

## BOTANICAL SOCIETY FORMED

### Meeting In Wellington

#### ENCOURAGING INTEREST IN NATIVE FLORA

With the object of fostering public interest in native flora and assisting botanical enthusiasts, the Wellington Botanical Society was formed at a meeting held in the lecture hall of the Dominion Museum last night. The meeting was convened by the director of the museum, Dr. W. R. B. Oliver, and was attended by about forty persons.

The object of the meeting was to form a society which would interest people in plants—particularly native plants—and he hoped it would not become just a society for botanists, said Dr. Oliver. He hoped that all interested in plants would join. There were many reasons for being interested in plants, and the native flora was one of the most interesting in the world. In addition, it needed looking after very much. Since the colonization of New Zealand large areas of forest had been destroyed, and a society such as they hoped to form could do quite a lot of good in assisting in the protection of what was left.

Members of the society could learn all about native plants through excursions and meetings, and the more they learnt the more interested they would become. Once they had learnt all they could about native plants they could then devote their energies to protecting them.

Mr. W. H. Field recalled how forty years ago he had begun campaigning in Parliament for the preservation of native forest. He had urged Government after Government to do something, but he had been a lone voice crying in the wilderness, he said. Even then far too much bush had been cut down. Eventually he had got a "mate"

in Mr. H. G. Ell, of Christchurch, and together they had succeeded in getting many areas of bush made reserves. He believed that if the society was formed it could do much to increase interest in the wonderful plant life of the country.

Mrs. M. M. Martin said she would very much like to see people who had not done any botany included in the society. So many young people had so much leisure time that it should be possible for them to take an interest.

#### Interesting Secondary Schools.

Mrs. Knox Gilmer said she thought the Institute of Horticulture and the Wellington Horticultural Society would give their whole-hearted support. Her own interest in botany had not got very far, but she felt that her upbringing on the West Coast had instilled into her a love of New Zealand's native flora. If the scope of the society could be widened an invitation to join could be extended to all pupils of secondary schools. It was a matter for regret that study of botany had fallen back in secondary schools.

Dr. Oliver, in reply to a question, said that the board of trustees of the museum had agreed to let the society have the lecture room on the same terms as the Royal Society. That meant that the charge for the use of the room would be a nominal one just sufficient to cover lighting and other expenses.

On the motion of Mrs. Knox Gilmer it was decided to fix the annual subscriptions at 5/- for senior members, 2/6 for university students, and 1/- for junior members.

Officers were elected as follows:—President, Dr. W. R. B. Oliver; vice-presidents, Mr. W. H. Field, Dr. H. H. Allan, Mr. F. S. Pope, Mrs. Knox Gilmer, Mr. J. G. MacKenzie, and Professor H. B. Kirk; secretary, Miss V. M. Norman; treasurer, Miss P. Self; executive council, Dr. I. Newman, Mr. W. A. Beddie, Mr. V. Zotov, Mr. M. Roberts, Mrs. M. M. Martin, Miss E. K. Pickmere and Mr. K. Given.