus*, and *Weinmannia racemosa* which had all been severely eaten, although the grass, *Microlaena avenacea*, seemed little touched. Some of the young tawas had been badly eaten, though those a little distance from the tracks were untouched.

A VISIT TO KANGAROO ISLAND AND TASMANIA

On August 15 Miss Lucy Moore gave a lecture to the Society on her visit to Australia in January 1949. During the earlier part of her stay she paid a short visit to Kangaroo Island with a party from Adelaide University. This interesting island, 90 miles long, lies off the coast at approximately the latitude of Whangarei and was probably once part of the mainland. Endemic species have developed on it and at the end of the nearby Eyre Peninsula. Round most of the island steep cliffs rise to the gently rolling interior. At the eastern end mallee scrub and heath predominate, but as the rainfall increases westward low forest takes charge.

In a broad estuary known as Pelican Lagoon which Miss Moore visited, the shore is fringed by a wide belt of *Hormosira*, and further out, by one of *Posidonia australis*, its lower parts embedded in the mud. Except for the difficulty of collecting, *Posidonia* fibre might be used in industry. Miss Moore showed one of the balls of fibre rolled and cast up by wave action.

Shore vegetation included rigid-looking plants of *Spinifex hirsutus*, a *Salicornia* and a bushy species of *Rhagodia*. An interesting low scrub grew on cliff tops, and cliff-dunes fixed by vegetation occurred. The bush *Scaevola*, related to *Selliera*, flowered abundantly on the dunes.