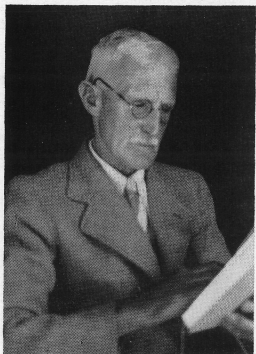


## G. O. K. Sainsbury, F.L.S., F.R.S.N.Z.

NAPIER and Wairoa might well be proud of the memory of their former citizen, George Osborne King Sainsbury, who died in the Napier Hospital on 22 July, 1957. He was born in Napier in 1880, but he did not come to Wairoa till 1910, when he and his brother, Mr. C. R. Sainsbury, engaged in farming near Nuhaka, with cricket as their stand-by recreation. In 1917 they bought out a legal firm in Wairoa and resumed their profession as lawyers. With the Urewera only 40 miles away, the Whakapunake limestones and Morere scenic resort near to hand, and forest remnants in the gullies of the encircling hills, this was a heaven-sent opportunity for an exploring botanist, and Mr. Sainsbury made a comprehensive study of the local flora, and at one stage contemplated compiling a list of the native plants in the Wairoa County. His most notable discovery at this time, and indeed his greatest ever, was the rediscovery of *Pittosporum obcordatum*, which at once brought him to the forefront in New Zealand botany, and occasioned the publication of the first of his numerous papers (1923). So important was the discovery of this species in what is now its only natural locality, that Mr. Turi Carroll donated the land to the nation and the Lands Department fenced it in. Until his departure from Wairoa for Have-lock North, in January 1956, Mr. Sainsbury was ranger of this tiny reserve, in the midst of the Hurumua new Maori settlement.

When Mr. Sainsbury switched over to the mosses in the early twenties a new world opened up for him, followed by 30 and more years of wide collecting, studying and writing. Realizing early on that a knowledge of German was necessary for his work, he borrowed a book and mastered the grammar in a twinkling. In amassing his huge collection of 18,350 specimens, mostly now in the Dominion Museum, he was of course greatly helped by other collectors, and overseas bryologists gave of their time and knowledge to help him with the taxonomy. Mr. W. Martin, and Mr. J. H. Willis of the Melbourne National Herbarium, have already written, in their tributes, of his 39 papers in 11 different scientific periodicals, his new moss family with one representative from Victoria, his new genera and species, and of his charming and helpful letters, for he certainly excelled in letter writing.



Mr. Sainsbury was a man of moods, and even with Dixon's Bulletin and his constant personal assistance, he was oftentimes discouraged by the perplexities which he encountered, but his enthusiasm and good humour always prevailed. For years he worried over the taxonomy of *Sphagnum*. In the Bulletin No. 3 of the New Zealand Institute, Part 6, 1929, Dixon merely gives Warnstoff's treatment of the genus, making 20 species for New Zealand, but he added that "a careful investigation of the New Zealand members with a wide independent judgment brought to bear, would be a very valuable study." Mr. Sainsbury eventually sent a full suite of New Zealand specimens to Dr. A. le Roy Andrews in Ithaca, U.S.A., the world's authority on *Sphagnum*, and well do I remember his excitement and delight on receipt of a letter from Andrews, agreeing with his judgment and authorising him to go ahead, which Mr. Sainsbury certainly did, reducing the twenty to six, with two doubtful.

When the *Handbook of New Zealand Mosses*—described in Bulletin No. 28—finally appeared in print, it was at once acclaimed overseas as a masterpiece. Sainsbury was elected a Fellow of The Royal Society of New Zealand, which he appreciated very much. In a letter to Mr. Willis, Dr. Andrews wrote: "I had a very high opinion of the late Mr. Sainsbury's work and personality. Upon receipt of his Handbook, I wrote to tell him that he had produced the best moss flora extant, of an exotic region—perhaps the best of any region. That seemed to please him, and I might add, was not meant as flattery."

This is high praise from a sound and illustrious muscologist. Mr E. B. Bartram of Pennsylvania, another world authority, wrote, also to Mr. Willis, that he will miss Sainsbury as a regular correspondent more than words can tell. This old gentleman feels that he is now almost the "last of the mohawks."

Although Mr. Sainsbury took no part in public affairs, he did have other interests, such as mountaineering, music, photography, and topping his pine trees. The photograph accompanying this contribution, kindly sent by Mrs. Sainsbury, was taken by himself. Mr. Sainsbury's brother, who was associated with him for so long, survived him by one week only.

As time passes we realize more and more how much we owe to the genius and friendship of the late Mr. Sainsbury. It is fitting that in *Orthotrichum Sainsburyi* Allison, and *Radula Sainsburiana* Hodgson, his name should be perpetuated by the two other members of the "old triangle."

AMY HODGSON, Wairoa.