

STRATHFIELD & DISTRICT JEWISH CENTRE.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Once again it is my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report for the year.

The year in review has been one of rather steady endeavour than of outstanding events, and though not spectacular from an organisational viewpoint has further solidly cemented your Centre as a definite fixture in the Jewish Life of New South Wales. By its Religious Services, Childrens Classes, Communal efforts, and its willingness at all times to co-operate and assist our sister organisations, it is forging a name and prestige second to none.

These premises are now, with our permission, used by different Jewish groups, each adding their efforts in helping and maintaining our children and group together. Of these the "Habonim" and "Betar" cater for the children, The Western Suburbs Jewish Tennis Club for the Youth, and the local Wizo group "Negba" for all interested in helping the state of Israel. Thus we have the three sections of our Community each being cared for in its activities. This I believe lends strength to them, and through them to us in the present and future state of the organisation.

At the first meeting of the members ~~in~~ this year our plan of sub-committees was put into operation and the following sub-committees were appointed.

Functions, Finance, Membership, Synagogue and Building, some of these sub-committees have done a magnificent job, others have not functioned nearly as well as they should, particular mention might be paid to the Functions Committee, they have done a magnificent work, on them has fallen the bulk of the work necessary in the organising and running of the different functions held during the year, and a really wonderful success they have made of it. During the year the following functions were held under their aegis, 8 Card Parties, 1 Musical Evening, Film Night for the Martyr's Forest Appeal, for the Children a Picnic, Chenakah Party, Purim Fancy Dress Party, and Succath Party.

All of these functions being an unqualified success. My thanks and the gratitude of all members is extended to this sub-committee who really did an excellent job of work, and took all of the work and responsibility of these functions in their stride.

Whilst on the subject of functions I think this an appropriate moment to mention the Fete held in conjunction with

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the Wizo "Negbah" group. This was one of our greatest successes and my thanks is extended to all those members of this organisation who worked so hard before and at the Fete itself and whose work showed such a wonderful success. I must mention in particular Mrs. Toister whose efforts were really magnificent, our thanks and expressions of gratitude has been extended to all those persons and firms who gave gifts for sale at the Fete. I do believe that this should become a regular yearly event, and would grow bigger every year.

The Finance and Building Committee have had numerous meetings over the year, and negotiated with the N.S.W. Board of Jewish Education for the purchase of this property, at the last meeting of this sub-committee it was decided to make a definite offer to the board, this was not accepted, and we are now waiting to hear further from the board, when negotiations will be resumed.

The Membership sub-committee has been a great disappointment, this committee has not functioned at all, and membership which should be growing, I am sorry to say has not done so owing to the neglect of this very important side of our activities. Unless membership grows we decline.

The Synagogue Committee has functioned to a lesser degree, and it is imperative that membership of of the section be confined to those interested in the running and servicing of the Synagogue from week to week. In reviewing these sub-committees I would suggest that each of the functions these serve gives every member a chance to serve and work on the sub-committee they are most interested in, thus bringing enjoyment to themselves and service to our community.

The other outstanding functions of the year which deserve special mention here, are the United Israel Appeal held in conjunction with the Negba Group and the J.N.F. Strathfield committee at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Flachs, this evening was a great success, and our gratitude is expressed to Mr. & Mrs. Flachs for the use of their home for this occasion.

The other was the first Play Reading Night ever held at the Centre, this proved very popular and to Mr. & Mrs. Hervey, the Producer, and our stars we extend our gratitude, this, of course, applies to all those members who took part, and Mr. Hyman a member of the Western Suburbs Tennis Club who co-operated and accepted a part in the play. This type of function is of great interest and enjoyment and I would suggest that a Dramatic Section, to all interested members, would be of great value to themselves and to the Centre. These functions together with our now recognised Succath Party and demonstration Sedar sums up the actual Public work of the year.

I am very pleased to be able to report to you that services have been held every Saturday morning, throughout the year, though it is that some Saturday mornings we have failed to

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have, the required 10 adults present, most Saturdays there has been the required number, we would like more of our members to attend these services as often as they possibly can, and so help maintain these services.

High Holyday services were again held here and it was found impossible to accommodate all those who wished to attend, therefore, this year the Strathfield Town Hall has been booked, and ample room and seating is available for all, our services are very much appreciated and our thanks is extended to our Honary Minister Rev. Goran and our B'aal Shachiresh, Mr. Sompenschein, for the attention and diligence they give to these services.

During the year Rev. Goran was asked to accept the position of Honorary Minister to this Centre, this he was pleased to accept, and since then has diligently attended to whatever duties this office entails, as a mark of our gratitude and esteem it was decided that a gown be made and presented to him, this honour I have great pleasure in doing this evening. You will be pleased to know that our children are now receiving religious tuition at Homebush Public School and North Belmore Public School, as well as Sabbath Class and Tuesday afternoon class, all these being conducted voluntarily by our Honorary Minister.

To the present time three bar-mitzvahs have been celebrated in our school, namely, R. Sikel, P. Kitchener and S. Handler, each of these boys was presented with a Herz Prayer Book suitably inscribed as a gift and memento from this association. Six more boys will be called to the Reading of the Law during the coming year.

Our thanks is extended to the teaching staff Miss Boas, Mr. Solomons and Mr. Berkovitch for their diligent care of our Children's tuition on Sunday mornings, and we assure them of our continued co-operation throughout the year.

During the year my wife and I were blessed with an addition to our family, and I would take this opportunity to thank all the members for their wonderful evening which the Functions Committee arranged in our honour, and for the magnificent gift you presented our new daughter ~~with~~ I am certain when she is older it is something she will appreciate all her life. Naturally Mrs. Goran could not continue with the work she so capably managed previously, to those ladies who gallantly, and wonderfully stepped forward and catered so well for all our gatherings we extend our most grateful thanks. They have done a magnificent job and without their planning and work our functions would decline in every aspect.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our Secretary, Mrs. Sekel, for her sterling work during the year and to Mr. Bernstein for the wonderful assistance he has once again rendered, Our treasurer, whose report will once

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again prove to you how well she guards and watches your funds, once again has proved herself a tower of strength, my thanks and the thanks of the whole organisation is extended to her.

To all those members of the Committee and sub-committees I extend my thanks for their help and support throughout the year.

Now as to the future.

I believe it is imperative that the sub-committees as set up at our previous general meeting be continued - each member thereby doing that work he or she finds most suitable to their own inclinations.

A very much stronger and more active membership sub-committee be set up, and function immediately.

A Ladies Section of the Synagogue Committee be set up to attend to the vestments etc. of the Synagogue.

More attention must be paid to the cultural side of our functions.

A sub-committee be set up to assist in the procuring of more educational aids for our children.

Negotiations must continue with the Board, until a satisfactory figure is reached for our purchase of this property and affiliation with the Board of Deputies is imperative in the coming year.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ~~now~~ <sup>make the addition of</sup> ~~the addition of~~ <sup>of the</sup> President's report for 1954-55 for discussion.

STRATHFIELD P. & C. ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENTIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1953.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The year in revue being my second year as your President has been one of steady progress and consolidation. Many of the objectives that we set out at the beginning of the year have been achieved and the steady progress of our Organization has proved that we are proceeding on the correct course. In the community at large, our standing and prestige has been recognized and growing continuously as one of the leading Jewish Associations in the Western Districts.

Membership has increased over the year, attendance at meetings and functions arranged by the Association continue to remain very high with keen interest shown by members in all the efforts of the Organization.

I have received throughout the year the loyal support of the Executive and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks for their invaluable co-operation which showed in the smooth running of the Organization throughout the year.

To all those members who have assisted so generously with finance, time and labour and who have never failed to respond to all and any calls made on them I would also express from the Association and myself sincere appreciation and thanks, without all these efforts we could no have succeeded in implementang our planned progress.

Once again I must commend to your attention the magnificent work done by our Hon. Secretary, as in my first year of Office, she has once again been a tower of strength to me and to our Organization. The Secretarial work necessary in a growing Organization, such as ours, is in itself immense, and never once has Fanny complained or neglected her responsibilities and our very sincere thanks is extended to her.

The finances of the Association have been very capably handled by our Treasurer, who has made himself available at alltimes so that the receiving and dispersing of funds would be smoothly effected, to him I would extend my grateful thanks. His report will follow and his guardianship of your finances will come up for your critical revue.

Now I would like to say a few words of appreciation to that section of our Organization without whom none of our functions could have been the success they were, our Ladies Committee. Their efforts and achievements over the year, catering to the varied occasions we have held, has been ~~xxxx~~ one of increasing amazement to me and of inculpable value to this Association. The manner in which they approach their tasks, the easy fluidity of their catering arrangements and the attractive and beautifully prepared suppers etc. that come from their hands is in itself a magnificent achievement. To their leader, my dear wife, and to all those ladies who have assisted her so wonderfully we owe an increasing and unpayable debt. On your behalf may I say gratefully and sincerely "Thankyou" to our wonderful band of workers.

At a meeting of representatives of the N.S.W. Board of Jewish Education and representatives of this Organization three plans were presented by the Board whereby we could help pay for the financial outlay by the Board in giving religious instruction to our children. These three plans were discussed and your representatives decided that the one whereby a subsidy of an amount to be decided by the members, per child, per annum, be implemented. At the next meeting of the members it was decided that the sum of £3.0.0. per child per annum be paid to the Board, this decision is being carried out and the payment effected per term.

There are 60 children attending the classes, these classes have been increased this year from once a week to twice a week. Classes are held every Tuesday afternoon and Sunday mornings. The teaching staff has been increased and four teachers are now in attendance.

High Holiday services were held by the Association, these services being carried out in an Orthodox manner, as applied to the United Synagogues of Great Britain. Conducted by Mr. L. Goran assisted by Mr. Zoltan, and with the services of Mr. Sonnenschien to blow Shofar, they were very well attended and beautifully intoned. Very good decorum was maintained throughout and the services were one of this Organizations outstanding achievements. Arrangements have been made for the coming High Holiday and the incoming Committee will find that all necessary plans have been finalized.

Two very big steps forward have been taken by the Association in this year, they are the purchase of a Sefer Torah and the preparing and equipping of a Synagogue. The Sefer Torah was obtained for us in Holland by Mr. Dahl, one of our Vice-Presidents, on his recent trip abroad and the Association expressed its grateful thanks to Mr. Dahl for his efforts. The preparation and equipment of a Synagogue has been in progress for the last five weeks. The main upstairs front room has been stripped and painted, and Aaron Koddish is being built, wiring or the room for additional lights has been affected, and the completed project will be ready for the High Holiday services. The completed work may be ready a week prior to this and if this is effected an official opening could be organized at short notice. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who have assisted so generously and ably in this work, namely Messrs. Blumenthal, A. Sekel, S. Sekel, J. Toister, E. Allen, E. Dahl, E. Aarons, N. Hartnam, ~~and~~ M. Goran and H. Smith, Mr. Rosen ~~has~~ promised to French polish the Ark when completed. To all those members who have donated towards the cost of the Sefer, and to all members who have expressed their willingness to donate towards the cost of the equipping of our Synagogue I express our grateful thanks. The children attending the classes are each week collecting money to clothe the Sefer and pay for the necessary Mantles. We have received the following donations towards the equipment of the Synagogue; a very beautiful silver Kiddush Cup from Mr. Smith and a silver inspic Tower from Mr. in memory of his parents. We would be pleased to receive other gifts towards the Synagogue furnishings in memory of departed parents of our members. It has been suggested that old silver be collected and stored for the making of sh~~ald~~ and bells for the Sefer, we would be pleased to receive any silver our members may have until we have sufficient to manufacture these appurtences.

In the past year we have held eleven meetings, all well attended.

- 1 High Tea held at the Centre
- 4 Card Evenings held at the homes of Mr. & Mrs. Flax, Dr. & Mrs. Ziegler, Mr. & Mrs. Toister and Mrs. E. Lowe. The thanks of the Organization is extended to these generous members who allowed us the use of their homes, the funds of the Association benefited very substantially by their generosity. An address was given by Rev. Benson and an address by representatives of the Jewish National Fund. A very beautiful musical evening and a "Come-in-Bad-Taste" dance rounded off the functions held at the Centre for the Adult members. A Cabaret Dance held at the Sheridan Ballroom was enjoyed by all present, and the management of the Sheridan thanked for their efforts, a previous donation was received from the same source.

Our children have not been neglected through the year and for them the following functions were arranged.

3 Picnics - one with the co-operation of the Eastern Suberbs P. & C. Association, and A party to celebrate the Anniversary of the Centre.

All religious festivals were celebrated in a manner to impress them on the children's mind. A Seder Demonstration was held and the thanks of the Organization is extended to Mr. L. Goran for the very beautiful manner in which he conducted the Seder.

L'ag B'omer was celebrated by a party. Succoth fittingly celebrated, Rabbi Porush officiated though owing to inclement weather a Succa had to be built indoors; at this party opportunity was taken to present our past President Mr. S. Isaacs Q.C. with a fitting token of our appreciation.

Chanakah was commemorated with a service, the proper lights being lit and the children singing Moaz T'zur and a party with the traditional Chunakah gelt being tendered to them. Purim was made the occasion of a Fancy Dress party with Chomen Taschen, and prizes for the best costumes.

It is with great pleasure that I record the Children's Bazaar ran by the children to raise funds to assist Jewish Child's Day Appeal, was a great success, £40 being the result of their efforts. This amount was passed on to the Jewish Child's Day Committee.

During the year we formed a children's club with the children attending the classes meeting once a month on Sunday afternoon to play games and enjoy themselves in each others company.

This Ladies and Gentlemen brings the record of the year's activities to a close.

I would like now to look to the future year. The incoming Executive and Committee in my opinion have before them four main tasks, the first is the further building of our membership, in proportion of the number of Jewish families living in the area served by our Centre, our membership is a very small percentage. Second, with the equiping and furnishing of our Synagogue services for Shabbos and all Festivals must be organized and held, also for the use of our members for Yortziot etc. Thirdly, a concentrated effort should be made to form a new Youth Group so that our children will not just drift away after leaving the classes. To further this end I have made arrangements that an Organizer from the N.S.W. Jewish Youth Council will come out and address our Youth and help to organize them as soon as we can get them together. A big step forward in this regard will be the building of a Tennis Court. This must be completed in the forth coming year, and I would suggest a special sub-committee, of all interested members, be set up to raise funds and organize the project. Fourthly, it is essential as Jews belong to this Community that we as individuals and as an Organization support the two main Jewish fund raising Bodies, namely, The United Israel Appeal and the N.S.W. Jewish Community Chest. These two Bodies, one, for the raising of funds for the help of the State of Israel, and the other the carrying out of all local Jewish charities, must receive the financial support of all for without them all is lost.

In the year now forthcoming I would express to you the need for complete unity amongst ourselves; co-operation with each other, to the building of an ever bigger and better Association catering to all the needs of the Jewish Community in the Western District, in its Religious, Education, Cultural and Social Activities so that we can pass on a heritage to our successors of an ideal Jewish Centre, performing all of its manifold tasks in a fitting and dignified manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen the President's report is opened for discussion.

President's Report, 1951-52.

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Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is with a feeling of gratitude and pride that I present to you the President's report for 1951-52.

The year in retrospect showed me that there is in this community, spread as it is, a vital need for just such an organisation as this, to foster and spread, in all of its various facets, the ideals of Jewish life, socially, culturally and nationally.

This year has been one of re-habilitating and re-building and I believe that with your co-operation and help this first step has been realised.

To all members of my executive, committee and general members, I wish here and now to express my heartfelt thanks for the wonderful way they have rallied and supported me throughout this year.

It is not my intention to signal out any one person to thank more than another except in one instance, that is to our secretary, Mrs. Fanny Robinson, who has had a tremendous amount of work to attend to in the last twelve months. This she has done nobly and without thought of quibbling or of self. There must have been times when she imagined that I was Pharaoh and she was building Raameses and Pithon by herself, and magnificent cities she would have made of them. She has been a tower of strength to me and to the Association. To all those members who have so generously given of their time and money to assist us, I would like, here and now to publicly express, on your behalf, our sincere thanks.

Last but not least we owe a special debt of gratitude to all those ladies, led by me dear wife, who have worked so nobly and well to prepare, cater and make our functions the success they have been. To all of you ladies, words could not express the feeling of gratitude we have for you. I know the terrific amount of work this has involved; you are indeed "Mother's of Israel" and a shining light for our guidance.

We have, in the year under review, held ten regular monthly meetings, three special committee meetings, organized and held four High Teas which have become a standard to the whole community and draw larger and larger crowds to our financial and communal betterment, six games nights - these are not as well attended as they should be and I would suggest that a method of popularising these be considered by the incoming Committee.

Culture has been catered for by the following evenings -- a Musicale, a lecture by Rabbi Swift, film night by the J.N.F., address by Mr. Stanton, address by Dr. Kopel-Rosen. We have also in the year co-operated with the Strathfield J.N.F. Committee and with our joint effort raised well over £300 at a meeting held in this Centre on behalf of the United Israel Appeal.

For the children, who are our prime responsibility and our main reason for existence, we organised the following functions. -- 1. Succoth Party, 2. Seder Demonstration, 3. Annual Picnic with which we once more co-operated with the Eastern Suburbs P. & C. Association, 4. Purim Party and Rally, 5. Shevous Celebration which took the form of an Amateur Hour, 6. Annual Prize giving, 7. Third Anniversary celebration in the form of a Fancy Dress Party. Though this is a fair record of events for our children, I do think this can be improved upon and a function of some sort be held for the children each month, so that the children themselves will look forward to them, and so increase their interest in the classes and increase their attendance so that they will be able to participate in all of the other activities.



We have succeeded, I am very pleased to announce to paying all of our promised donation to the N.S.W. Board of Jewish Education, and have not committed ourselves to any further amounts to any organization.

During the past year the community was visited by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Rabbi Israel Brodie, and we had the honour of being invited by the Western Suburbs Synagogue to a joint Sabbath service in his honour, a kiddush tendered to the Chief Rabbi after the service was catered by our own dear ladies.

Later the same night as your representative, Mrs. Goran and myself, attended a reception in his honour at the Bankstown Synagogue and donated £10.0.0 from this association to their appeal for funds.

Your Secretary, Vice-President, Mr. Blackman, and myself attended a special meeting called by the N.S.W. Board of Jewish Education, at which their very serious financial difficulties was explained, and the various P. & C. Associations were urged to assist and make their centres self-supporting. This was reported back to this organization at the first meeting following the conference, and it was resolved at that meeting we would assist to make our centre as near self-supporting as possible.

This, I believe is quite within our powers and ability and should be one of the prime considerations of the incoming executive.

It is with great pleasure that I can report to you that the High Holiday Services for the ensuing festivals have been once again arranged and a Minister and assistant Minister has been procured and a sub-committee to assist in the necessary organisation should be set up immediately.

Our membership in the past year has increased by 60% but a very large number of potential members still exist and this also is one of the very important tasks of the incoming committee.

There are at present 64 children enrolled, divided into three classes and receiving tuition from the Board's teachers at this Centre.

Our third Anniversary celebrations, both for adults and children, was an unqualified success, fittingly celebrated and so popular that we did not have sufficient seating accommodation for the large attendance. Again on the following Sunday the fancy dress party for the children was extremely well attended, the children being beautifully dressed and they had a very memorable day.

I have endeavoured through the year to foster a spirit of friendliness between all members of our Association and bring to the Centre that spirit of friendliness that only the Yiddish word "Chamishness" can differentiate, also to bring some small measure of unity and co-operation between the other P. & C. Associations and groups in the other Centres. This, I am sure, will bear fruit in the ensuing year, and a greater spirit of mutual reciprocity will prevail.

To the future betterment of the organization I have formulated a short and long term plan for the guidance of the future executive. For immediate policy it is essential that Association accumulate its own funds so that it can at all times be ready to, out of its own resources, meet any emergency that may arise, increase membership and attract, by various well planned functions, large gatherings to the Centre. Publicity must be well attended to and I would suggest that a Publicity Officer be elected to handle this very essential work and who will give the position the necessary thought and time. The long term plan I envisage is the purchase of our own property, either in this or in some other locality, is essential to our continuance. The thought that the N.S.W. Board of Jewish

Education can at any time sell this property, and so leave us without a Centre in which to meet and work, is, to me like sleeping with the sword of Damocles suspended over our heads. With the purchase of our own home this is removed and a proper Jewish Centre, completely independent, and serving all of our religious and social life, will be possible without any interference from any outside body and I envisage the day when the Strathfield Jewish Centre will be one of the outstanding communal organisations in N.S.W.

It is with regret that we saw the end this year of the activities of the Youth group that met and used this Centre each Sunday. I did try and organise this group into a homogeneous unit, but without the lead and help from this organisation their executive thought that they could not carry on, and they resigned en masse. This was notified to us by letter when it was too late to do anything to try and revitalize their enthusiasm. It is my studied opinion that a Youth group is essential, and they must be organized from the children now attending the classes when they reach the required age.

In conclusion I would once again express my gratitude for the way you have rallied around me and made this year, one of re-building and rehabilitation always a difficult task, one of joy and pleasure. To the incoming executive, I would say you have a year of extreme difficulties in front of you, with some very serious problems to face and overcome, by unity and co-operation this can be done.

I would appeal to you and to all members to join and assist in the work that lies ahead and at the same time derive that pleasure we all receive in seeing the fruits of our labors worth gathering, and joining in that peculiar Jewish trait of receiving new Jewish consciousness by being united together.

Ladies and Gentlemen I ask that the President's report be received.