

Mrs. Bertha Solomon, M.P., Addresses Zionist Conversazione.

Some Parliamentary Impressions.

There was a very large audience at the Zionist Conversazione in the Zionist Hall on Tuesday night when Mrs. Bertha Solomon, M.P., was the lecturer.

Mr. J. Herbstein was in the chair.

Mrs. Solomon dealt with her subject, "Some Parliamentary Impressions," in a very interesting and informative manner. She was a firm believer in Parliament, she said, and considered it a tremendous error for people to deprecate Parliament in these times; it was the only means by which the right of speech and freedom of thought could be preserved; it was the essence of democracy and the only alternatives were Fascism or Communism. Mrs. Solomon said that she had been inspired in this belief by her father, the late Mr. Idel Schwartz, who was a firm believer in Parliament, because he considered Parliament and democratic institutions as the surest shield for the Jewish people. She had been brought up in the atmosphere of Parliament and remembered being introduced to such figures as Merriman, Jagger, Sir Thomas Smart, etc. We owed a great deal to the fact that when Responsible Government was given to the Cape, Parliament was in the hands of men imbued with the English Parliamentary tradition, which could be felt even to-day.

Mrs. Solomon then dealt in a most interesting manner with her first impressions of Parliament after her election as a member. She described the atmosphere prevailing at the great crisis when the war debate took place. There was a general feeling of regret and pity at the bare possibility that the United Party should fall asunder. When this did happen, however, it was felt that the Party had at least foundered on no mean rock, but on the great issue of war or peace.

The Jewish Question.

Referring to the Jewish Question, Mrs. Solomon said that while there was no frontal attack this session, it was always coming up. The Re-united Party had by no means discarded anti-Semitism, as recent utterances of Mr. Werth and Mr. Becker testified. At every debate the Jewish question was brought into the limelight. It was foolish to deceive ourselves. Should the Malanites come to power, they would put anti-Semitism in the front of their programme. Even the moderates among the Malanites who realised that anti-Semitism was not in accordance with the traditions of their forefathers, tried to excuse it by an emotional appeal. They argued that their first duty was to their own people; that they must uplift the Afrikaner and therefore be against the Jew.

What could the Jewish citizen do to meet that threat? There could be no effective answer by Jewish organisations as such. The only remedy was for Jews to throw in their lot as ordinary citizens. The Jew who did his duty in public life honestly and loyally did a great deal for his fellow Jews. Jews had played a great part in the history of South Africa in every sphere. They must also play their part in public life. They owed a duty to the country in which they lived. In the present Parliament the Jewish population was for the first time represented in proportion to their numbers.

Mrs. Solomon paid a tribute to General Smuts and said it was heartening to realise what a magnificent come-back he had made. He had taken on a new lease of life, and was giving force and direction to the Cabinet, which was now one coherent whole and not torn aside by divergent elements. Smuts in the saddle was ably supported by Mr. Hofmeyr, who was proving a tower of strength. The rest of the Cabinet was pulling as a team much better than before; there was team-work instead of arbitrary dictation. The spirit of the Cabinet was animating the Party. During this session the Opposition had been put on the defensive in Parliament and the Government had won all along the line.

Referring to the Opposition, Mrs. Solomon said that it was known that many members were not happy in it, but remained there because of personal loyalty to their leader.

In conclusion, Mrs. Solomon said that the only hope for the Jews lay in General Smuts and the United Party. It was their duty to throw in their lot there.

Miss V. Faktor rendered a pianoforte solo.

CAPE JEWISH ORPHANAGE.



Side view of New Building, Dining Hall and Pergola.