

## JEWISH COMMUNAL PROGRESS

### CHICAGO

**G**ROWTH and enlargement of institutions in the Jewish community is the outstanding manifestation of the current year. The Jewish Charities of Chicago is again concentrating its efforts on a "United Drive," this time for \$4,000,000 under the general chairmanship of Jacob M. Loeb. One fourth of this sum is to be Chicago's quota for foreign relief and reconstruction under the Joint Distribution Committee, and the balance is to be devoted to the building needs of hospitals, social centers, and other institutions. This amount is supplementary to the \$2,500,000 Drive which was successfully completed in 1923, but which, since that time, has proven inadequate for the accepted plans of development.

The Drive will cover the financing of further additions to the Mt. Sinai Hospital and to the Michael Reese Hospital. It will allow for the increase in hospital beds of between 50 and 100 in the Mt. Sinai Hospital, and for the enlargement of 62 beds in the Michael Reese Hospital. This will increase the service of the hospital to patients who can afford moderate priced care. Other developments are necessary because of the building of the Meyer House, a private pavilion of 96 private rooms and suites for which \$500,000 was contributed by the Meyer family.

Before the 1923 Drive it had been established through a study of the recreational needs of the Jewish Com-

munity, that there was a need for two social centers in the immediate future, one in the Lawndale district, and one on the Northwest side of Chicago. Since plans and specifications have been fully developed for the Lawndale branch which requires a center adequate for the population of 100,000 Jews, and with the information now on hand for proper facilities on the Northwest side with a Jewish population of 70,000, it is found that additional funds are necessary.

In addition to taking care of national needs such as contributions to the Ort, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Publication Society, and others, the Drive hopes to have available a substantial amount of money for other building development that will be required during the next three or four years.

Various factors have been contributing, in Chicago, to the stimulation of building activities. Chicago has not as yet made up for the stoppage of institution building during the war period. There has probably been a growth in Jewish population in the last ten years in Chicago. The standards of health, recreational and social life, and cultural needs have expanded considerably for the Jewish population as a whole. Simultaneously there has been growth of an organized feeling of community responsibility that these requirements be furthered through organized activity. One has only to compare the

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type of institution of the old Jewish Peoples Institute with the ambitions which find expression in the present plans for community centers costing well in the neighborhood of \$800,000 each, to realize that the community is becoming more conscious of its prestige and the need for having its institutions represent fittingly its social, economic, and cultural status. Synagogues, Temples, and Temple Centers of recent construction also indicate a like standard for adequate structural expression.

### Jewish Social Service Bureau.

There has been a well marked increase in demands upon the Jewish Social Service Bureau. This increased demand became obvious in August 1924, and the pressure upon the material resources of the organization was constant until the early summer of 1925. Since then there has been a receding of relief expenditures, although the former level has not as yet been reached. The demand upon the agency for social services as distinct from monetary assistance continues to be very great.

The pressure of need has made further organization and reorganization inescapable. The district system has been enlarged from five to six districts carrying a total of 27 sectional case workers. The relief standards which the Chicago Council of Social Agencies has endorsed through the recent revision of the Nesbitt Budget have not yet been introduced in the Jewish Social Service Bureau. Because of pressure upon funds due to increased relief cases, an old family budget, lower in amount, is being applied. An effort, however, is being made to bring the standards of the Jewish Social Service Bureau up to the newer basis.

The Domestic Science Department has been re-organized with an emphasis upon class and group instruction in place of individual instruction by a visiting housekeeper. After a study of visiting housekeeping cases, it was decided that intensive work of this kind was not proving successful as an additional service added in the same family to the efforts of the family case worker. The families referred for visiting housekeeping were invariably those where the situation was complicated by difficult marital, and personality factors. These problems seriously affected the interest and teachability of the mothers. Instruction was being given in homes on a very expensive per capita basis, while the social worker also continued to deal with the complicating problems. Success in handling such situations was not outstanding. The plan at the present time is as follows:

1. A course of lectures has been given to the social workers by the head of the Domestic Science Department, making each case worker better equipped to deal with the minor problems of a housekeeping nature arising in the family.
2. Special emphasis upon group instruction for mothers who are not adequately equipped to deal with their housekeeping problems.
3. Consultation between the social worker and the domestic science supervisor on difficult housekeeping and budget problems.

The Jewish Social Service Bureau is experimenting with a combined visitor-housekeeper. A domestic science worker is being trained in the functions of the general case worker. The families requiring intensive housekeeping super-

vision in the district will then be turned over to this worker who will be responsible for the general case work as well as for the housekeeping problem. It is hoped that one such worker will be properly equipped to begin this experiment in 1926.

The Jewish Social Service Bureau is making an experiment with a psychiatrist on its staff, as an aid to the Bureau in its use of the several Mental Hygiene and Psychiatric Clinics in Chicago. This psychiatrist is available for reading of case records and consultation with workers with regard to the mental hygiene aspect of their case problems. When psychiatric analysis is required, the case is referred to one of the regular clinics. The psychiatrist on the staff does not make original diagnoses nor examine patients. Assistance is given the worker in understanding the analysis and in carrying out the recommendations of patients examined by the clinics.

The Jewish Social Service Bureau is also planning to re-organize its work with offenders. The work now distributed among the Legal Aid Department, Boys' Department, and the Institutional Visitor will be centralized under the supervision of the Legal Aid Department. Aside from the court cases, other work formerly carried by the Boys' Department will be handled by the district organization. Boys' workers will be attached for this purpose, to individual districts. Work with transients will continue as a specialized activity.

#### Jewish Home Finding Society.

The Jewish Home Finding Society, in dealing with children presenting varied problems, experiences a large num-

ber of replacements and an equally large turnover of its foster homes. Both are indications of an unhealthy state of affairs and result in waste of energy and maladjustment. Among the more important causes of the situation are the lack of adequate information regarding the child at the time of placement, his background and his needs, and the resources and possibilities of the new foster homes in use, as well as a lack of facilities and equipment for acquiring the desired information.

In an attempt to meet the situation, the following steps which have been taken, are departures for the Jewish Home Finding Society:

1. Abolition of separate home finding department and placing responsibility for home finding upon the visitors in the district.
2. Housekeepers used in temporary care cases instead of placing the children whenever conditions are favorable.
3. Development of two Receiving Homes for emergency placement. These homes are limited to six children each, at any one time.

The first measure has caused but little confusion and has not resulted in a falling off of homes that could be used. The visitors, while required to find and investigate their own homes, have not the authority to put a new home into use without inspection and a check up by a special field supervisor with considerable experience in the home finding field.

The second step involved the placement of housekeepers in twenty families during the period of eight months with 104 children involved. The shortest period under this arrangement was three days, and the longest seven and

one half months. The average cost per child amounted to \$12.87 per month.

The third experiment involved 39 children in ten months time in the two Receiving Homes for observation and training and 20 children in the Emergency Home during the period of four months. The total cost of board and supervision in the two Receiving Homes for the ten months has been in the neighborhood of \$3,500.00.

It is too soon to summarize the results of this threefold effort to stabilize the placement problem.

#### Jewish Educational Committee.

Two years ago Chicago was considerably behind other large communities in Jewish educational work. The Jewish Educational Committee, organized in 1923, believed, however, that Chicago was a very fertile field for developing an adequate Jewish school system. A preliminary survey disclosed that of 51,000 children of school age, less than 5,000 were being taught in the Hebrew Schools and Talmud Torahs, 6,000 in the various Sunday schools and about 1,000 more were being instructed by private teachers and in private schools. The majority of children receiving Hebrew education were being taught in Talmud Torahs which followed antiquated pedagogical methods. There was no definite curriculum and no cooperation between the various schools.

The early struggles of the Committee were the result of the effort to establish community control of the Jewish educational facilities rather than the control by any particular group. Against opposition it was maintained

that the Jewish Charities were properly responsible for the development of the educational program and could not be considered merely as a charity organization in its narrower sense.

The general policy being followed is to avoid over-centralization of authority and to place the main responsibility upon the local school boards and congregations, giving only such additional help as is found necessary. The appropriation for this work has increased from \$38,000 in 1923, to \$103,000 in 1925.

Of the 5,000 children taught in the Hebrew Schools of Chicago, over 3500 are found in those now affiliated with the Jewish Educational Committee. Uniform curricula for the Talmud Torahs and for the Hebrew schools have been agreed upon in order to coordinate the teaching in the several types of schools. In some of the Talmud Torahs, English has been substituted for Yiddish as the medium of instruction. A Central Hebrew High School has recently been organized. A Traveling Principal was appointed to help the smaller schools—particularly those connected with congregations and institutions. A Home Visiting Service was instituted to connect more closely the home and the school. An Extension Department, a weekly school paper, the Hatzofeh, a Jewish Youth League, are all examples of further activities by the Committee. A College of Jewish Studies was established in the winter of 1924 to provide Jewish cultural opportunities for young adults and to help in the training of Sunday School teachers and club leaders.

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