

The Origin of the Festival

In 1911, Dr. Charles Harris, of Ottawa, organized a Musical Festival Tour of the Empire, with the famous Sheffield Choir, conducted by Dr. Henry Coward. This splendid Choir visited our City on May 15 and 16 of the same year, and gave two evening and one afternoon concerts. The latter to afford our school children an opportunity of hearing the famous singers. Dr. Harris was so much pleased with the spirit and enthusiasm of our teachers and pupils on that occasion that he decided to present a trophy to our School Board for competition among the schools. This consummated some time later in the form of a handsome shield, with the stipulation that it be competed for annually by choirs of school children who should be trained wholly by the regular grade teachers, and that the competition must be in public. The adjudicators to be appointed by the Trustees of the Shield.

The School Board gratefully accepted the gift on these terms, and commenced arrangements for the competition last year, but through the delay in the arrival of the necessary music, were compelled to postpone it until this year.

In the meantime, the Vancouver Musical Society, which has been organized and developed under the auspices of the School Board, had made such splendid progress, that it was thought desirable to amalgamate the forces and arrange a two-day festival, which we trust is but the earnest of what is to follow in years to come.

That the competitive festival movement has done much for music in the British Isles every music lover knows. It is chiefly through this instrumentality that choral music particularly has been raised to such a high standard of excellence. One of the most striking things in connection with competitions there is the frequent high excellence of the results attained by school classes and choirs. This occurs all over the country and springs up sometimes in districts where the adult choral singing is indifferent. All this goes to prove the natural capacity of children is almost everywhere good, and simply awaits the fairy wand of a good teacher.

It is hoped, therefore, that the movement just started here will receive encouraging patronage from the public, so that it may be a stimulus to musical activity in our City and its influence be felt throughout the Province.

THE COMMITTEE.