

Saskatchewan Junior Bands

by ACTING CORPORAL D. G. CHATER

Music is the eye of the ear; Junior Bands widen the vision of the ear and ignite a spark that flares into a flame of inspirational pride.

MANY and varied are the responsibilities of the detachment member. In early summer of 1937, when asked to instruct the Bengough Junior Band in drill and marching, I was dubious about accepting the implied honour. I decided, however, that it was an opportunity to serve the community but explained to the executive I would act only in so far as my detachment duties permitted.

The venture was a success; so much so that two years later I received a similar request to give assistance to the Viceroy Jubilee Band.

As my knowledge of music is limited this is written from the view-point of a marching instructor only. In working out a syllabus for marching I adopted a method based on the principles taught by instructors of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I began with the correct standing positions and outlined the proper marching movements. In the case of the Bengough Band I discovered that, although they had received some training, there was a distinct lack of discipline. This had to be rectified by the only measure available—a very stern front. Some pupils seemed unable to grasp the difference between walking and marching; others found it difficult to acquire the proper swing of the arms.

Another difficulty was to achieve an eye-pleasing marching formation. For the players, who had to be placed according to the instrument they played, varied greatly in height. Some tall players when in the front line were inclined to overstep and set a pace that proved uncomfortable for the shorter players. But the major problem was the fact that inexperienced members often became so engrossed in their music that they marched out of line and broke up the formation.

Nevertheless there has been a decided improvement in deportment and rank.

Some critics argued that marching lessons were unnecessary; that they created a military aspect and forced the band member to be a sort of compulsory soldier. These fault-finders, few in number, overlooked the fact that all organizations of this nature must train along lines prescribed for smart appearance.

On the other hand the majority of onlookers, including the band members' parents, have commented favorably and approve of the training syllabus. Remarks regarding turnouts heard at such places as Regina, Moose Jaw, Ogema, Saskatchewan and Scobey, Mont., U.S.A., signify general acclamation.

The public and the participants derive much benefit from such bands. During



BENGOUGH BAND, 1938