

Current Comments

— By DR. ASHER ISAACS —

I WONDER how many of my fellow Jews experienced the thrill I did in walking along Murray Avenue, the main street of Squirrel Hill last Saturday.



Dr. Isaacs

Squirrel Hill is the home of over half of the Jewish population in Pittsburgh. Murray Avenue is the thoroughfare traversed by worshippers on their way to and from

five synagogues. Murray Avenue is close to the homes of six rabbis as well.

But Murray Avenue is likewise the Jewish shopping center. In a few blocks one passes 10 kosher butcher shops, 2 fish stores, several kosher poultry stores, 6 Jewish-owned bakery shops, more than 14 grocery and fruit stores catering almost entirely to Jewish trade, a Jewish book shop, a hardware store, some specialty shops, as well as some eating places which serve dishes made from Jewish recipes.

AN INCONGRUITY

For many years there has been an incongruity between the Jewish consciousness of housewives which caused them to patronize Jewish bakeries and Jewish food stores and the purchase of these supplies on the Sabbath. The same housewives who have always been reconciled to the purchase of meat before the Sabbath because butcher shops were always closed on Saturday were not imaginative enough to make their other food purchases at the same time and in the same manner.

THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL

Through the efforts of the Rabbinical Council of Pittsburgh, conditions have changed in the last two weeks. Fourteen Jewish groceries and fruit stores, and four bakeries on Murray Avenue now close on the Sabbath, beginning with sunset Friday evening. In order to get the full effect of this, one must add to these 18 places of business, 10 butcher shops, poultry stores, a tailor shop, a bookstore, a hardware store, and so on. Murray Avenue begins to have a Sabbath-like appearance. Fewer Jewish women carrying packages, fewer Jewish children running errands, fewer automobiles belonging to Jewish shoppers lend a quietness to the street.

SOME EFFECTS

The effect on the children promises to be remarkable while the influence on non-Jews has already been marked. Murray Avenue is likewise a thoroughfare over which much non-Jewish traffic passes. Many of these people have thought of the Jewish merchants as money-mad because they remained open seven days out of the week in disregard to both Jewish and Christian Sabbaths. Now they see the same street transformed into a Sabbath-like thoroughfare on the Jewish Sabbath.

In bringing about this change, the Rabbinical Council performed its duty. In agreeing, the merchants showed a splendid spirit for which they deserve the congratulations, the cooperation, and the enthusiastic patronage of the buying public. What remains now is for the Jews of Squirrel Hill to get into the habit of making purchases before and after the Sabbath. A routine can be established that will cause no inconvenience to anyone. But it

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will be a routine which will restore a dignity to the Sabbath and to the Jew.

AN IMMEDIATE RESULT

One heartening result of the Sabbath-closing is the announcement of the Rabbinical Council this week that Messrs. Henry Feld and Paul Freuthal, operating as F. & F. on Murray Avenue, will conduct a strictly kosher restaurant and delicatessen beginning with Erev Pesach. In accordance with the agreement, the establishment will be closed on Sabbaths and holidays; only kosher foods will be handled at the counter and served to guests; milk and meat products will not be served at the same time; and the supervision of kashruth will be carried on by a person acceptable to the Council. Plans likewise call for a catering service. Pittsburgh will finally enter the ranks of other leading cities in this respect.