

THE JEWISH HERALD

HOUSTON, TEXAS, JANUARY 20, 1910

REPLY TO H. B. LIEBERMAN

To the Editor of the Jewish Herald.

There appeared in your issue of the 13th, under the caption, "H. B. Lieberman Resigns," a list of reasons why Mr. Lieberman severed his connection with the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau. In justice to the humanitarian purposes for which the bureau stands, and to the Jewish community of Houston, I wish to correct misrepresentations which have found an important place in the letter of the bureau's former agent. These can be best covered by a resume of the case, the facts of which can be substantiated by Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston.

When Mr. Lieberman was chosen agent in Houston, at a salary of fifty dollars per month, it was agreed that he was to accept eight individuals per month, which is the number customarily handled by agents receiving that salary. At that time the question whether Houston could absorb eight immigrants per month was not discussed.

Owing to the fact that the bureau was practically in a state of reorganization, the number of immigrants it handled per shipload had not as yet reached a high point, and, although Mr. Lieberman regularly drew his fifty dollars per month, he received on an average only four to five individuals, instead of the eight agreed upon, but with the understanding that when the shipments to Galveston increased he was not only to take eight immigrants, but was to make up for the small number heretofore sent him, to which Mr. Lieberman offered no objections.

It transpired during the present month that two shipments instead of one were expected at Galveston, and it appeared that the time had come when Mr. Lieberman would have to "make good" for the fifty dollars in salary he was drawing.

But as soon as this was evident, Mr. Lieberman declared that (while he was evidently willing to accept fifty dollars per month as salary), he would not

take more than the four immigrants which he had gotten into the habit of accepting. Believing that fifty dollars was exorbitant for the placing of four men, and in view of the fact that Mr. Lieberman would not take a less sum than fifty dollars for placing a less number than eight per month, I declared the agency vacant.

As matters stand, Mr. Lieberman's contention that the bureau insists that the city of Houston take eight men per month is not only a misrepresentation of the bureau's practice, but is a fallacious statement of the relations which the bureau wishes to maintain with the Jewish community of Houston. What the bureau contended was that as long as Mr. Lieberman drew fifty dollars per month, he must do what the agents in other cities were doing. If Houston could not absorb eight immigrants per month (which is a matter the bureau does not believe Mr. Lieberman can decide for the great Jewish community of Houston, the members of which must surely feel deeply for those who are crossing the sea to escape the impositions of the most reactionary government under the sun), then it were better that this growing city of the southwest aided the bureau voluntarily, instead of having an agent who would be paid for his efforts.

Neither the heads of the organization at New York, nor I as manager of the bureau, prescribe what any town should take. We merely prescribe what an agent should do for a certain salary, if he accepts the agency. This Mr. Lieberman has failed to do, and his resignation was in order. His duty should have been either to remain with the bureau until he had made up for the small shipments he had handled, or to refund part of his salary. Instead, Mr. Lieberman has seen fit to resort covertly to criticism.

There is one other correction I wish to make in Mr. Lieberman's letter before closing, since I will not seek again the public prints to justify the

work and practice of the bureau. This correction deals with the statement made by Mr. Lieberman that he found employment for the immigrants consigned to him for wages ranging between nine and fifteen dollars per week. Mr. Lieberman has to date only reported on ten out of the nineteen men consigned to him, and five out of the ten were listed as earning less than nine dollars per week—decidedly less, in fact. The bureau's records are open to the public to prove this point.

As for the promised article on the bureau and the Zionist movement which Mr. Lieberman is to offer the public, I can only say, without knowing its character, that as a paid agent Mr. Lieberman was heartily in accord with our work, as his correspondence will show. What his future attitude will be, that salary can no longer determine. I know, however, that where the welfare of the persecuted Russian brothers of the Jewish community of Houston is concerned, Houston will not be found wanting. If it is ascertained that Houston can not absorb more than four immigrants a month, not more than four will find their way there. The bureau is humanitarian in its aim, and humanitarianism can not be an imposed ideal. At the same time, humanitarianism should not be asked to pay exorbitant agent's fees.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Henry Berman,
Manager.

Adath Yeshurun Services.

Early Friday evening services at 6 o'clock; later services at 8; subject of lecture, Rav Hunnah. Sabbath morning at 8:30; children's services at 10:30; Minchah at 4 p. m.

J. L. S. HIKE.

Remember the Hike Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Everybody meet at Joe Weidinger's store on Washington street.