



Mr. Nolan's Home at Okuru.

or depend on the uncertain steamer. This was the way the sick and accident cases went out to Hokitika and the way the wives of the settlers carried their babies back. Air Travel, Ltd., of which the late Captain Mercer was the promoter, has brought the social isolation of South Westland to an end (on plane days you can read *The Press* at the lunch table), but to develop its economic and scenic possibilities roads are still needed.

The aeroplane brings regular mail and small but essential items of freight. It means that business trips can be done in reasonable time, that a holiday can be taken occasionally, that technicians and tradesmen can get in and out, and, most important of all, that the sick can be evacuated to hospital speedily or a doctor brought in when necessary.

Some years ago these people were their own doctors and dentists. Mr. Nolan, or "Dinny" as he is known the length of the Coast, has stitched up a gash in his own leg with a darning-needle and he has drawn many an aching tooth with a pair of forceps given him by a dentist years ago. Thus he can, and does, discuss the technical angle of tooth-extraction with some authority.

The aeroplane has changed all that. Now the settlement farthest south, Jackson's Bay, is within two hours flying

time of Hokitika. Life is still fairly strenuous, however. The Nolan homestead was built from timber felled and sawn on the spot, and when there are any additions to be made to a building or a shed to be erected there is always the bush "just down the road" and the mill beside it. The homestead is big and comfortable, and has all the amenities of any city flat. A Diesel plant supplies ample electricity and there is every modern gadget to make the women's work easier. No one will deny that they deserve them.

Across the aerodrome is another homestead, the sawmill which can handle large-size logs, and a canning-factory which not only cans whitebait in the season but also makes the tins. Naturally there is a fair amount of complicated machinery about the place and naturally it breaks down on occasions. Then the farmer turns mechanic and, if possible, sets it going again. It's not much use waiting for an expert to get down from Hokitika two hundred miles away, even if you could get him in a hurry. You can't ring. All messages go out by wireless from Jackson's Bay. So these ingenious people become electricians, motor mechanics, sawmillers, Diesel engineers, cannery operators, fishermen, and farmers as necessity demands.