

The gardening group began when Mr. and Mrs. McWhannell, themselves keen horticulturists, offered their garden as the subject for a series of lectures. Over the past few years the drama group has put on plays which have packed the little hall. A hobbies club for the men was begun by the local schoolmaster, Mr. Hancock.

The Library, in many respects the nerve-centre of the community, is housed in the Hall and is run by Mrs. Hancock, the schoolmaster's wife. She, too, has young sons to look after. Members of the Community Centre borrow books free of charge and the proportion of non-fiction read is considerable. Books are supplied by the National Library Service which, in addition to making calls with the Library van, provides a regular hamper request service free to the community.

In developing the Centre, stress has been placed on the needs of the children and younger people. One achievement has been to teach all the young people to dance and to provide dances for them at Ngahinepouri so that they are not dependent on Hamilton to provide their entertainment.

A MONTH or so ago, the people of Ngahinepouri organised a community holiday, and though one is loath to use the word, they made it a "cultural" one. Having decided to hold a Community Week, they secured the co-operation of the Auckland Adult Education Centre; and into Ngahinepouri came a stream of lecturers from the city, all specialists in their own fields. The Week opened with a concert, followed by lectures on a variety of subjects—music, child psychology, vocational guidance, drama—when fresh viewpoints from the city met and merged with country opinions. The "local angle" was introduced through lectures on the history of the district, and a day was taken visiting places of historical interest. A special fixture for the men was a visit to the Government's Animal Research Station at Ruakura, where the manager conducted 50 farmers round the estate discussing points of farming interest. The drama circle provided an evening's entertainment with *The Blank Cart-ridge* and documentary films were shown by the schoolmaster.

At the end of the week a cricket match was arranged between the Young Farmers' Club and local players at the Stewart Reid Memorial Park. Saturday wound up with a dance at the Hall, and on Sunday a special church service was held.

THE story told here is probably no different, except in details, from the story that could be told about several rural communities in New Zealand. Activities such as those described help to break down the gap that often exists between town and country. In the beginning, some of the older settlers looked askance at the whole idea of a Community Centre for Ngahinepouri, but they have since come into it as keen members and will acknowledge that it has brought a new spirit into the district, enabling the people to enjoy advantages which tend to be a monopoly of city life while at the same time preserving their own way of living and working.

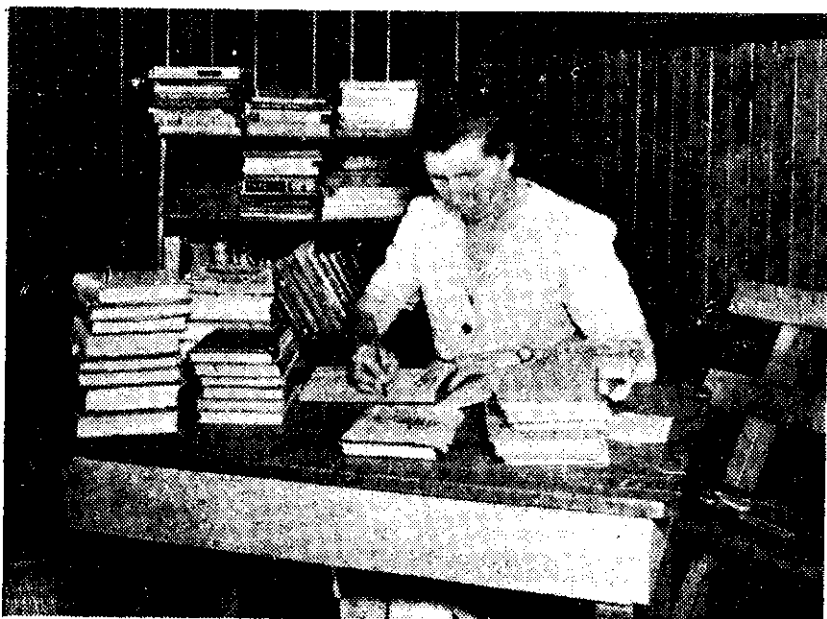
—G.F.



AND ON SUNDAY Church is held in the public hall—the Rev. A. G. Gardiner greets some of the congregation after the service.



NEAR the end of the week a cricket match is played, between the Young Farmers' Club and local players, at the Stewart Reid Memorial Park.



MRS. HANCOCK, wife of the schoolmaster, is librarian for the Centre. The library service is free and the proportion of non-fiction read is high.



WHEN THE SCHOOL week is over, parents play tennis in the school grounds while the younger children amuse themselves safely in the adjoining sand-pit.