

AN EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE STUDY

- for the -

METROPOLITAN LEAGUE OF JEWISH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

WHEREAS, Mr. Jack Nadel, in his paper presented before this Convention, proposed the establishment of a central employment bureau, and,

WHEREAS, he has indicated the importance of this problem,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the President appoint a committee to study the employment problem as it affects the Jewish youth, and in particular, study Mr. Nadel's proposal, and further submit a report embodying recommendations as to the League's responsibility and as to specific steps which should be taken by the League in this matter. ■

The above resolution was adopted by the Convention of the Metropolitan League of Jewish Community Associations, on October 31st, 1936.

THE COMMITTEE:

Jack Nadel, Chairman
Samuel Leff
A. W. Rosenthal

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INTRODUCTION

There are twenty or more Y. M. and Y. W. H. A.'s, Jewish Centers and Settlements in the Metropolitan League, every one of which seeks to offer to its membership a fully rounded-out program within the limits of its physical facilities. If a list of similar activities was prepared for each of the organizations, there would surely be among them "placement and vocational guidance", which are vital to every boy and girl, man and woman, in the community. No other work sponsored by our associations compares with them in value, because, until our members are happily employed, they are not adequately receptive to a physical, religious, educational and social program. Unfortunately, only two associations in the Metropolitan League, are properly maintained and equipped to carry on this work — the 92nd Street Y. M. H. A. and the Y. W. H. A. The workers in the other organizations, however, feel when called upon that they are sufficiently prepared to give vocational advice to the young people with whom they come in daily contact. Without knowledge of the opportunities in the various fields, without information about employment conditions, and without the means to help carry out the suggestions they make, some of the workers, nevertheless, undertake to shape the careers of these young people whose futures are in the balance.

The two bureaus above mentioned, together with five others hereinafter considered, constitute the extent of employment and vocational guidance work for Jewish boys and girls in this city. The other institutions refer their unemployed to these existing agencies, whenever they, themselves, cannot make the placements. In this way, they add to the number of applicants who are already applying to the established bureaus, where preference is displayed for their own members. The unsuccessful ones report back that they can get no jobs, because of this partiality shown where the agencies are maintained. This situation has led a number of organizations to consider the establishment of bureaus of their own, in which they may properly take care of their members. Obviously, this would involve a great duplication of effort and expense, without justification, and constitutes one of the reasons for the institution of this study.

In this report, we have considered the interests of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Societies which supports all of the seven bureaus now engaged in placement and vocational guidance work, though a number of them are not in the Metropolitan League. A proper coordination of the employment work, now subsidized by Federation, might well solve the problem of the Metropolitan League and its constituent associations.

In dealing with this subject, therefore, the Committee treats with the Jewish bureaus now in existence, as though they were a part of the Metropolitan League, in the hope that any single venture which may result from the recommendation herein contained, will receive the joint support of both the Federation and the Metropolitan League.

VALUE OF THE EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

So many reports of a derogatory nature have appeared in the press about employment and vocational bureaus, that a statement of their value and usefulness is in place in this study.

There are some who feel that an employment agency serves no valuable purpose, because it does not create additional jobs, but merely directs workers to vacancies which they could undoubtedly find by following the media of the press and personal solicitation. We feel, however, that the employment bureau has an opportunity for usefulness.

* An employer does not know who is out of work and an employee does not know which firm is in need of help. The purpose of the employment bureau is to bring these two together, and in every case where this purpose is fulfilled, a valuable service is rendered. This is true if the bureau be conducted by the public, by a philanthropic organization, or for private gain.

Those engaged in center work are expected to render every possible service to their members. Their service cannot be limited to advice only, but must include something of a more tangible nature.

Y. M. H. A. and Center activities are many, but if one of our young men or young women is in financial difficulty, his interest in other things is diminished and our hold upon him loosened. Every home has its economic problem which must be solved first. If we were equipped to satisfy cultural and recreational needs only, these young people would vanish from our midst at the first sign of financial trouble, and any hold which we thought we had upon them would be lost. Our desire should be to satisfy all their needs spiritual, social, physical and economic. A man or woman out of a job needs us more than one who is working. One's outlook upon life is considerably affected by his income and economic stability. Every one in need of work and in want is an embryo dissatisfied citizen.

At this point the community becomes interested. In New York City there are always thousands of men out of employment. We often hear it said that unemployment is a cause of crime. Be that as it may, it is essential that those out of work have some place to which they can apply in order to obtain work or to learn about conditions from which they can determine their future course. *

THE EMPLOYER AND THE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

There are several distinct advantages of an employment bureau to the employer, the most important of which is the elimination of selection. When an advertisement is placed in the press, a large number of workers invariably apply and in his haste to rid himself of them, the employer fails to find the most desirable applicant. It is said, of course, that applicants may be asked to write instead of calling, but the time lost is too great. In addition, the personality of the writer cannot be ascertained, and the one sending the most matter of fact reply may have potentialities which can be appreciated only when interviewed. Ordinarily, it is unfair to determine the selection of a worker solely on the basis of his handwriting or the letter he writes, (except, perhaps, in cases where correspondence and advertising ability are essential).

An employment worker is in a better position than the employer to select from the mass. He is the expert and has had an opportunity to compare one with the other and to eliminate those

unfit for the job. The task of final selection is, in all events, left to the employer. In other words, while a bureau often chooses the very man who ultimately fills the job, it invariably sends two or three applicants to the employer, so that he, himself, may have some choice. He will not hesitate to interview a select few, but will object to meeting a large number.

Incidentally, the employment bureau investigates its applicants and saves the employer this necessity. A request to furnish references is not infrequent and reliable offices have them in their possession in order to satisfy the employer. It is a relief to most employers to know that the applicants who apply have a clear record of honesty.

THE WORKER AND THE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

One of the recognized purposes of an agency is to find positions for workers, and in this respect, it is of especial value to shy and backward applicants who are afraid to face competitors. In addition, every efficient bureau is prepared to give information about the different industries with their attendant advantages and opportunities. Advice concerning business conditions is constantly sought and given. Vocational and educational guidance are and should be distinct features of employment service, and one does not visit an agency today merely to get a job.

The disadvantages of the employment bureau exist for some applicants only. The Y. M. H. A. department notices young men, usually unskilled and unendowed with too much intelligence or spirit, spending day after day without making any effort whatsoever in their own behalf. They seek no interviews, they answer no advertisements, but sit and wait for something to happen. For this type of applicant, the employment bureau is of no value. It discourages not only this type of so-called applicant, but also many who might otherwise possess a willingness to work and progress. For that reason, lounging is discouraged. The department referred to opens particularly early in the morning, so that the young men can be told quickly whether there is work for them. Those for whom there are jobs are dispatched quickly, and the others are requested either to visit the reading room and write letters, or call upon employers of their own choice. Too much dependence upon the bureau is discouraged and they are impressed with the fact that the agency is only one of the means of obtaining work.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

While placement work is, as a matter of fact, of immediate importance to the job-seeker, as a matter of theory, it is of little importance compared with the uncertainty and dissatisfaction which may result from just giving some one a job. The theory referred to is described as "vocational guidance" which is defined as "organized common sense used to help each individual make the most of his abilities and opportunities". It means that an inventory is taken of one's knowledge, ability and experience, on the basis of which he is guided in the direction which will help him most in his future development.

Vocational guidance seeks to help persons to choose, prepare for, enter into, and make progress in occupations. It means giving information about commerce and industry to help in the choice of an occu-

patron. It gives opportunity to discover talent. It advises boys and girls to enter this or that school for the purpose of discovering their talents and preparing for an occupation. It advises in regard to promotion, change of jobs, and after-education. It supervises the progress in particular positions and chosen occupations.

Vocational guidance is a new name for an old function, but in these days of specializing, even the friendly interest which an older man takes in a younger one about to enter upon the thorny path of every day working life, must be dignified with a specific appellation.

Ever since employment has been a necessity, the question of which path would lead most easily to success, has been of paramount importance. In the days of fewer occupations and a more limited number of persons seeking and needing employment, the matter was one of family adjustment. As conditions became more complex, outside advice was often sought, especially from those who had had a larger experience in the world. By easy steps, we have been led to feel that this time-honored opportunity for doing something for somebody, should be left to those specializing more or less in the art of giving advice.

With all due respect for the value of proper guidance and fully realizing the importance to the wage earner of starting right, we are sometimes amazed at the assumption of our critics that we profess to stand at the crossroads and like a signboard, point the road to success. It savors too much of omnipotence. The experience of others and the investigations of those who are interested in general welfare, enable us to point out ways of avoiding mistakes in selecting a career. To discuss with a young man his plan to ascertain his talents, his bent and his limitations, to suggest along which lines he could best work out his own future, to recommend, whenever possible, further education, do not transcend the bounds of procedure in work of this kind.

It is natural that if a boy takes up a line of work for which he is adapted, he will achieve a greater success than if he drifts into an industry for which he is not fitted. An occupation out of harmony with a worker's aptitudes and capacities means a measure of inefficiency and perhaps distasteful labor. An occupation in harmony with the nature of the worker means enthusiasm, love for his work and efficient service. Vocational guidance seeks to work with each person as an individual problem, and to invite the confidence of parents so as to secure assistance in guiding their children.

Men and women everywhere are wearing out their lives by working in the wrong fields, because of a wrong start in life. We must attempt a conservation of human energies to eliminate the great waste in man's lives, just as we do in the case of the conservation of natural resources, by providing for our children today.

When the vocational guide meets an applicant, his first effort is to keep him in school. It does not matter that he may already have left, because it is never too late to return. The guide keeps on hand a list of schools with the subjects taught, and if it is at all possible, he tries to induce the boy to return to school. Occasionally, the parents are consulted with a view to ascertaining the necessity of a boy's going to work. If they are not in need of his earnings, they are sometimes convinced of the advantages to the boy of continuing his education. If, however, his few dollars are needed, different methods must be used. First, an attempt is made to return him to school and find after-school or part-time work for him. In many cases,

this is satisfactory to both the boy and the parents. Second, if the part-time position does not pay enough to overcome the financial handicap in the home, the boy is given full-time employment, with the understanding that he is to enter school at night.

Some of the associations, particularly the 82nd Street Young Men's Hebrew Association and the Educational Alliance, which have scholarship funds, help young men to continue and complete their educations, which, lack of funds, would otherwise prevent. These funds are made available by persons who feel they can best help young people, by properly equipping them for the work they may eventually undertake.

The vocational guide seeks to encourage self-analysis in the selection of employment. By constant questioning and reference to the boy's application, he is able, by a process of elimination, to determine several kinds of work for which he may be fitted and in which he may succeed. The theory, that a man is fitted for only one vocation in life, has long been disproved. It is felt that he may be equally successful in more than one situation and the counsellor is satisfied if he has found one of them.

Vocational guidance does not necessarily cease with the placement of the applicant, nor with returning him to school. Even though he believes he is in the right industry, he may find conditions of such a nature as to necessitate a change. He may be dissatisfied because of lack of advancement. His prospects seem so poor that he feels that he is wasting his time. The same may be true of a school where the system of instruction is not sufficiently inspiring. A young man who works all day may fall asleep in school at night, unless his instructors are interesting. The vocational guide must follow up his first effort by making such corrections as the boy's new situation requires.

There are among us many sceptics as to the value of this work. At best, they say it is guesswork. Were it not for the fact that many self-styled experts are engaged in doubtful practices which they call vocational guidance, the work, itself, would progress more rapidly. It is hard to dispel scepticism when a pretense for vocational analysis is made by means of mind-reading, handwriting, muscle-reading, and the shape of the nose. There is a private bureau in New York City, which advertises a complete vocational analysis for \$15.00, based upon a photograph of the applicant. But we must not let such frauds overshadow the possibilities which vocational guidance offers. We all agree that there are certain elements manifesting themselves in ordinary cases which guide the careful observer to give sound advice. We are all vocational guides in a sense. We all meet young people to whom we give suggestions regarding their vocations, which we think are based upon common sense. The vocational guide who makes a study of applying such common sense to situations, which include a knowledge of one's education, inclinations, experience and training, is aiding the development of a necessary work, the result of which will greatly benefit the great mass of young people who come to you saying, "I can do anything", when they really mean they can do nothing.

Having considered the need of this service, let us turn to the structure upon which its success depends.

FUNCTIONING AGENCIES

There are three groups of employment agencies to which great numbers of applicants for work apply. They are the public bureaus which include the City, State and Federal offices; the non-commercial bureaus, such as those conducted by philanthropic organizations, and private bureaus. There are but few Jewish organizations in New York devoted to placement and vocational guidance work. The few bureaus dealing, officially, with Jewish workers are connected with organizations affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Societies from which they obtain their support. They are the Young Men's Hebrew Association, 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue, where an employment bureau has been carried on continuously for twenty-eight years and where an average of 2000 boys and young men are placed every year; the Young Women's Hebrew Association, 31 West 110th Street, which conducts the only bureau for Jewish girls and young women, of whom they place more than 3000 a year; the Jewish Sabbath Alliance, 302 East 14th Street, which seeks positions for boys and girls who are Sabbath observers and which finds employment for more than 200 boys and 300 girls; the Fellowship House, 133 East 43rd Street, which seeks positions for the wards of the Hebrew Sheltering & Guardian Society, of whom 300 boys and girls are placed each year; the Hebrew Technical Institute, 36 Stuyvesant Street, which obtains positions for its graduates who have learned a trade; the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, at 2nd Avenue and 15th Street, which finds positions for its graduates who have learned a trade or vocation, of whom almost 500 are placed each year; the Vocational Service for Juniors, 122 East 28th Street, which is especially concerned with juniors who are effected by the Continuation School requirements (although applicants are accepted up to the age of twenty years) and of whom they place more than 2500 a year. Although this bureau is supported by the Federation, it is non-sectarian and the placement of Jewish boys and girls constitutes but a small percentage of the total number assisted.

NEED OF A JEWISH AGENCY

The community has a right to ask, why the special need of a Jewish bureau? The answer is, because of the discrimination against the Jew, to which, perhaps, we should be accustomed by this time. What is surprising, is the fact that in New York City, where there are more than one million and one-half Jews, discrimination should exist to so large an extent. A large proportion of the young men who seek employment report their experiences with employers who regret they cannot employ Jews. The Y. M. H. A. had that experience in placing ex-service men, notwithstanding the preference which service to one's country is assumed to give, irrespective of national origin or religion. One of the largest agencies in New York City discriminated against Jews, even though some of our prominent Jewish leaders were on the board of directors. Only after a thorough ventilation of the situation, the discrimination was discontinued.

When we realize that the Jew has his own likes and dislikes, his own peculiarities and characteristics, his own unusual troubles, as well as talents, a special sympathy and understanding are essential, and a separate treatment is required. There is no agency better able to handle this problem than a Jewish organization. The placement of Jewish boys and girls should be a part of the work of every Jewish

community. This does not mean, however, that every Jewish organization should conduct a separate department for this purpose. Such a condition would bring about the very objections this study seeks to eliminate. We already have the agencies mentioned above, which are less effective because of their separate efforts. It is a "central employment and vocational guidance bureau" in which we are interested and in which all the activities forming a part of this subject can be carried on.

THE CENTRAL BUREAU

Having considered the purpose, scope and need of employment and vocational guidance work, and the manner in which the present agencies function, we come now to the proposal which this study makes for the solution of the problem. We recommend the establishment of a central employment and vocational bureau which will not only serve to guide our Jewish youth carefully and intelligently in a matter most vital to them, but also to eliminate the evils of the loose and unorganized methods of agencies unequipped to carry on this work.

Duplication of Effort Avoided

The avoidance of duplication of effort constitutes the chief value of the central employment agency. For, where several small bureaus are conducted, separate staffs are maintained who communicate with the same employers in order to place the same applicants who visit the same bureaus. This wasteful system encourages employers of labor to write or telephone a number of bureaus at one time, to insure obtaining a worker as quickly as possible. They do not concern themselves with the predicament in which they place the agencies, upon which they call, whose clients, when they reach the employer, are informed the position has been filled. Thus, four or five organizations will send workers to the same position, without knowledge of the fact that they are competing with one another for the same job. The applicant cannot understand this and expresses the belief that he is sent to a position which he has no chance to secure, merely because the bureau wishes to get rid of him. This cannot happen in a central bureau where all requests for help come to one place from which all applicants are sent out.

There is also duplicate registration by those seeking work. Young men register in a number of bureaus and travel from one to the other. They spend so much time in the different bureaus in which they register, competing in each case with a new group of applicants, that they have no opportunity to seek work for themselves. This can be avoided in a central bureau where they register but once, and if no job is available, they can visit establishments on their own initiative.

Increased Service to Employers

The service to employers under a single system would be greater than under the independent arrangement. A central bureau located in the business section of the city will more readily satisfy the request of an employer. The bureaus at present are scattered throughout the city and it often takes from a half hour to an hour for an applicant to reach the person who seeks his services. If the worker is not engaged, the employer must wait another lengthy period before a second or third applicant reaches him. This method restricts the number of applicants he can interview in a given time.

Greater Convenience to Workers

The applicants live in all parts of the city, and after reporting to the agency for work, they are sent to employers in the business district from whence, if unsuccessful, they return to the employment bureau. This process may be repeated several times a day at considerable expense and loss of time to the workers. With a bureau in the central part of the city, they can visit a number of employers in a very short time and can go to and from the agency with a saving of time and expense. The ambitious boy and girl remains downtown most of the day seeking work, and a central bureau, by its accessibility, will be a great help to them.

Placement of Middle-Aged Persons

Another group of workers for whom very little can be done by our agencies is that of persons who have reached the age of forty years. Unless they are especially skilled, they have the greatest difficulty in finding employment. Invariably this type of worker requires a larger salary than a boy half his age, although the latter can do the work as well or better. Considerable has appeared in the press with regard to this class of applicant, and although every one depl. es the fact that conditions exist, wherein his opportunities to find work are so few, no concerted effort has been made to help him.

It is a great mistake to regard the middle-aged as unfit and useless for labor and employment. A middle-aged or even elderly person who has lived a clean life is inferior to a young person in but one respect; he is not quite as spry and nimble and cannot get about quite so rapidly and expeditiously. But in other respects he is generally superior to a young person. His mental powers are stronger and riper; his experience in life has been more extensive; his knowledge of character, his judgment, his training and efficiency in his work are all greater and better than those of a young person. Moreover, the elderly person is generally reliable, trustworthy and steady.

An employment bureau interested in this problem can do a great deal to educate the employer with respect to the value of this type of worker in his business. There are many positions in every industry which require a form of routine work which, if accepted by ambitious young men, is temporary at best and constantly requires the breaking in of a successor. The turnover in these departments of labor is tremendous and can be reduced considerably by the employment of middle-aged persons who seek merely a berth in which they can give the best of their interest and energy for the purpose of earning a livelihood. An intelligent employment secretary who is placed in charge of work of this kind can be decidedly helpful in aiding the employer and the worker.

Religious Discrimination Avoided

We previously referred to the need of a Jewish agency because of the discrimination which is constantly directed against the Jew. A unified effort on the part of those who understand the problem may help the situation. We cannot ignore it in spite of the doubt in the minds of some people, that such conditions exist. In addition to the personal experience of Jewish applicants seeking work, is previously referred to, a number of organizations engaged in placement work report the difficulty in placing Jewish workers. The employment secretary of

the Young Women's Christian Association, in New York City, reports that the greater number of their employers state a preference for Christian employees. She says that this is true of the Jewish employers, as well as the Christian. The former employment secretary of the Young Women's Hebrew Association reported great difficulty in placing Jewish girls with some Jewish employers. The director of the largest commercial agency in New York City informed this committee that so many Jewish employers are demanding Christian help, that it has become a recognized problem.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, in a recent statement, attacked what is termed "Jewish Anti-Semitism" and what he described as discrimination by Jews against Jews in business. He spoke of many communications he received from boys and girls who charged that Jewish employers objected to hiring Jews. "Jewish employers don't want to employ other Jews because they don't want a competitor in six years.... They damn the very things that made them". A program of education carried out by the directors of the central bureau may result in the correction of this situation and certainly a reduction of it.

Vocational Guidance

Very little opportunity is afforded the average placement worker to inquire into employment and vocational conditions. They are in no position to do any research work and become incapable of properly advising the applicants who appear before them. In a central bureau, where the program of work will permit the fullest development of all phases of employment and vocational effort, a complete information service can be established, which will result in carrying out an effective program of vocational guidance, training, placement and follow-up. A greater accomplishment will result from such permanent offices, with properly equipped and trained workers who can advise, suggest and seek information regarding the actual conditions and possibilities in the various trades and professions.

There is no reason for so many people entering professions and trades which are already overcrowded and which they propose to enter only because of their lack of knowledge of more fertile fields. Mr. Stroock has pointed out how congested the legal profession is, yet thousands and thousands of young men and women are constantly applying for admission to the Bar. They have no conception of the capacities demanded by the law and decide on this career because they are insufficiently acquainted with others in which they may be equally or more successful. Opportune advice to these young people may present a new aspect of human endeavor.

The above constitute the many reasons for advocating a central employment bureau which will become a distinct benefit to the community, through the service it will render both the young men and women who seek guidance and placement, as well as to the employers who require desirable help. There are some organizations which feel that their identity will be lost if this plan is put into effect, because they have been conducting vocational bureaus for many years, which have acquired enviable reputations of service to the community. A strong feeling exists among some of them in favor of combining this work with the other activities, constituting their program. We feel that this is based entirely upon sentiment which is only a bias to be overcome by reason.

MODUS OPERANDI

Physical Arrangement

Assuming that the central bureau is to be established for the purposes previously referred to, the problem of arranging the physical facilities for conducting this work becomes important. The space obtained in which the work must be carried on, should be so laid out as to create no new problem which might arise from the meeting of all types of workers of both sexes in one place. In addition to separate sections for female and male workers, several special offices will be required for interviewing applicants and employers and for the special activities referred to in this report. In view of our recommendation that the central bureau be located in the business district, the high rental will prevent provision for as great an area as would be desirable. Nevertheless, such space as will constitute the physical restrictions must be arranged to secure the best results.

Personnel

The personnel engaged for the conduct of this work will determine in a large measure its success. The executive head of the central bureau should be a person well trained in practical psychology, and economics, thoroughly experienced in recognizing changes in business conditions and familiar with handling young people. He must be human, kind, understanding and approachable, in addition to being a good administrator of what will, undoubtedly, be a busy organization. The chief duty of this executive would be to plan and supervise the work of the bureau and coordinate the various departments. The assistants should be qualified by training and experience for special departments of the bureau. Those in charge of vocational guidance should be trained in that subject. Those in charge of placement should have the practical experience in that work. Only experienced solicitors and investigators should be employed. Unless a high grade staff of this kind is engaged, this work will not reach the standard required for its success.

Solicitation of Jobs

There is a tendency on the part of employment agencies to rely upon letters and telephone calls for positions to which their applicants may be sent. The personal contact with an employer is an important matter and can be established by meeting him and talking with him. An intelligent solicitor, who can place before the employer the value of the central bureau as a communal enterprise, will be more likely to enlist his interest and cooperation. The solicitor, with the proper approach, can be of great value to the employer in advising him intelligently upon matters affecting his staff.

Investigation of Business Establishments

The central bureau will not be properly performing its function, if it will send female workers, as well as juniors of either sex, to establishments which they have not investigated. Too many reports are made on the disadvantages, inconveniences and intolerable conditions under which such employees must work. The investigator, with the proper personality, will not only ascertain the conditions of employment in a particular place of business, but may be helpful in correcting any condition which forms an obstacle to the employment of a worker. His report will also serve to protect the applicant from being sent to employers who cannot provide proper working conditions.

Registration of Applicants

While most registration in a central bureau will take place in the office in which this bureau is situated, it is impossible, except in unusual cases, to complete at one session all the steps necessary to qualify the applicant, fill out the necessary forms, receive the proper interview, check up the references and establish the proper connection with an employer. It may take several days to complete it. Invariably, therefore, a person seeking work, who lives at some distance from the central bureau and who comes to that bureau for the sole purpose of registering may lose considerable time while waiting for the opportunity to be interviewed. It is proposed, therefore, that registration forms be kept in each of the organizations affiliated with the central bureau, so that the members of these organizations, to which they undoubtedly apply first for work, can fill out the forms without a special visit. These forms will be sent at once to the central bureau from which a notice will be sent to the applicant to apply, only after the references have been looked into and other necessary steps taken. In these cases, when the applicant finally arrives at the central bureau, at a time set for taking care of him at once, he will be ready for vocational guidance and placement without interference with his own efforts to find employment between the filing of his application and the completion of the preliminary steps.

Permanent Record

In every case the record containing the complete history of the applicant and of the bureau's efforts in his behalf, should be kept in the central office, easily accessible to the organizations interested in him. These records should be kept in multiple form, so that each department, assisting in handling the case, will have its own information.

Fee

At the present time, some organizations favor a fee and some do not. The Young Men's Hebrew Association, at 92nd Street, has always charged a fee of 50% of the first week's earnings for non-members. The policy behind this course of action was established because of the desire to attract a more desirable and reliable group of young people who on the whole are opposed to accepting service for nothing. They feel that they can be more independent in the selection of a position, as they are paying for it. They are also more inclined to retain a position for which they have paid, than one which they secured without expense. As for the employer, he knows that he will receive a better type of worker who comes from more independent stock and who makes an investment when he accepts the position. As to the bureau, it is easier to work with this group of better applicants than with those who feel they can patronize every free bureau in the city, accept any job and leave it at will. Of course, there are exceptions made in the Y.M.H.A. employment bureau for those who cannot afford to pay for employment and for those who are referred to it by other organizations or social institutions which, themselves, charge no fee. A feature of the Y.M.H.A.'s system is that the fee is credited toward membership in the Association, which entitles the young man to the various privileges for as long a period as the amount will cover. In many instances, a full year's membership is granted the applicant for his fee. The Young Women's Hebrew Association, on the other hand, does not favor a fee and requires merely that each applicant become a member of the organization, upon payment of a small fee. (Since writing this, the Y.W.H.A. has abandoned its practice of charging no fee and is charging up to 30% of one week's salary in addition to membership).

This report recommends that no fee be charged to members of any organization in the Metropolitan League, but that a fee should be charged to all non-members, which fee may be applied to membership in some one of the institutions. This will to a great extent offset the objection that the association contact will be lost by the establishment of a central bureau. In some places, it is felt that a loss of membership would result from separating the vocational department from the other activities. Members are often recruited from among applicants who are given employment, because of the influence under which they come while in the building where the bureau is located. It is said that without the physical contact with such building, they would merely be applying to an agency like any other of its kind and thus defeat the purpose which prompted the development of this type of service. As a matter of fact, comparatively few of the applicants actually enroll in any of the associations, unless compelled to do so prior to obtaining work. While it is true that under the old plan an applicant actually visits some organizations before registering for employment, this visit is merely incidental and no association influence is absorbed. Workers applying to the central bureau will automatically become members of organizations after obtaining employment, and a real contact will be effected through the participation in Center activities.

As there is no uniform membership fee in the Metropolitan League organizations, it is fair to ask how we will arrive at the amount to be charged for employment. The committee recommends that a fee be charged equal to the maximum house membership of the Jewish centers in the Metropolitan League district. In other words, as there is no organization in which the maximum membership fee for young men or women is more than \$5.00 a year, that shall become the charge for obtaining a position through the bureau. If these young people prefer to become members in an organization which charges less than \$5.00 for its house membership fee, they shall be privileged to enroll in such an organization for as long a period as the fee will cover. They shall likewise be privileged to add an additional sum for such special activities as they may be interested in. In the case of boys and girls under sixteen years of age, the fee shall be \$3.00 which is equal to the maximum house membership for juniors for one year. Upon payment to the central bureau of the employment fee, this sum shall be sent to the association in which the applicant wishes to become a member and such organization will communicate with this person, informing him or her of the privileges of membership and the acceptance of his or her enrollment. Under this plan, a larger registration will result in each one of the organizations and the influence for good which we seek for as large a number of young people as possible, will be felt.

Cooperation with the Organizations

The central bureau will cooperate with organizations not affiliated with it in an effort to be helpful in guiding and placing people in whom they have a special interest.

Trade organizations have for many years tied up their instruction with the placement of students, upon graduation. In their case it is not difficult to understand the advantage of the arrangement whereby the employer and the prospective worker meet actually, or theoretically, in the school. We see the justice in the contention that to separate the employment work from the school, in which the instruction was obtained, would discourage the former students from calling upon the more recent graduates to fill vacancies in their establishments and thus make it more difficult to find openings for

the latter. The spirit of cooperation between a school and its appropriate body cannot be carried over to premises which are foreign to their personal interest. Jewish organizations, therefore, devoted to instruction in which employment work is carried on for their students can be best served by continuing to do this work, independently. Cooperation with these schools, however, as well as with charity societies, relief organizations, and the like, should be encouraged.

Cost of Operation

It is natural to be concerned with the expense involved in operating a central employment system in the business section of the city. The three important factors are salaries, rent and incidentals which include printing, stationery and postage. The Federation, which supports the bureaus now operated by the individually affiliated societies, appropriates annually \$21,700. In the opinion of the Committee, it is doubtful that the cost of maintaining the bureau herein advocated will exceed that amount. This is based upon the fact that the fourteen workers now engaged in the various employment departments, need not be increased in number, and that the rental of satisfactory quarters will not be exorbitant. The latter is prompted by the contemplated physical layout of the offices which would include two assembly rooms for male and female applicants, about twenty feet square; five offices for department heads, approximately ten by fourteen feet; about four hundred square feet for office purposes; or a total of about two thousand square feet. This can be obtained at a reasonable rental, particularly if the Federation Building can be used.

The income, however, to Federation will, undoubtedly, equal the expenditures and probably exceed them. In 1937, the employment departments in the separate institutions placed more than 9000 boys and girls. The plan proposed, having in mind the enrollment of every applicant in some one of the institutions supported by Federation for purposes of social and educational influences, will produce more than \$30,000 in minimum dues. This is based upon the figure of 9000, half of whom are juniors who will pay a membership fee of \$2.00 and the rest paying \$6.00, each. This does not include additional membership dues for particular activities which many will, undoubtedly, participate in, after enrolling in some one of the associations. It also presupposes that the same number of applicants will be placed, as are now placed, whereas in the central bureau a great many more will, undoubtedly, be given employment.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to point out the problems of employment and vocational work in the metropolitan district, together with the desirability of establishing a central system which will make more effective our helpfulness to young men and women in need of guidance and placement. The limited activities in the individual associations and the duplication of effort prevent the expansion which this work demands.

Each one of the twenty or more associations in the Metropolitan League continually faces the problem of advising its economically dissatisfied members, and while the exercise of common sense in most instances may be helpful to the person concerned, it is, at best a haphazard handling of a delicate yet important situation. Vocational guidance may not be a science, because it has no basis in fact, but there are a sufficient number of men and women who can expertly inter-

test and measure the value of one's knowledge, training, experience and inclinations, and whose service is invaluable and essential in connection with work of this kind. This service is best utilized in a unified and comprehensive system, where the opportunity exists to study and check the result of concentrated effort in advising your people. The central bureau makes this possible and the success of its operation should not only be helpful to the boys and girls for whom the service is intended, but should provide within a reasonable course of time sufficient data from which a science may be evolved.

This experiment is worthy of a trial. A city such as ours demands special measures for problems of this nature and a central association of employment and vocational guidance, which includes most of the organizations dealing with young people, is, undoubtedly, an improvement upon the sporadic efforts now made by a few individual organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To sum up, it is recommended:

1. That a central employment and vocational bureau, in charge of experts, be established in the business section of the city by the Metropolitan League of Jewish Community Center Associations, for the benefit of the members of the affiliated societies.

2. That the purposes of this bureau shall be, as follows: to give expert advice to young people through an effective program of vocational guidance, training and follow-up; to obtain suitable employment for them; to obtain employment for middle-aged persons for whom no adequate bureaus exist today; to determine more clearly religious discrimination and to endeavor to reduce it; to establish complete information service regarding vocational and employment conditions.

3. That the Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Societies subsidize the central bureau, the work of which in effect it now supports in the affiliated societies.