

At a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the congregation at which all members were present, it was unanimously resolved to recommend to a Special Meeting of the congregation to be called for that purpose, a sale of our Temple and School property in Eighth Street and Fayette Street. In order to facilitate a more intelligent consideration of the matter by the congregation a committee was appointed to prepare a report setting forth in detail the reasons that impelled the board to actions so extraordinary and yet so unanimous.

Four years ago our membership numbered one hundred thirty-one (131); which up to that time was the largest in the congregations' history. Our school enrollment totalled less than one hundred (100); our facilities were inadequate. A committee of nine was appointed to secure plans and devise ways and means for the erection of a new Synagogue and to select a successor to our then respected and now lamented Rabbi, Dr. Mayer.

We quote from the report of that committee; "Relative to the new Synagogue we found our path beset with many difficulties. In the beginning of our deliberations not a single member had a kind word for our present location; it was not deemed worthy of serious consideration. It seemed that in this large city a site might be obtained wherein would be embodied all the advantages of Eighth Street with none of its disadvantages; for it will readily be admitted that in some respects our old location is scarcely ideal. We have had this condition to face. For many years practically all our members lived in Allegheny and five years ago not five lived in East Liberty. Within the past few years, however, a movement has begun, which, if we are wise, we must carefully consider and, learning from the experience of other cities we must not under-estimate. Of our total membership not thirty members live in East End; over seventy per cent live in Allegheny, as nearly as it is possible for human understanding to estimate it will not take five years for the East End to be the home of a majority of our members. Would it be prudent to pile up an enormous debt, such as would be necessary if we were to secure property in Allegheny, whereon to erect a suitable building, only to be left with it on our hands in a few years when the bulk of our membership will have determined it to be advisable to build in the East End.

In view of present conditions and taking into consideration the future, dare we risk financial and congregational disaster by locating in Allegheny? And as Allegheny is unfit for the present and the future, so is East Liberty with but

thirty members residing there out of serious consideration for the present and the future. With this in mind we set about to find a location, central to Allegheny and to the East End and though our efforts were earnest, we were unable, even leaving cost entirely out of the question to find any that was better and few as good as our present site, which while far from beautiful is centrally located and entirely paid for.

In this connection we will say further, that it has been impossible for us to sell this lot or to obtain an offer for it. Even were a sale possible, the proceeds would go but a small way toward paying for a site equally desirable. Your committee, therefore, since they can not improve upon the present site, recommend its use and ask for appropriate action."

Remember what has just been read was part of a report of a committee submitted to the congregation about four years ago. Several years before that the congregation had unanimously resolved that when it would build a Temple, not to build it on the site of the old building; yet within two years, that action was reconsidered with equally unanimity and the recommendation of the committee was unanimously adopted. We recite these conditions in detail to remind you that it was impossible to do other than we did; the most sanguine among us did not hope for an increase of over fifty per cent in membership; yet our plans provided for a building with seating capacity considerably over one hundred per cent in excess of that of our old Temple. Without any financial assets excepting a lot 80 X 90 in Eighth Street and that of hardly more than nominal value we prepared to go into debt \$50,000, or more. The election of our present Rabbi Dr. Levy followed. Without attempting to pay to him the acknowledgement that is his due, but which is so generally understood as to be accepted without even mention, our membership at one bound leapt to over three hundred (300), our school enrollment to almost four hundred (400). Instead of the looked for debt, the congregation already on the day of the dedication had a surplus from out of which they paid for an adjoining property and for the assembly and school-rooms erected thereon; leaving in the hands of the Temple fund commission \$ which can only be applied to the purchase of a site for a new Temple or for the improvement of our present building. Our membership has since increased to three hundred and thirty-four (334), our seat renting non-members to We could not have foreseen the phenomenal growth of the congregation and had we known it, we could not have done differently. So much of an explanation to those of you who were not members of the congregation four years ago and hence were not

familiar with the conditions that then influenced us to action that has since been censured and criticised.

These are the conditions that face us to-day. Many people for whom we cannot find seats would like to join the congregation. The school is inadequate for its purposes and absolutely unfit for the small children who use it. Not only is the Temple too small to permit accommodating additional members but even the children of members, whom of all others we should be anxious to reach, can not find seats on holidays or Sundays. Notwithstanding the objections to our present location and the limitations of our quarters, your trustees would in all probability have borne with conditions in silence had not the sale of the Second Presbyterian Church in Penn Avenue and Seventh Street made it possible for us to enter into negotiations with the officers of that Church looking to the purchase of our property; from no one else and for no other than church purposes, could we expect an offer making the consideration of sale possible. Presbyterian Churches abound in all sections of the city. Dr. Youngs' congregation feels that its field of usefulness lies in this particular district. Your Trustees have therefore, been able to arrange with them, subject to your approval, of course, to sell them our property for the sum of \$150,000, cash or its equivalent; the memorial windows to be substituted by other windows, the candelabra which were donated to us to be retained by us; possession to be given within a reasonable time. They will allow us to use the Temple and school buildings for Saturday and Holiday services until our proposed new Temple is completed. We will be able to secure suitable quarters for our Sunday services pending completion of the new Temple. Until then we have been promised the use of the Fourth Ward school at corner Eighth Street and Duquesne Way for our Religious School. This price, if accepted for our property, refunds to us all the money we have expended for buildings, decorating and furnishings dollar for dollar and after deducting the cost of the lots purchased in the rear of the Temple pays us for our Eighth Street property Seven Hundred and Fifty dollars per foot front. This is much more than we could have secured for it four years ago. If we calculate its value at One Thousand dollars per foot front, we would be loosing about \$20,000, on our building. If we are satisfied to stop growing and are willing for a sufficiently long time, to put up with school facilities that to put it mildly, are a source of great uneasiness, the probabilities are that, eventually, our property will have a value for business purposes equal to the price we are now offered, but your

Trustees feel that this congregation stands for enlargement and development. If we are a power for good in this community we want to increase our sphere of usefulness. A Temple should not be a club with a limited membership and a waiting-list. Every Jew in the community be he ever so humble and his means ever so small should feel that in our Temple he is welcomed either as a member or seat-holder but for the present we have reached our limit, we have no room for new members, seat-holders of the children of members; Such a condition is intolerable and ought to be quickly corrected.

Considerably more than a majority of our congregation live on this side of the river; many Alleghenians will move to the East End this coming year; if the contemplated action takes place over seventy-five per cent of our membership will live on this side of the Allegheny River within six months of the dedication of the Temple. Your Board asks for authority to purchase a suitable site. It has no particular piece of ground in mind. No property will be selected that is not central to all sections of the East End and as conveniently located for Alleghenians as is possible under the circumstances. For a while the change of location maybe a hardship to some members; we fell that they will not hesitate to sacrifice their individual comfort for the good of the community. It is hoped that arrangements can be effected with the Penna. Railroad Co. for the running of through trains from Allegheny to and from services; this is merely a thought but we believe it is quite feasible. The Board also proposes that a branch Religious School be established and maintained in Allegheny for the convenience of children of Alleghenians. Without taxing any of our members excepting by the sale of seats to those not owning them and desiring to purchase, by which means approximately Twenty Thousand dollars will be raised; We will have available and without going into debt Two Hundred Thousand dollars for the purchase of the ground and for building purposes. You will understand that without having a site definitely decided upon, we could not have even provisional plans prepared, upon which an accurate estimate of cost could be obtained.

We propose, if authorized, to buy the ground and to have various plans prepared and then, before deciding upon any of them to ask for a general meeting of the congregation, so that, having all the necessary data for a proper understanding we may come to a satisfactory conclusion. It will depend entirely upon the site and character of the building whether our funds will see us through. We do not desire to indulge in any extravagance and it will remain for the congregation to

decide how large a building shall be erected, how simple or how elegant shall be its construction. In no case and under no condition will the Board recommend any action that will result in unduly taxing our members who recently came to the front so generously and freely; on the contrary they propose, that so far as it is possible, pew owners in our present Temple be assigned pews similar in location and value in the new Temple without placing upon them any additional burdens.

In conclusion we have only to add that the Board have not come to an unanimous decision so far as they are concerned without grave and careful consideration of the question in all its phases. From the intimate knowledge they have of the affairs of the congregation they unhesitatingly and without equivocation recommend first the sale of our present property and secondly the purchase of a new site.

Respectfully Submitted.