

effect on the life of the port. Changes are, of course, occurring all the time: streets are tar-sealed, an occasional new house is built, one or two of the old buildings are reconstructed, electric cranes installed on the wharves. But most of the changes are superficial: they make no deep mark on the face of the town. Neither do they alter the essential sounds and smells of the port nor the way of living of the people.

Some would like to see a large part of Lyttelton reconstructed. Most of the houses are old: one, still occupied, was partly prefabricated in England and brought to the port before the First Four Ships. They have a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are built of corrugated iron. At least one which became vacant recently was found to lack amenities such as bathroom, washhouse, and even kitchen sink. And some betray their age in sagging verandas and lifting iron on the roofs. In a survey of Lyttelton in 1936, 24 per cent. of the houses were found to be unsuitable for the people then living in them.

The Town Clerk says the Council does its best to see that housing is improved, but finds this difficult without the law behind it. "What we need," he says, "is a slum clearance Bill." Others suggest that the Council should undertake a housing scheme of its own with money borrowed from the State, and still others would like to see the number of Government houses in the port increased. But Lyttelton has only seven applicants for State houses on the waiting list, and it is considered unlikely the Government will build any more houses there until the needs of Christchurch have been reduced.

The port's water-supply, which has sometimes been strained, is to be the Council's main concern this year. It is to be improved at a cost of £8,000. The plan is to sink additional wells at Heathcote, at the Christchurch end of the railway tunnel, and lay a new pipe-line through the tunnel to the mouth at Lyttelton. The Council has other suggestions for public works on its list, such as making a recreation-ground on the reclaimed mud-flat area, preparing a residential area at Cass Bay, west of the

port, tar-sealing roads and improving the water-supply at Diamond Harbour, and it may be one of these it will use as a rehabilitation scheme when the war is over.

Last year was a good one financially for the Council and it was able to put £2,500 into bonds. It is hoped to use this after the war with a Government subsidy to provide employment for returned servicemen. And Lyttelton will have its fair share of them. Approximately 90 men from the port are overseas on service now. Fifty-one have returned, 18 are prisoners, 27 have been killed, posted missing, believed killed, or died of wounds, and 2 are missing. So about 188 men, or roughly 6 per cent. of the port's population, have been away with one of the three services. The killed include three boys of one family and the only two boys of another.

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It was a grey February morning with the tops of the hills above the port hidden by slowly moving cloud. Lyttelton looked drabber than ever. Heavy rain had been falling through the night. It was still falling; and down near the jetties great pools of water lay between the railway-lines. The only people about seemed to be the shunters, and you couldn't see much of them in their oilskin coats, gum boots, and peaked-and-slouched felt hats. In the Coronation Hall, the watersiders' hall, a couple of men stood by a fire, talking. Except for them, the hall was empty. Work



Lyttelton's Time Ball Station. Once a day the ball used to drop from the masthead to the base to give the port Greenwich time.