

especially in Westland, in the centre of the North Island, and in the Urewera, but widely spread. It is often the dominant tree, but it flourishes in mixed forest. Its bark is dark brown, scaling off in large flakes.

4. The matai is called *Podocarpus spicatus* (its flowers grow along the sides of a spike of flower stem).

The young tree is hardly handsome, but very striking. While its main stem shoots up straight as an arrow, its branchlets grow at all angles, forming a tangled pattern; and the leaves, growing sparingly on these, give it a half-stripped appearance. The leaves are narrow, less than half an inch long. On the young plant they are reddish brown, often bluish beneath. As it develops, at a height of 12 feet or so, the matai is transformed. Books say that both the Maori and the early settler failed to identify it with the juvenile form, though it is hard to believe; you may find specimens with juvenile growth below and the adult growth above it. It becomes a densely leaved tree of striking and distinctive form and foliage. Its outline tapers, but not so narrowly as the kahikatea; its leaves become a rich dark green, with a hint of blue; the under sides of the leaves are decidedly bluish.

As a mature tree it is easily recognised by its bark; it is dark, and peels off in small rounded flakes, leaving crimson blotches. Even when these fade the peeling gives the impression of numerous rounded dents in the bark. The mature tree is shorter and narrower than our other great trees. Its wood is so hard and lasting that fallen trunks lie undecayed for very many years. One account tells of a log over which broadleaf trees had grown. The broadleaf was calculated to be 300 years old; yet when it was removed the matai was recovered and split for fencing posts. The fruit of the matai is like a tiny plum.

5. The miro rivals the rimu as a handsome plant when young. It has been described as fern-like; its long, narrow, curving leaves are a glossy green, soft in texture and gracefully tapering, growing in two rows, spreading like fern leaflets. Its branchlets spread wide, drooping at the tips. I have never seen a plant in the bush that gives so much the impression of being a garden specimen.

As it grows, its leaves change little; they become smaller and tough-looking, but still

curve slightly. They closely resemble the leaves of the matai, but are green on both surfaces, not bluish beneath.

Its name is *Podocarpus ferrugineus* (rust-coloured). The bark of the mature tree is dark, peeling off in flakes, and it develops a narrow, rounded head. Its resin is said to be good for wounds, as bushmen knew (a case of healing the hand that bites you). Its fruit is notable. It is like a small plum, crimson, with a waxy powder which gives a delicate bloom. Pigeons are fond of it.

## FROM THE DUNEDIN BRANCH

### The Fiordland Region

A ruggedly magnificent, yet relatively unknown, part of New Zealand, including Dusky Sound, Breaksea, Malestrina and Dagg Sounds, and Crooked Arm of Doubtful Sound, was described in an illustrated talk by Dr. A. C. Begg last June.

A journey made by Dr. Begg and his party was described and illustrated by colour slides. Commencing from Lake Te Anau, partly by boat and partly on foot, they made their way via Lake Manapouri to Deep Cove and Crooked Arm of Doubtful Sound, to Dagg Sound, and through several heavily forested valleys to a magnificent vantage point overlooking Dusky Sound and revealing northwards a great panorama of mountain ridges extending far into the distance. The slides gave some realisation of the unsurpassed and diversified scenery, of water and mountain, of lake and valley, of bush-clad, almost sheer precipices rising up to 4,000 feet from the water, and of the richness of the rain forest.

The party saw several crested penguins, pied shags, the rock wren, and numerous keas, which sometimes tormented them with their mischievous ways. A number of kiwis were heard, but none were seen, and the party's hopes of seeing a kakapo were likewise disappointed.

Many flowering trees and plants were seen, including ribbonwood, mistletoe, gentian, *Ourisia*, *Veronica*, *Donatia*, *Celmisia*, and several orchids, including *Dendrobium cunninghamii*, *Earina autumnalis* and helmet orchids; white climbing rata and red rata, *Phormium colensoi* (flax with dependent flowers), and *Cassinia*; also an uncommon *Olearia* which is peculiar to that region,