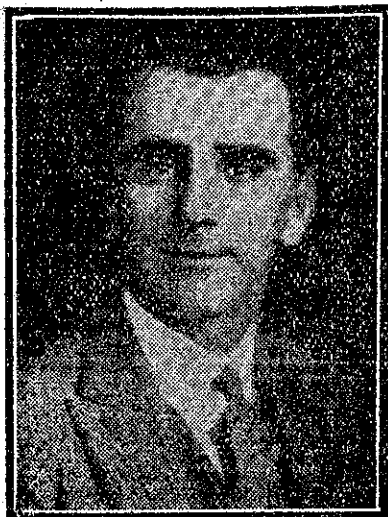


Forget Your Troubles —And SING!



MR. OWEN PRITCHARD,
who, conjointly with Mr. Albert
Russell, acts as song leader at the
Wellington Community Sing.
—S. P. Andrew, photo.

We all like to sing—especially when we know that nobody knows or cares whether we make mistakes or not! And that is why community singing is so popular. At 12.30 every Wednesday, a community sing is held in the Auckland and Wellington Town Halls, and on many occasions accommodation is packed to its limits. These sings are broadcast from 1YA and 2YA, and their popularity with listeners-in is evidenced by the telegrams and heavy mails received after each broadcast by the organisers in both centres. All letters are appreciative, and many show this in more tangible form by the inclusion of very acceptable donations for the collection boxes. On several occasions sailors and passengers on board ships in mid-ocean have given practical proof of their enjoyment of these concerts by "taking the hat round" and forwarding the proceeds on reaching port.

COMMUNITY singing is not new to Wellington. Many remember how during the hard days of the 1921 winter a crowd would assemble one day each week in the Town Hall, there to forget their troubles in singing. That this was the panacea for which the public was then waiting was evidenced by the fact that from a small effort commenced in the Concert Chamber of the Wellington Town Hall, there sprang up in the course of a few weeks organised community sings in about fifty of the largest towns in the Dominion. Mr. Albert Russell, well known as an organiser and song-leader of such entertainments, himself established then in Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland,

One sing in Wellington created a record, there being over 6000 people present. The Concert Chamber and the main Hall were packed to their limits, and 3000 more clustered in the streets outside—all singing, singing, singing. These sings, which were renewed during the winters of 1922 and 1923, have not fallen in popularity since then, but this year, with its accompanying financial worries, has been an enthusiastic revival, and now community singing is more popular than ever.

This is easily understood by anyone who has attended one of these gatherings. One perhaps goes there with a bad attack of the "blues," but after ten minutes of lusty roaring, with bright quips by the song-leaders, taxes, unemployment and other spectres which haunt many people these days, all assume laughably small proportions.

Community singing in Auckland has developed side by side with that in the Capital City. Inaugurated in 1921, the movement has persisted to the present day. Though admission is free, collections are taken up, and the response in Auckland has been such that in the past five years £643 has been distributed among the various local charitable organisations. In addition to this, £90 was paid into the Murchison and Hawke's Bay Earthquake Funds as a result of two special sings.

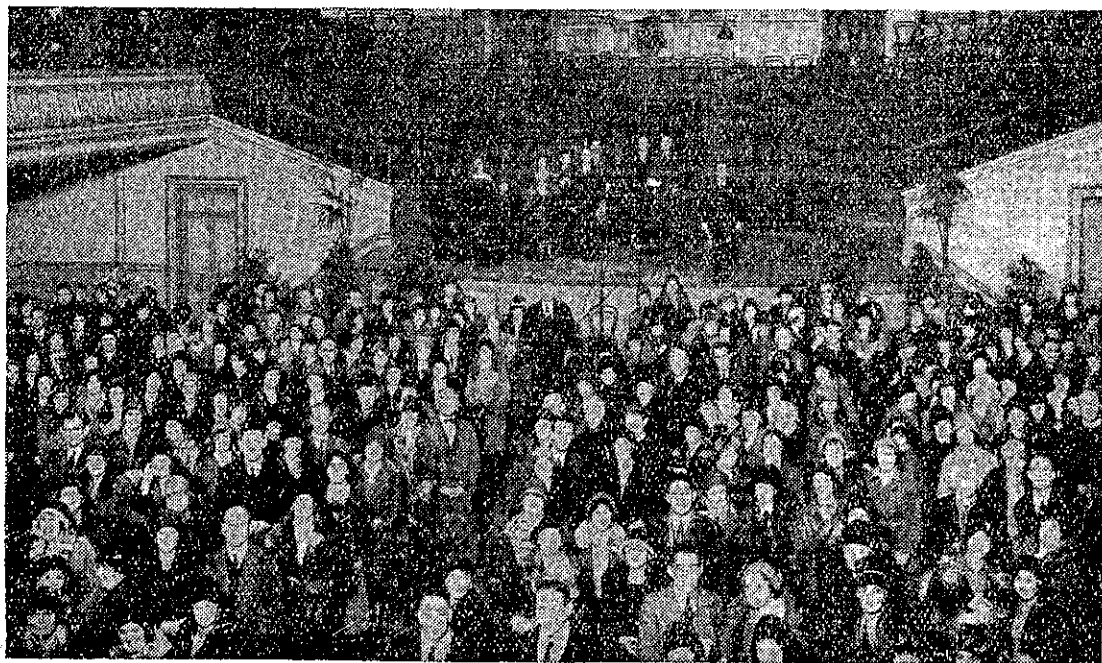
In past years the community singing season commenced in Auckland in June and continued until the last week in September, but, in response to many requests, this season began on April 22, and it is proposed to continue it until October 7.

On the other side of the world community singing has enjoyed immense

popularity. At one period every gathering in the Mother Country—no matter for what object—was preluded with a community sing. Many employers recognised the undoubted benefits of such sings, and set aside fifteen minutes each morning for such a purpose. Imagine all the employees of a big department store, all gathered together on the ground floor, conductor on the staircase, making the building ring to the melody of "Pack up Your Troubles," etc. No doubt such practices did much to help England successfully pull through the difficulties of the after-war period.

IN Australia to-day community singing is the order of the day, and for a two-hour period each week the main halls of the capital cities are packed with people eager to forget their troubles.

As in everything, community singing has advanced with the times, and instead of old-fashioned, cumbersome song volumes, neat pocket-size books of "words only" are now available for the singers, while the accompanist has the music of the same songs in a larger volume. The profits from the sale of these song books, obtainable at a nominal cost from music dealers, go toward the collections.



A happy crowd of community songsters in the Wellington Town Hall. Mr. Owen Pritchard may be seen standing toward the front of the stage with the microphone a little to his right.

—H. T. Robson, photo.