

(Committee Report)

THE INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED HEBREW CHARITIES, NEW YORK

At the suggestion of Mr. Nathan Lamport, the society organized its Industrial Department and started on April 27, 1915, for the purpose of collecting waste, with the intention of utilizing the useful material directly for the poor and disposing of the balance, the proceeds to be turned into our general funds. Four lofts in a building at 37-39 Greene Street were rented for the operation of this new undertaking.

Through circular letters, street-car advertising (which was secured through the courtesy of the New York Street Railways Company) and newspaper publicity, we sought to arouse the interest of the Jewish community. All available lists of names of Jewish householders and business concerns were utilized, with the result that up to the present time 57,417 empty bags have been distributed. The Federation of Jewish Charities of Brooklyn was invited to join with us and do so with the understanding that the returns from Brooklyn would be used for the benefit of the poor of that borough.

Up to the present time 12,417 filled bags have been received, nearly all of which have been emptied and sorted. A considerable number of articles have been distributed among the poor through the Supply Department of the organization, articles have been sold to an amount of \$10,576.87 and there is still considerable saleable material left, which we approximately value at \$5,000.

Merchandise of every conceivable description has been received. Bags have come from the most modest homes as well as from wealthy householders. All grades of goods are represented in the articles which have been received. The varied character of the contents of the bags contained elements of human interest that furnish interesting material for the imagination. Among the articles found in the bags for instance, Maillard's chocolates, face creams, cosmetics, miniature sewing machines, artificial limbs, ton of coal, etc., etc.

As we expected, considerable funds had to be invested in the enterprise to cover particularly such items as rent, bags, post-

age, stationery, salaries and expressage. This was made up by an advance from the United Hebrew Charities of \$5,000 and loans aggregating \$9,500 from a number of the trustees of the organization. A number of voluntary contributions, one amounting to \$150 per annum, were also received.

Financial returns were not realized until June, when a beginning was made in the sale of some of the material. In that month the total amount sold was \$745.67. In the following month the sales amounted to \$1,861.18. In August this sum was increased to \$3,346.98. In September, owing to the many Jewish holidays, the sales fell to \$2,178.32.

This enterprise has been so widely advertised that it does not appear necessary now to describe the plan of operation. To offset any exaggerated notion of the financial possibilities of the work, it should be stated that the cost of administration approaches the financial returns within a narrow margin and that it will require the continued and enlarged co-operation of Jewish householders and business establishments, together with the strictest economy on the part of the Department, to produce a substantial income for the society.

It can readily be seen that it is imperative that all persons who have been enlisted in this movement should co-operate earnestly in order to make it a success. Without their complete and steady co-operation, the efforts thus far made will have been made in vain. If we receive this co-operation we are sure that a new, permanent source of income will have been established for the society, to be used for the benefit of the poor under its care.

Only those who have been in touch with the work can realize how great and onerous have been the labors of the committee. The clerical work necessary, in conjunction with the sending out and receiving of bags, constitute a veritable mail-order business. The task of assorting and of selling them requires special technical knowledge, which the committee has had to acquire painstakingly.

The problem of delivering the bags and receiving the donations has been particularly vexatious and we fear has caused some annoyance and inconvenience to some of our good friends who have been kind enough to co-operate with us. We hope that the inaccuracies and delays that have occurred will be judged leniently in the light of the fact that this is a new enterprise of a unique character, which must take time to perfect. We trust that the householders will make allowances for the imperfections of the past and be satisfied with our assurance that we shall be alert in our efforts to develop the business of the Department into an efficient working organization.

It will be of interest to know that the Department is developing a form of service that was not anticipated in the beginning, but which is helpful to us and to the poor under the care of the organization. We have begun to establish some of the wards of the society in what is known as the "second-hand clothing" business, purchasing the fixtures with funds from our Self-Support Department and equipping them with stock from the Industrial Department. A double service is thereby rendered, an outlet being afforded for the sale of goods received by the Department and an opportunity given to persons formerly dependent to become self-supporting. The experience thus far met leads us to believe that very considerable progress can be made in this direction.

In the beginning the committee considered whether, for economy sake, it would not be well to use the returned bags over again after having them washed and disinfected, but after careful deliberation it was decided that for hygienic purposes it would be safest to distribute only new bags at all times. It is therefore seen that we have been solicitous to safeguard the health of those who are good enough to donate articles to us. In this connection it is interesting to observe that in the opinion of a prominent physician and sanitary expert we are performing a distinct sanitary service in providing these bags to householders and so encouraging a quick disposal of household waste which otherwise might develop into insanitary matter.

A number of our friends have expressed their gratitude for the opportunity of en-

listing the service of the children in this work. The ethical value of the work has been fully recognized. It encourages economy and providence on the one hand and stimulates charity on the other. For this reason alone, if no other, parents ought to make the charities bag a household institution.

We particularly desire to impress upon our contributors that continuous co-operation is necessary and that the mere sending of the first filled bag will not suffice to make the movement successful. Surely sufficient waste material accumulates to enable the average family to send us a number of bags during the course of the year. The sacrifice we ask is not great. The good that can be accomplished is incalculable and the moral value of the movement cannot be overestimated. Our enterprise has afforded this community an opportunity of doing a substantial service to the poor at minimum cost to the one who renders it. The practicability of the plan has been vindicated; therefore let all join together earnestly and persistently to establish it firmly and successfully.

The committee desires to express its sense of deep appreciation to those who have thus far donated and assures all of those who have enlisted that it will ever be grateful for continued co-operation.

Mr. Leonard Quits

Because certain delegates to the Missouri Conference of Social Welfare objected to having two Jews hold important offices, Mr. Oscar Leonard, superintendent of the Jewish Charitable and Educational Alliance, has resigned as secretary of the state conference, an office he has held for three years.

Mr. Leonard made this statement on his return to St. Louis after a stormy session of the conference at Marshall, in which the whole delegation from St. Joseph walked out because the conference refused to elect Rabbi Louis Bernstein of St. Joseph to the presidency of the organization. It was for this same reason, which he terms "an insult to his race," that Mr. Leonard resigned as secretary after he had been unanimously elected.