

having bought and sold some hundreds of sheep, find they can't have cold mutton for lunch at the pub. because they've forgotten their coupons.

If you live in Fairlie, you know that the war has made more differences to the township than are visible in the main street. Notices in the Anglican Church ask you to pray for more than one hundred parishioners who are with the Forces. There are few reserved occupations in the Fairlie district, and the young men—and many of the young women—are almost all away. The swimming club, the football club, and the drama circle have suspended operations; the annual show is being revived after a lapse of three years; and the tennis and golf clubs just manage to keep going.

Some day, it must be hoped, some one will write the story of the Mackenzie Home Guard. Fairlie and the Mackenzie raised 22 platoons and were given priority in equipment. The battalion's assignment was the defence of a coastal sector just south of Timaru. When the first battalion parade was held in Fairlie, only women and children were left to watch, and of the women most were members of the Women's Auxiliary. And when orders came to start an E.P.S. organization, the only possible solution of the problem of personnel was to make E.P.S. duties a Home Guard function. The trial mobilizations presented a problem of transport such as few other Home Guard units faced, some platoons travelling nearly 100 miles from their assembly point.

Fairlie has two war industries. One is linen flax, which employs between sixty and seventy workers and has made the township's already difficult labour problem more difficult. The factory is half a mile away on the north side of the town and has near it cottages for married workers. Single women employees live in a hostel. The other war industry, surprisingly, is munitions making. This is a story that might be told round the life of one of the garage-proprietors, a man who has lived in Fairlie all his life and began work in a garage about the time service cars

began to run through to Mount Cook. To begin with, he had the flair for making things, which a man is born with or not born with. In a city he might have been apprenticed to a large engineering firm, gone to night classes, and become in due time a highly competent engineer. Whether that sort of training would have discovered his real genius is questionable. In Fairlie he had a very different sort of training. What he learnt he learnt always in relation to some practical problem. Every second job was a challenge to his wits and imagination. If a service car stripped a crown wheel battling through a snow drift, there was no question of telephoning Timaru to send out another part. There was nothing for it but to make another part. When New Zealand seemed in danger of invasion, and desperately needed military equipment, this man, and others like him in the Fairlie district, went over to war production. They made their own machine tools, they made parts for Bren gun carriers, they made rifle parts, they made mortar bombs, they made trench mortar parts—and they are still in production. In its way, the story of Fairlie's munitions factories is as remarkable as the story of Willow Run.

Indeed, when the official historians get down to the task of telling the story of New Zealand at war, they might do worse than start with Fairlie.



Blacksmith and Wheelwright.