

A FAREWELL TO MRS. REBECCA SIEFF.

Memorable Zionist Conversazione.

One of the most memorable Zionist conversaciones took place at the Zionist (Major) Hall on Tuesday night when Cape Town Zionists bade farewell to Mrs. Rebecca Sieff. The hall was packed to overflowing and hundreds were unable to gain admission.

Dr. C. RESNEKOV was in the chair and said that they had decided to combine the farewell to Mrs. Sieff with the regular fortnightly conversazione as they did not wish to break the continuity of these. He expressed deep gratitude to Mrs. Sieff for her visit to South Africa; she had given great inspiration to the Jews of this country and shown that the true way of Jewish life was to work for the great ideal of the building-up of Eretz Israel. He was sure that Mrs. Sieff would take back with her the message that South African Jewry stood solidly behind the leaders and would support them morally and financially.

To mark the occasion, Dr. Resnekov announced that the Dorshei Zion Association had decided to inscribe Mrs. Sieff's name in the Golden Book.

Adv. J. HERBSTSTEIN, on behalf of the Keren Hayesod Committee, expressed deep gratitude to Mrs. Sieff for her great work in making the Campaign a success. She had endeared herself to every section of the community, and it could be truly said that she "came, saw and conquered." Her eloquent and forceful addresses had attracted vast audiences who went away deeply inspired. All regretted that her visit was so short, but realised that she was going back to England to engage in the larger sphere of Zionist work.

They would like her to take back, not only the message that the Jews of South Africa stood solidly behind the leaders but also pleasant recollections of her visit to South Africa. They would also like her to take back a tangible form of regard in which she was held here and he had pleasure in presenting to her a small woodcarving of Lot's Wife by the well-known Cape Town artist Lippy Lipschitz. He hoped this would remind her of her visit and of the esteem in which she was held here. He wished Mrs. Sieff a pleasant voyage and success in Zionist work in the future.

Mrs. F. CLOUTS, on behalf of the women Zionists, associated herself with Mr. Herbststein's remarks and pointed out that it was the idea of the women to have Mrs. Sieff as a delegate for the Campaign. Although Mrs. Sieff had not been able to devote as much time as they would have liked specifically for the women, yet she had been a tremendous inspiration to them and many would be inspired to follow her example of devoted service to the cause of Zionism.

Prof. BRODETSKY, who arrived with Mrs. Brodetsky during the interval, after having delivered a most successful lecture on "Recent Developments in Aviation" at the University of Cape Town, then addressed the audience. His address was full of wit and humour and he was listened to with great interest. It was an act of pleasure, he said, and an elementary duty to pay a tribute to Mrs. Sieff, who was one of the most effective and eloquent propagandists that the Zionist Movement had. There were very few Zionists who were so well acquainted with the history of the Movement and whose knowledge of it was so deep. This was the result of her intimate connection with the

leading personalities in the Zionist world. She had been one of the small privileged group in Manchester, with Dr. Weizmann at the head who, during the war, had been responsible for influencing the British Government to issue the Balfour Declaration. Later she had formed the Federation of Women Zionists, to which the men were at first opposed, and it was also on her initiative that the Wizo was formed.

Not only did Mrs. Sieff work in England, said Prof. Brodetsky, but she travelled all over the continent on behalf of the Movement. He was sure that all would agree that her visit to South Africa had given a tremendous impetus to Zionist work here and that it had resulted in a deepening and strengthening of Zionist sentiment throughout South Africa.

It had been a privilege, continued Prof. Brodetsky, to co-operate with Mrs. Sieff in



this campaign. She had given herself to the task unstintingly, and no thanks could be commensurate with the magnificent results she had achieved. He wished her a pleasant voyage and trusted she would carry away with her such pleasant memories of her visit that she would not need much inducement to come once again to South Africa.

Mrs. SIEFF received a tremendous ovation on rising to reply, the audience breaking out spontaneously with the singing of Hatikvah. She found it difficult, she said, to express how deeply touched she was by this demonstration. The vast audience and the words spoken about her made her feel a very humble person indeed; it was difficult to listen to tributes to oneself without having a strange feeling of detachment. Zionists, she said, neither ask nor merit thanks—it was their obvious duty to place any gifts they may have at the service of the Movement.

She was deeply touched, continued Mrs. Sieff, that they should have given her to take away from Cape Town the work of a young Jewish artist in this town. It was not easy for all to understand modern art, but through force of circumstances she was in a position to appreciate what young Jewish artists were doing in the movement of modern art. Pioneers in every movement had to go through suffering in order that something new might be born.

This, said Mrs. Sieff, brought her to the question of art in Palestine. Even before the war, the desire to express Jewish life in the form of arts and crafts was manifested in the Bezalel school; to-day we see every form of art developing in Palestine. This was not surprising, as we are not going back to Palestine merely as a place of refuge from persecution but with a heritage that inspired all European art and culture.

We already see in Palestine a very complete culture; we have magnificent players whose performances on the stage have created an enormous impression all over Europe; we have young sculptors and painters and many exponents of that very Jewish expression of art—the love of music. A great philharmonic orchestra was in process of formation, said Mrs. Sieff; this was the dream of the great violinist Huberman who some years ago was an exponent of the Pan-European idea, but was so inspired by a visit to Palestine that he changed his outlook completely and became an ardent lover of everything Jewish. Toscanini, the world's greatest conductor, had consented to conduct this orchestra and this was as great a recognition of what the Jews were doing in Palestine as the acknowledgments of the representatives of the various nations at the League of Nations Assembly.

We look forward to the time, said Mrs. Sieff when there will be such a festival of music and art in Palestine that people will flock to it as they do to-day to Salzburg.

Women's Work.

Addressing herself particularly to the women, Mrs. Sieff said she had found the women of South Africa splendid and was delighted with the part they were playing and the way they were expressing themselves. She was glad that her visit had inspired the women to greater Zionist endeavour. Women in South Africa had a great deal of leisure, and should employ this for the great and magnificent work of up-building Palestine.

With all our troubles, said Mrs. Sieff, we should be glad that we have this glorious task and unique opportunity before us.

It showed many flowerings such as the Hebrew kindergarten in Cape Town, which was like a little piece of Eretz Israel.

Mrs. Sieff expressed her deep appreciation to Professor Brodetsky—to be a co-delegate with him she said, had been a constant joy and inspiration. One of her regrets at leaving Cape Town was that it would be a long time before she would be able to listen to him again.

In conclusion, Mrs. Sieff said she would be taking away with her impressions of South African Jewry that would live for ever. The welcome given to the Zionist emissaries had been so warm and enthusiastic that they would not be human if they did not cherish them.

She hoped she would be able to pass on these memories to her children so that in some measure they would be inspired by the splendid spirit that animates South African Jewry. Even if it was the last time she would meet with such a spirit it would be sufficient to carry her across for the rest of her life. (Loud applause).

Miss Stella Myers, Miss Lily Blumenthal and Cantor M. Katzen contributed to the musical programme.