



THE thousands of people who converged on Christchurch Cathedral on December 17, 1950, will long remember the solemn and moving Thanksgiving Service wherein the Province of Canterbury affirmed the faith of its pioneers. In old age, today's children will look back over the years to that historic occasion, when, with a magnificent fanfare, the trumpeters marked the end of Canterbury's first century and heralded the new.

The radio review that week by week has presented something of the music

and pageantry of this memorable year to listeners will make its final bow when 3YA broadcasts the 51st edition of *Centennial Roundabout* on Tuesday, July 31, at 8.0 p.m.

This time the programme will last an hour—its fifty predecessors were all half-hour broadcasts. In those 60 minutes 3YA will recapture in vivid snapshot the muster of international champions at the Games, the photo-finish on the racetrack, the coaches of the 1860's as they clatter over the bitumen of the 1950's. History repeats itself in the Lyttelton Landing, the Randolph Breakfast, the Early Colonists'

Ball, the Bridle Path Pilgrimage, re-enacted by descendants of the pioneers. The unforgettable, incredible loveliness of the Floral Week is recalled—its pageantry and colour in the summer weather, the crowds, the processions, the marching girls. And month after month like a golden thread through the festival, the choirs—thousands of voices singing throughout the year. *Centennial Roundabout* appropriately ends with massed choirs singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

The Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. S. G. Holland) will bring the programme to a close with a short message congratulating the Province on its efforts, and wishing it well for the future. Messages from Sir Ernest Andrews, Chairman of the Centennial Association, and Mayor of Christchurch for many years, and from the present Mayor (Mr. R. M. Macfarlane, M.P.) will also be heard in the programme. One of the station's most popular sessions, *Centennial Roundabout*, has been edited and compered these twelve months by E. V. Spencer, Announcer-in-Charge at 3YA. Cheshire-born, Mr. Spencer came to New Zealand in 1938 from London and joined the NZBS at the end of that year as station announcer at 2YZ, then 2YH, Napier. During the war he served with the New Zealand Forces until 1943, when he was seconded

from the Army to the Pacific Recording Unit, based on New Caledonia. But he moved farther than the Pacific war theatre as time went on—to such places as Athens, Naples, Florence, Tobruk. "I was only flying through Tobruk," he told *The Listener*, explaining that he went back to the Army in 1945 and joined the Middle East Recording Unit in Rome, where he was second commentator for 12 months. Returning to England with the first leave party from Italy, he did some recording at the BBC of New Zealand staff in British Forces Clubs. Back in New Zealand after the war, Mr. Spencer returned to 2YZ until 1946, when he succeeded A. L. Currie as Announcer-in-Charge at 3YA on the latter's appointment as Station Manager of 2YA.



E. V. SPENCER
The Pacific, and several points West

THE STORY OF OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, who died in 1919, was one of the most famous figures in the unpredictable business of American theatrical production. In a few years he transformed himself from a penniless youth into an inventor, playwright, entrepreneur and operatic impresario, and finally reached the stage when he chose to be known as the "Barnum of Opera." The story of his life and times has now been made into a musical and dramatic radio serial, which will be heard in New Zealand

weekly, beginning at 1YA at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, August 5, and at other stations later.

Starting out as a cigar maker, Hammerstein became dissatisfied at the slowness of production and invented a machine, only to be laughed at by the tobacco trade. He sold his rights for a song, improved the machine, and this, with nearly a hundred other contrivances, brought him a fortune. Then he wrote three plays for which he also composed music, and to exploit them, leased the Old Stadt Theatre on the

Bowery, but lost heavily. Next he built the Harlem Opera House and afterwards in succession the Columbus Theatre, the Harlem Music Hall, the Murray Hill Theatre, the Manhattan Opera House (No. 1 in 1898), the Olympia, the Victoria, the Republic and the Harris Theatres, most of which this extraordinary man managed himself.

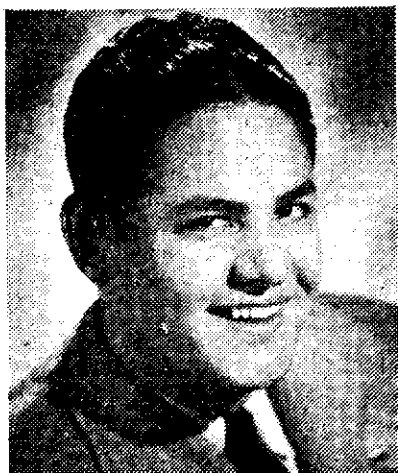
At the Olympia, Hammerstein presented three variety performances for the price of one admission, lost a million dollars and walked out penniless. Then he determined to be the first man to stage Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* in America, but Rudolph Aronson, who had the same idea, beat him to the curtain by five hours. When he built the Manhattan Opera House (No. 2) in 34th Street, Hammerstein established there a brilliant company with an important repertoire. Cleofonte Campanini was the principal conductor and the singers at various times included Melba, Nordica, Tetrassini and McCormack. In a dispute over the rights of *La Bohème*, Hammerstein was beaten in a legal battle but won an appeal, and finally managed to stage the opera. He presented many famous works new to New York, including *Pelléas and Mélisande*, *Louise*, and Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*.

In 1908 he built the Philadelphia Opera House, running it in association with his New York enterprise, and so extending his rivalry with the Metropolitan. After some intense competition,

the Metropolitan bought out Hammerstein's interests, with the stipulation that he should not produce opera in the United States for ten years. He went to London and built in Kingsway the London Opera House as a home for a resident company. It opened in November, 1911, with Nougues's *Quo Vadis?* and closed in August, 1912. Hammerstein announced that he was going to throw in his hand, having lost many thousands of pounds which he proposed to recoup by building forty more opera houses—but all in the presumably more opera-minded United States. An English writer on music recalls that when walking down Kingsway shortly after the London Opera House closed, he had the melancholy experience of seeing a workman chipping from the facade of the building (by then a cinema) the projecting head of its founder.

So, back to New York went Oscar Hammerstein, to build the Lexington Opera House, but the Metropolitan blocked his plans for producing opera there. He was declared bankrupt, and became seriously ill. In 1919, the year of his death, he was still optimistic, announcing his intention of producing operas in New York in 1920.

The serial, called *Oscar Hammerstein*, was produced by 3DB Melbourne, which was responsible for such musical and dramatic shows as *Melba*, *Queen of Song*, *Holiday for Song* and *Glenda*. It is presented by a large cast of Australian operatic, concert, dramatic and variety artists, with the Australian Symphony Orchestra and the Westminster Singers directed by Hector Crawford. Each episode will take half an hour.



LLOYD BERRELL and PATRICIA KENNEDY, who play the parts of Oscar Hammerstein and his wife in the new serial programme which begins at 1YA on August 5