

you do not necessarily agree with the writer, must have come as a shock to your readers.

PEGGY BRITTEN.

The Editor, *The Black Sash*.

#### WHO KNOWS THE SASH IN LONDON?

Sitting in a bus last week, I found myself next to a black man who looked to me very much as if he might be a fellow South African. So I took out my Black Sash Diary, and holding the cover so that he could see it, looked at my non-existent appointments within! The reaction came at once: "You are from South Africa?" "Yes, are you?" "No, I am from Ghana." "Do you then know about the Black Sash?" "O yes, I am very interested in South Africa and have read about this women's movement." We exchanged addresses and soon met in our flat to spend an evening together. He is at present an advanced student here. He is most intelligent and alert, and we spent a very interesting evening discussing South African and Ghanaian problems. As a result of his knowledge of what the Black Sash stood for, he was quite prepared to talk without any reservations, even being exceedingly critical of the present rule in Ghana. We all felt that the sincere desire to find an honest solution for racial problems facing us was a warm human bond which no racialists would be able to break because it was woven from an urge in the human race to approach problems truthfully and with an open mind. Afterwards I received from him a most charming note, the keynote of which was hope and joy at meeting South Africans (especially of Boer descent, he said) who are trying to win the confidence of the Coloured races and to influence the leaders among them. He expressed the hope that in due course the solution of the racial problem will come from "soberminded, civilised, broad-minded and genuinely sincere people rather than from the rough, narrowminded fanatics and obscurantists in either camp!" A sane approach indeed!

ANNA MARAIS.

The Editor, *The Black Sash*.

Some time ago I asked you to reprint a most excellent article which appeared in your issue of July, 1957, on the Refugee Camps in the Anglo-Boer War. I was deeply disappointed when told that was impossible as from my experience such statements of fact should be made publicly again and again to counteract the malicious fables on the subject which circulate freely in the country.

Since writing I have been so fortunate as to meet two persons who knew these camps from the inside. One was an old gentleman who had no complaint whatever against the camps as he was comfortable and well treated. The other was younger and a woman. She was in the camps as a child with her mother, and said "those tales of ill-treatment are all lies. We were very happy in the camp. I was only a child, seven or eight years old, and I had a lovely time." She repeated, "I had a lovely time." And she added that that was why she and her friend (an Afrikaner lady who introduced me) hated the Nats. so because they were deliberately disseminating falsehoods to serve their own

political purposes. The "powdered glass" we are told was administered to those "unfortunate women and children" was Epsom (or other) medicinal salts with which the veld farmer's wife was then unfamiliar.

Other evidence I have had since from an old gentleman who fought in the British Army. He became friendly with a family who were interned, the man as a prisoner of war, and he had nothing to say against his treatment. His wife and children, so they said themselves, were simply starving when taken in. She was given a large tent for herself and her children and she was allowed to cook her own food. In a short time they were plump and healthy and had nothing but gratitude for the kindly way they were taken care of.

But it is slow work overtaking a lie.

G. E. DEWAR.

*The Editor apologises for an incorrect assumption in a letter headed "A Saner Franchise" in our June/July magazine. The writer wished to say, "The voluntary and purposeful disbandment of all the political parties opposed to the Nationalists might create an alignment of Nationalist Party versus the rest of South Africa." And later, "An improvement might be to impose a standard qualification for white and non-white. No non-white voting should be allowed without an essential precaution."*

## GEMS FROM HANSARD

DR. VAN NIEROP: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Government for the change which was made in the ceremony of the opening of Parliament. . . . I just wanted to draw your attention briefly to the position we had in South Africa 20 years ago. There are members in the House who did not attend that ceremony because in our opinion it was un-South African. . . . But with the last opening of Parliament it became possible for all members of Parliament to do so, because the South African anthem only was played and only the South African flag was flown. . . . We therefore want to express our gratitude, on behalf of the people of South Africa, for the fact that the Government has now made it possible for us to attend the opening of Parliament.

MR. LAWRENCE: Now that the hon. member for Mossel Bay (Dr. van Nierop) has raised the question of the amenities at the opening ceremony, may I remind him that, whereas according to him there was a time when many members could not attend this opening ceremony for the reasons he gave, at present many members find themselves in this difficulty, that they cannot attend the opening ceremony because there is no room for them, because there are too many Senators!

—(Hansard, 1958 p. 1063-1064).