

BARROW DAY IN CHRISTCHURCH

£3,500 For Canterbury Sick, Wounded And Distress Fund



"JACKO" forsakes childish things to take on a man's job of selling savoyes

"CHIV," the early bird, has the help of Mrs. Chivers and his small son

"DAVID" was busy at home, but Mrs. Cambridge represented the family

TO WHEEL her barrow, "Gracie," of 3ZB, had the aid of Fred Hyde

IN connection with the War effort and the very successful appeal for the Sick, Wounded, and Distress Fund, there was a striking illustration of radio listening that brought about half the population of Christchurch into the city streets on Friday, May 31. For what purpose? Merely to see a procession of decorated barrows. But what a procession! It included the Mayor of the City, and six provincial Mayors, and most of the prominent citizens. It included representatives of most of the Social Organisations and Sports Bodies, representatives of most of the commercial houses, and representatives of the workers and from private homes in the city. So great was the crowd that traffic control was completely out of the question. So great was the interest and enthusiasm of the citizens of Christchurch that from the proceeds of the barrows alone a sum of over £3,500 was raised. But the return to the War effort went further than this. The Canterbury Appeal Committee for the Sick, Wounded and Distress Fund has reason to be proud of its figure approaching £50,000. This represents well over the quota desired, and of this amount £11,000 was collected from the citizens of Christchurch on one day, which will go down in the history of the city as "Barrow Day."

How the Idea Originated

During a discussion on ways and means at one of the sub-committee meetings the idea was produced that a procession of decorated barrows loaded with goods averaging £2 would attract the people into town. And people were wanted in the city because it was intended to sell tickets in a One-Day Motor-car Raffle. From among its band of willing voluntary members, the Joint Appeal Committee selected, as organiser of the Barrow Procession, H. Bell, Director of

Station 3ZB, to work in conjunction with Mrs. Clark, who had suggested the idea.

In a space of ten days Mr. Bell and his colleagues at Station 3ZB took the "grain of mustard seed" in the suggestion for a Barrow Procession, and built it up to a point where it comprised over 400 barrows, nearly all decorated. All the personalities at the Station did their bit, even to the extent of obtaining their provisions and decorating and wheeling their barrows in the Procession. The Burnham Band led the parade, and among the attractive ideas incorporated by the organiser was a barrow-load of pennies contributed by every child in the Christchurch education area, a barrow-load of samples from the Combined Banks staff of Christchurch, a barrow-load of contributions and produce from every local body in the district, etc. The size in barrows ranged from three inches to an overall coverage of 40 feet, for an individual barrow. The ideas of decoration ranged from merely white paint up to a windmill six feet high, completely built from flowers.

Five Bands

The procession started from Latimer Square, and was led by the Mayor of Christchurch wheeling a Golden Barrow. Incidentally, the procession had to be started 20 minutes early because the traffic men had reported that Cathedral Square and Colombo Street were so packed with people that any further delay would make it absolutely impossible for the procession, with its five bands, to go through. By the time they had finished their march along the quarter-mile route, the bandsmen were walking single file, and the barrows had just room to go in line through the crowd, which was squeezed back to the shop windows.

The Crowd Was Thick!

Perhaps the best illustration of the density of the crowd could be repeated from the Christchurch newspaper which reported that a telegraph boy caught in the jam with his bicycle and intent on his duty, hoped to be able to lift his bicycle through the outer section of the crowd. He attempted to do so, lifting his bicycle over his head. In a few minutes, so dense was the crowd which packed in around him that he could not put his bicycle down, and he stood fixed in this unenviable position until a conductor from a tram held up in the streets leaned over and relieved the lad temporarily of his machine.

At the conclusion of the procession in Victoria Square, each barrow disposed of its own produce.

A grand day, and a grand return from the barrows, of £3,500. But what of the one-day car raffle for which the procession had been originally designed? Well, the sellers only touched the fringe of the crowd, and were able to obtain £5000 for their effort. In addition, the example inspired donations to an amount of over £2,700, which meant that Christchurch in this one Barrow Day contributed a sum for the Red Cross Sick, Wounded and Distress Fund of over £11,000.

Station 3ZB's studio was very close to the terminal point in Victoria Square, and certainly had more visitors that day than ever before. The great proportion of the visitors was interested in passing on donations or returns from the produce to the Red Cross officials who had, after darkness, taken up their headquarters temporarily at the spare reception desk at 3ZB.

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