

In and Around the Town.

58 Burg Street,
Thursday.

THE INFORMATION BUREAU OF THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES.

For some years the item "Jewish Unemployment" figured on the Agenda of the Congresses of the Jewish Board of Deputies. This question was also discussed at conferences of the Hebrew Order of David. The Jewish Board of Guardians, of Cape Town, and the various benevolent institutions of Johannesburg, were confronted with the self-same problem. In this column two years ago it was urged that something must be done to come to grips with the problem. The question was discussed, pious resolutions were passed, and the subject, like the Congresses, passed into the limbo of history. Jewish unemployment in South Africa! Were we not confronted with the self-same problem in Tel-Aviv? But there arrived a moment when the *personnel* of the Executive of the Jewish Board of Deputies underwent a radical change—a change which focussed attention on South African problems in addition to oversea problems, and as a result the question of avenues of employment for our school-leaving youth became a vital one which demanded solution. A year ago, the Jewish Board of Deputies established its Information Bureau in response to an insistent demand, and although its earlier months were fraught with much anxiety, and its first meetings were held under most difficult and discouraging circumstances, the will to succeed overcame all obstacles and the Jewish Information Bureau to-day figures as one of the community's most useful assets. I use the words "most useful assets" advisedly, for with the proud record of having found avenues of employment for over 300 Jewish men, women and juveniles, its usefulness can no longer be challenged, nor its standing as a communal asset be questioned.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

This proves interesting reading, quite apart from the concrete achievements recorded. The statistical table included in the report shows foresight in its conception and outstanding ability in its execution, and a careful reading of the report itself shows that the old time-honoured cry of a dearth of workers is not borne out by facts. It will be found that amongst the actual workers are leaders of industry and commerce who have hitherto not been actively associated with communal work. The endless meetings, debates, discussions, "machloukas," which go to make up the communal activities of our people, had no attraction for the men who are the actual workers in the Bureau. Rules of order, points of order, resolutions, amendments, riders, found no place in their vocabulary. The Information Bureau was devised as the machinery wherewith to place our

unemployed in productive employment, to find careers for our boys and girls, and not as a forum for the manufacture of phrases, or as a debating society to score forensic victories. Men at the head of large industries, whose leisure is limited, whose every moment is occupied with supervising large plants and larger bodies of workers, cheerfully devoted themselves and their vast experience to the service of their less fortunately placed brothers and sisters, and in so doing conferred a boon not only on the community, but on South Africa. South African Jewry is indeed fortunate in numbering amongst its workers men like S. Raphaely and S. B. Friede, who by their energy and example have fired the community with their own enthusiasm to the advantage of hundreds of individuals and to the credit of the South African Jew.

CAPE TOWN TO BE THE VENUE.

In the leading article which appeared in the issue of the 11th January of the *S.A. Jewish Chronicle*, under the caption of "Closer Contact Between North and South," it was then suggested that the next congress of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies be held in Cape Town, so that the new spirit of co-operation between North and South, which had been so manifest of late, may be closer welded for the benefit of the whole of South African Jewry. In a later issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* it was noted that the entire Jewish press of South Africa had unanimously fallen in with our suggestion, and were pressing the claims of Cape Town as the venue of the next congress of the "South African Jewish Parliament." A recommendation to this effect was made by the Executive, and at the last meeting of the Deputies this recommendation was unanimously agreed to.

MUCH CONSTRUCTIVE WORK.

Thus Cape Town Jewry, for the first time, will have the opportunity of welcoming delegates to the Congress to the Mother City at the end of the year. It is a wise step that has been taken, and the local community will appreciate this gesture on the part of the Board, which can be taken as only indicating a sincere desire on its part to unite closer the bonds of brotherhood between Jewry of the North and Jewry of the South for the good of Jewish South Africa as a whole. It will be a momentous congress, for since the last Assembly much constructive work has been completed under the aegis of the Board to the lasting benefit of Jewry from the Cape to the furthest part of the sub-continent. Among its achievements may be enumerated such far-reaching projects as the establishment of the Information Bureau, the Land Settlement Movement, the Board of Education and the compilation of the Jewish Year Book. In all of these matters the co-operation of Cape Town Jewry

is desired, and the next Congress here will undoubtedly cement the good relationship between the Cape and the Rand, and will entirely remove the misunderstandings which have unfortunately existed in the past. The holding of the Congress in Cape Town will, without doubt, create a new path to Jewish unity in the sub-continent.

THE PRESENT!

The President of the Gardens Synagogue and Mrs. Liberman have a dear little grandson, aged four. He peeped into his grandmother's drawing-room one afternoon last week and there found the Rev. A. P. Bender. Mr. Bender has a delightful way with children, and after some little conversation between the two, Mr. Bender asked: "When are you going back to Johannesburg?"

"On Thursday," said the child.

"Well, I must really send you a nice book," said Mr. Bender.

"We pack to-morrow," said the child.

OLGA RYSS—JEWISH PRIMA DONNA.

Madame Olga Ryss made a triumphant first appearance at the City Hall on Saturday night, due, no doubt, to her beautiful voice, her charming personality and her extraordinary ability to please all sections of a large audience. She sang *Santuzza's Aria* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Aria Ritorna Vincitor* from *Adia*. She is a polished operatic soprano and gave a rich dramatic value to the two arias. Her encores were a mournful and touching little

negro spiritual, two Yiddish melodies, Kaddish and Yohrzeit, which were rendered with much feeling and great impressiveness; and a dainty German lullaby. The glowing golden quality of Madame Ryss's voice, combined with the irresistible fascination of her stage presence, make her a very welcome visitor to this country.

A JEWISH COMPOSER.

At the concert that marked the actual anniversary date of the Orchestra on Thursday of last week, the Meistersinger Overture was played in accordance with tradition. This is not the conductor's strong point—or is too strong a point of his, as one likes to take it. He is over vigorous in his interpretation, thus missing the delicate as well as humorous aspect of the piece. The principal work of the evening was Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Mahler was an Austrian Jew who became a Catholic. His fame rests very largely on the enormous propaganda made for him by that prince of conductors, Mengelberg, of Amsterdam. He is at most times an austere thinker, but this particular symphony is light to the verge of sweetness! Most hearers who knew something of the composer's reputation were taken by surprise. The rendering was good in many ways, without reaching the level of perfection that repetition will no doubt confer. The audience was literally enraptured by Margaret Fairless in Elgar's Violin Concerto. The last movement in particular did very

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well, in the two others even those who do not care for the work had to admire the playing. The concert concluded with an Elgar "setting" in libertarian vein, of a Bach fugue for orchestra. Those who know the original are forced to regard this trifling with masterpieces as an abomination, but it is just possible that the breakneck speed with which the item was played was partly the conductor's doing.

CHEAT THE CALENDAR.

Mr. Alfred Holtzer is a well-known figure in Cape Town dramatic art circles, and has had practical experience of stage requirements. This augurs well for the musical comedy which he has just written, "Cheat the Calendar," which is to be produced at the Opera House on 18th to 23rd March, is thoroughly modern in its plot and characters. There are many amusing situations in it and it promises to be good fun. The book, which is in three acts, and the lyrics have been written by Mr. Holtzer. Mr. Swanson (who has had experience with the D'Oyley Carte Company) and Mr. Max Miller, of the Alhambra (who was chorus master at the Gaiety for a number of years), are responsible for the music. A special orchestra conducted by Mr. Swanson with Mr. John Spink leading has been engaged. The cast numbers thirty plus a chorus, and includes Batchelor Smith, Rose Mitchell, Lila Grace and Stella Moller. The costumes are in the able hands of Mrs. Wray. Mr. Norman Lister is the producer and is also responsible for the dances. This is the first three-act play ever produced in Cape Town of which the libretto, the music and the dances originated in this country. I feel that this enterprising local effort deserves the full support of our whole community.

LATEST PRESENTATION BY MR. ALFRED DE PASS.

Mr. Alfred de Pass has added yet another gift to the New Art Gallery. It is an etching, the Dead Toreador, by E. Manet. A little gem, this etching is exceedingly valuable for its wonderful tone-contrasts, its masterly treatment of textures as well as for the amazing handling of foreshortening. It is at present on view at the Van Riebeeck Galleries, 61 Burg Street. Mr. Alfred de Pass is a Jew to whom the country owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for his extreme generosity in the cause of art. It is well known that he relinquished Groot Constantia after the terrible fire that razed it to the ground. The beautiful old Dutch furniture which he put into the reconstructed homestead has made Van der Stel's historic home a priceless museum. Among the pictures acquired for the New Art Gallery, quite a number owe their inclusion in the collection to the generosity of Mr. Alfred de Pass.

THE "SHOW."

Large crowds thronged the Rosebank Show Grounds last week. One was amazed at the number of Jewish stalls representing industries of all sorts and pointing to the great and active part taken by co-religionists in all spheres of commercial activities. Their names, too, figure largely among the prize-winners. Jewish women carried off a number

of prizes in the handiwork section, and the Girls' Central School, which is attended by large numbers of our girls, again carried off the prize for their comprehensive school exhibit.

BRASS OR GOLD?

In this week's Sedra, Exodus, chap. 36, verse 18, we read: "And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent together that it might be one."

Whenever one reads this verse the question always arises why these fifty taches were made of brass. In the same chapter, verses 5-7, we read: "And they spake unto Moses saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work. . . . And Moses gave commandment and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it and too much." One could understand the finishing off of the Tent of Assembly to be of brass taches, if they had run short of gold and silver. But this was not the case. The people had to be told not to bring any more. There was more than was required. Surely one would expect the taches to be made of gold. Perhaps the answer to this question is to be found in the last few words of verse 18: "Lichaber es Ho-ohel lihiyos echod," i.e., "to couple the tent together that it might be one." It was these fifty taches that were the mainstay of the Tent of Assembly; they coupled and joined together the various parts of the Tent of Assembly into one. The joining of one curtain to another with gold taches was only the joining of smaller parts, but when it came to the main covering which held the "Mishkon" as one, no luxuries were looked for, lest the wealthy class might claim that they were the mainstay of the "Mishkon."

It had to be shown at the very first outset of our national inspirations that the mainstay of the "Mishkon" depended on the masses, not the few, on the brass, not on the gold. So many of our brethren to-day make the great mistake of thinking that Judaism depends on the gold and silver, viz.: on the few rich among us. But they are wrong. Any ideal must depend on the masses and not on the few of the wealthy. The Rabbis so aptly expressed this idea when they said: "Be ye careful of the children of the poor *Shemehem tetzey Sorah*, because the knowledge of the law comes forth from them."

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MATTERS COMMUNAL.

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because it is un-Christian. Anyone who believes in the hand of God in history must glimpse His purpose to preserve Israel and once more establish them in the land which their fathers made holy for Jews and Christians alike. He indicts it on the score of its costliness and waste. Let the Christian church use the funds which are being literally thrown away for this purpose, and devote it to bringing Christianity to the many nominal Christians who are living without God to-day. He indicts it because it is un-American, in that it ignores the value of the Synagogue in making godly citizens and in the furthering of many good causes for the betterment of the community.

THE JEWS OF IRAK.

Dr. Makovsky, Physician to King Feisal of Irak, and Engineer Beschkin, the manager of the King's cotton fields, both Russian Jews, are now visiting Palestine. Speaking with Press representatives in Jerusalem, they said that the position of the Jews in Irak is good. Twenty per cent. of the Government officials are Jews. Arab-Jewish relations in the country are good. Most of the merchants in Irak are Jews. Hebrew is taught and the Irakian Jews show a great deal of interest in Palestine, but they are not emigrating to Palestine because they are afraid that business is not so good as in Irak. Engineer Beschkin stated that he is building oil, soap and chemical factories in Irak, financed by German and Irakian capital.

In the total population of Bagh-

dad, the capital of Irak, which is 250,000, there are 50,000 Jews, a recent British official report on Irak stated. There are Jewish ecclesiastical courts in the country which have exclusive jurisdiction to decide suits relating to marriage, divorce, dowry and maintenance. There are Community schools of the Jewish population maintained at the expense of the Community and under the management of the Community. In some of them the language of instruction is Hebrew. The Jewish schools are assisted by the *Alliance Israelite* and the Anglo-Jewish Association. The *Alliance* and the other Jewish schools in Baghdad are the largest in the country.

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