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THE
JEWISH AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

1931



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REUBEN ARKUSH,	HENRY MORGENTHAU, JR.,
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Assistant Manager.....	PHILIP R. STRISIK.

Main Office: 301 East 14th Street, New York City.

Branch Offices: 720 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Ill.
532 Pine Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
36 Center Street, Ellenville, N. Y.

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- PHILIP R. STRISIK.....Assistant Manager.
- JACOB M. MAZE.....In Charge } Farm Settlement
BENJAMIN SACKS.....Assistant } Department
- BENJAMIN C. STONE....In Charge Extension Department;
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- BENJAMIN MILLER.....Assistant Editor *Jewish Farmer*.
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- SAMSON LIPH.....Assistant Western Office.
- HENRIETTA BERNFELD...Cashier.
- JENNIE SCHWARTZ.....Chief Clerk.

An Appreciation

On January 21st, 1932, Eugene S. Benjamin will attain the age of three score and ten years. The Directors of The Jewish Agricultural Society are happy to join his host of friends in congratulating him on this significant anniversary of his natal day. Mr. Benjamin has been an active member of the Directorate of the Society since its establishment thirty-two years ago. In that capacity and as Trustee of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, it was given to him to render a service unique in the annals of American Jewish philanthropy, a pioneer service demanding pioneering qualities—vision, courage, patience—which he possesses in abundant measure. His fine intellect, his astute judgment, have earned the admiration of his associates. His sympathy, his modesty, his nobility of character, have won their esteem and affection. His fellow Directors wish him length of days in health and happiness. May it be granted to him to continue to serve for many years the cause which is so dear to his heart and which has profited so much through his labor and devotion.

The above Resolution was adopted at the Directors' Meeting held on January 19th, 1932.

To the President, Directors and Members of The Jewish Agricultural Society, Inc.

On December 9, 1931, there occurred the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Maurice de Hirsch, the founder of the two organizations—The Jewish Colonization Association and the Baron de Hirsch Fund—to which The Jewish Agricultural Society owes its existence. It is eminently fitting, therefore, that, in presenting this report, we pay merited tribute to the memory of that noble benefactor. Baron de Hirsch was a staunch advocate of farming as an occupation for the Jewish masses. His conviction that Jews can make good farmers was translated into action through the prodigious endowment of foundations entrusted with the mission of colonizing Jews in various parts of the world. He envisaged America as one haven for his down-trodden brethren—a place where the Jew could take the pack off his shoulders and devote himself to the calling of his forefathers, where he could find refuge from oppression, surcease from wandering, and settle down to peace and security “under his own vine and fig tree.” That he built well, the many Jewish farm settlements in America and elsewhere are adequate testimony. Today, thirty-five years after his death, his work still goes on along the lines on which his vision, his foresight, and, above all, his sympathy fashioned it. On this centennial anniversary of his natal day, The Jewish Agricultural Society, vested with the charge of carrying out his trust, rededicates itself to the task reposed in it.

The economic position of the American farmer took a step backward in 1931. Passing over natural causes, such as drought, frost, pest, from which some regions in so large a territory as the United States are always bound to suffer, the fundamental cause was the world depression in trade and industry. Whether due to overproduction or to underconsumption, agriculture was burdened with surpluses which demoralized markets and sent

farm prices to very low levels, in some instances to the lowest point in twenty years and more. The tightening of credit, in spots its total stoppage, and country bank failures in unprecedented number, contributed still further to the farmers' woes. Conditions in the cities did not add to their comfort. Widespread unemployment deprived them of the seasonal jobs to which some of them or their children were wont to turn in dull times or during slack periods on the farm. This disruption bore seriously upon our farmers and placed extraordinary burdens upon the shoulders of our Society. The demand for our service mounted. The means to supply it declined. In the face of greater need, at a time when a more liberal loaning policy would have been in order, we were, because of diminished resources, compelled to reject applications and to pare down loans as never before in our history. The aggregate of our loan grants was smaller than in any year since 1915 and comprised less than 25% of the amount for which application was made.

By dint of the most rigid economy, we managed to keep our educational service intact, except that we were again obliged to omit the grant of agricultural scholarships as well as to discontinue the presentation of merit awards initiated two years ago. The importance of educational service cannot be over-emphasized. It becomes all the more evident in times like this. The unbalanced condition of agriculture has created a competition, to cope with which proficiency counts as it never did before. Our educational work cannot be narrowed without detriment to the farmer. Indeed, it could stand broadening. There are phases of extension activity which we have not been able to engage in on a scale commensurate with their importance. The organization of farmers for community undertakings, closer contact with existing farm operatives and aid in establishing new ones, are distinctly worth while endeavors. But they require time and money, more than we have been able to devote to them.

Farm settlement activities were conducted with the utmost caution. There was no falling off in the number of those who came to us to be advised about establishing themselves on farms, but only a small part of our loanable funds could be used to set

up new farmers. The needs of those already on the farm claimed prior attention. Yet we cannot escape the belief that this is an opportune time in which to settle farmers in moderate number. Farm values have receded materially and good farms can be bought at relatively low prices. Out of the thousands clamoring for farms, a modest but fair sized contingent could be found for whom farming would offer a real opportunity to lift themselves out of their economic slough, and who could be settled along sound lines, along lines which will reduce the risk of failure and afford the possibility of gradual, even if slow, development. It is true that farmers are far from prosperous. But if we may judge by the anxiety, even despondency, of the city people who come to us as farm applicants, we are persuaded to believe that the farmers' plight is not as desperate as that of many in the city.

This year we again incurred a deficit, somewhat larger than last year, but less than four per cent of our operating cost. This was due to failure to receive interest collections as budgeted. Principal repayments slumped to the lowest point since 1917. These results were inevitable, all the more so because we did not pursue a drastic policy with respect to collections. So long as a farmer had a chance, however slight, of working through, he was accorded that chance. Unfortunately, our loaning capacity is limited by the volume of amortization payments and our service capacity is determined by the size of our interest income. A further decline in both these items may be expected in 1932, for even if the anticipated upswing takes place, it is not likely to reach the farmer immediately. This only means that we will be obliged to guard our expenditures still more carefully and to restrict our loans more rigidly—this, too, at the time when our farmers need us most.

The very nature of our work makes some losses unavoidable. They must simply be written off against the cost of building a Jewish farming class. Losses would cause us little uneasiness, were our endowment large enough to enable us to set up a reserve. In the beginning that was the case. Up to 1915 the Society received annual subventions from both the Jewish Col-

onization Association and the Baron de Hirsch Fund. These were more than enough to cover loaning operations, service costs and administration expenses. They enabled us to build up a revolving loan fund and provided annual balances for accretions to capital. The Jewish Colonization Association's subvention came to an end upon the outbreak of the World War. With this support cut off, our reserves were gradually used up. Now, losses are charged against capital and progressively deplete our treasury, causing a shrinkage in both principal and interest available for loans and for service activity. This year they rose to a height which give us much concern, and the outlook is for a further rise next year. A shrinkage would not be so serious were our fund of a size commensurate with the magnitude of our work, but resources of less than a million and a half dollars cannot stand further diminution, if this work is to be carried forward on a nation-wide scale as heretofore. The time may soon come when American Jewry will have to be asked to help share the burden. Thus far this important activity has been carried on solely through the largess of one man—Maurice de Hirsch—and that man, not an American. Would it not be fitting to mark the centennial of the birth of that great benefactor by the raising of a memorial fund to strengthen and advance the work which his munificence created?

FARM SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT.

The purpose of farm settlement work is to guide the farm buyer in the selection and purchase of his farm. It is not propaganda—the preachment of farming as a panacea for our economic and social ills. We are not so much concerned in multiplying the number of Jewish farmers as we are in safeguarding, in so far as lies within our power, the economic fate of those who cast their lot on the farm. Our function is not to implant the desire of farming. Even if that were possible, it is not necessary. The 1161 applicants registered at our offices this year represent, we firmly believe, but a small proportion of those of our fellow Jews in whom the yearning for farm life burns with persistent flame. Our mission it is to build upon that ideal, to transform it into practical reality.

Farm settlement service is always a responsible task. Not merely the initial investment, but also the family's economic welfare is at stake. Success or failure may color the farmer's entire future. The realization of the extent of our responsibility weighs heavily upon us. In the troublous year through which we have passed, we had to exercise much more care than in normal times. We were not anxious to influence a man to invest the small remnant of his savings unless we felt reasonably certain that he could make good. Large was the number that came to us nursing the hope that farming would unlock the door to economic security. To disillusion the unqualified was no pleasant duty.

Because of these considerations, our farm settlement work this year was mostly of a preventive character, to dissuade those who in our judgment were unfit or unprepared to take up farm life. Still, it had a very real value in forestalling probable failure, and in giving our farm minded clients a reasoned point of view on farming and its possibilities. To some of them farming is simply a hope deferred.

Despite our caution, we could have established more families, and we believe profitably, had we not been so severely circumscribed in the amount of money available for loans for settlement purposes. Faced with the necessity of cutting our loan budget, the needs of existing farmers were paramount. Only 7% of the aggregate of our loans went for loans to establish new farmers. These loans were the smallest in number, volume and in relation to the total annual loans since 1918. In consequence, the number of new farm settlements was the smallest in the history of this department. We settled but 36 families in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Of these 10 received loans totalling \$13,900 and averaging \$1390, the lowest average since 1925. The rest established themselves on their own resources. But the number of prospective farmers with sufficient capital of their own has declined. The percentage in the less than \$2000 class rose from 25 to 36 in one year, while that of those in the higher brackets fell off materially. More farm seekers, therefore, depend upon us for financial aid in buying or equipping their farms, and failing this, must abandon the idea or postpone its realization.

It may be argued that we already have more than enough farmers; that, therefore, encouraging an individual to go into



farming is rendering him no service. We shall not debate the question. We need only point out that the same objections can be raised to the accession of new entrants into practically any field of human endeavor. The professions are overcrowded, business cannot absorb the large numbers of willing workers, the supply of man power for factory, shop and mine far outruns the demand. Overcrowding will not prevent people from going into business or industry and will not deter numbers from going into farming. The fact is that 1,392,000 people went from cities to farms in 1930, and that for the first time in almost a decade the movement from the farm is almost entirely balanced by the movement to the farm.

We repeat our conviction that there is room for more farmers. The important thing is that the new entrants into farming proceed along sound and practical lines, along lines which will reduce the risk of failure and afford the possibility of gradual, even if slow, development. The moderate priced farm minimizes the risk. Such farm need bring only a small cash income to meet small carrying charges and cost of operation, and can be made to produce much of the food for household consumption.

Another way out, we believe, is offered by our agro-industrial plan discussed in former reports. The plan implies moving city workers closer to the sources of food supply by settling them on small farms within commuting distance of the places of their employment. Its merit lies in enabling workers to gain entrance into farming without immediate severance from their city occupations. In its essence this is the scheme advocated by some outstanding leaders in American life, not least among them Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York. This method of settlement constitutes a bridge over which the newcomer can travel in greater safety from city to farm. There are also advantages which, though social in character, bear upon economic success. Proximity to the city robs farm life of its isolation and loneliness. Accessibility acts to preserve family ties and to prevent the breaking up of bonds of friendship fostered through years of residence in the city. In short, adjustment is facilitated, orientation is quickened.

We do not blink the fact that this is not undiluted farming, but the risk of failure is not nearly as great as it is where one goes directly into straight farming. The city job serves as an

insurance. The possibilities for emergence into straight farming are always present and many of the people so settled are likely to evolve into out-and-out farmers as they become sufficiently entrenched to surrender their city jobs. Be the agricultural outcome what it may, the agro-industrial plan of settlement will, in our judgment, be eminently worth while if it results in nothing more than providing the worker with proper housing in healthful surroundings, where his children can come in wholesome contact with nature, where the family can escape the city's drawbacks and yet take advantage of the city's opportunities.

As reported last year, we took concrete steps to put this plan into practical operation. A tract of land in Middlesex County, New Jersey, close to New Brunswick and about 32 miles from New York City, suitable for subdivision into about thirty farms, was acquired. The project was initiated with nine farm units. We intended to go further as soon as the first group of buildings was completed, but the prolongation of the economic depression makes us fearful of going ahead at this time. The families settled have made a good start, and the results of their first season's operations were, if anything, above expectations. It is our purpose to build and settle more units when conditions are more propitious.

The settlement near Bound Brook and the smaller ones established along these lines have, as might be expected, had their difficulties. City employment, the heart of the plan, was scarce and many of the families were driven into whole time farming before they were ready for it. Still, they were fortunate in having the farm to fall back upon. It gave them a source of income which, even if small, afforded them at least a meagre livelihood.

Taken all in all, our experience with this type of settlement, obtained though it was at a most trying period, confirms us in the belief that its fundamental principles are sound and practicable. Our hope is that, as this idea takes firmer root, more and larger settlements of this class will spring up.

We again made a study of the length of tenure of the families established by us during the last five years to determine how many are still on their farms and the cause of defection of those who left. The results are as follows:

Year.	Total Settled.	No. Left Farm.	No. on Farm.	Percentage on Farm.
1927.....	99	20	79	79.7
1928.....	80	22	58	72.5
1929.....	89	21	68	76.4
1930.....	73	6	67	91.8
1931.....	36	—	36	100.0
	<hr/> 377	<hr/> 69	<hr/> 308	<hr/> 81.7

The main causes of defection are sickness, death, partnership dissension, dissatisfaction on part of wife, and agricultural failure. It is pleasing to contemplate that so large a percentage of farmers have survived the formative stage, all the more critical because of the unprecedented conditions which confronted them during almost the entire period. There is no indication that Jewish farmers, old or new, are deserting their farms. On the contrary, there is plentiful evidence that they are sternly determined not to succumb to defeatism or discouragement.

FRAUD PREVENTION: By means of well directed publicity, we aim to bring our settlement service to the notice of the prospective Jewish farm buyer. This is done through announcements in the Yiddish press and, to a less extent, by talks before Jewish audiences. Our press publicity, however, does not reach the non-Yiddish reading farm aspirant.

The farm agent is ever active. With those whose practices are straight we have no quarrel, but, unfortunately, there are some who stoop to questionable methods. Try as we may to guard the farm buyer from falling victim to their wiles, there are always some who, through ignorance of our service, allow themselves to be led into making disastrous purchases. This is a hard thing to combat. This year, a particularly misleading line of advertising appeared in some Yiddish newspapers. We brought it to the notice of the papers and succeeded in having two papers discontinue the advertisement and a third insist upon the elision of the objectionable features. Not only was the land advertised grossly exorbitant in price, but it was altogether unsuited for farming purposes, poorly located, wooded land, involving heavy expenditures for clearing. Scores of people bought land, but, fortunately, only two have thus far settled on it. We prevented those who consulted us from being duped, and are

advising others to drop the venture, even if it means the loss of their initial investment.

A pamphlet broadcast by a company engaged in land development in Northern New Jersey, contained such exaggerated statements of the possibilities in poultry, that we felt it our duty to bring it to the notice of the New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station. To counteract the effect of this misinformation the Station promptly issued a bulletin under the caption "Poultry Farms Are Not Sources of Quick Riches" and gave it wide publication in New Jersey and metropolitan dailies.

FARM LOAN DEPARTMENT.

Agricultural credit in 1931 was tighter than in several years. Federal Land Banks were short of money and some discontinued taking applications. About eighty-five per cent of the Joint Stock Land Banks stopped making loans. Country banks were in no position to place farm mortgages because, confronted with heavy withdrawals, they could not afford to tie up their funds in securities not readily convertible into cash. Some, in fact, were compelled to call in mortgages. An abnormally large number failed and the trustees had to demand payment to expedite liquidation. Building and Loan Associations were called upon for redemption of shares in such volume as to leave nothing over for new loans. Besides, not a few were already loaded up with farm property taken in under foreclosure. Life insurance companies and other corporations which usually lend money on farm mortgages drew in their lines. Private lenders were wary. Second mortgage money—of which there is always a dearth—was virtually unobtainable. Short term credit was scarcer than in years. Merchant credit ruled at a low point. On the whole, the agricultural credit structure was under a severe strain.

Fortunately, there are strong indications that this situation will ease up in 1932. Late this year the United States House of Representatives passed a bill increasing the capitalization of the Federal Land Banks by one hundred million dollars. Strong efforts are being made to thaw out the frozen assets of country banks, and a five hundred million dollar banking pool has been created for that purpose. President Hoover has proposed the creation of a Home Loan Bank System similar to the Federal

Farm Loan system, which, by relieving the pressure on existing lending agencies, will make more funds available for new loans.

The situation just portrayed increased our burdens, the more so because principal repayments fell short of their mark. So carefully were we forced to husband our resources that the aggregate of the year's loan grants was the smallest in sixteen years. In 1920, the year in which the previous depression broke, we were in a position to approve loans of \$416,853, more than double those of 1931. This year we were obliged to rule out applications which, though worthy, were not pressing, and to hold loans within the barest figures needed for absolute essentials—a policy not to our liking.

During the year we received 896 applications for farm loans aggregating \$801,751.14 coming from farmers in 23 states. These figures include only recorded applications and take no account of applications from clients of our Farm Settlement Department whose settlement on farms was not effected. The actual total is substantially higher. We granted 435 loans totalling \$201,798.06, only 25% of the amount applied for. To these figures should be added the two classes of grants by means of which we are able to render financial aid without making cash advances. These are (1) permitting mortgages to remain after farms have passed into the hands of new owners, (2) releasing or subordinating our mortgages to prior mortgages for larger amounts, letting the borrowers use the excess for farm purposes. The second class necessitates the weakening of our securities to the extent of the increase of the new over the old mortgages. In class one there were 29 cases aggregating \$31,839.43 and in class two 40 cases aggregating \$42,502.00. The inclusion of these figures brings the total of all grants to 504 in number and \$276,139.49 in amount.

The 435 cash loans were made against the following securities:

First Mortgage	23
Second Mortgage	103
Third Mortgage	34
Fourth Mortgage	22
Fifth Mortgage	4
Promissory Note	246
Purchase Contract	3

In 30 cases we took additional security in the form of chattel mortgage or other collateral.

The number of loans on promissory notes went up. The reason was alluded to in the introduction to this section of the report. Loans on promissory notes are what we denominate "short term loans." These are seasonal loans, made without security, repayable within brief periods. Their size is necessarily limited because of the risk inherent in unsecured loans to a widely scattered clientele. They are intended primarily to do away with the necessity of resorting to merchandise credit for feed and supplies, an expensive form of credit. Even that type of credit is now scarce and we may expect to be called upon for more and larger short term loans next year.

Last spring we made two loans to coöperative buying associations—one to a group of Michigan fruit growers for the purchase of fertilizer, the other to an association of New Jersey poultrymen for the purchase of feed. The former was repaid in the fall when the fruit was sold, and the latter is being paid off in monthly instalments as stipulated. We look with favor upon loans of this character. They have a value over and above pecuniary help. They foster coöperation, engender a sense of responsibility, develop an understanding of the methods and uses of credit, promote local leadership and cement community ties. We will probably be called upon for more loans of this nature in the future. As a matter of fact, we have now under consideration a loan to a Connecticut group, and application has been made to us by a New Jersey association for a loan for a coöperative storage house.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FARM LOANS SINCE ORGANIZATION: Since the founding of our Society we granted 10,288 farm loans aggregating \$6,756,773.68. These figures do not include loans to synagogues, community houses, student loans and other miscellaneous loans. (See table next page.)

Loans granted but not closed were either rescinded or carried over to the following year. This year 24 loans aggregating \$23,938.60 were rescinded and 19 loans amounting to \$17,916.13 have been carried over to be closed in 1932.

Year.	LOANS GRANTED.		LOANS CLOSED.		LOANS OUTSTANDING.	
	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.
1900..	39	\$14,425.00	25	\$9,125.00	23	\$7,503.02
1901..	66	31,347.59	65	29,014.80	87	36,820.82
1902..	80	41,517.06	65	33,406.56	150	67,507.52
1903..	117	46,590.51	106	44,006.27	224	99,161.44
1904..	151	63,851.14	125	52,150.44	316	130,968.58
1905..	156	69,864.76	134	56,547.05	386	162,960.40
1906..	154	66,358.03	151	63,836.14	481	208,099.41
1907..	223	140,334.34	204	114,812.07	578	282,494.16
1908..	284	174,633.11	263	160,038.71	710	399,194.07
1909..	256	141,494.48	239	129,442.91	816	478,654.59
1910..	318	209,697.96	281	178,561.55	983	571,103.44
1911..	334	256,000.07	320	237,575.56	1,069	686,657.13
1912..	390	238,323.86	356	222,432.70	1,186	797,503.33
1913..	423	244,977.85	358	203,991.21	1,342	902,649.18
1914..	327	170,811.92	331	186,733.76	1,480	978,196.62
1915..	396	190,036.21	358	162,896.53	1,628	980,830.26
1916..	386	229,827.88	320	182,598.83	1,713	977,423.70
1917..	389	209,453.73	387	211,268.19	1,761	995,085.47
1918..	360	222,937.12	315	177,848.12	1,641	942,267.84
1919..	410	296,686.34	364	254,376.34	1,503	933,564.07
1920..	444	416,853.77	403	369,070.27	1,468	1,064,179.37
1921..	451	331,614.93	407	312,771.57	1,470	1,144,159.43
1922..	473	335,154.45	448	318,176.40	1,512	1,228,818.38
1923..	353	272,830.67	318	231,145.26	1,457	1,192,016.79
1924..	461	310,534.91	401	249,983.22	1,440	1,190,233.85
1925..	442	280,291.70	436	269,662.40	1,418	1,190,087.40
1926..	479	303,865.69	431	272,416.23	1,409	1,206,694.37
1927..	570	399,103.63	532	344,368.94	1,465	1,299,425.86
1928..	454	293,922.62	441	271,730.31	1,467	1,340,475.75
1929..	477	305,692.88	417	249,808.38	1,471	1,346,026.51
1930..	489	244,671.13	463	222,500.48	1,520	1,377,749.80
1931..	435	201,098.06	420	192,614.48	1,529	1,371,419.80

Our loan work has been nation wide. The only states not yet reached are Arizona, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, Utah and West Virginia. As may be expected, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are by far in the lead.

ANALYSIS OF 1931 LOANS: The table on next page contains interesting data pertaining to the loans granted this year. It will be noted that loans were made in 17 states.

REPAYMENTS: The subject of collections was touched upon in the introduction to this report. We pointed out that our prin-

STATE.	No. of Loans.	Amount of Loans.	Acreage.	No. of Farmers.	Value of Real Property.	Value of Personal Property.	Prior Mortgages.	Equity Real and Personal Property.	Average Equity.
California	1	\$ 1,000.00	6	1	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 10,400.00	\$10,400.00
Connecticut	57	25,083.31	3,815	47	288,200.00	109,725.00	155,635.00	242,290.00	5,155.00
Delaware	1	100.00	117	1	8,000.00	1,150.00	125.00	9,025.00	9,025.00
Florida	2	2,250.00	135	2	32,000.00	3,100.00	6,200.00	28,900.00	14,450.00
Indiana	2	2,100.00	350	2	8,000.00	775.00	2,100.00	6,675.00	3,337.00
Maryland	1	1,000.00	50	1	9,000.00	1,475.00	6,000.00	4,475.00	4,475.00
Massachusetts	12	4,200.00	503	11	90,000.00	17,225.00	57,200.00	50,025.00	4,547.00
Michigan	49	24,327.77	2,514	46	370,900.00	64,845.00	189,393.00	246,352.00	5,355.00
New Hampshire	2	377.78	50	1	1,000.00	100.00	800.00	300.00	300.00
New Jersey	153	82,556.65	4,178	141	1,066,125.00	228,720.00	668,372.00	626,473.00	4,443.00
New York	115	41,248.56	8,981	112	602,250.00	142,865.00	369,974.00	375,141.00	3,348.00
Ohio	23	8,894.94	2,016	22	164,300.00	34,150.00	113,202.00	85,242.00	3,874.00
Oklahoma	1	1,000.00	112	1	15,000.00	750.00	4,000.00	11,750.00	11,750.00
Pennsylvania	13	4,600.00	507	13	104,900.00	22,590.00	60,100.00	67,390.00	5,183.00
Washington	1	500.00	12	1	10,000.00	2,250.00	1,000.00	11,250.00	11,250.00
Wisconsin	1	2,000.00	313	1	17,000.00	7,625.00	15,000.00	9,625.00	9,625.00
Wyoming	1	559.05	160	1	6,400.00	1,800.00	4,600.00	4,600.00
Totals	435	\$201,798.06	23,819	404	\$2,807,075.00	\$639,245.00	\$1,656,401.00	\$1,789,913.00	\$ 4,430.00

cial repayments dropped to the lowest point since 1917; that our interest collections likewise fell off. Collections, always a vexing problem, were bound up with more complexities this year than ever. Many farmers were not in a position to meet obligations, but there were also some, we feel certain, who were able to pay but who exploited the depression for selfish purposes. This is a factor which is bound to confront an organization built on our lines, and we are constantly faced with the perplexing task of deciding whether a default is due to inability to pay or to the attitude of the debtor. Unless we feel reasonably certain that we are on safe ground, we must give the borrower the benefit of the doubt. We cannot adhere to the strict letter of our contracts when we have reason to believe that farmers are unable to live up to them. Terms were fixed on the basis of conditions that prevailed at the time the loans were made, but, because conditions have changed, we are often compelled, whether we like it or not, to ease up on our terms. This is not pleasing, because it slows down the revolutions of our loan fund. Our present difficulty is that too large a percentage of our capital, inadequate as that is, is tied up in farm loans on which payments must be postponed. Even so, we may have to extend more liberal terms on future loans, especially for the next few years. Other lending agencies are somewhat in the same position, even those which lend on primary and not, as we do, on subsidiary security. Some Building and Loan Associations are omitting amortization payments. Congress is considering an enactment providing for the spread over five years of the defaulted payments on Federal Land Bank mortgages and an appropriation of \$25,000,000 to enable the banks to grant such extensions. Defaults must be condoned if farmers are not to be driven off their farms.

There is no little satisfaction to be derived from the knowledge that our forbearance has enabled farmers to remain on their farms who might otherwise have been compelled to surrender their all and to join the already swollen ranks of the unemployed in the cities. Indeed, to such an extent did we go to keep some families on the farm or, to state it more accurately, to keep them away from the city, that we not only extended our own payments, but made advancements for interest, taxes, insurance, etc., to avert foreclosure of prior mortgages. Other farm

mortgage agencies went through similar experiences. A large middlewestern Joint Stock Land Bank's defaults jumped from a normal 5% to about 25% on first mortgages. Our collections ran less than 15% lower than last year and 24% lower than 1929. Everything considered, our showing cannot be regarded as at all bad.

In principal on farm loans we collected \$159,714.88 as compared with \$186,311.38 last year. In interest we collected \$55,656.43 as against \$62,748.38 in 1930. The collections on loans to synagogues, community houses, student loans, etc., were \$5,819.58 principal and \$1,585.69 interest, bringing the sum total of collections on all loans to \$222,776.58. We lent out \$27,080.02 more than we collected on principal. This difference came from advances made by the Baron de Hirsch Fund.

To complete this division of the report, it should be mentioned that our inventory of farm real estate taken in under foreclosure has grown. This is a situation which we do not relish because farms so acquired can, as a general rule, be sold only at a loss, besides which they consume money in carrying charges until sales can be consummated. Yet these and other salvaging operations were resorted to, to save as much as possible out of wrecked enterprises, even though the salvaged funds had to be temporarily withdrawn from their original purposes. For example, we exchanged a farm mortgage for city real estate in the hope that the latter could more readily be converted into cash and the money in time restored to its proper function. With farm valuations low, in some states back to a pre-war level, the realizable value of our mortgages has been materially lessened. What percentage of our outstanding loans will ultimately prove collectible we can hardly estimate. A ray of hope can be gained from the fact that for the most part our mortgages are in sections which, though not immune from the slump, have been least affected by it. Meanwhile we must bear with our debtors. In that way we may keep down the volume of losses while giving our farmers the chance to stage a recovery.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DEPARTMENT.

The question is often asked why Jewish farmers require a special agricultural educational service. Can they not avail

themselves of the multifarious extension activities carried on by federal, state and other agencies? The answer is to be found in the fact that most Jewish farmers are yet comparatively newcomers, largely first-generation farmers. They are almost wholly drawn from non-agricultural occupations and entered farming without agricultural experience. Jewish farmers make use of governmental agencies, but they also need a type of extension service which is more personal and more direct, perhaps more elemental, in a sense more sympathetic, than public extension service can be—in short, a service more suited to their background, psychology and temperament.

The nature of our extension work, our method of approach to it and the instrumentalities which we employ, have been fully discussed in former years. We confine ourselves here solely to the presentation of the outstanding problems which we attacked this year.

During the troublesome days of the past year we had to wage a fight along two fronts—to hold the ground heretofore won and to make further advance. Adverse conditions of unparalleled severity demanded greater efficiency on the part of the farmer and by that token required the intensification of our educational efforts.

COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS: Several cooperative associations showed signs of weakening because of the sharp competition from private dealers and the poor state of the cooperatives' treasuries. They had been built up with much care and now had to be braced up and encouraged, and their members imbued with the spirit of loyalty to cooperation.

The egg marketing project on which we entered last year felt the effects of hard times. In the hope that nearby fresh eggs could be made to command a higher price than eggs coming from distant points, we had evolved a system of selling eggs marked with a copyrighted brand. We promoted the formation of The Nearby Farmers Cooperative Association to control the stamp and to market the product. That Association entered into a contract with a New York grocers' cooperative, an arrangement which held a special appeal because it implied cooperation between cooperatives. Unfortunately, the grocery men's cooperative became financially unstable and the relations between the two asso-

ciations had to be terminated. Yet, the Nearby membership is so convinced of the virtue of the project that it is strengthening its program and reaching out for larger territory. That the egg stamping idea possesses merit can be judged by the fact that a large general poultrymen's association in South Jersey has adopted it.

A vegetable growers' coöperative association in the South Jersey Colonies sold \$30,000 worth of produce at a figure considerably higher than could otherwise have been obtained. One of the newer coöperatives, that in Perrineville, New Jersey, is about to build a warehouse for the storage of feed and the packing of vegetables. A new feed buying association began to function in Eastern Connecticut and several like organizations are in the process of formation elsewhere.

PROBLEMS: The dairy farmers in the Ulster-Sullivan (New York) districts, who had heretofore enjoyed the advantage of high retail prices for milk sold to hotels and boarding houses, found their summer market invaded by a powerful outside milk distributing company which sold milk at much lower rates. Surplus production made matters worse. The market was weak. The economic forces were beyond our control, but we launched a vigorous milk improvement campaign in the hope that a better grade of milk could in time demand higher prices. Our Sanitation Department and our Ulster-Sullivan office coöperated. We called upon the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The help rendered by Dr. James D. Brew, Milk Specialist of the Health Department, a national authority, was invaluable. Gains in sanitation improvement saved the market for some who would otherwise have lost it.

Trouble arose in some dairy districts in Connecticut presumably because of the poor grade of the milk. Investigation revealed that this was due, in instances, to faulty handling after the milk had left the farms, for which the farmers, of course, were not to blame. Thanks to the coöperation of the Connecticut Milk Producers' Association, the cases to which we called attention were satisfactorily settled.

Disease among poultry flocks is an inevitable occurrence under our modern intensive practice. The problem is to keep

it within bounds and to reduce its ravages. Some anxiety was caused by a sudden and severe outbreak in Woodbine late in the summer when there was least reason to expect it. Three poultry clinics, conducted by the State poultry pathologist, had been previously held, and we thought that the period of danger was over. As soon as we learned of the trouble, we called in the chief pathologist of the State and his local worker, and the spread of the disease was soon checked.

Our energetic vaccination campaign, we believe, was responsible for preventing heavy losses from the scourge of fowl pox. The slight loss among protected flocks compared with the heavy toll among the unprotected, demonstrated the value of vaccination.

While relieving emergency situations we followed up our regular agricultural projects, such as the use of better seed, the raising of better and earlier varieties of vegetable and field crops, the artificial method of ripening fruits and vegetables, the control of plant diseases and insect pests, the introduction of better livestock, the caponizing of birds, methods of fire prevention, beautification of home grounds and others.

We made ample use of the meetings of farmers' organizations to drive home these important lessons and to hammer away on the need of greater efficiency in production and marketing. To many of these meetings we brought experts of national repute to discuss their specialties. The largest of these gatherings was held in Connecticut, attended by representatives from the Jewish farm communities of the entire State. Dr. E. A. Perregaux, the State Agricultural Economist, expounded the principles and methods of coöperation. Committees were set up to make further studies and to carry on further organization work.

CONFERENCE OF JEWISH FARMERS: The second annual conference of Jewish farmers was held in New York on November 15th, attended by representatives of farm communities in the eastern states. Through intelligent advance planning a well rounded program was mapped out. The best minds among Jewish farmers were mobilized to consider the following topics:

1. Strengthening and coördination of existing coöperative associations and formation of new ones.

2. The best types of farm equipment from the standpoint of actual experience in its use.
3. Methods to bring about standardization of marketing practices.
4. The possibilities of obtaining agricultural credit through coöperative credit unions, intermediate credit corporations and other institutions.
5. The fuller utilization of extension services and their improvement.
6. The promotion of closer community relationships and the setting up of machinery to adjust disputes.
7. The furtherance of cultural activities.

Seven committees were formed to deal with these subjects and to this was added a general committee to coördinate the activities of the others and to consider their recommendations.

NIGHT SCHOOL: Our night school has steadily grown in popularity. Conceived as a means of acquainting farm aspirants with the possibilities in farming and teaching them the rudiments of agriculture, it has had to widen its scope to satisfy the avidity of students of former years for more advanced courses. Among our guest lecturers last year was a poultry expert, himself the owner of one of the largest poultry farms in the East. As in former years, classroom instruction was supplemented by several outings. Especially instructive was a tour which included a visit to the New Jersey State Agricultural College and Experiment Station, arranged through the courtesy of the Dean and Director, Dr. Jacob G. Lipman; to the new agro-industrial settlement of Jewish farmers near New Brunswick, and to a poultry farm noted throughout New Jersey for its unique equipment and arrangement.

The 1931-1932 class opened in December with a lecture on fur farming by Dr. F. G. Ashbrook, the Chief of the Division of Fur Resources of the United States Department of Agriculture. This subject was selected because of the widespread interest in fur farming, which has been stimulated by high pressure salesmanship on the part of a number of firms interested

in the sale of breeding stock. Over two hundred men and women were in attendance—evidence that interest in farming remains unabated.

THE JEWISH FARMER: Beginning with the first issue of the coming year, *The Jewish Farmer*, our monthly magazine, will appear in two sections. One section will be identical in form and in makeup with the issues published heretofore, but it will be of smaller size. The other section will consist of a bulletin devoted to a single subject, comprehensively treated. Our purpose in making this change is to enable our readers to build up a library of publications which are handy in form and valuable for reference purposes. Our experience with publications of this kind convinces us that our subscribers appreciate this method of getting their information. Two editions of our poultry book, a substantial number of copies of our pamphlet on horses, and another on disease of animals, were quickly exhausted.

We shall be able also to effect some economies, for which, unfortunately, the need is becoming ever more pressing. Under the old plan we had to cover the full range of subjects yearly so as to make every volume, as far as possible, complete in itself. In the future, we shall have to publish only such material as has not been treated in any of the bulletins. Consequently, the magazine itself need carry only news items and matters of current interest.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT LOANS: As already reported, we were, because of budgetary limitations, compelled for the second time to omit the award of scholarships for the winter courses at the state agricultural colleges. But we granted twelve junior short course scholarships. With few exceptions, the winners had been recommended by state workers because of their achievements in junior club work.

Not a few of our young folks gained distinction for some definite agricultural accomplishment. Two Rhode Island boys, both sons of a former night school student, received several prizes from the Pomona Grange for their skill in judging and caring for dairy cattle. A Long Island lad, son of a farmer and grandson of one of the original Woodbine settlers, won a number of prizes in egg laying contests. He was president of

his 4 H Club and is now the leader of two township groups. At the Ulster County (New York) Fair, eleven Jewish boys, all 4 H Club members, carried off forty-one prizes in the Junior division.

Only one student loan was granted this year—to a young man at the Connecticut Agricultural College.

PURCHASING SERVICE BUREAU: Monetary saving is not our entire aim in maintaining this service. We are much more concerned in supplying our farmers with high grade material and in guiding them in making judicious purchases. Lately we have given more and more encouragement to local buying associations to make their own purchases, establishing the initial contacts and letting these organizations function independently.

EXTENSION DATA: We made 3135 farm visits, sent out 4339 letters of information and gave advice to 1569 callers at our offices. Our purchasing bureau handled 664 orders. We held 169 meetings and demonstrations with an aggregate attendance of 4842.

Our most effective instrument in agricultural extension work remains the individual farm visit whereby our field agents, selected not only because of their expert knowledge, but also because of their understanding of the mental, perhaps temperamental, makeup of the Jewish farmer, carry the latest agricultural information directly to the farmer's door—a service unique and, we believe, indispensable.

RURAL SANITATION DEPARTMENT.

During 1931 we visited 544 farms and revisited 298, making a total of 842 investigations. Our time was devoted to Sullivan and Ulster Counties, New York, Rensselaer County, New York, and New London County, Connecticut.

We adhered to our original plan of education to obtain and maintain basic sanitation essentials—safe water supply, decent sewage facilities and adequate food protection. The small farmer, the man whose living is derived chiefly from actual farm operations, received the major part of our attention. Yet we could not ignore entirely the larger farm boarding establishment, nor

could we graciously turn a deaf ear to requests coming from local town and village boards and town and village health officers for coöperation in matters of sewage or water supply or for advice and guidance where community health was involved.

Our methods and the nature of our routine sanitation visits have been fully discussed in the reports of former years. We shall deal only, and briefly, with the improvement in sewage that has taken place in Sullivan County, and with the changed sanitation status in Rensselaer County and in New London County, and devote a word to sanitation publicity.

SULLIVAN COUNTY—NEW YORK: A striking, almost revolutionary, change in sewage disposal has taken place in the Neversink, Fallsburgh and Kiamesha sections. Heretofore it had been the universal procedure to drain all sewage directly or indirectly into streams, lakes, ponds and other water courses. We bitterly fought this pollution evil, and for years we fought almost alone. Scant support came from the local town and health boards. But we kept on pounding away, teaching and educating the farm boardinghouse owners, with the result that during 1931 almost half of the large farm boarding places in the Neversink Valley began the installation of scientifically approved sewage systems which will adequately safeguard the purity of the streams of this beautiful mountain region.

RENSSELAER COUNTY—NEW YORK: We made special effort to reach the outlying sections where many of the farms are still served by the primitive bucket well and outside privy. We convinced many owners that running water for kitchen use can be easily and inexpensively installed, that the equipment of the farm house with inside toilet and bathroom was within the reach of even the modestly circumstanced farmer. At practically every farm, instruction was also given in cleaner dairy methods.

NEW LONDON COUNTY—CONNECTICUT: In the sections in which we worked in past years, progress is plainly discernible in the care given to screening, garbage disposal, upkeep of yards, lawns and premises. Many Jewish farmers have premises that are admirably well kept. But sewage disposal advance has not kept apace. Some of the old type cesspools now refuse to func-

tion and sewage overflow has become a problem. To solve this will demand further teaching and more labor.

SANITATION PUBLICITY: In no previous year did we deliver so large a number of sanitation and public health talks. We addressed farmers' meetings, meetings held under the auspices of Farm Bureaus, Home Bureaus, Dairymen's League and Grange. We delivered lectures at village and town boards, county medical societies, health associations and business men's clubs, Masonic, Elks, Oddfellow and Bnai Brith Lodges. We spoke before 87 groups composed of summer guests. Through this propaganda we were enabled to spread the gospel of higher sanitation and better rural living to over 10,000 people.

FARM EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT.

With no improvement in economic and agricultural conditions, the demand for farm labor was unusually small this year. Low agricultural prices compelled many farmers to get along without extra help. Unemployment was so widespread that plenty of local help was available. Such help could be hired by the day instead of by the month or season, without the responsibility on the part of the farmer to furnish room and board. Many farmers' children who had lost their city jobs went back to the farm. There was therefore little occasion for the farmer to draw upon the city for help.

These conditions made it exceedingly difficult to find jobs for the many who applied to us, and practically shut the door to unskilled farm labor. We found positions for 188 men during the year. Of these, 81 were beginners, 30 were students of agricultural schools in this country or abroad, 49 had been placed by us in former years, and the rest had had some farm experience. Our total placements since the establishment of this department now number 17,248, covering 32 states.

Farm labor offers little inducement. True, it is a healthful and useful occupation. But the work is hard, the hours are long, and the pay is small. It holds no attraction except for the person desirous of making farming his permanent pursuit. We never looked upon farm work as an end in itself, but rather as a means



of training for the better paying farm jobs or for farm ownership. It is the educational factor of a farm apprenticeship upon which we lay stress.

BRANCH OFFICES.

WESTERN OFFICE: This office has just rounded out its twentieth year. It is located in Chicago and serves the middlewestern states. The bulk of its work is centered in Michigan and Ohio, but from time to time trips must be made to Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and other states. Within its territory are situated the big cities of Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati and St. Louis, which must on occasions be visited to reach the farm seekers among their large Jewish populations.

In company with our local staff, our Assistant Manager made a tour of the most important sections last fall. He reported that these regions were harder hit by economic conditions than Jewish farm districts in the east; that unemployment in the cities was widespread; that buying power was low; that truck crops were so cheap that some were not even marketed; that fruit remained unpicked on the trees; that unprecedentedly hot weather during the summer and fall months had dried up bushes, baked fruit vines, ripened grapes, peaches and other fruits prematurely, flooding the market and driving down prices; that withal, our farmers were displaying a fighting spirit and were holding on with tenacity and determination.

The farmers are studying their situation more than ever, realizing that improvement can come only through economical and efficient production and marketing. They are strengthening their coöperatives and diversifying their farm production. They are more responsive to advice. It is all the more to be regretted that we are not able to place out-and-out extension workers in the field, instead of relegating the work to a minor position to be performed spasmodically and to the extent only that our other duties permit. As a result of this lack, and because our staff was already overburdened, fewer educational meetings were held, this, too, at a time when we could draw less upon the state extension agencies. Some of these were, because of reduced appropriations, in the same position as we were.

This office received 259 applications, 77 of which totalling \$33,880 were granted. In the furtherance of their duties our men made 950 investigations of various characters, held 564 consultations, and conducted 15 farm fora. Because the National Council of Jewish Women withdrew from this territory, some of the problems which it had been accustomed to handle were laid on our doorstep.

PHILADELPHIA OFFICE: The jurisdiction of this office extends over New Jersey, except the sections contiguous to New York City, Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware. Occasionally excursion is made into Maryland.

This office considered 137 applications for loan and farm settlement, 614 investigations were conducted and farm appraisals made. 54 loans aggregating \$17,200 were granted. Educational work was carried on under the direction of the home office and is covered by the report of the Extension Department.

Generally speaking, agricultural production was high but markets were demoralized and the net result of the year's operations was very disappointing. Fortunately, most of our farmers raise poultry either as a major enterprise or as a side line. While the price of poultry products was low, feed costs were likewise low and the small margin of profit was a redeeming feature of a critical situation. Perhaps that was why comparatively few of our borrowers in this territory were in default in interest payments to the Society.

Located within the area covered by this branch is the well known agro-industrial community of Woodbine, founded by the Baron de Hirsch Fund in 1891. Within the last decade an agricultural awakening seems to have taken place there. This was fostered by our Philadelphia branch and encouraged by the Baron de Hirsch Fund. More land has been cleared, modern farm buildings have been erected, new farmers have been established, an active coöperative has been organized, and Woodbine has developed into what is perhaps the largest poultry center in a poultry county.

ULSTER-SULLIVAN OFFICE: This branch, with headquarters in Ellenville, New York, is located in the center of a district which contains probably the densest rural population in the

country. Its clientele is not wholly agricultural, but a sizable amount of dairying, poultry raising, fruit and vegetable growing, is being conducted and there are possibilities of further development.

As might be expected, this section passed through a trying year. A short boarding season and low rates drove down the already low prices of all farm products. The summer season, with its rise in milk prices, had always been a reliance for the mountain dairy farmers, but a milk war waged by competing companies cut prices 40% or more.

There is a growing realization, brought about no doubt by our constant campaigning, that there is a community of interest between hotel keeping and farming, that these two industries are so interrelated that the welfare of the one affects the welfare of the other. A spirit of coöperation is developing which we trust will redound to the benefit of both groups. At the last annual convention of the Federation of Hotelmen's Association, a resolution was adopted which not only urged the hotel men to patronize local farmers, but also to inform them of the hotels' requirements, so that farmers might produce crops of the type, quantity and quality needed for the hotels' tables.

During the course of the year, this branch handled, either in person or by correspondence, 292 applications for loans and farm settlement; 73 loans aggregating \$30,850 were granted. This is the smallest aggregate in ten years. It compares with \$43,700 in loan grants last year and \$52,626 in 1929, and represents less than 17% of that for which application was made. This sharp drop is due solely to the low state of our treasury. Applications from unalloyed farmers used up most of our resources and we were forced to be extremely conservative in loans to those who combine farming with boarding. For one thing, the former had a single source of income, the latter two. Moreover, the out-and-out farmer comes directly within our scope and must be given the preference. But we feel that a continuation of this policy will mean the loss of a real opportunity to promote farming in districts where farming should be encouraged. The boarding business is not nearly as profitable as it was formerly. Boarding-house keepers, the majority of whom have evolved from farmers, are casting their eyes more and more back on the farm. This is the time to take advantage of their receptive mood.

Despite the decline in loaning operations, this office had a most active year. The 559 investigations of various characters it had to make, mirror its service in but a small way. There is hardly a phase of social, cultural or communal endeavor with which it was not called upon to deal. Improved educational facilities, school transportation, widows' pensions, old-age pensions, adjustment of disputes between employers and employees, composing partnership differences, naturalization—these and a host of other problems claimed its attention.

OTHER SERVICES.

These activities include advice and help on a variegated range of problems affecting farmers.

We kept in intimate touch with cooperative associations. Our Assistant Manager helped obtain charters, attended many meetings and advised along legal and administrative lines. This activity has a two-fold value. Cooperation makes possible financial savings. It also stimulates community spirit.

In the field of fire insurance we kept track of 1491 policies aggregating \$4,272,504, looking after the procurement of the policies, their renewals, mortgage endorsements, ownership transfers, vacancy permits and kindred matters. We aided in the preparation of proofs of loss and helped in the adjustment of 54 fire losses. 3647 notices and letters were sent out by this division.

The business phase of our work required the making of 2675 field investigations to advise farmers and to administer our loans.

We continued our cooperation with the National Council of Jewish Women in its well conceived plan of work among Jewish farm families. As heretofore, we maintained our interest in the religious and communal affairs of farm communities.

Our explorations into the history of early Jewish farm colonies was continued and we completed the record of the frenzied Jewish colonization period of fifty years ago. Two historical sketches will be published next year.

Publicity was carried on as always for the two-fold purpose of bringing the service of the Society to the attention of farm-minded Jews and of acquainting the public, Jewish and non-Jewish, with the existence of a virile Jewish farm movement.

The latter form of publicity aids in dispelling the conception too generally held that Jews are by training, tradition and temperament, unsuited for farm life.

The record of the year's work has been written. We add but a word about the larger implications of our activity. Help to the individual in improving his economic lot and deriving that satisfaction out of living which only contact with nature can bring him, is an end in itself. But above and beyond service to the individual, is service to American Jewry as a body. Active, rugged, tillers of the soil, earning their bread through the labors of their own hands, are a living refutation of that age-old calumny that Jews are incapable or unwilling to engage in arduous productive toil.

I tender thanks—sincere, not perfunctory—to our President and to the members of our Board of Directors for their wholehearted support and encouragement. Our Assistant Manager and the members of our staff deserve words of praise for their diligence and devotion.

Respectfully submitted,

GABRIEL DAVIDSON,
General Manager.

December 31st, 1931.

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