

On the eastern side of the range the original Seventy-mile Bush, the belt of podocarp-dominant forest that ran between the foot of the range and the tussock-covered Takapau and Ruataniwha Plains from the head of the Manawatu River to Kereru has been almost entirely replaced by grassland, its outline being roughly preserved by the scattered totara (*Podocarpus totara*, see Appendix 2) of bushy form which appears to have been able to regenerate in grassland in the face of browsing.

Fires have here and there run up the face of the range, and in some instances have been more extensive. In 1910 a fire ran up the Makaroro valley for several miles as far as the start of Colenso's Track, and in 1939 fire in cut-over bush adjacent to this in the Makaroro mill workings has left an area of several hundred acres partly in grassland, partly in dense wineberry (*Aristotelia serrata*) thickets which are still persisting.

There are traces of fire on both sides of the northern head of the Waipawa River, and if even-aged regeneration of mountain beech (*Nothofagus solandri* var. *cliffortioides*) on old screes in the basin is connected with this, as seems likely, an extensive fire occurred here prior to 1903.

Two major fires have occurred near the head of the Tukituki, the first, some time in the 1880's, spreading from either Howlett's Hut or the head of the Moorcock Stream, across the range into the head of the Oroua and further south across the Pohangina Saddle and into the head of the Makeretu River, an area of some 5,000 to 6,000 acres. The name Daphne Ridge is said to come from the abundance of *Pimelea buxifolia* in the scrub-tussock succession that followed the burn.

During the drought of 1946 a fire starting in the Pohangina Hut ran over part of this area, reaching the divide just south of Otumore, but mainly travelling back into the head of the Moorcock valley.

In the Southern Ruahine there are traces of fire on the lower forest margins and up some of the outer spurs, characteristically indicated by dense stands of *Cyathea medullaris*, the large black tree fern, but none of these is extensive. One fire, however, in 1915 ran up the Pohangina Gorge from the west, crossed the range at the Apiti-Norsewood saddle, and went on to Te Ohu Station. My information comes from L. H. Bowden, who stresses that this was a series of spot fires and that the bush in between was untouched. Today a few anomalous patches of *Coprosma/Myrsine* scrub in the forest near this saddle presumably mark the sites of these spot fires.

An extensive fire which is stated to have run southwards along the western margin of the Southern Ruahine about 1927 appears to have been confined to farm land and to have had little effect on the main forest.

VEGETATION

TAXONOMY. For so comparatively limited an area the Ruahine Range has become the type locality of an exceptional number of high-country plants, thanks to Colenso's early missionary visits to the Inland Patea. The regular listing of type specimens and localities in the 1961 *Flora* is, because of this, of particular assistance to work in the Ruahine Range. In addition, the provision of footnotes explaining the history of the nomenclature and the status of the various synonyms and partial synonyms which have bedevilled taxonomists in the past is most welcome, as so many of these originated with Colenso's collections in his later