The Civil Rights Law

Of late years, various hotel-keepers have advertised extensively in the newspapers and through circulars, and by means of other publications that Jews or Hebrews are not acceptable as guests; that Hebrew patronage is not solicited or desired. Railroad companies and steamboat companies have issued folders in which appeared similar advertisements of various hotel-keepers.

There has been a growing sentiment on the part of many Jews that such discrimination and especially public advertisement of it, is not only a contemptible and bigoted practice, but also that it is actually an infringement on civil rights.

Your Committee, therefore, advocated the passage in the legislature of the State of New York of an amendment to the Civil Rights Law of the State, explicitly prohibiting such discrimination and providing penalties for its practice.

This amendment was passed by the Legislature, and became a law on September 1, 1913.

It provides that all persons within the jurisdiction of the State of New York shall be entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages and privileges of any place of public accommodation, resort or amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons. A place of public accommodation, within the meaning of this law, includes any inn, tavern or hotel, whether conducted for the entertainment of transient guests or for the accommodation of those seeking health, recreation or rest, any restaurant, eating-house, public conveyance on land, or water, bath-house, barber-shop, theater or music hall. The act prohibits the owner of any such place from denying to any persons any of the accommodations thereof, and from publishing, circulating, issuing, displaying, posting or mailing any written or printed communications, advantages and privileges of any such place shall be refused, withheld from or denied to any person on account of race, creed, or color, or that the patronage or custom thereat of any person belonging to or purporting to be of any particular race, creed or color, is unwelcome, objectionable or not acceptable, desired or solicited.

This legislation was urged in the interest of the equality of all citizens before the law, and for the purpose of placing upon the statute books of the State of New York a declaration as emphatic as it could be made, that these manifestations of prejudice against law-abiding citizens would not be tolerated.