

### *Dr H. H. Allan and Forest Botany*

Dr H. H. Allan died in Wellington on 22nd October 1957. He was one of a succession of notable New Zealand botanists who in their day have each had an effect on New Zealand forestry thinking. T. Kirk, a well-known pioneer botanist, was the first Conservator of Forests, appointed under the Act of 1885. Dr Leonard Cockayne was Honorary Botanist to the State Forest Service and carried out many investigations in association with forest officers. Allan was a protege of Cockayne. While he did not pursue his mentor's strong ecological approach to botany, he consolidated the information on natural hybridisation which the two workers had begun.

Allan's leanings and his strength lay in taxonomic botany; not in the old and narrow sense, but in a broad approach which was unusual for a botanist who had had no formal training. He looked at a plant in relation to its variation and ecology. For these reasons he was always loath to attach a name to a plant in the field and would generally wait until he could compare a specimen from it with a range of herbarium material.

A man of very word words, he was, nevertheless, a copious writer and an outstanding lecturer. Before it went out of print, beginners just learning our flora had reason to be grateful for his little book "Trees and Shrubs". Although based on purely artificial keys, this little book contained the first reference to natural hybrids contained in any New Zealand flora. Allan's "Grasses of New Zealand" and "Naturalised Flora of New Zealand" were the first complete floras for these two highly important sections of New Zealand plant life. In his day, Allan had an excellent knowledge of our adventive flora. From the time of his retirement as Director of the Botany Division in 1949, almost until the day of his death, he was engaged in writing a new flora of the flowering plants. The volume of dicotyledons was all but complete. The revision of the genus *Hebe* alone remains and as soon as this has been finished by the Botany Division the volume should be ready for publication. The new flora will be eagerly awaited by practitioners and research workers in the field of forestry, as it will by all students of New Zealand plants.

## OBITUARIES

### ALFRED GRAHAM GROOME

Forest officers throughout New Zealand will have learned with regret that A. G. Groome passed away last November.

Ben, as he was familiarly known, served with the New Zealand forces during the 1914-18 war. On his return home he took up farming on the East Coast-Gisborne district. In 1929 he joined the

Forest Service, being stationed at Waiotapu Forest and later transferred to Kaingaroa Forest as station clerk. Whilst employed as a clerical officer and in his own time, he compiled from the meagre information available a compartment history for the whole forest. This history still stands as a monument to his industry, efficiency and painstaking research.

On appointment to Forest Ranger status he was transferred to Canterbury Conservancy as Officer in Charge, Balmoral Forest, where he spent five years. Apart from this break his service was in the Rotorua Conservancy.

He was a man of kindly disposition, ever ready to lend a helping hand to those in need. He will be greatly missed by those who were privileged to know him well. To his widow, two sons and daughter we extend our sympathy.

D.D.D.

#### R. C. CULBERT

Rae Carrington Culbert died under tragic and heroic circumstances in the Karakoram Himalayas last year. With other members of an Oxford University Mountaineering Expedition he was returning to camp from a reconnaissance of Mount Haramosh when two of the party were overwhelmed by an avalanche and carried a thousand feet down the mountain. Rae spent the next three days in a most determined and gallant attempt to rescue his comrades, and although one came out alive, Rae did not. Truly, he gave his life in an effort to save others.

Rae joined the Forest Service as a trainee in 1951, and soon impressed as a young officer of outstanding character and promise. In 1955 he was selected to undertake post-graduate studies at Oxford. He had completed his degree there and was about to return to New Zealand in 1957 when he was honoured by an invitation to join the Oxford University Mountaineering Expedition. The leader, Captain H. R. A. Streather, himself a famous Himalayan climber, writes of him as follows: "I had only known Rae a short time but we had become close friends. He was one of the finest people I have ever met. He was always straightforward and cheerful, and I never heard him say a bad word about anybody. I can never hope to meet a better person."

Those who knew Rae well will appreciate how justified this tribute was. A most valuable young life has been cut short and forestry in New Zealand will be the loser. The Institute offers its most profound and heartfelt sympathy to all members of his family.

A.P.T.