

Several things were obvious. We were by inheritance the voice of the community. In the scheme of things to come we could play a vital and useful part. We had the machinery, hoped we had the drive to put it to the best use.

The first thing to go by the board was that 45 per cent. circulation. How could we serve a community if we were reaching less than half of it? The library was our cue, the answer was a blanket delivery to every home.

A hundred problems came hard on the heels of that decision. Newspapermen will shudder at the thought of such folly. We did our share of shuddering, too. But in the event, I don't think we lost any "prestige"; I think we served the community better than ever before, and we certainly made friends. The financial results were inconclusive, because of the war which was to interfere, but they were promising, and we were certainly no worse off than before.

Nights of planning, estimating, innovating produced answers to most of those hundred problems. They also produced an inch-high pile of typewritten manuscript, and every morning an office table littered with scribbled scraps of paper and cigarette ash.

The problems? We had decided to become a "free" newspaper. How could we do it and face our friends? The thing we get for nothing has no value! You can't sell your newspaper, so you are going to give it away! What were the counters to these gibes?

First of all, our readers would know of no other reason for the change-over but that we were determined to play what we saw to be our role in the development of community life. To the name of the paper, on the front page and over the leader column, and on all our stationery, we added the words, "The Community Newspaper." The price, 2d., was retained. A subscription was retained—a voluntary subscription. (We expected nothing from this, and were surprised.) We tied up even more closely with the community centre, the high school, the free library, the churches, the local bodies. An attractive "ballyhoo" folder was prepared for advance distribution to

every home. It was important that we be well announced.

Finance was the next big problem. Would the venture pay, or would it bite the dust? Against the loss of regular subscriptions and the increased cost of production and delivery, would advertising revenue balance? We studied it from every angle. Careful estimations were made of the probable increase in "casual" advertising; "contract" advertisers were "sounded." The reaction seemed favourable. We made our calculations, and this time we were *not* surprised. The front page was rearranged, labelled "The Notice-board of the Community." In action it was a honey. For the first time, Mrs. Brown could advertise her lost watch, the tennis club its forthcoming ball, the Borough Council its general notices, and know that every home was getting the message. It was a good service, and it earned the right reward. Business houses using contract space were also quick to realize the advantages of over-all coverage. They contracted for more space, paid a better price for it.

Biggest headache was the news side of the venture. There is a lot of news

