

Board of Deputies Congress.

Deliberations on Sunday and Monday.

Prime Minister's Message.

(Special Telegraphic Report.)

The Tenth Congress of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies was opened on Sunday morning last at the Durban Jewish Club in the presence of a large gathering of delegates and others. Mr. Hirsch Hillman, President of the Board, was in the chair.

The Congress was opened with a prayer by Rabbi E. M. Levy, after which the Chairman made sympathetic reference to the sudden death of Mr. William Sagar, of Kimberley, which had taken place recently.

Durban's Welcome.

Mr. H. Moss Morris, President of the Durban Jewish Communal Council, then extended a hearty welcome to all on behalf of the Council. He expressed his pleasure in seeing so many delegates present, and expressed the hope that the Congress would be a successful one. This was a time when it was necessary for all Jewry to co-operate and he hoped that the Congress would bear this in mind in the course of its deliberations.

Mr. Hillman replied on behalf of the Executive of the Board, and of the delegates, warmly thanking Mr. Moss Morris for his kind words, and the Durban Jewish Club for their hospitality in allowing the use of their hall for the Congress. He spoke in praise of the work of the Club and of the Jewish community of Durban generally.

Messages of good wishes to the Conference were then read from Mr. M. Kentridge, M.P., Mr. S. H. Frankel, Mr. A. Liberman, Adv. Bertha Solomon, Senator Ginsberg, Rabbi M. Ch. Mirvish and others.

THE PRESIDENTIAL REPORT.

After the Minutes of the previous Congress had been read and confirmed and the roll called, Mr. Hillman moved the adoption of the Presidential Report. Before doing so, however, he extended a welcome to Dr. Leo Bramson, the representative of the Ort, Oze-Emigdirekt, who was a recent visitor to South African shores, although not a stranger.

Mr. Hillman went on to express the general feeling of sorrow which the Jewish people in this country felt with regard to the persecution of Jews in Germany. He felt proud of the community for the restraint they had exercised under the greatest provocation. There was no need to ventilate Jewish affairs in the general press, and the Jewish press had very adequately expressed the feeling of the Jewish community in this country as far as the German position was concerned.

Mr. Hillman, in speaking of the work which the Deputies had done since the last Congress, emphasised that personal contact with the Government had been established. The Executive had also been in touch with European Jewish organisations so as to keep itself informed and in order to secure unity of action in important matters.

The finances of the Board were not in a too happy condition, and he hoped that the Endowment Fund would be as well supported as it deserved to be. The Information Bureau had been most successful, as could be seen from the printed report.

Anti-Jewish Propaganda.

An alarming increase in the circulation of anti-Jewish leaflets in the towns and country districts had taken place. The Law and Press Committee had given much attention to the matter, and the Cape Committee, acting under Mr. Morris Alexander, had been very active in attempting to stem this pernicious propaganda. In this connection Mr. Hillman paid a warm tribute to Mr. Alexander for the enormous amount of work he did not behalf of the Board.

New Deputies Executive Council.

RESULTS OF ELECTIONS AT CONGRESS.

President:

Mr. Hirsch Hillman.

Vice-Presidents:

Mr. S. Raphaely (Transvaal).
Mr. Morris Alexander (Cape Province)
Mr. H. Moss Morris (Natal).
Mr. J. Phillips (Free State).

Treasurer:

Mr. D. A. Bradlow.

Committee:

Messrs. A. Schauder, B. L. Pencharz,
H. Carter, J. Alexander, M.
Karnovsky, J. Jackson, G.
Friendly, Woolf and Greenberg.

Cape Committee:

Messrs. Morris Alexander, A. Liberman,
M. Rosen, A. M. Jackson, W. Harris, M.
Sonnenberg, M.P.C., and M. Mauerberger.

Before formally moving the adoption of the report, Mr. Hillman said: "I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that before the Congress, the Executive decided to interview the Prime Minister in order to place their views before him, and I want here and now to express our gratitude to the Prime Minister for his extreme courtesy and for his appreciation of our efforts in the interests of the peace and the racial welfare of the peoples of South Africa. As a result of this interview, the Prime Minister has been good enough to give us a message of goodwill and encouragement which I will now read to you."

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER.

Mr. Hillman then read the following message from General Hertzog:—

"Allow me once more to extend to you, assembled in Congress as representatives of South African citizens of the Jewish faith, my good wishes. Where you have been called together to consider matters of grave moment to the Jewish people of South Africa, and for that reason, of corresponding importance to the rest of the population, I shall follow your deliberations with keen interest, and in wishing you every success therein I feel confident that whatever resolutions may be adopted will bear testimony to the fact that due consideration has been given to the interests of the country as a whole and that in the advancement of sectional interests, where this has proved necessary, nothing has been done that may conflict with that national harmony which we all so greatly desire to see maintained.

"It is a duty incumbent on the Jewish citizens as well as on the citizens of any other race in the Union, more so than ever before in this troublous time of the world's history, in the fullest measure to accord to the Government of the country its support and co-operation and to strengthen the hands of the Government in the execution of measures calculated to advance the country's welfare.

"That your Conference will be guided in its discussions by a knowledge of the grave responsibility which rests upon you as representatives of an important constituent part of the South African nation is my earnest hope as well as my sincere conviction. My best wishes are with you in your labours."

Resuming, Mr. Hillman said, "I want you delegates to appreciate your responsibilities—the responsibilities that rest on you as representatives of South African Jewry—and I want to appeal to you with all the sincerity at my command to help me conduct this Congress with dignity, in keeping with a Congress representative of South African Jewry. I sincerely hope and trust that the spirit of this message of the Prime Minister's will prevail and that at the end of the Congress our deliberations will have been

conducted in such a way that it will be realised that our interest in the welfare of South Africa is paramount and that the welfare of our communal interests is based on that cardinal principle—to be a good Jew is to be a good citizen. That, ladies and gentlemen, is my profound conviction.

The adoption of the Report was seconded by Mr. B. L. Pencharz who elaborated on the question of anti-Semitic propaganda. He also stressed the need for support of the Endowment Fund.

In the discussion which took place on the Report, the following participated: Messrs. Jackson, Lyons, Patley, Schauder, Wartski, Phillips, Friendly, Sarovitch, Merkin, Lurie, Abrahams, Levy, Davis, Rossenzweig. The Report was finally adopted.

The Draft Constitution to take the place of the existing Constitution was then submitted and discussed. In the main it was accepted although the contentious clauses were submitted for consideration to a Select Committee, of which Mr. C. P. Robinson was appointed chairman, Mr. I. M. Goodman, secretary, and Mr. Morris Alexander a member.

Reception on Sunday Night.

On Sunday night a reception in honour of the delegates was held in the Durban Jewish Club. A welcome was extended by Mr. Moss Morris, and speeches were delivered by Mr. Hirsch Hillman and Mr. Morris Alexander. Musical items were rendered.

On Monday morning, before the business of the Congress was proceeded with, the platform was given to Dr. Bramson who spoke on the tragedy of German Jewry, but who at the same time emphasised the need for assistance to be given to Jews in other countries, as in Eastern Europe, who were in a very serious plight.

The Draft Constitution.

The decision of the Select Committee appointed to go into the Draft Constitution was then reported to the Congress by Mr. Robinson. It was resolved that the Executive Council should consist of a President, four Vice-Presidents (one from each Province), a Treasurer, and nine members, eight of whom were to be resident within fifty miles of the headquarters of the Council. The Council was given power to co-opt five members.

The Cape Town Committee will still consist of seven members to act in co-operation with the Board.

The Draft Constitution was accepted *en bloc*.

The elections to the Council and the Cape Committee next took place, after which a resolution was passed to the effect that the Executive, in consultation with each Provincial Committee, should appoint a representative to enquire into and report upon the possibilities of establishing Jews on the land and as workers in industrial trades. The motion was proposed by Mr. Hallis and supported by Messrs. Karstaedt, Merlin, N. Lurie and Phillips.

RESOLUTIONS.

The preliminary report of the Meshulachim Committee was then put and accepted after which the following resolutions were unanimously carried:—

Proposed by the Executive Committee.

“That this Congress of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies, representing the Jewish Communities of South Africa,

notes with profound grief and distress the continuance of the persecution of Jews in Germany and that there is no abatement of the cruel restrictive measures which have deprived tens of thousands of Jews of their means of livelihood and abrogated their civic rights. This Congress fervently trusts that wiser counsels will prevail with the present German Government and will bring about a cessation of this retrograde and cruel policy carried out against its citizens of the Jewish faith and urges upon the Jewish people in this country to give every support to the measures being taken for the relief of German Jewry.”

Proposed by the Executive Committee.

“That in view of the fact that less than thirty constituent bodies of the Board have become foundation members of South African's Jewry's Endowment Fund, the Deputies, in Congress assembled, pledge themselves to use every effort to enrol the constituent bodies they represent, as foundation members of South African Jewry's Endowment Fund so as to help bring the fund to a speedy and successful conclusion.”

Proposed by the Executive Committee.

“This Congress in the cause of racial peace is of opinion that the Executive should approach the Government and pray for legislation making it a criminal offence to publish defamatory libel without legal justification or excuse against any nationality, race, or creed likely to expose persons belonging to such nationality or race or professing such creed to hatred, contempt or ridicule.”

The following resolutions were referred to the Executive:—

Proposed by Durban Jewish Club.

“It is essential that the greatest measure of co-ordination and co-operation should exist in world Jewry, and to effect this steps should be taken to establish regular inter-communication between all world central organisations representing Jewry and to create an international Jewish Central Bureau linking them together so as to afford a means of expression of the voice of world Jewry in matters affecting them.”

Proposed by Durban Jewish Club.

“That a Jewish Statistical Bureau be established by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.”

Proposed by Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.

“That statistics be collected of the extreme poverty prevailing amongst Jews in the Union and an investigation be made of the steps to be taken to permanently relieve and reduce the distress.”

Jewish Agency Council.

Mr. Bernard Alexander was appointed the representative of the Board at the meeting of the Jewish Agency Council to be held in Prague on the 31st August, 1933. It was decided to send greetings to the Zionist Congress to be held this month.

The Congress concluded after votes of thanks had been passed to the Chairman, Mr. Morris Alexander, the Congress Committee, and to the Durban Jewish Club for their hospitality.



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