in their gut, both of which provide the enzymes to digest the cellulose and/or lignin.

As there was no sign of a break in the weather, the party agreed on a fairly early retreat back to the cars and home.

WOODCOCKS KAWAKA PARK SCENIC RESERVE

Maureen Young

Three ferns in Woodcocks Kawaka Park Scenic Reserve near Warkworth - Loxoma cunninghamii, Gleichenia flabellata and Pteris comans (July news-sheet) - greatly surprised Frank Hudson and myself when we found them growing there. The Loxoma and the Gleichenia we have seen in the Russell Forest, Great Barrier Island and Kauaeranga Valley, but we have no knowledge of them growing in this district. The coastal Pteris comans, which we have found at Mimiwhangata and Mayor Island, looked most out of place in a shady, damp patch of bush c. 15 km from either coast. When Lucy Moore was consulted she was immediately suspicious on seeing one patch of each fern growing near the road and nowhere else. She concluded that they had probably been planted, maybe by Cam Finlayson or Jack Edgerley - both now deceased, but both very active in the botanical field in the post-war years. We spoke to Mr Edgerley's son Bill, who lives near the reserve. He was quite sure that his father was not responsible, as he was mainly interested in trees. However, he feels it is quite likely that Mr Finlayson may have planted them.

We will probably never know for sure how these ferns came to be in Woodcocks Reserve, but their presence remains a subject of conjecture.

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WHAKATIWAI SCENTIFIC RESERVE

E.S. Moore & R.B. West

Whakatiwai Scientific Reserve is part of Whakatiwai Block, Kaukapakapa Riding, Rodney County.

This was first owned by the Outhwaite family and kauri was first milled about 1880. The terrain is steep and the project was not particularly lucrative for the family. Much of the kauri was of poor quality and a good number of the trees were left. In the early 1920's the last of the Outhwaite family died and the property was sold to timber firm Canutson and Lovatt. They cut the remaining millable kauri and it was rafted to Helensville by C.S. West and railed to Auckland - about 1928.

The land was then sold to Tung Oil Co. This Company was hoping to promote a new industry - namely growing tung oil trees and extracting the oil from the nuts that they bore. In this area the land was roughly cultivated and trees planted but the trees would not grow. In some northern areas they grew but produced no nuts.

About 1940 C.S. West purchased part of the block, about 2200 acres, for planting trees, his idea being that he would have permanent timber for his Helensville sawmill. R.B. West planted some trees in the following year but the regular planting organised by A.B. West began in 1944. Another small block of land was purchased in 1946.

Part of the area was particularly steep and covered with young kauris, particularly one ridge extending from the trig to the Kaukapakapa River. This ridge had a distinctive pa site. C.S. West said there were half a million kauris! This area was across the river from Wests Farm Ltd, managed by R.B. West and K.F. Moore. Dr Lucy Moore visiting the area and being taken for a hike through the native area remarked that it would make a good reserve to study regenerating kauri forest. Arthur B. West was interested and considering the rates on the whole property were becoming embarassing as no timber was yet fit for sale offered this 500 acre block to the Waitemata County as a gift for a reserve. They were not interested.

The N.Z. Forestry were approached but they were not interested and C.S. West was not impressed with their approach to natives at that stage.

Next the A.R.A. was contacted and they sent Mr Mead and two other botanists to have a look at the area. Although they reported favourably the A.R.A., busy acquiring East Coast coastal areas, was not interested either.

A.B. West, having discussed the project with Dr Moore on more than one occasion talked to her again and she suggested that its real value lay in a scientific reserve available to young botanists and said that she would ask Mr Geoff Kelly from her Department to cruise the area. This he did and produced a favourable report for the idea of a reserve, with a comprehensive list of native species found from the hills and gullies and river mudflats.

The Company offered the 500 acre area to the Department of Lands and Survey as a scientific reserve at no cost provided it fenced the area. The Department were interested and would accept it if the Company would fence it and charge them the cost. The land was held by the Whakatiwai Plantations Ltd, with shares held by C.S. West and his family, with A.B. West as the managing director. Lands and Survey paid the Company $5000. The cost of fencing was about $4750.

The reserve should really be called the Arthur B. West Scientific Reserve as it was his inspiration and perserverance which concluded the deal. He was accidently killed before the final take over in 1968 but his son Edward West made final arrangements.

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