

SPECIAL PROBLEMS AT THE MEMPHIS CONFERENCE

By Oscar Leonard, St. Louis

As the Memphis Conference is approaching, it would be well for workers to think of some particular problems which they feel need to be discussed. There are many problems which arise in the day's work, which perhaps are not thought of by the program committee. These problems could be discussed informally, either at regular sessions or in connection with round-tables. Groups interested in special problems could hold informal gatherings to discuss these problems and get light from one another.

Quite a number remain for the National Conference. Many of these will not attend all the sessions of the National Conference. They could use some of the time as a sort of extension of the Jewish Conference. In this way a great many questions may be discussed, which are not scheduled on the regular program.

That there are plenty of questions to be discussed goes without saying. Take, for instance, the Transportation Rules. In the course of the social worker's labors many questions arise in his mind as to these rules. The Conference is the place to take up these questions. It occurs to me, for instance, that a special ruling should be made in case of minors. A minor should not be treated in this connection as is an adult. Technically, he belongs with his parents. If he appears in a different city as a transient, it should be possible for the city where he does appear to return him to his own people, without the need of obtaining permission from the organization in the city where the parents live. Of course, the rules as to verifying his statement should continue to hold good, for obvious reasons.

Or take the problem of the transient. Only a few weeks ago the organization of a certain city in the North returned a transient to St. Louis simply because he happened to have lived in St. Louis for nine months and a day. The transient did not belong to St. Louis any more than to the city which sent him back to us. He belonged to Philadelphia, where he was a ward of the Juvenile Protective Society. He is under age, and even if discharged from the custody of that organization, the

society has certain responsibilities toward him. It is in *loco parentis*, as it were, and as such cannot waive its responsibility. Nor would that organization waive its responsibility, if the lad had been sent there.

I am mentioning this instance because it throws some light on the manner in which things are done when the Transportation Agreement is applied to the letter. In this, as elsewhere, it is the "letter that killeth and it is the spirit that giveth life."

I am glad the Transportation Agreement will be discussed. I hope many of the Southern charitable agencies will send their delegates. They seem unable to understand the Transportation Agreement, judging by some of the experiences we have had in St. Louis. If a better understanding can be reached, it will certainly be worth going to the Conference.

Another question which must be taken up is the Denver situation. Denver has now a Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Agencies. How shall the rest of the country meet this new situation; since it affects us all in one way or another?

There are scores of other problems which press for some sort of solution or at least consideration. Those who have been thinking about these problems should not hesitate to bring them up in Memphis.

It is well to say a word about those who are diffident and backward. As I understand it, the leaders of the Conference do not desire to do all the talking. As far as I know, they wish very much to hear from all workers who are thinking about their work. The Conference is a forum for all. Those who do not take advantage of the forum should not blame "the bunch." They should blame themselves.

I am speaking of this because in the past I heard complaints from some workers. I know their complaints were not founded on facts. For only two years ago I was a stranger within the gates of the Conference, yet I found friends and welcome. I therefore say to other workers: If you feel you have a message, deliver it. If you have a contribution, do not hesitate to give it.

INFORMING THE IMMIGRANT

Report of the Division of Information of the Immigration Bureau for fiscal year ending June 30, 1913

PART I

Latterly the need and the importance of a distribution of our immigrants has come into the foreground. Many causes have contributed to this increased recognition of an important principle, the unemployment prevalent throughout the country, the conferences which have been so sociologically fertile but practically sterile, the report of the Commissioner General of Immigration calling attention to the value of distribution of aliens, and finally the annual report of the Division of Information. This recognition, although belated, still promises much. It would assume serious proportions and be instrumental in moulding a good and useful thing if now the Government earnestly addressed itself to the question, unafraid of "paternalistic bogies" and deaf to the blandishments of restrictionists of one type or another.

PART II

The Government did, in 1907, create a bureau known as the Division of Information as an integral part of the Immigration Department. We have before us the last annual report of this Division, issued by Hon. T. V. Powderly, a man possessed of a fine social vision and practical capacity, and who has for the last seven years been rendering the best possible service within the restrictions that are arbitrarily imposed on his Division. We wish to review this report, not so much because of its internal significance, as because the possibilities of the Division are tangible and because a plan might be devised whereby it would actually undertake the work of distribution, backed by the tremendous government machinery and by the substantial government resources. To understand the work of the bureau it will be well to recount its origin and development.

PART III

In the report of the Commissioner General for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1907, Hon. F. P. Sargent, the Commissioner General, under the caption "Distribution of Aliens," had this to say:

"A most important factor in the solution of the immigration problem consists of a remedy for the congestion of the foreign elements in our great cities. * * * The 'colonies' formed in such cities as New York, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia are today the chief menace that grows out of the heavy influx of foreigners. * * * When it is realized how much space there is in other sections still vacant and crying out for settlers and cultivators, where the condition of the aliens would be incalculably better than in these already overflowing localities, the deplorable nature of the situation is apparent and leads inevitably to the query, is there not some remedy at hand? The bureau believes that in adopting its recommendation for providing means for disseminating information among arriving aliens by the establishment of a Division of Information, Congress has taken a step in the right direction—one which will, in the course of time, exercise a marked influence for improvement in the way of preventing further congestion by encouraging the aliens to proceed to sections where they are needed and can be assimilated. After a fair start is once attained in establishing the new arrivals in sparsely located districts, the nuclei so inaugurated will draw others in rapidly increasing numbers and, after a while—particularly if there should be any marked change in the conditions which produce the present phenomenal immigration—the influence of this gradual distribution should begin to be exerted by the very force of circumstances on the overcrowded 'colonies' of our large cities."

The Division of Information began operations in July, 1907. Has it in the past seven years justified the exceedingly optimistic expectations of the Commissioner General above quoted? Unfortunately, as the following analysis will show, his forecast, while justified by the potentialities of the movement undertaken, ignored the fact that unless the Division was equipped with the facilities commensurate with the important work it was about to undertake, the accruing results would fall far short of the goal that had been set. And this is what happened. It is, indeed, cause for

comment that a principle of vast social significance, the importance of which was fully grasped by the government officials at the helm, should fall into respectable mediocrity and a smug conservatism because of the traditions inherited from the past. Consider that in the seven years of the existence of the Division it extended information to 121,477 applicants, while in the same period the total number of male immigrants to this country reached 3,164,139. Of the almost 122,000 people who applied for information, only 25,299 availed themselves of the advice given and located in other sections of the country. The reports of the chief of the Division classified those who took advantage of the information extended to them as "Aliens Distributed."

It would be interesting to analyze in detail the results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913. In that year 19,881 requests for information were received by the Division. In this number were represented 471 applications made by Jews, of whom only 32 acted on the advice given by the Division. The bulk of the requests came from native-born Americans (2,475), Germans (2,411) and Polish (2,268). It is interesting to note the occupations of those who applied in largest numbers to the Division, and on examination of the report we find that 5,344 were laborers, 4,465 were farm laborers, 1,601 were factory hands and 1,564 were firemen. Of the total number who applied, only 5,025 availed themselves of the opportunities to which their attention had been directed by the Division. Of this number the bulk located in the States of New York (1,707) and of New Jersey (1,114). Pennsylvania took 978, the third largest number. It does not require a statistician to deduce from these three figures that the majority of the applicants located in States so near the ports of entry because of the nominal cost of transportation from such ports to points in the neighboring States. And these figures are cause for serious misgivings as to whether the distribution so effected has any permanent result. The immigrant who is near the source and who, for a small amount of money, can find his way back to the large seaport cities, is less calculated to remain in the locality where he settles than

one who penetrates to points further remote from the seaport cities like New York and Philadelphia. It is not difficult to imagine that on the slightest provocation those who distributed themselves in nearby States would return to New York City, thus defeating the purpose for which they had applied to the bureau and upon whose advice they had acted.

While these 19,891 applicants had written to the bureau, 808,144 male immigrants arrived during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913. This small number of applications does not render the services of the bureau unimportant, nor does it make the principle underlying it untenable. Had these well-nigh 20,000 persons located in other sections of the country, the results would have been most substantial, notwithstanding the heavy influx of immigration during the year. But as we have already pointed out, only 5,025 availed themselves of the advice of the bureau (of whom 964, or almost one-fifth, were United States citizens), and of this number the largest portion, about 76 per cent, located in points adjacent to or not far removed from the city of New York or Philadelphia. What happened to the other 14,866 who had taken the trouble to write to the Division of Information for advice? Many reasons may be set forth for the failure of this large number of applicants to migrate to other points. First, it may well be that in many cases the information extended by the bureau was not favorable to the applicant, discouraging him from settling in a State which he had selected. Furthermore, a portion of the applicants may have changed their minds after writing for information because of the fact that they secured employment at the port of entry. But what we consider by far the most important eliminating cause is the lack of financial resources which would enable the applicants to pay their fare to the points selected for them by the Division. We are strengthened in this conclusion not alone by the fact that the large majority of the 5,025 persons distributed in 1913 located in States adjoining New York, but by the following citation from the report of the Division of Information for 1912. In that year the Hon. T. V. Powderly received a report from the inspector in charge

of the New York branch of the Division. This inspector said, among other things:

"Transportation is still the great stumbling block to distribution. I am of the opinion that mileage, issued by the Government and so arranged as to be honored by all railroads upon presentation, would be of great economy and value to the Government and to traveling seekers of employment, if a plan can be perfected which will be acceptable to the transportation lines."

It would, of course, make the analysis more precise if the Division had included in its report for 1913 a statement of the kind of information it extended to the 14,000 applicants who were not distributed, as well as to cite its experience, indicating what sections of the country presented the greatest proportion of industrial and agricultural opportunities. The absence of such figures, however, does not vitiate the conclusion drawn that the work of the Division is nullified in the majority of instances because of the inability of the applicant to raise the necessary funds for transportation to the city where he has been advised to go.

PART IV

Credit must be given the chief of the Division of Information for the excellent suggestions he has made in his last report and the constructive social viewpoint that they seem to indicate. He has suggested that every private employment agency and every person directing men to employment across State lines should be subject to the supervision of his Division. A more radical suggestion is the one providing that in each city and town of sufficient population to maintain a post office, the daily registration of those out of work be made without expense to the unemployed. Employers in need of workmen could register their needs in the same place. By this means he hoped that the tide of the unemployed could be turned toward places of unemployment.

Mr. Powderly also called attention to the bulletins that his Division has been issuing, which are designed to educate immigrants as to the various resources and opportunities throughout the United States. What he says on this point is so important that we deem it well to quote in full:

"It is a well authenticated fact that hundreds of thousands of immigrants were farmers in Europe; it is natural to suppose that they would prefer following agriculture in the United States. Two causes combine to prevent this. One is lack of funds, the other lack of information concerning the agricultural possibilities of this country. That immigrants come here with their pockets bursting with money is a fallacy. They are driven here, in the main, by economic necessity, and their capital is a combination of ambition, muscle and hope. All three are good, but not sufficient to make a farm productive. To educate them as quickly as possible in the ways of this country and as to its superiority over others in its agricultural opportunities would seem to be the part of wisdom, if not of necessity. The work of reclaiming our immigration and turning its attention to the land cannot be done in a day or a year, but it can and should be done. One great cause of the high cost of living, so much complained of, is the drift from farm to city. To increase the number of producers of foodstuffs and keep the stream of idle city workers at low ebb by properly directing them to employment is the sanest and best way of solving the high-priced food problem.

"Men who were farmers in Europe and save their earnings with which to buy land would more willingly buy cheap, productive land in the United States than high-priced land elsewhere, and to the end that they may invest their savings in land here they should be fully and frequently informed of what the various States have to offer to one in earnest in his desire to till the soil for a livelihood. With a branch of the Division in each industrial center, always open and ready to impart information, it is probable that the greater part of the vast amount of money taken abroad each year by aliens returning to Europe would be invested in land in the United States.

"The port of entry is not the only place to tell the alien about the United States. Every industrial center should have its representative of this Division prepared to tell alien and citizen the things they do not know about farm life in this country."

PART V

That the Division of Information may, with the proper equipment and an adequate fund, become the medium for a substantial distribution of aliens there can be no doubt. That such an extension of its functions and powers is well advised seems to us likewise axiomatic. Without the means at its disposal to deflect the stream of immigration by defraying the cost of transportation of worthy immigrants to points in the interior where employment may be found for them, the information it gives and the work it performs becomes, from the practical point of view, of unappreciable value. We have already shown in this review how this element of the cost of transportation precludes the largest portion of the applicants for information from locating elsewhere.

We have taken the liberty of suggesting in the last annual report of the Industrial Removal Office that the scope of the Division of Information be extended, and I believe that the crux of the question is summed up in this citation:

"Not only has there been a growing recognition of the soundness and the importance of the work of distribution, but the Government has shown its appreciation of that principle by the inauguration of the Division of Information of the Department of Labor. The services rendered by this Division of Information are not unimportant, yet it must be confessed that it suffers fundamental limitations because the Government has not granted it either the appropriation or the machinery which would enable it to perform adequately the work for which it was founded. While the Division extends information to thousands of immigrants, advising them as to conditions in the interior, hundreds of thousands of immigrants are arriving. Since the Government has evidenced its moral sympathy with the distribution of immigration by establishing this Division, should it not grant the bureau that practical support which will justify its existence? It can do more; it can undertake such a wide distribution of immigration as will adjust population to economic conditions and opportunities. And it can do this by reason of its vast resources and the adequate ma-

chinery at its disposal. Surely the Government must have watched with anxiety the overexpansion of the larger cities and the consequent lack of adjustment between the labor markets of this country. If it is at all disposed to remedy this unfortunate situation then, we repeat, it has the facilities and can utilize its resources to organize distribution of population on a comprehensive scale."

Orchard Demonstration

The Federation of Jewish Farmers of America in co-operation with Prof. C. D. Jarvis of the Connecticut Agricultural College, will hold an orchard demonstration on the farm of Mr. O. Berman (Hall Place), Colchester, Conn., on Thursday, March 26th, at one o'clock in the afternoon and will be continued all day. On Friday the orchard demonstration will be continued on the farm of Mr. J. Levitta at Leonards Bridge, Conn. Besides Professor Jarvis, there will be several Jewish students from the Connecticut Agricultural College, who will assist in the orchard demonstration. The demonstration will consist in pruning old trees and also showing how to spray. Spraying apparatus will be on hand and all details of spraying will be explained. Orchard demonstration at Stepney, Conn., will be held in the latter part of the month. Announcements of same will be mailed directly to the farmers. It is also planned to hold orchard demonstrations in New Jersey and New York.

At this meeting the following will also be present: Gabriel Davidson, assistant manager of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society; J. W. Pincus, secretary of the Federation of Jewish Farmers of America; Mr. William J. Stanton, general manager of the Massachusetts Credit Union of Boston, Mass., the recently organized association for the purpose of assisting in the formation of Credit Unions in the State. The capital of Massachusetts Credit Union is about \$10,000, and it has been contributed largely by the leading Jewish citizens of Boston through the efforts of Mr. Max Mitchell, vice-president of the Cosmopolitan Trust Company, and former superintendent of the Hebrew Charities of Boston.

THE MOTION PICTURE STORY

"How the Jews Take Care of Their Poor"

A Film Story in Two Reels by Benjamin H. Namm and Max Abelman

Produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Co. (Carl Laemmle, Pres.), in Co-operation with the BROOKLYN FEDERATION OF JEWISH CHARITIES

Synopsis

A young Russian Jewess, after the death of her husband, comes to America with her little boy and girl. Upon landing at Ellis Island they are met by a charitable worker from the Brooklyn Council of Jewish Women, who looks after their welfare.

She is taken to live with her brother, who is a poor tinsmith. A short time later she fails in health and dies, and her dying wish to her brother is that he will care for her children. He promises to do so. But misfortune befalls him, and he is stricken with illness while working. He is brought home and kind friends notify the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, which is the central agency for all Jewish charities in Brooklyn. They send a young lady investigator and she immediately takes the entire situation in hand.

The Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn is requested to send an ambulance at once. The brother is taken to the hospital and examined and it is decided by the physicians that he must be operated upon immediately for appendicitis.

The children, who are now left uncared for by the illness of their uncle, are taken to the Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum.

In the meantime the uncle has been successfully operated upon, and after his convalescence he is discharged from the hospital completely cured.

His first thought upon leaving the hospital is to visit his children at the orphan asylum. He calls there and finds that they are cared for in an excellent way. The children enjoy their life there, and the uncle thanks the management of the orphan asylum for their tender care, and departs.

After several years the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities assemble at the orphan asylum to attend the commencement exercises of this institution. It so happens that the speaker chosen to deliver the valedictorian address is the little orphan boy who was left there by his uncle several years before.

His address is called "Charity, or How the Jews Care for Their Poor," and with impassioned voice and tear-dimmed eyes he extols the noble work done by the Federation. In his address he states that the Federation was the means of caring for his mother when she arrived here, for his uncle when he became ill and for himself and his sister after they became homeless.

As he speaks, the scenes which are described appear in vision. The audience is deeply impressed, particularly one philanthropist, who decides to learn more of the work of the Federation.

He calls at the offices of the Federation and there he is shown its advantages and many poor applicants applying for help. He is so impressed with the work that is done that he gives a large sum of money as a donation to the Federation, hoping that his act will serve as an example to all Jews to further the splendid charity carried on by the Federation.

Social Workers, Attention!

You possibly know that there is a definite movement on foot now for a federation of all the Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations throughout the United States. This federation is to be known as the Council of Y. M. H. and Kindred Associations. The Board of Managers thought it might be possible to interest some of you in making a study of conditions at institutions in various cities along the route to Memphis. This could be effected by arranging stop-overs at two or three cities along the line, and the reports could then be sent to us. All expenses attendant upon the lengthened period of travel and study in the city would be met by the Council. For further details and arrangements, please write to I. E. Goldwasser, chief of the Board of Experts, Hester and Essex Streets, New York, N. Y.