

Philip L. Seman, "Report of the Superintendent," *Chicago Hebrew Institute Observer* 2, no. 6 (May 1914): 10-23.

To the President, Directors and Members of the Chicago Hebrew Institute, Ladies and

Gentlemen:—

I beg herewith to present a report of the activities of the Institute for the season 1913-1914, though I feel responsible only for the work beginning October 1st, 1913, the day I had the pleasure and the privilege to take official charge of the Institute.

Needless, I am sure, is it for me in a form of introduction to this report to go into a lengthy discourse, trying to convince or prove the value and the need of the work we are conducting in the face of your experience for the past ten years. An institution conducting twenty-seven distinct departments, in one instance, a department covering as many as 193 separate gatherings in a given month with a total aggregate attendance of 12,421, gives you at a glance the enormity and the scope of its operation. To go into every detail of the work, conducted under our auspices, giving a fitting explanation as to the intent, purpose and reason for its being conducted by us, would mean a voluminous result; and since my effort here is not to give you bulk, but rather to tell you just what has been done by the institution during this past year in a perfectly matter of fact manner, and because I am anxious that you read this report and become better acquainted with the institution, you are interested in (I presume by virtue of your affiliation), I will limit myself to speak only of the most important departments.

In our department of ENGLISH FOR FOREIGNERS, where we prepare the adult immigrant, who cannot speak our language, to better opportunities for usefulness, 1,104 different individuals have been under instruction for the past twelve months in ten classes, meeting four nights a week, two hours each evening. I might explain here, for the purpose of record, that until

two months ago the department conducted only seven classes, and in order to accommodate the unusually large waiting list of persons, who were anxious to join our English classes, we found it necessary to furnish the Social Hall, on the third floor of our building, with Coburn Round through trolley tracks from which are suspended folding doors, affording; the possibility to change this large hall into four independent class rooms, divided by a sufficiently large hallway to offset the chance for noise, that would naturally be created because of the closeness of the rooms and the fact that the partitions are not altogether sound proof. These arrangements made it likewise possible for us to turn these four independent rooms into [end page 10] the original social hall, which we are using heretofore for either dancing or entertainment purposes. These changes from large hall to small rooms and vice versa take only a minimum amount of exertion on the part of one janitor.

I might say further, that even though we have increased our physical facilities for teaching, our waiting list has not materially diminished, because just as many as were accommodated in classes from the waiting list, were in turn added by additional applications. We have oftentimes [*sic*] pleaded with those, whom we could not accommodate, to make use of the Public Schools, who offer similar educational advantages, but for one reason or another and with the exception of rare instances, we met with failure. This is rather astonishing for the reason that we make a charge to the immigrant for the instruction he receives in contrast to the Public Schools who offer him the instruction gratis. The explanation to this is probably that the foreigner intuitively recognizes that the institution can more effectively cope with his situation, because it has a better psychological understanding of him, knowing his environment, his life, his difficulties and aspirations in the "Old Country."

Besides teaching our immigrants English the Institute takes a personal interest in the individual. For example, for the past five months a class now numbering over 200 immigrant women are given instruction, as a part of their school work, in calisthenic [*sic*] exercises and drills. I remember well the first few evenings this class was conducted. The girls could not quite see what exercise and calisthenics had to do with the study of English, but it did not take very long before they felt a new life entering their tired, wornout bodies, and the exercise hour was looked forward to with much anticipation. We recognize that the girls, who work hard in shops or factories all day long and spend four evenings a week at their studies, needed physical instruction to invigorate them. The clumsy immigrant girl of the first evening after five months, in the majority of instances, has been changed to a graceful and spritely girl, who now moves her arms, her limbs and her body with grace and poise to the tune of the piano and the orders of the instructor.

The men are given special instruction in American citizenship, where they are taught, first of all, the great importance of all who come to this country with the initial idea of making it its permanent home, to prepare for citizenship. In this class [end page 11] we further teach the principles upon which our government has been based, the rights and duties of a citizen and likewise, in short, the history of our country. The students are encouraged and advised to take out their first citizenship papers, if they have not already done so, and not to neglect to acquire their full citizenship papers if they have made proper declaration, according to the requirements of the laws on naturalization.

This instruction in CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP is extended through the work done in these classes by special instruction, advice and information given each Sunday morning, to not

only members of our English classes, but to any one in the neighborhood who finds the need for special instruction and advice.

In the effort to stimulate a greater interest in the reading of books each of the classes was from time to time taken down in a body to the LIBRARY, where the librarian explained the method of procuring books, the kind of books to be had and the value to be derived from the reading of good literature. Talks on hygiene are given by the principal of our school, who is a physician.

The members of the night school classes, as well as the graduates, have banded together in an organization known as the Institute Educational League. There are approximately 600 members on the register of this league, though 250 of them are active and participate in the various functions prepared by the Executive Committee of the organization. The extent of the activities of this league during the past six months, will probably give you some idea of the important educational and social value of this organization and the moral effect on the English department. They have conducted six social gatherings, six educational meetings and lectures, five social and educational meetings, nine business meetings and two excursions to the Art Institute and the Columbian Museum. This League likewise conducts the patriotic and legal celebrations. February was an extremely busy month for the members of the League.

Sunday, February 1st, Miss Esther Dresden, of the Workers' Suffrage Alliance, delivered a lecture on "Why Women Should Vote." Lincoln's Birthday was celebrated on February 12th and the honorable Charles S. Deneen, ex-governor of Illinois, was the speaker of the evening. February 15th was celebrated as Woman's Day and all unusually fine program was prepared to commemorate the occasion. Mrs. Grace Wilbur Trout, president of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, addressed the audience. Washington's Birthday was celebrated on February 23rd.

The feature of the program was an original address on George Washington, written and prepared by one of the members of the League. This address was illustrated with stereopticon pictures. I wish space would allow me to incorporate here this excellent piece of work. The immigration authorities and particularly our restrictionist friends should have witnessed the work done by the boys and girls of the League, particularly that evening. They would have grown as intensely enthusiastic as did the very large audience assembled; and then there would be no fear when a Dillingham or a Burnett Bill would be introduced before our National Legislature.

An English Teachers' Association was organized some six months ago. The purpose of the Association is to foster a greater solidarity and unity of purpose between the teachers and their classes. All contemplated changes, either in the curriculum of instruction or in the method pursued, in fact everything pertaining to the department is taken up by the Association and discussed as to the merits and practicability. One of the things done by the Association from the beginning was that each week one of the teachers be given a leave of absence for the purpose of visiting the other rooms and thus coordinate the work of the other classes. The chairman of the organization acts in the capacity of head. of the department.

KINDERGARTEN, MONTESSORI CLASS AND MOTHERS' CLUB.

Our kindergarten during the past year has had an aggregate registration of 206, though the attendance has not been over 90 on any given day. The total aggregate attendance during the past year has been 10,460. Our kindergarten is conducted twelve months during the year. Ours is an under-age kindergarten. By the term under-age we mean under the age of the Public School requirements. The instruction is given each morning between the hours of 9:00 to 12:00, five days a week. During the summer months the work is conducted on the grounds. [end page 12]

About seven years ago, Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, opened the first Cassa del Bambini, or a house of childhood in Rome, and began to apply her revolutionary methods of education to the teaching of little children. The master principle of her system is self-education. The function of education is to foster growth. All growth must come from a revolutionary action of the child; that is, the business of growing must be done by the child and not handed over to a teacher or any one else. Thus it follows that the teacher must, as far as possible, efface herself. She must cease to occupy the center of the stage; she must indeed annihilate herself; she must be in a state of masterly inactivity towards the children, ready to give guidance and stimulation, as it is required by the child, and must see that the child is provided with suitable materials, but she must leave the child free to exercise her own faculties; in other words the orthodox method of a teacher making the children do certain lessons, whether they attend to them or wish to do them or not gives place to a regime of freedom for the child, in which his love for rational activity, his desire to do things for himself, his joy of overcoming difficulties shall be made and mastered by judicial and sympathetic guidance on the part of the teacher.

The system so far has been planned for children between the ages of two and five. We are told that Dr. Montessori is making preparations to extend her system for children beyond that age. We feel that the scheme is practical and should be given a fair test. Through the generosity of a good friend of the Institute, such a class has been organized in connection with our kindergarten and game room. The necessary games especially prepared for this system, have likewise been donated by another friend of the Institute. Instruction is given daily except Saturday and Sunday. A number of deficient and backward children who are observed by the various instructors in charge of our children's activities are transferred to this class and are given

this special instruction, for Dr. Montessori states that the instruction gained through the play part of her system can be made particularly advantageous in developing the backward and deficient child. [end page 13]

So that the mothers of the children in the kindergarten, as well as in the Montessori class, in fact in all of the children's activities, may have a more definite understanding of what the Institute is trying to do in behalf of their children, a MOTHERS' CLUB was organized. So far about 100 members are in active attendance. We hope, however, before long we may be able to impress the importance of this club on the mothers of the children, who are participating in the various activities. One of the regular features of the programs at their meetings is the giving of hygiene lectures. These lectures are aimed to be as comprehensive as possible, so that the mothers may be informed of the best and safest method of bringing up their child to a better manhood and womanhood. The value of careful attention to the physical and mental needs of the child is emphasized and the relationship of the home to a life of useful activity is made clear. The organization through these lectures will aim to deprive the mother of the feeling of helplessness in case of emergency. The lectures are given in Yiddish by specialists in their respective lines. One other important object of the organization is to see not only to the enforcement of the existing health laws, but that such laws are enacted, insuring the child a sane and healthy environment. The programs at these meetings, however, are not limited to work of a directly educational nature. There are musical numbers, recitations, as well as refreshments, and a pleasant social evening is spent bringing cheer into the overworked lives of many of the mothers. The spirit of good fellowship and co-operation is bound to result from the monthly meetings.

SEWING CLASS.

One hundred and thirty-eight different girls were given instruction in the sewing class. The instruction is given Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, between the hours of four and six, and the girls are taught the practical use of the machine and needle, thus aiding in preparing them for the earnestness of life. The Institute is not very strong in this department.

For the past few years there has been a sudden rise in the cost of living. Wages, however, have not increased in proportion to this rise. It requires skill and a real ability to manage nowadays for the housewife of the poor or even middle class family to make both ends meet. The solution to such a problem to a large degree would be that the girls and the young women and the near-to-be wives be given instruction in domestic economy, be taught how to make their own clothes, how to cook and the relative value of foodstuffs. Instead of this, less attention is paid to these important matters. The young girl of today does not know how to make her own clothing, is not in a position to trim her own hat, is generally not able to cook, and in oft cases not even ready or willing to attend to her own household. We should have such a department. It should be run on a large state and should attract many hundreds of girls, and particular attention should be paid to the young girls who are about to enter married life. This naturally would require space much more than we can, under the present physical cramped conditions, afford. But let us keep this in mind and, when in the near future our vision of a series of buildings for educational and social purposes on the grounds of our Institution is realized, give the plan serious consideration and adequate space.

HEBREW, SABBATH SCHOOL, SERVICES AND RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

Two hundred and forty boys and a few girls have received instruction in HEBREW two hours each day, except Friday and Saturday. Friday, however, the boys of the Hebrew classes

are under instruction in the gymnasium, because they are unable to attend the gymnasium at any other time.

We have reorganized our school and are now conducting classes in the Ivris B'ivris method, in contrast to the mere teaching of reading words, so that the boy and girl may be trained in time to read his prayers. The chief aim of our school has been to attain efficient results by making it attractive and by rendering the work interesting and pleasant. Our class rooms, unlike the typical filthy chedar, are light and airy, a fact which has highly facilitated the task of maintaining order and respect for our Institution. We have also been fortunate in securing experienced teachers, combining a good knowledge of Hebrew and general pedagogy. All of our teachers are University students. The difficulty of making the study of a language interesting and ap- [end page 14] pealing to the young mind is minimized by this method. Perhaps in no other Hebrew School in this city is there such a devotion on the part of the pupils, such an eagerness to study in advance, as one can observe in our school.

Through the introduction of the natural method, the beginners are at once taught to converse in Hebrew by administering objects, by employing action and motion instead of dry theory. Life and vigor has been brought into the class rooms and the children are kept in constant attention. The work is continued through the three higher classes, enriching their vocabulary, acquainting them with grammar and steadily developing the pupils' ability to write and speak a good Hebrew. In the advance classes original composition is encouraged on a large scale. The boys write stories and of things experienced through personal observations employing a sound Hebrew borrowed from the Bible, as well as from modern literature. Considerable attention has been paid to the study of Jewish history, religious tales, to general discussions on Judaism and Jewish ethics. Once a week the classes are assembled and special talks along these

lines are given by the principal of the school. The average pupil of our school presents a most desirable type of the Jewish-American boy. Conscious of the great past of his nation, of the glorious contribution of his people to civilization, he makes a proud Jew and a good American citizen.

Six hundred and eighty-one children have been registered in our Sabbath School, which is conducted Saturday and Sunday of each week, where they are instructed in Bible history and in Jewish ethics. We have probably the largest Sabbath School in Chicago and if physical difficulties could be overcome there would be no trouble to attract over 1,000 children.

We felt that a Normal Class for Sabbath School teachers was sorely needed, in order to properly equip the teachers, and accordingly such a class was organized a few months ago with all of the teachers of the staff as a nucleus. The class is in charge of a competent instructor and we expect after a year's work the teachers will be splendidly equipped to teach in any Sabbath School in the country. An invitation was extended to all Sabbath School teachers in Chicago, or men and women who are not Sabbath School teachers, but would like to take advantage of this course with probably the object of connecting themselves with this work. The class meets twice a week, Saturday afternoon, beginning at 4:00 o'clock, and Monday evening, beginning at 6:00 o'clock.

Every Friday evening at 8:00 o'clock RELIGIOUS SERVICES are conducted by a cantor and a well trained boys' choir. Sermons are delivered by the various members of the Chicago Rabbinical Association. Saturday afternoon similar services are conducted for the children of the Sabbath and Hebrew Schools. At these services children of the neighborhood who cannot be accommodated in our classes are welcome.

The RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS are likewise appropriately looked after. We have had six such celebrations. The programs in every case are rendered entirely by the children of these classes. At these celebrations the hall is always taxed to its capacity, making it necessary to give an extra performance the following evening. On one of these occasions only lately, even after the second performance was given, long before the hour of starting, the hall and the gallery were jammed and many hundreds were turned away.

DANCING CLASS AND SATURDAY EVENING SOCIAL DANCES.

The dance belongs to all communities and all ages. It has come down to us through all myths, all histories and all religions, and in spite of its responsive cloak, it has always and everywhere preserved much of its original character and cannot be lightly set aside as a pastime of an idle hour. There must have been a time in the world's history when every action of life, every game, banquet and dance represented a repast and form of recreation. From all that can be learned from the writers of the dance it is almost a certainty that the origin of most dances can be found in religious worship. Over 2,500 years ago, the Greeks trained their youths in the art of dancing for the development of their minds. We are told by J. P. Mahaffy, one of the greatest authorities on Greek civilization, that all the education of the Greeks came through physical activity. Greek philosophers had defined the soul as the harmony of the body [end page 15] and their aim was to develop quickly all the powers of the body, hence their love for symmetry, order and regularity was evidenced in the perfecting of the human form. Their dancing consisted of the physical representative of an idea, so that their feeling for the rhythmic became highly cultivated.

Dancing is an art, in fact it is the mother of arts, for it was really the first. Every person who cares can enjoy it and when properly done produces organic vigor, health, strength and

happiness. The evils associated with social dancing have brought the dance into disrepute, but in its primitive forms has represented by the rhythmic movements of the Greeks, for example, and the rhythmic games and folk dances of the peasantry of Europe it becomes chaste, wholesome and a highly beneficial form of exercise, which develops grace of poise and movement and promotes health of mind and body. Dancing freed from the modern proversions, which have rendered the word dancing objectionable and has placed a taboo on this form of exercise in certain circles, will recover its old position of respect and importance and again become a powerful factor in contributing to the health and happiness of the race and the physical and mental welfare of mankind.

This splendid means of social intercourse among the young is conducted by us in a great many different ways. The social dances weekly have been enjoyed by an aggregate attendance of 15029 during 52 weeks of the year. There were as many as 452 and as few as 78 attending. These dances are frequented by the young men and women who toil hard during the week days in shops, factories and stores and have this as possibly the only chance or means to socially entertain themselves under clean and wholesome surroundings. It is the acknowledged opinion of sociologists that social intercourse is of utmost necessity for each human being. How much more important is it, therefore, for the boy and girl who works hard all week long to be given the opportunity to pass a pleasant evening in this manner.

Then, too, there were 406 individuals who were given regular instruction in dancing, most of them foreigners. The course is generally completed by the average student in ten lessons. These are given once a week. An amusing instance in this connection is a reason given me by one of the members of the dancing class, who stated that he was taking dancing lessons

because he wanted to be able to dance at his own wedding, which was to take place in about six weeks from the date of the information volunteered.

At the social dances a ladies' orchestra of four pieces furnishes the music. A University student, specializing in physical culture, is dancing master and in charge of the general discipline of the hall. He is assisted in his work by a band of young women, members of the Young Woman's Club of the Institute. The club appoints committees and each Saturday evening a different committee of four or five reports for duty. A charge of 15 cents per person is made for the privilege of dancing and the hours are from 8:00 to 12:00.

In passing, in justice to the young men and women, I desire to take this opportunity of saying that no better behaved crowd of people can be found anywhere, either in private or public dance halls. This observation is made after having visited many dance halls in this city, as well as in other cities in the country.

All forms of classical dances are taught in the athletic department in the girls' and ladies' classes. This means that upward of 300 girls and women are under instruction. There are also other dances given, generally Sunday afternoons and evenings. These dances are under the private auspices of the clubs meeting at the Institute or in rare instances by outside organizations.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT: CONCERTS, PIANO CLASS, GLEE CLUB, SINGING SOCIETIES,

ETC.

An aggregate of 10,420 persons have paid an admission of 10 cents each and have attended the twenty-eight Sunday afternoon concerts, conducted by the members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Some very excellent programs have been rendered. The following is a sample of one of the twenty-eight concerts given: [end page 16]

Jewish Composers.

Wedding March – Mendelssohn

Overture "Fingals Cave" – Mendelssohn

King Solomon Hebrew Melodies – Tobani

Kol Nidrei – Bruch

Cello Solo, A. Heinickel.

Fantasia on National Hebrew Songs -- I. L. Bloom

Legend – Wieniawsky

Violin Solo, A. Zukovsky.

Melodie – Rubinstein

Fackeltanz -- Meyerbeer

Our MUSIC DEPARTMENT is not very strong. It is my hope, however, that we may be able to develop this department within the near future. There are quite a number of talented children in the neighborhood that the Institute reaches, and in order not to allow children who are possessed with such talent to be submerged, we found it advisable to give instruction in music. Of course, we cannot begin to accommodate the number that would be glad to take advantage of this instruction. Though the children pay 25 cents per lesson for the instruction received, this amount does not even begin to pay for the cost of conducting the department and it is largely for this reason that we cannot under the present circumstances branch out in this important activity. Fifty-nine different children have been instructed during the year and there are as many children on the waiting-list. We cannot reduce this number unless the child either leaves the city or for one reason or another is compelled to give up the study.

I have had a number of conferences with our music director regarding the practicability of establishing a music school. The following plan has been suggested to me by the director and

I should like to recommend it for your consideration. He is willing to look after and direct the instruction and to provide the necessary assistant\$ to teach the violin, cello, piano, all wood-wind and brass instruments, also voice culture. He further agrees to run this department without any cost to the Institute under the following conditions: That the office of the Institute run the department just as it does all of the other work, attend to the necessary printing, look after the business end, namely the collection of fees, issuing of cards, the registration, etc., and that the income from the department be turned over to me, so that he may be in a position to pay the teachers and instructors in charge. In time, if there is a sufficient income from the department, he is willing to turn over to the Institute a certain per cent of the balance. The understanding would further be that he would be recognized officially as the music director of the Institute and he is to have complete charge of the work done at the Institute in music. I am informed that arrangements similar to the above mentioned are not by any means unusual. The Northwestern University and a number of other institutions are conducting their musical work from the financial side practically in the same manner. No one except the director and the management are concerned about the arrangements. As far as the pupils are concerned, they would consider themselves students of the music department of the Institute, just as the students of the other departments do.

Again referring to the concerts, I think it would be advisable to probably reduce the number of concerts and increase the number of men. The only criticism that has been called to my attention regarding these concerts by those who frequent them regularly, is that the orchestra be enlarged, making it possible to play some of the heavier music. That would mean tilling out the string apart of the orchestra and adding a few additional pieces. I believe that this should be done this coming season. This must be done in order to stand abreast of the many efforts that are

made by musical organizations of this city. You probably are aware of the popular concerts that have been experimented with by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra during the past few months. The public is afforded the opportunity of hearing on the last Thursday of each month the full Chicago Symphony Orchestra, consisting of about one hundred persons, at half price. Chicago unquestionably is gradually becoming the music center- [end page 17] of the country, and it is for that reason, if for no other, that we should make an effort this coming season to take a step forward in the line of music.

The GLEE CLUB you have heard this evening, was organized a few months ago under the leadership of the musical director of the University of Chicago and head of the University of Chicago Glee Club. If what they have shown tonight is the result of their short experience, I need only to leave it to your imagination what we may expect at our next Annual Meeting, if we have them take part. There are a number of other music clubs at the Institute, among them a Jewish National Choral Society, consisting largely of young men and women immigrants, who have good voices and sing national Jewish songs. Another is the Chicago Operetta Club.

DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS.

The Dramatic Department, under the auspices of the Players Club, is conducted for the benefit of talented young men and women, who do not especially aspire for the stage, but crave for the opportunity to study the drama. The pupils are encouraged to acquire a dignified and stately bearing, a clear and pleasant voice, a greater appreciation for good literature and wide knowledge of life and the great social questions of the day. Classes meet Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday morning. In all there has been thirty-five members in the class and a charge of \$1.50 per month is made for instruction. Performances are given regularly each month and an attendance of from five to six hundred is not considered unusual. Only lately

two of the best dramatic critics in the city have attended one of these performances and frankly stated that our players were as good and even better in parts than those who took part in the Iden Payne Repertoire Company at the Pine Arts Theatre some few months ago.

Of the numerous features and activities of the Dramatic Department something must be said of an organization, due to the fact that it reaches the Yiddish speaking element of the community, namely the Progressive Literary and Dramatic Club. This club is the result of that general awakening of art, feeling and love of art pleasure that has permeated the soul of the modern Russian-Jewish youth. It is the result of that wave of protest against the modern Yiddish Theatre, which is at the present time controlled by a few who produce plays that appeal to the baseness and vul- [end page 18] garity of the .mob and satisfies the appetite of the population. The Literary and Dramatic Club has proven beyond a doubt, by the immense crowds that fill the assembly hall of the Institute at their performances, given regularly the first Sunday of each month, that it has become an indispensable and educational factor and culture force in the life of the Yiddish speaking element of the city.

There is also the Young Players' Club, who are very ambitious and lately have received permission from Mr. Israel Zangwill, of London, to present the dramatized version of the "Melting Pot." They are at present rehearsing the third act and expect to be ready to give the performance of this much talked of play, probably in the early Fall.

The children who take part in the various religious festivals of the Institute have likewise been organized into a permanent Children's Dramatic Society, where regular instruction in the elements and technique of the drama and the stage is given.

Many of the clubs are dramatically inclined and from time to time give some dramatic performance.

When it was found that there were so many in the various classes and clubs at the Institute who were often put to the test of speaking before groups and larger audiences, that they were not as well equipped as they should be to clearly and effectively bring out their arguments and ideas, it was considered wise and timely to organize a class in EFFECTIVE SPEAKING. This class meets once a week and has during the past four months, since its incipiency, given instruction to thirty-nine men and women. Among its membership may be found men and women with diversified interests. For example, a practicing lawyer, a number of law students, some club women and a few who are in business and have considered it wise to take advantage of the class, having sufficient foresight that effective speaking does no harm even to the business man.

GAME ROOM AND STORY HOUR.

Play is the most intense part of the life of the child and it is therefore that during the play hours that the child's most abiding lessons are learned, that the most central and determining growth takes place. The social and moral influences of play produce [end page 19] indelible effects upon the child's mind. Systematic and organized play minimizes the development of the bully and the coward and impresses the ideals taught by organization and co-operation. The recognition of mutual rights is one of the initial values of organized and well planned play; such rights are little understood by the average child. Few children are spontaneously generous; most are selfish and require companionship to soften this selfishness. In the organized play-room the first lesson taught the child, is that the right to the use of any favorite game cannot be monopolized by any ambitious player. Everything is held in common, and every child must be granted an equal opportunity; he learns that others have rights that must be respected, and if he learns to respect these rights due consideration will be in turn shown his. Our game room is

distinctly individualistic and studiously attempts to bring out the latent powers in the child. We aim to conduct play in a constructive way and to conserve the waste energy that usually and unfortunately is lost in aimless, disjointed and unsupervised play by encouraging the natural development of art, music, mind culture, love for creating beauty in the home, as these distinctive characteristics are observed; for each game has its purpose and the child is watched carefully, though unnoticed, by sympathetic and trained child workers.

During the past Winter season six hundred and twenty buttons were issued to the children of the game room at a very nominal charge. The total aggregate attendance from November to May 1st was 25,973. The game room is in charge of a director and an assistant and is open four days a week from 4:00 in the afternoon until 9:00 in the evening.

About three months ago a STORY TELLING DEPARTMENT was organized and placed in charge of a well known and experienced story teller. During this time an aggregate attendance of 2,969 children have had the pleasure of listening to these stories. To watch the faces of the children is sufficient to satisfy the observer that the time and effort spent is worth while. The stories all have an ethical basis and put the imagination of the child to play. It is our hope that this department may develop to the degree warranting more time, energy and effort to be devoted to the work. Do we not with joy remember our own childhood and with what enchantment and eagerness we would almost devour the stories told us? Child psychologists agree that the story hour has not only its place in the proper development of the child, but is of the utmost importance, for it supplies the child with vision and a good story well told helps to create proper action. As many as 492 on one occasion and as few as 42 on another have been in attendance at these stories.

LECTURES.

Beginning with November 7th, 1913, and ending with April 29th, 1914, twenty-eight lectures were given to an aggregate attendance of 2,692 persons. There were as many as 330 and as few as 41 at a lecture, depending upon the weather, subject and prominence of the lecturer. The course has been divided into seven groups. The first group covering philosophy, the second literature, the third art, the fourth music, the fifth the drama, the sixth science, and the seventh current topics.

Our lecture program gave to the audience in a pleasant form the results of research in the various fields by experts, professional lecturers and many of them heads of departments in some of the largest universities of the country. At this time, when progress is so rapid and the results of discoveries in science and history are so many, our audience has the opportunity of keeping abreast of the age in its thought, through the medium of these lectures. With the improvement of taste and the expansion of knowledge, the difficulty of arranging proper programs that shall be true to the standards we have set, is constantly increasing; though preparations have already been made semi-definitely for the program of the coming season and from all indications it will be far superior from the point of view of coherency of the subjects treated and of the lecturers procured. An admission charge of 10 cents per lecture or a dollar for the course is made. The Association, however, numbers only 133 members. This number is by no means anywhere near adequate to carry on the work of the Association as effectively as it should be. I wish to say, however, that a strong effort will be made [end page 20] by the Association this coming season to launch a campaign for members, and it is my hope that I will be able to report a very much larger membership at the next Annual Meeting.

BRANCH LIBRARY.

One hundred and three thousand, four hundred and thirty-one books were circulated through our branch of the Public Library. The total attendance in our reading room during the past year was 116,188. The library is in charge of five paid attendants. The average attendance per day was 300 as a minimum and 757 maximum. There are 567,241 books in the Central Library that any cardholder of our branch may draw on requisition. There are approximately on our shelves 5,520 books in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, French, German, Russian and Italian. There are sixty-eight magazines that are on file and come from the publishers direct, so that our readers have the opportunity of reading the current magazines. Our branch library stood first in circulation from all the branches in the city a few months ago and it usually averages third.

ART CLASS.

About two months ago an ART CLASS was organized under the direction of a young and promising artist, who has studied abroad for a number of years. The class naturally is small, but we are hopeful that it will grow gradually and that all who are interested in the study of art will join. A charge of \$1.00 a month is made for the instruction and two hours a week is devoted to the study.

POOL AND BILLIARD ROOM.

To combat the evil influences of the public pool and billiard parlors of the neighborhood we conduct this activity in a clean and well supervised manner. The boys, who come to play soon realize that there is more real enjoyment in a decent well ventilated pool room, than there is in the hovels many of them are in the habit of frequenting, prior to their coming in contact with the Institute pool room. A charge of 25 cents per hour per table is made and the total number of hours used during the past year was 1,475, and the total aggregate attendance during the year was 9,256.

PLAYGROUND SUMMER ACTIVITIES.

Not having been in charge of the Institute last summer, I am not in a position to give you at first hand as complete a report of the summer activities on the grounds as they deserve. I am obliged in this instance to merely summarize from the reports submitted to the Board, by the directors of the summer activities. The playgrounds were opened April 27th, 1913. A charge of 15 cents for the entire season was made to all children under 15 years of age and 25 cents for those over 15 years of age. The total attendance on the grounds last summer was 113,580. Stereopticon lectures on hygiene were given to the children in the large hall once a week during July and August. An outdoor Sabbath School was conducted with an average attendance of 110. Sessions were held Saturday afternoons. The program consisted of Bible stories and legends. Numerous outings and celebrations were conducted. I am very hopeful that I may be in a position to give a complete report, including recommendations, next year, after a careful study of the summer activities during this coming season.

GYMNASIUM.

You have heard from the president's report the plan for the new gymnasium that is to be built shortly on the grounds of our Institute. There were 944 boys and girls, men and women who registered in the department this year. This does not include over 200 women, mentioned in the early part of the report, who are members of the department of English for foreigners and are given instruction under the auspices of the gymnasium department. There was a total aggregate attendance of 17,281 during the year.

For ages it has been the opinion that physical development of the young is highly essential. The Jew until lately has not actively taken to develop the body. The Institute, however, has made wonderful progress in this work and has proven that when the Jewish boy is

placed under instruction he in time surpasses his non-Jewish oppo- [end page 21] nent. Our boys in the various tournaments carried off the most honors. During the last International Gymnastic Union Wrestling Tournament, the boys carried off thirteen individual medals from a total of thirty prizes with twelve different organizations competing and won two junior and senior team shields for the Institute. At the present time we have 655 men and women, boys and girls under physical instruction. During the summer a good part of the gymnasium work is done outdoors on the grounds. The tennis courts are in constant use from May to October. The hand ball courts are likewise in use with very little intermission. It is astonishing, in the report submitted by the physical director of the summer work on the grounds, that the total number of accidents reported was eighteen; of this number none were serious. The April number of the Observer, which was devoted to the Athletic Department, gave so complete a report of the growth of our work, in the interest of the physical up-building, that it would be merely repeating what was so ably stated by the physical director and the chairman of the Athletic Department. I therefore respectfully refer you to that number of the Observer for details.

CLUBS.

As a means of social intercourse, particularly among the young, we found it highly important to develop our club and social department. In this department 89 regular clubs were in progress and of this number 59 clubs meet regularly each week at the present time. Of these 89 clubs, one is a chess club, two glee clubs, two gymnasium clubs, three auxiliary societies, two fraternities, three aid societies, eight dramatic clubs, nine lodges and vereins, fourteen Zionist clubs, eighteen social clubs and twenty-seven educational clubs. There was a total of 1,538 meetings held during the year. There are 2,425 different individuals registered as members in the club department this month.

CONCLUSION.

Our Institute has become a home and headquarters for all social, civic and Jewish events in the community. It is in reality a center of amusement, as well as an outlet for the energetic spirit of our people. We are a brotherhood in which the Institute, the membership and those who come to be benefited have a mutual interest. Our workers and directors have no affectation about them and no appearance that they are trying to do others good. We aim to uplift the moral and intellectual development of the dwellers of the neighborhood. We teach them to play their parts worthily as members of the family, society and the state. We make an effort to direct the young into those walks of life for which their capabilities best fit them. We make a further effort to so conduct ourselves and the activities as to cause it to be looked upon as a real social center, a free and open forum, impressing all shades and variety of opinion, without, however, officially standing for any of them in particular. We stand in the community for the Jews what the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association and the Settlements stand for the non-Jew. A great deal has been done by the Chicago Hebrew Institute and much more can and will be done to make every Jew and Jewess in this city proud of the fact that there is such an institution standing for the constructive efforts in society. Ours is not a charity. We are a dignified institution with the primary object of developing men and women who will stand out in the community as free individuals fully capable of taking care of themselves and prepare them for a useful and good life.

I have purposely alluded very little to the financial side of the Institution, being conscious of the fact that our good secretary will in her report give a complete account of the financial situation both from the point of view of internal revenue and income from membership. In another part of the report will be found a page devoted entirely to the statistical side of the work

for the year and those who are especially interested in numbers may find it of interest to peruse carefully the statistics there furnished. Suffice it to say that nothing is given away at the Institute without some charge and ours is the only Institution in the country of its kind, Jewish or non-Jewish, that can show so large a percentage of internal revenue. Our total income from internal revenue this year has been \$13,558.15, which is 40% of our total expense. I wish to take this opportunity of thanking most sincerely the officers and directors of our Institute for the many courtesies and kindnesses shown me since my coming to [end page 22] Chicago. It has been indeed a great pleasure for me to conduct your activities during the past seven months. Not a thing unpleasant has presented itself since my taking charge and I attribute it largely to the thoughtfulness and the interest taken by the officers and the board. I also wish to express my thanks to the South Side Auxiliary, the Institute Woman's Club and the Young Woman's Club for their personal assistance and their encouragement, as well as their live, active interest in behalf of our Institution.

The press, too, has been very thoughtful and generous in the items published from time to time regarding the work of our Institution. I wish to make mention in particular of the Daily Jewish Courier, the Jewish Record and the Labor World, the Chicago Israelite, the Sentinel, the Reform Advocate and the Daily English papers.

To the administrative staff of the Institute, the heads of departments and teachers, who have been untiring in the performance of their duties, I desire to here publicly thank them. Without their co-operation and whole-hearted interest and fine esprit de corps our work could not have shown the results that I have here in this report been able to call to your attention. [ends on page 23]