The building has reached stage 2 and can at present accommodate up to 30 children and adults, but when finished will have room for 74 children and 16 staff. The children come in groups at weekends and are being trained to love and appreciate the native flora and fauna. Already much good work has been done. 200 plant species have been classified in the area, including 26 species of orchids. There are also 26 native snail species and numerous birds, among them tuis, bellbirds, kiwis and the rare kokako, the blue wattled crow. The movement owns 1½ acres; there is a 40 acre reserve, and 300 acres nearby are under negotiation for a wildlife sanctuary.

After a welcome cup of tea Mr. Devlin took us into the reserve. He hoped to let us hear the call of the kokako, but it was rather late in the morning and Mr. kokako wouldn't perform. We followed an old logging track down a steep hill and were rewarded with the sight of a rather unusual stand of kamahi. On the track we saw Podocarpus hallii, Pittosporum elliptica, Griselinia lucida, Carpodetus serratus, tanekaha and several large rimu. There were also orchids including Corybas macranthus longipetalus, and on the forest fringe the fern Hypolepis rugosula. We were lucky to find Mida salicifolia in flower, and to be shown a bush of golden rata with Metrosideros fulgens in bloom nearby. We saw a sole puriri near our luncheon site and also Neopanax laetum. Once again time was our enemy and we could not linger, but our host assured us we were very welcome to return. After thanking Mr. Devlin for his hospitality, we had a quick lunch, turned our backs regretfully on Te Kauri Park, Oparau, and sped homewards with more pleasant memories to add to our collection. Our thanks are due to Mr. Caldwell for his excellent leadership.

AN INTERESTING FIND IN THE WAITAKERES

During the Science Congress which met in Auckland about a year ago, a botanical field day was held in the Piha valley and, on the trip, Dr L.B. Moore, head of the Botany Division of the D.S.I.R. (affectionately known to many of us as Lucy) noticed at an elevation of slightly under 1000 feet, a solitary plant of a species of Astelia not previously reported in the Waitakere Ranges, though its identification was not certain from the leaf only. Later in the year, Mr Mead led a small party of members of this society in a search of the vicinity for any more plants, but without success. Mr Mead kept an occasional watch on the lone plant and, in early December, found that it had flowered. The flowers were female, on a raceme deeply set among the leaves, not on a stalk as in the Astelia trinervia, so plentiful in the area. On a later visit it appeared doubtful whether seed was developing. He sent a colour slide to Miss Moore and received this interesting letter in reply.

"Thank you for your letter received today and for the colour slide which arrived in good order. Your picture shows the female flowers of the Astelia perfectly and confirms the identification as the A. cockaynei of Cheeseman. It was lucky that there was a flower so soon after you began to watch the plant, as every

plant does not flower every year by any means. I would certainly be glad to have a snippet off one of the racemes to accompany the leaf specimen in our herbarium. If the fruits are not developing normally it could well be through lack of suitable pollen -- you would certainly have noticed if there had been a male plant of the same species anywhere near. It would have been interesting to try whether pollen of A. trinervia or A. solandri applied artificially would have had any result. Here when we had female but no male Collospermum flowers we tried Astelia pollen on them, and certainly the fruits are swelling nicely and much better than those not treated, though that does not necessarily mean that seed will set.

You may remember that I took a fan off this same plant -- one that was overlapping the pathway. It languished for a while but is now looking very healthy and growing well, but I would not expect it to flower this year and perhaps not even next.

In the shadehouse our Collospermums have flowered very well this year, especially C. microspermum in which the male flowers are white and in short squat racemes as distinct from the longer, fuller, almost butter yellow racemes of C. hastatum. The male (and perhaps female too) of C. microspermum has an unpleasantly heavy almost acrid smell whereas C. hastatum, judging by flowers just out today, smells of damp bush and leaf mould, a nostalgic smell in Canterbury that is anything but unpleasant. Have you come across C. microspermum (distinguished also by its milk-white fruits) in the Waitakeres ? The next few months would be the time when it would be most easily recognised."

Note - Would members please keep a lookout for C.microspermum, and send in a report regarding any plants found.

NGAWHA HOT SPRINGS TRIP - JAN. 28 to 31st, 1966 - MISS M.TODD

Friday 28th dawned fair and bright, with 36 members, our special bus left Auckland at 9 a.m. for the journey north. At Whangarei (108 miles), reached by 12.30 p.m., we had a picnic lunch in the grounds of the beautiful MAIR PARK. Recent rains had kept this area in good, fresh condition, and a stroll by the stream and walks up the lower bush tracks of Mt Parahaki showed us the predominating trees - Towai, Rata (white, flowering), Karaka (orange berried), Tanekaha and, most impressive, a pair of handsome Kawakas guarding the entrance to the grassed area. At 2.30 p.m. we continued our journey north through rolling bush country. On the flats stands of Kahikatea grew, on the hills the rounded heads of Puriri and groves of Totara flourished while, in the smaller settlements along the way, still in use, were the little old wooden houses of early days. An excellent sealed highway prevailed, then 2 miles of dusty road brought us at 5 p.m. to NGAWHA SPRINGS (57 miles from Whangarei). Here we were accommodated at the two hotels, set in a hollow amid open-air hot mineral pools with the warm atmosphere of a thermal region. A walk after tea through scrubland brought us to a small but very peculiar lake. Here, owing to volcanic disturbance, the original old kauri beds had been thrown up, and the huge trunks now littered the sides. The water's surface lay thick with oily bubbles, due to gases forced up from below. The area had been,