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## THOMSON & BRISKER, DURBAN.

### THE JEWISH PLATOON.

#### Reception at His Majesty's.

On Sunday evening last the members of the Jewish platoon belonging to the column which visited Johannesburg last week were entertained at His Majesty's Theatre to an interesting concert. For the excellence of this they were indebted to the Committee of the Jewish Guild who had arranged the programme which was as follows: 1. God Save the King; Ha Tickvah; 2. Overture, "Light Cavalry," Suppe; 3. Song, "The Sea Road," Haydn Wood, Mr. Syd. Schragger; 4. Song, The Waltz Song from "Romeo and Juliet," Gounod, Miss Annie Immink; 5. Trio, 1st Movement No. 11, Mendelssohn Concerto, Misses S., B. & J. Weiner; 6. Song, "Bid Me To Love," D'Auvergne Barnard, Mr. Z. Butow; 7. Selected Patriotic Poem, Miss Cecilia de Banks; 8. Song, "Land of Mine," H. Lane Wilson, Miss Hilda Neale; 9. Duet, "La Forza del Destino," Verdi, Messrs. Z. Butow and Syd. Schragger. The orchestra was under the direction of Mr. S. Miller while Mr. E. Solomon was responsible for the excellent stage management at the theatre and was one of the indefatigable workers at the entertainment which was subsequently accorded in the Guild rooms.

The stage was occupied by a number of gentlemen including Mr. Max Langermann who presided, Lieut-Col. Hirsch, Major Blaney, District Staff Officer, Lieut. Greenberg (in charge of the platoon), the Mayor (Mr. T. F. Allen), Dr. Manfred Nathan and Mr. I. Levenson (chaplain) while amongst the prominent members of the community present were Mr. Harry Graumann, M.L.A., Mr. Emile Nathan, M.L.A., and Mr. H. Solomon who occupied the stage box on the right.

During the course of the proceedings some speeches were delivered the first being that of the Chairman who congratulated the thirty or forty Jewish recruits present upon the noble example they had set to their co-religionists, and indeed to everybody, by volunteering for the fighting line. Their enlistment dispelled the idea that the Jew was not ready to do his duty in this war. They were only a portion of the Jews who had so offered their services. It was idle to say that there were no slackers among the Jews, but he did not admit that that community had any more than others. In this war

Jews had received seven Victoria Crosses, and only recently a Jew had been made a lieutenant-general. (Applause). Many Jews who had come from Russia, and were not naturalised, had gone to serve. To those who might have said that they were unable to help Russia because they were British subjects, he had to say that all restrictions had been removed, and the way was now clear for them to help the Allies. Personally he believed that many Jews had unjustly been blamed as slackers, and he had no doubt that an increasing number of Jews would show their affection for the flag which had given them so much protection. (Applause.) To those who said that they had domestic obligations in Russia, he had to say that the Board of Deputies would help them if they would only state their cases. There was an idea that local Jews should only go to Palestine, but the fighting area there was not the place that really mattered. If they wanted to fight for the national home in Palestine they could do it by enlisting for the Western front, where alone would be decided the conflict for civilisation and freedom. (Applause).

In wishing the platoon "God-speed," the Mayor said he thought that up to the present Jewish boys had done remarkably well in recruiting. In South Africa they had not had much chance, though it must not be forgotten that a number had served in both West and East. He agreed that the slackers were not confined to Jews, and in all circumstances he would advise Jews to go right ahead and act according to their consciences.

General Collyer, said that the platoon was a public inspiration to every man of the Jewish race to do as its members had done. If he were asked what one should in these days say to the eligible man who did not enlist, he would find it difficult to answer. The position had over and over again been stated. It was a matter of life and death to the Union. But he doubted whether telling them would be of very much use. There was a much more potent factor which had not sufficiently been employed; that of example. (Applause) The topical slacker was not the only type of his tribe. Much had been done by those who could not fight, but not enough had been done; and it was by constantly emphasising the Empire's need, besides helping in other substantial ways, that these people could be of service. The Jewish platoon was going to rein-

force the South African Brigade, on the Western front, which had earned a great name for itself. It was a gallant brigade, composed of clean living, self-respecting, decent gentlemen.

In support of this and its utility in the severe strain on the West, he quoted Mr. Churchill's remarks and went on to give examples of how in West and East Africa the Union troops had by their conduct set an example of how war should be conducted with the least hardship on the civil population, which in the operations he had in mind was always protected, and not harried and abused in the fashion that was Prussian. (Applause.) Always he would remember with justifiable pride the conduct of the Union troops in those campaigns. There was nothing showy; but they never failed, or once let one down. That was the type of man the South African soldier had proved himself to be; always, as Napoleon had said, a soldier should be, inspired by fortitude in privation and fatigue. The Jewish platoon came of a race that knew the meaning of oppression and brutality; a race that, fortified by deep religious faith and high patriotism, had risen superior to inconceivable difficulties and discouragements. Their traditions would be a source of strength to the members of the platoon, all of whom he hoped to see again when they had helped to restore the liberties of the world. And when they returned they would have the consolation of knowing that they did the right and patriotic thing in joining the South African Brigade. (Applause.)

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At the conclusion of the concert the members of the platoon together with some of their friends and the Jewish V.A.D. nurses were escorted to the Guild rooms where they were entertained at supper. The arrangements which were under the supervision of Mrs. Asher, assisted by the members of the Guild executive, were excellent in their completeness and a very pleasant hour or so was spent. One of the members of the platoon delighted those present with some ragtime songs, to which the popular secretary played the accompaniments, and after Miss Jean Barrkman had expressed the pleasure of the Guild at being able to entertain their gallant co-religionists, Lieutenant Greenberg suitably replied.