

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

HON. EDITOR: Marguerite W. Crookes, 31 Maungawhau Rd.
Epsom, Auckland, S.E. 3.

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. P. Hynes, 54 Calgary Street,
Mt. Eden, Auckland, S.2. 'Phone 89-207.

We are always very glad to hear from our country members - particularly when they send accounts of such interesting areas as those described by Mr. R.D. Cresswell of Tokomaru Bay. We thank him for his article and hope he will write again to us of the delightful region in which he lives.

HIKURANGI.

This 5753' mountain is the fifth highest in the North Island, being exceeded by the National Park mountains and Egmont. The translation of Hikurangi means 'reaching to the skies', an ancient name is Maharangi 'Upon which the sky rests'. The ridge lying south-east of the highest point is Taukemawhero.

In 1834 the Rev. Wm. Colenso, eminent priest, colonist and explorer landed at Port Awanui from a schooner. From that whaling station and native village he walked through dense scrub and small clearings with their whares. At the end of the first day he stopped at what he described as the largest Pa he had seen. At Whakawhitira he paced the palasades and found them to total over a mile in length. Over 3,000 people inhabited this Pa.

The forests flanking on Hikurangi are mixed heavy rain forest. At lower levels Rimu, Matai, Miro and Rata are the dominant trees, higher up, red beech (Nothofagus Fusca) and the thin-barked totara (Podocarpus Hallii), then these give way to the silver beech (Nothofagus Menziesii). Further up stands of the mountain beech (N. Cliffordoides) finally give place, with increasing altitude, to sub-alpine scrub. Here the terrain of our cliffs is covered with the trampers' joys, i.e. leatherwood and spear grass (Aciphylla or Spaniard). At about 5,000' this scrub thins out and alpine herbaceous plants make ascent easy after that.

The large woolly-leaved Ranunculus Insignis with its pale glossy yellow flowers delights the eye during mid-summer. In the late summer masses of native violet (Viola Cunninghamii), gentian and geum flower among the rocky crags. In more open situations a white daisy with clumps of silvery foliage, mingles with the two larger white mountain musks or Celmisias. Here and there dwarf grass trees (Dracophyllum) struggle for root hold with cushion moss and alpine totara. Truly a gardener's paradise! It is interesting to note that a herbaceous tutu grows at the bush line on the northern side where an old slip is grassing over. This tutu (Coriaria Pottsiana) has only been found on Hikurangi. A more plumose variety growing in numerous situations, is

found on most mountains in the North Island. A handsome forget-me-not, having white flowers with a yellow centre has as yet been found only on Hikurangi and Arowhana. This Myosotis and the Coriaria Pottsiana are among the rare plants of the world.

In the highest elevations Raoulia Grandiflora (of the vegetable sheep family) mingles with the N.Z. edelweiss (Leucogenes Leontopodium). This differs from the European edelweiss (Leontopodium Alpinum) in the flower structure. Everywhere the well known cat'sear or tall dandelion, such a pest in lawns, thrives as far up as 5,700'.

Hikurangi has been swept by fire twice. In 1913 a fire spread up dry ridges on the north side and burnt several acres of the east side of Hikurangi, and both sides of the Taukemawhero ridge. Rejuvenation is very slow and here and there snow and wind erosion is causing the ridges to fall away, owing to the thick coverage of tundra being burnt away leaving exposed areas to the elements. Another fire a few years ago burnt over a hundred acres on Hikurangi, the alpine flora very slowly re-establishing, together with the common piripiri, cat'sear and cud weeds (Gnaphalium).

Future climbers must realize the slow re-growth after alpine fires, and if garden landscapes such as those of Hikurangi are to remain green and the delight of botanists, remember - be careful of that cigarette or billy fire, for the benefit of posterity.

R.D. Cresswell.

The Society continues to keep a watchful eye on Rangitoto and a party of stalwarts armed with suitable implements has again hit back at invading vegetation. Mr. Brian Hannken has kindly supplied us with an account of this most recent excursion.

Tree Felling Expedition

The Society's campaign against "weeds" on Rangitoto was continued on Saturday, 25th July. A party of fifteen including helpers from the Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Natural History Club and the University Field Club spent a profitable day felling pine trees (Pinus Radiata) on the island. Although over 200 pines have been removed in the last five years there are still sufficient left to constitute an ever present seed-producing menace.

The party split into three groups. One, led by Mr. Dennis, reconnoitred the Islington Bay side of the cone; a second, under Mr. Farnell, worked along the coast track from Islington Bay towards Rangitoto Wharf while Mrs. Hynes led to the Wrecks Bay area. Over 25 pines were chopped down varying from seedlings to 40 year old trees 14 inches in diameter. More were sighted than could be dealt with in the time and further trips will be necessary, particularly in the area to the south of the naval base and along the rugged coast west of the wrecks. In this latter area there is also a profuse growth of Hakea (H. acicularis) up to 8 feet high and spreading rapidly. This may prove even more aggressive than the Pinus.

Our thanks are due to our sister organisations for their assist-

ance and we hope that they, like ourselves, will continue to keep a watchful eye on the purity of our priceless island gem, Rangitoto.

P.B. Hannken.

"The Cheeseman"

The seventeenth Cheeseman Flower Show will be opened at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 25th September.

Last year the Show dealt with the 'Use and Beauty of New Zealand Plants' and apart from the many decorative exhibits, emphasis was on the practical aspects of plant life. This year the Show is being organised by the Museum Botanist with a committee representing the Auckland Botanical Society, and it will be set up with the co-operation of the Museum staff and the assistance of various interested bodies and will, in addition to decoration, be concerned with exhibits of plants growing in special situations, and the detailed study of certain important families.

As regards decorations, always of fundamental importance in any flower show, the aim has been to stimulate the interest of as many outside bodies as possible. The Lyceum Club, The Victoria League, the St. Mark's Gardening Circle, the Y.W.C.A. and others will give their quota of beauty and originality. This, plus the efforts of discriminating individual workers, will ensure that the centre of the hall will be made lovely with varied and original arrangements of flowers and berries. Its beauty should be increased this year by the removal of that headache of past decorators "the butcher's block". Without this monumentally solid centre-piece, the tables should be able to run gracefully the full length of the hall.

The decoration of the entrance to the Hall of Botany will be in the skilled hands of the Titirangi Beautifying Society, which will, we feel sure, deal with this demanding position suitably and with charm.

As regards the bays flanking each side of the Hall, the aim has always been to make them both educative and attractive - a task calling for much thought and energy on the part of co-operating individuals and societies. This year the problem will be tackled from two angles

How often people on holiday wandering over sand dunes, lingering by salt marshes, trudging over gumlands or scrambling through cliff-side vegetation, have found themselves confronted by entirely unfamiliar plants, exasperatingly common in that particular location, but unknown in the more familiar bush. The exhibits on the right side of the Hall will deal with these particular situations and others. A little time spent studying them will be found most rewarding when holiday times come. These exhibits will be set up by members of the Botanical Society and the University College.

At the end of the Hall forming a fitting background to the colourful array of tables will be a display by the Bird and Forest Protection Society. This will show a bushland scene, which will be