

# Rural Water Supply Amenities in South Canterbury

**A** GENERAL picture of the exterior and interior water supply and plumbing amenities in country homes in South Canterbury was given in the two previous articles in this series by Eirene E. Unwin, formerly Field Officer in Rural Sociology, Department of Agriculture, Christchurch, who carried out a field survey into this subject recently. This month the rating scale which was used to assess the houses surveyed is discussed, and the preferences of the housewives for the various plumbing amenities available are given. Though rural South Canterbury homes appear well off when compared with homes in some other countries, the author concludes that by generally accepted standards in New Zealand the survey result gives no cause for complacency.

**A**PPARENTLY three main factors contributed to the final standard attained in any house water supply. The first was the natural supply of water—its adequacy, purity, and ease of attainment; the second comprised what the occupier had done with the water before bringing it into the house—provision of storage, purification where necessary, and increase in pressure; and the third included provision of interior facilities for use of the water—bathroom and laundry, fixed equipment with drains, plumbing, and a water-heating system.

With almost any natural supply it is possible for a rural home to be provided with every water-using convenience available in town, but if the natural supply is poor, greater enterprise is demanded of the householder to reach this standard than would be required if the natural supply were good.

Thus each house can be rated on three scales—the natural supply scale, the external treatment scale, and the house amenities scale. The total of the scores on these three scales gives the final water supply rating.

## Natural Supply Scale

In the district covered by the survey there were nine alternative sources and these were given seven different scores (see Table 1 and Graph 1). The highest score of course went to a piped high-pressure water supply, for example, the town supply and the downlands supply (see article on page 195 of "Journal of Agriculture" for August 1954). The other sources were given scores depending on the amount of work required to bring them up to the standard of a piped supply. The more work required the lower the score.

## External Treatment Scale

The external treatment scale measured what the householder did to the water before bringing it into the house, and the scores possible varied according to the source of supply. The treatment required for a piped supply (score 80) is provision of storage adequate to tide over an emergency and ensurance of good



Farm home inconveniences. Too often country housewives have to go to a pump or a tap outside, perhaps some distance from the house, for all their water, which is an extremely labour-making arrangement. Added to the labour of carrying the water, the inconvenience of always having to use it frugally is a great handicap to the smooth and pleasant managing of a home.

TABLE 1—NATURAL SUPPLY SCALE AND NUMBER OF HOUSES RECEIVING EACH SCORE

Source	Score	Extra score if water soft	No. of houses
Piped supply (downlands or town supply)	80		55
High spring	70	5	6
Shallow ground water or low spring (that is, having to be pumped)	50	5	105
Deep ground water (if flow ample for all needs)	45	5	7
Deep ground water (if flow not adequate)	40	5	8
Water-race or stream			
Rain-water (plus a good supplementary supply or in an area where there are no long dry spells)	25		11
Rain-water only (dry area, much storage necessary)	15		8
Total			200