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QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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It is not often that the editor sees fit to indulge in an editorial but all things have their place and it is now appropriate to say something about recent changes in our constitution. When the rules of our Society were first formulated with the assistance of a distinguished and public spirited member of the legal profession, care was taken to see that that members had no lack of counsellors. In addition to a President, Secretary and Treasurer and nine members of committee, there were also vice-presidents to the number of eight, who were ex officio members of the committee. So in previous years our affairs have been directed by a Committee of twenty - surely rather cumbersome direction for a society such as ours containing only about one hundred and seventy odd members, forty of whom live in the country and can thus take no regular part in meetings. One very serious disadvantage of such an outsize committee has been that in order to get our full quota, the same people have been elected again and again. Personally I have always been a strong believer in "new blood" in a society like ours. For this leads to healthy growth and healthy growth means that more and more people not only become interested, but sufficiently interested to take an active part in our affairs. A smaller committee gives much more opportunity for office-holders to change round.

It was this conviction about the undesirablity of the same people remaining in office year after year and not unwillingness to serve the Society that made me refuse to stand for election at the last annual meeting. I might add here that it had also been the intention of Dr. and Mrs. Millener to refuse to stand, but when it transpired that both the newly elected President and the newly elected Secretary had had no previous experience as committee members, Dr. Millener felt that it would be useful for the Society to have on the committee a member of the University staff versed in the matter of making arrangements for the showing of slides, the use of rooms, the arrangement of displays etc.

Dr. and Mrs. Millener will be leaving at the end of the year for a trip to England, and I am sure that all members appreciated their willingness to add to their labours with so many other tasks lying ahead of them.

To return to the matter of committee members. At a General Meeting called prior to the Annual meeting, Dr. Millener moved an amendment to the rules reducing the size of the committee from twenty to ten,

consisting of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, four committee members and three vice-presidents. It was pointed out that the committee always had power to co-opt additional members if at any time it felt it necessary. After a short discussion Dr. Millener's resolutions were passed, and the committee was reduced to what many of us feel to be much more workable proportions.

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The highlight of the evening was a very charming little ceremony which concerned our retiring secretary, Mrs. P. Hynes. For fourteen years Mrs. Hynes has carried on her capable shoulders the major responsibility for conducting our affairs. And of recent years that weight has become increasingly heavy, involving much more than attendance at meetings, sending out notices and keeping records. Incidently, in all her years of office I cannot recollect that Mrs. Hynes has ever missed an ordinary or a committee meeting. In addition to these duties there has also fallen to her lot the often frustrating task of arranging transport for excursions. Of late years our local transport system has become increasingly complex, which has often meant the hiring of private buses, making arrangements for members bookings and dealing with cancellation when necessary. Gone, alas, are the old spacious days of "Train leaves Auckland at 9 a.m. returning from Swanson at 5 p.m." Moreover, out-of-town excursions have had to be organised to places as far afield as Te Aroha, Mt. Egmont and Arthur's Pass.

The Society endeavoured to indicate its appreciation of Mrs. Hynes' labours by means of a presentation. Its exact nature constituted something of a problem, but after various secret top-level talks with Mervyn Hynes, a selection was eventually made. At the appropriate moment there emerged from beneath its black velvet cover, a small mahogany table surmounted by five books held in position by hand carved Indian book-ends. Accompanying the gift was a particularly lovely bunch of roses brought in by Mrs. Holt. A pleasant touch was the reading by the president of a long telegram from Lady Gunson expressing her regret at absence from the meeting and appreciating in the warmest terms Mrs. Hynes many services to the Society.

Mrs. Hynes acknowledged her gifts in a brief but most appropriate little speech.

We hope she will continue to enjoy them in her own home where they will be a lasting witness to the regard and gratitude of our members.

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We take this opportunity of welcoming Dr. H. Nelson to the position of President. Dr. Nelson has been for many years an enthusiastic member though his medical duties have not always permitted him to attend our meetings as he would have liked. We hope very much that he will enjoy his period as President with us and can assure him of the loyalty of all our members.

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