

school-children, who begin to arrive as soon as school is out. The librarian's main regret is that the stocking of a special children's section will have to wait till after the war.

Fairlie needs books, because the winter is formidable. Frosts begin in earnest in May, and for three months or more the weather is sub-Arctic. Last year there were frosts of  $34^{\circ}$ . Fairlie people protest that their cold is invigorating, which may be so. But it is a trial, nevertheless. Prudent housewives empty the pipes about three in the afternoon, running off enough for dish-washing and baths. The motorist who forgets to empty his radiator is certain of a burst water-jacket. One motorist tells this story. Last winter he was called out at night and filled his radiator with warm water. He had driven only a few hundred yards when the water-jacket burst; the heat of the engine was not sufficient to counteract the frost. Shattered water-closets are a familiar sight in Fairlie back gardens—a memento of last winter. The school had to close for eight days because both the heating system and the lavatories went out of action.

For ordinary residents, winter in Fairlie is bad enough; for the County Council employees, whose job it is to keep the Mackenzie country's main roads open, it is a nightmare. They are out for days and nights on end with the snow-ploughs, which are equipped with heated shelters in case they do not reach a house by nightfall. Metal becomes so cold that it burns the flesh; frost-bite is a constant danger; and often the snow so completely obliterates landmarks that roads are hard to find.

The busiest man in Fairlie is the engineer-clerk to the County Council. Fairlie has no town board and is administered as a riding of the Mackenzie County. It has sewerage, electric light, and a bitumen-surfaced main street, which is about as much as any township of the size could expect. In the absence of a municipal authority the county clerk combines the duties of mayor and town clerk; he is also secretary of the school committee and the patriotic committee, and was commander of the Mackenzie



**The Anglican Church.**

battalion of the Home Guard. Apart from that, he looks after 640 miles of roads, most of them liable to become snowbound in winter, and 7,350 acres of plantation reserves.

Looking round the main street you would see few signs that Fairlie is a township in a country at war. Both the banks are closed, and all banking business is now done on one day of the week by two bank officers from Timaru. They arrive by the 10.30 a.m. train and leave by the bus soon after midday; and for two hours financial activity in Fairlie is as brisk as it ever is on Wall Street. In the pastrycook's shop garishly-coloured bottles of aerated waters imperfectly conceal the emptiness of shelves. A card in the window says: "No Sweets, No Chocolates, No Chewing Gum." War-time bureaucracy is represented by a printed announcement: "By Order of the Price Tribunal, Cakes 1s. 3d. a dozen," and also by a confused bundle of printed matter labelled "Price Orders." The cleanness of the price orders shows that no one in Fairlie bothers about them. The only shortage that really annoys Fairlie is the tobacco shortage. The general theory is that the Army gets all the cigarettes. There is also grumbling on sale days when farmers and auctioneers