

was off for the morning, off until 1 o'clock, and would be probably put off then for the rest of the day. Near the door to the secretary's office was a small poster: "The Truth About Greece. Price 3d. Get your copy here."

Inside the office the secretary, alone, was sitting on a high stool at a desk. We asked him if the men were really interested in Greece. Did they ever express their opinions on international affairs? They were interested, he said, and occasionally talked about international affairs at their monthly stop-work meetings. "It's got to be something exceptional, though," he said. "We're interested, but we don't have much time to talk about these things. Industrial business first. We did discuss Greece and we passed a resolution. We didn't pretend we knew all about it—just asked the Government to look into the matter."

On the streets, in the bars, and in the restaurants you naturally don't hear much talk about anything except local affairs and events on the waterfront. Particularly the waterfront. What's coming tomorrow, what has she got, what is she taking? And when you consider the town's complete dependence on the port an inward-turning like this, a concentration on domestic day-to-day affairs, can scarcely be surprising.

But up the hill we found that, if the Public Library is a reliable guide, the people don't read much either. The library, with a subscription rate of 7s. 6d. a year, had 160 members, 5 per cent. of the population, and not all of them were full-year members. But then a good number of its 6,000 books were old—backs coming off and covers torn—and the room which housed them was overcrowded. Changes were being made, though. With the assistance of the Country Library Service, the library was to open in March as a free library, the nearest to the City of Christchurch. "And," said the Town Clerk, "we'll be disappointed if we don't then get a thousand members." Rangiora, with the competition of two book clubs, has a free library with a membership of 50 per cent. of the population. Kaiapoi has one with a membership approaching



*Most of the houses are old and they have a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are built of corrugated iron.*

50 per cent. Lyttelton, which also has two book clubs, aims to reach about 30 per cent. of the people, and if it succeeds it will have a membership just about the average. Amongst a proportion of its population, however, it will have to compete with the libraries of Christchurch.

Under the new system each resident will be entitled to one ticket which will allow the holder to take out one book, though at present only two tickets will be allowed to each family. Extra books will be available at 3d. each. Not only has the Council agreed to spend more money on books this year, but the Country Library Service, in addition, will supply 470 books every six months and make available its loan collections, request service, and magazine service.

What do the people read? "Current light fiction," the librarian said, "books by war correspondents, anything on the international situation." And she added, "But the men like westerns and crime. Something that will make them forget." An inspection of the shelves showed that, if dilapidation was any criterion, the most popular fiction included that by such writers as Sax Rohmer, Grace Richmond, Margaret Pedler, Gene Stratton Porter, William MacLeod Raine, Joan Sutherland, Peter B. Kyne, Kathleen Norris, Jeffrey Farnol, Warwick Deeping, Jackson Gregory, Ethel M. Dell, Sapper, Taffrail, P. C. Wren, and Francis Brett Young.

As in any small town, Lyttelton's places of entertainment are strictly limited. You can go to the pictures at the Harbour Light Theatre or take