

Chevra Kadisha and the Jewish Clergy

Annual Meeting of the Helping Hand Society

THE annual general meeting of the Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society of Johannesburg and Suburbs was held at the Hebrew High School on Sunday morning. There was a small attendance, presided over by Mr. M. Reuvid, the president.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and balance sheet, expressed regret at the smallness of the attendance. After all the work they had done, the Chevra Kadisha deserved that more interest should be taken in its work than was evidenced by the size of the attendance that morning. They had sent out 4,500 notices and that was the result. Owing to the election of the Finance Committee last year, the work of the society had greatly improved. He paid a tribute to the Baaley Messaskim and to the lady Missaskos, who had more work during the past year owing to the increase in the number of funerals. He referred to the unflinching courtesy extended to the society by the hospital authorities when cases were sent by them to the hospital. The Jewish ministers were doing good work visiting the hospitals and prisons, and especially active in this respect was the Rev. Mr. Shrock, of Yeoville.

Mr. M. Rubenstein, the vice-president, seconded the resolution and said that the Chevra Kadisha to-day was a big institution handling a large amount of money. During the past year many improvements had been introduced into the institution. He regretted that the young men of the community did not come forward to take a share in the work of this society. Mr. Rubenstein said

there were many young men in the community who did not mind paying the membership to golf clubs but were unable to pay 30 shillings per year for the Chevra Kadisha.

More Help Needed.

MR. S. B. FRIEDE, in support of the resolution, said he felt sure that much more money than £12,000 could have been distributed and that there were cases where larger amounts could be given to the recipients. There was a class of people who were in great need but who would never come to the Chevra Kadisha, and he appealed to people who knew of such cases to bring them to the notice of the Committee.

Mr. B. I. Bloom said that he disagreed with the statement of the Chairman that the clergy were helping in the work of the society as much as they should. It was a custom that the minister, who saw to the inscription on the tombstone, for which he got a commission from the mason, must attend the unveiling ceremony, and he gave an instance of the trouble that arose at a certain unveiling because a particular minister was busy with a funeral. He was afraid that in so far as their society was concerned their clergy were all out to make money, which was regrettable.

Ten Thousand Members?

MR. SAM KATZEN said that it should be easy for them to get a membership of 10,000 or 15,000, and incidentally he pointed out that 90 per cent. of those who gave to the Keren Hayesod also gave to this and other institutions.

Mr. L. Frank said that the institution itself was helping to create a loafing class. He pointed out that a great deal of the work of the society could be done by the Benevolent Society, if the Chevra Kadisha would themselves be the sureties in those cases which required help.

A Minister for Burials.

CHIEF RABBI DR. J. L. LANDAU said he objected to ministers taking money for tombstones. But that was an arrangement between the minister and the mason. But what annoyed him most was that some of them could not write the epitaphs correctly, with the result that one found mistakes on most of the stones. That should be avoided. Years ago he had urged that the Chevra Kadisha should either, as in other countries, have its own minister, or else have the power to get in touch with the minister of a congregation and make arrangements with him.

Dr. Landau added that there was a standing outcry at meetings of the Board of Deputies—which should confine itself to its own matters—as to why the ministers do not attend the sick. He pointed out that there were over thirty wards in the General Hospital alone, and there were other hospitals, nursing homes, and especially the Rietfontein Hospital, where there were chronic cases of people who could never get well, and which was therefore like a living grave to them. It was a most pitiful thing, but he (Dr. Landau) could not do everything.

But there were young ministers and *chazonim* who should be called upon to visit Rietfontein and other hospitals, and it should be arranged that every one of the ministers should attend to it.

The Rev. Mr. Shrock did his duty. He attended the hospitals regularly every week. The Chevra Kadisha should write officially to the congregations and claim that their ministers should attend to the hospital work, and they should also see that the epitaphs on the tombstones in the cemetery should be correct. In conclusion, Dr. Landau expressed the thanks of the community to the Committee for their noble self-sacrifice in doing such excellent work for the Jewish community.

Councillor H. Kroomer said that the reason for the small attendance was that there were no elections that morning. He pointed out that the time would soon come when they would have to get a new cemetery, and that would cost about £4,000. Previous speakers had given advice on what the society should do to increase their members, etc. Let those who spoke come along and offer their services, instead of only advice.

The adoption of the report and balance sheet was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The Honorary Officers.

THE choosing of honorary officers and Committee resulted as follows: President, Mr. M. Reuvid; vice-presidents, Messrs. M. Rubenstein and S. Kessel; hon. treasurer, Mr. S. B. Friede; hon. secretary, Mr. A. W. Katzen; governing body, Messrs. B. I. Bloom, M. Sand, J. Jaffe, H. Daniels, D. Lynn, J. Distiller, H. Kroomer and B. Plein; Baaley Messaskim Committee, Messrs. Ch. D. Joffe, A. Lederman, L. Krawitz, H. Marks, H. Hirschowitz and W. Jacobs.

The Chairman in returning thanks mentioned that he had just completed 29 years' service on the Committee of the Chevra Kadisha.

Mr. B. P. Marks moved a vote of thanks to the Executive and Committee, as well as to the paid officials, which was carried unanimously.

Balfour Day Meeting

Dr. Landau and Cabinet Minister to Speak

On the sixteenth anniversary of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, a public meeting will be held under the auspices of the Nordau Club, in the Selborne Hall, Johannesburg.

Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau and the Hon. P. G. W. Grobler, Minister of Native Affairs, will speak. The meeting will take place on Sunday evening, November 5, 1933. Mr. I. E. Judes will preside.

Kapay House-to-House Collection

Under the auspices of the Johannesburg League for Working Palestine, the annual 1s. day, house-to-house collection for the Palestine Workers' Fund (Kapay) will take place on Sunday, October 8th.

The following is a list of the different district supervisors: Central, J. Kretzmar and A. Etkind; Yeoville and Berea, Mrs. Milstein and J. Bahr; Doornfontein, Mr. Batnitzky; Observatory, Mrs. Feldberg; Hospital Hill and Hillbrow, Mr. J. Penn; Bertrams, Miss Aron; Parktown, Miss N. Lazarus; Troyeville, Mrs. D. Segal.

The collection for the Eastern Districts, Mayfair and Fordsburg, will take place on Sunday, October 15th. It is hoped that the public will generously respond, as they have done on previous occasions.

The Yiddish Players

The interest in Yiddish plays on the part of theatre fans in Johannesburg was well indicated on Saturday evening last when a crowded house greeted the new company of Yiddish players, headed by Vera Kanavska, Paul Breitman and Simche Natan. These three artists were assisted by several members of the gifted company. The play, "A World of Love," proved to be an operetta full of tuneful melodies and dances. It was a play of light character which evidently pleased the audience.

On Monday evening the players were seen in a straight drama entitled "The Eternal Mother," which illustrated the artists' ability in dramatic roles.

On Friday evening the company is appearing in another operetta. It is impossible for the company to stay here longer than three weeks, and the management trusts that the Jewish public will support the Yiddish Players during the whole of this period.

Relative Sought

The present whereabouts are sought of the relatives of Samuel Grossmith, of the Upington District, who has not heard of his people for over twenty years. His father's name is Barnett Grossmith, and his brothers' names are Simon, Moses and Abraham. The last home address was 18 Chicksand Street, off Brick Lane, London, E.

Anyone having information of these people should communicate with Mr. S. Werbeloff, P.O. Box 11, Upington, C.P.