

# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

## Ngahinepouri's Community Life



APPLES for the pupils at Ngahinepouri—but the smiles are not only for the apples . . .

“NGAHINEPOURI, Auckland. Farming district seven miles by motor from Hamilton. Rural delivery from Ohaupo.” That’s what *Wise’s New Zealand Index* says. Those who have been there know that Ngahinepouri is neither a town nor a village. It might be called a settlement or, perhaps, in the words of Mark Rutherford, “not a town properly speaking, but the country a little thickened and congested.” Passing motorists would scarcely turn their heads. There’s no store, no “pub,” only a community-hall and a school-house.

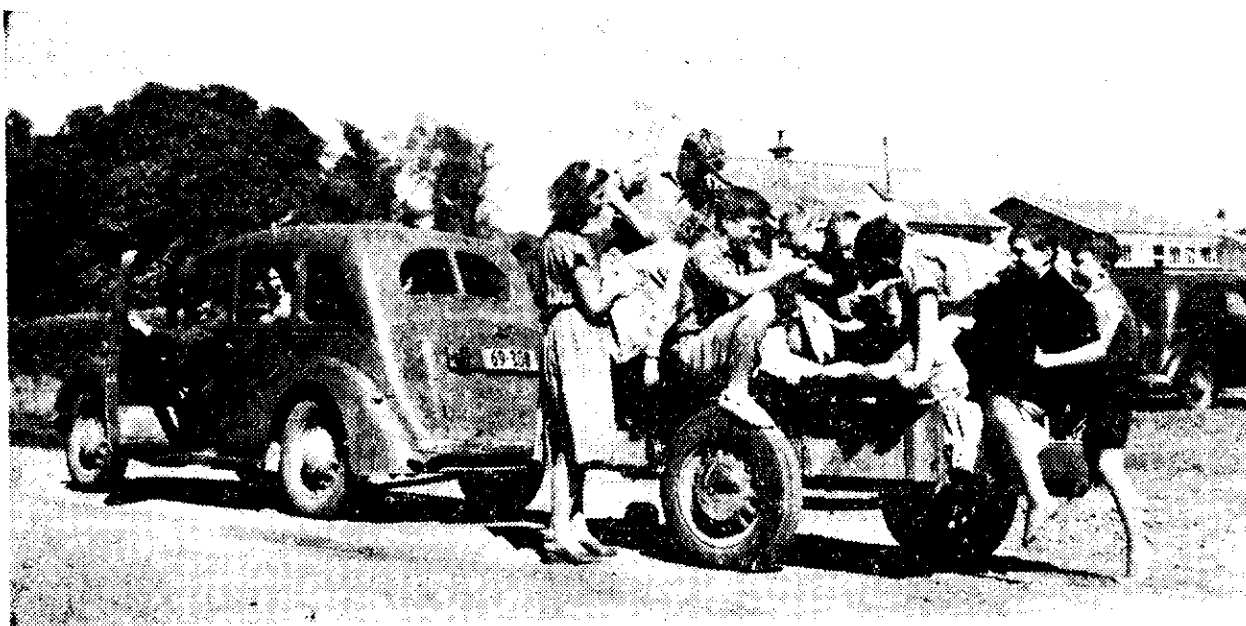
Ngahinepouri means “sorrowing young women”; its history is enriched with the struggles of the early settlers against the raids of the Maoris. Eighty years ago

the only means of transport was the Waipa River which flows near by; supplies came up the river by paddle-boat and canoe.

To-day Ngahinepouri is prosperous, even wealthy. There’s nothing unusual about the inhabitants—the largest proportion of them, like most people living in the country, voted against the Government last November. If an artist were to paint the scene, Mount Pirongia, the district landmark, would take its place in the background; around it would be gently-rolling pastures for both fat sheep and cattle, pleasant homes, and English trees. This description is in no sense coloured by “artistic wistfulness”; hard-bitten stock and station agents would not hesitate to admit that here is some of New Zealand’s best farming country.

WHAT of the people? They are mainly farmers and the families of farmers and are therefore busy people; and yet they have found time to build and develop community activities right outside the sphere of producing butter-fat, meat, and wool.

Three and a-half years ago the Women’s Division of the Farmers’ Union (now Federated Farmers) began social activities and enter aimments on a small scale in the Ngahinepouri Hall. The idea took on, interest grew, and the wife of a well-known farmer, Mrs. J. M. McWhannell, formed what became known as the Community Centre. More than half the “Ngahinepourians” joined, and the co-operation of the Auckland Adult Education Centre was enlisted. Ngahinepouri was brought into a scheme of discussion courses, all the data and notes being sent by post to the district, but organisation and leadership being provided by the residents themselves. Drama, literature, a choral group, gardening, and carpentry classes all flourished. A discussion group, meeting for nightly, was formed by another farmer’s wife, Mrs. Ian Smith: she has four children, but still finds time to act as the group’s secretary. Their meeting-places are the homes of the members.



.... OFF TO THE RIVER this afternoon for swimming lessons—the boys stow themselves in the trailer, the girls in the car.



“KEEP AWAY from the deep water at the bend”—the teacher in charge points out the safety limits before the lesson starts.



WHILE Ngahinepouri’s juveniles are receiving a liberal education, the adults are not being neglected—the Library van arrives at the Centre