

May 18, 1923

THE S.A. JEWISH CHRONICLE

**A Shortage.**

I have noticed in practically every Jewish paper published in the British Empire, advertisements for ministers and *Chazanim* and, in short, it must be admitted, that the supply is nowhere near the demand. The problem of ministers is, of course, a serious one and optimistic as one may be, it will be a lengthy period of time before any likelihood of a third of the congregations who are in need of spiritual leaders are satisfied. The ministry seems to have lost its attractiveness for our young men and I doubt whether even the War Memorial Scheme will be of much avail. True, we have many learned men in Europe, especially Eastern and Central, but the great drawback as far as they are concerned is, that they are unable to speak English and the demand as far as the ever growing Jewish congregations of the British Empire is concerned, is for men who are able to deliver their sermons in fluent English. Hence the shortage.

The Question of "Chazanim"

But, it is more with the question of *Chazanim* that I wish to deal with in my this week's article. In Johannesburg alone, I know of at least three congregations who are doing their utmost to fill a long felt need and, I am afraid there is little likelihood of any real success being achieved in the immediate future. One must remember that a tremendous responsibility rests with those who are responsible for securing the gentlemen so badly needed. A *chazan*, to my mind, and I think this opinion is shared by all, must not only be a good singer and a musician he must be eminently suited for his holy calling. He must be a man who, next to the rabbi or the minister of a congregation is able to lead the flock and, we in South Africa, do not need the type of person who, at present, is touring America like a travelling revue company. Let me explain, looking at my last batch of

American papers, I notice in several of them from that wonderful *medina*, whole page advertisements announcing concerts by various *chazanim*. Their usual custom is to engage a hall, one or two variety performers and to announce that in addition to the *maariv* service being intoned a concert will follow. High prices are charged for admission and, when the High Festivals come along these people with such peculiar notions literally fight with one another to get booked up by one of the wealthy congregations, the majority of whose members only recognise their Judaism on two days in the year and think more of the singing than the significance of the event, as far as their being Jews is concerned. We in South Africa have not reached that stage yet and I do not think that we will ever descend to make such a mockery of our Holy Faith, as far too many of our American co-religionists have done.

More Experiences.

Just to show how difficult the whole situation is, might I also give an example or two from one of the leading Anglo-Jewish congregations. After being a faithful and a devoted servant for close on thirty years it was decided that its *chazan* should, as soon as a suitable successor was found, be pensioned off and thus enjoy a well deserved rest for, in addition to his duties in the synagogue, he had like all good men of his calling played in a no small part in communal affairs. For the last five years efforts have been made to obtain a right man but with no success despite the fact that the salary offered was a substantial one. In fact nearly as much as we are prepared to pay here in South Africa. No suitable man has been found and in the last mail I received a letter from the minister who is a particular friend of mine telling me that the position was still vacant. If such is the case in a country where it should be comparatively easy to obtain the best of anything, how

much more so is it going to be for us here? One can rest assured that our local officials are going to take every precaution to safeguard their fellow members.

A Solution.

It is no secret that a happy state of relationship exists between the senior Jewish Congregation on the Witwatersrand and the Orthodox Hebrew Congregation and this state of harmony is likely to become even more pronounced in the immediate future. A great step to unity could be accomplished if the latter body were to come under the aegis of the former, for not only would the difficulty of obtaining a *chazan* be overcome seeing that the Orthodox Hebrew Congregation already possess one who not only is highly efficient but admirably suitable in every way but it would be the forerunner to achieving what is a long felt need, a union of congregations with one spiritual head.

THE S.A. JEWISH ORPHANAGE.**Arcadia Building Fund.****First List Of Donors.**

The South African Jewish Orphanage Committee announce with pleasure the completion of their organisation for the collection campaign for the Arcadia Building Fund. The convenors have cheerfully responded to the committee's request, and the honorary collectors have already commenced their personal calls. The first results reached the committee at its meeting last evening, when the following donations were reported:—

Messrs. Schneier and London	£250
" Hillman Bros, Ltd.	250
" Heymann, Gordon & Co	250
" A. R. Bradlow, Esq.	100
Sive Bros. & Karnovsky, Ltd.	100

General dealer's Kaffir Eating House & Butchery business registered Boksburg, name Louis Butcovsky on Stand 314, Driefontein Farm, transferred to Abraham Glaser as from the 1st May 1923. Chas. Hoppenstein, Agent, Box 424, Benoni, & Box 152, Boksburg (Adv. 355). 18.25.1

Notice is hereby given that the general dealer's licence registered in the names of David Bloch and Harry Eberlin, trading as Bloch & Eberlin, at Stand No. 271, Central Road, Fordsburg, has been abandoned as from the 12th May, 1923. Cur & Duthie. 18.25.1

Notice is hereby given that the general dealer's business carried on by Edward Hart, under the style of Phitwell Brothers, on Stand 642, No. 73, Market Street, Johannesburg, has been abandoned from 1st June, 1923. Edward Hart. 18.25.1