in a borough and a dozen smaller places scattered about the district, some up to twenty miles away. But it is " small " news, hard to gather. The traditional method of collecting this news is to find in each village some public-spirited person who is " in " everything to act as correspondent. He or she is paid so much per column. But these days it is often impossible to find such a person, and when a choice is made it is often unsatisfactory, especially when the novelty has worn off. In any case, our budget allowed for one reporter only, and he would be fully occupied in the town and at the office.

There was one way left. We could rely on the voluntary contributions of readers in these country districts. Newspapermen will shudder again. They know how easy it is to get Mrs. Smith to promise a report of her daughter's twenty-first birthday party. They know, also, how close to the impossible it is to lay hands on the actual copy. When a week has gone by and you meet Mrs. Smith in the street, she hasn't had the time, or she didn't know how to start, she's so sorry, and you say it doesn't matter. But you didn't get that story. In a small newspaper little stories like that are news.

Some way we had to make it easy for amateur reporters to work for us. The answer was: forms. We devised forms to cover every standard function; weddings, birthday parties, dances, kitchen evenings,; meetings of all kinds; sports events, cricket, tennis, golf, football, basketball matches. These forms made it easy for people who previously never got past chewing the ends of their pencils. Around them we built a system of keeping check, mailing, elbow-jogging, and so on.

It worked, better than we had expected. The forms went out, and most times they came back again, promptly, in their preaddressed envelopes. Over to the reporter, it was his job then to be a rewrite man. Sometimes a smart linotype operator wrote the forms straight into lead.

The first issue was marked by a change of " dress," some new features, including an inexpensive illustration service from Copenhagen (of all places), and a general brush-up. Later we installed one of the new " legibility " type faces, a big improvement. We were determined to maintain a standard; in spite of the removal of the circulation incentive, there would be no slipping back. From week to week we printed the homely, intimate story of what people do who live in a small town and in the townships and on the farms nearby. But in addition we carried to every home this kind of story: reviews of interesting new books available at the library; a record of the beginnings and hopes of our community centre; a column from the churches, which carried their message beyond four walls. Not many New-Zealanders write good books; one, favourably received here and abroad, first saw print in our pages. These things were not bought and paid for. They were contributed by readers for readers. We were the medium. We became twice as effective, three times as useful. We had met the challenge, and as far as events allowed we had succeeded.

But less than a year later, there was war. All thoughts of community development, except along necessary lines, were dropped. Plans for the centre went on the shelf. All our newspaper staff were eligible for military service; one by one they went into camp, and soon I followed. We had already suspended publication for the duration.