

THE BLACK SASH

DIE SWART SERP

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Die Geheim Van Ons Krag

„In stil-wees en vertrouwe bestaan julle krag.”

—Jesaja. Hoofstuk 30: vers 15.

DIE Swart Serp-beweging het hierdie woorde uit die Heilige Skrif as 'n teks, as 'n geloofsverklaring, aanvaar, en hulle dien as grondslag vir die wyse waarop ons ons sake verrig.

Hoewel die Swart Serp grotendeels op publisiteit staatmaak om sy planne te bevorder—hy sou nutteloos wees as niemand van sy bestaan bewus was nie—is die gewone reklame-metodes, met die lawaai wat daarmee gepaard gaan, vermy. Hy het 'n edele doel wanneer hy die regering en sy handlangers daaraan herinner dat hul plig in die opbou van 'n volk bestaan en nie in die vernietiging daarvan nie, en in hierdie verband is die reklamemetodes van die sakewêreld beslis onvanpas. Bowendien het die oorgrote meerderheid van die vroue wat by ons beweging aangesluit het, dit slegs na rype oorweging—en soms met 'n mate van teensin—gedoen. Hulle is terughoudend; hulle het 'n afkeer van die kalklig. Hulle werk vir die Swart Serp slegs omdat hulle nie kans sien om die vernietiging van 'n volk te aanskou sonder om 'n vinger te verroer nie. Met lede van hierdie kaliber is 'n trompetgeskal ondenkbaar. Die erns wat die vroue van die Swart Serp saamsnoer blyk uit die plegtigheid van ons metodes. Die roubetoging is uiters paslik as 'n gebaar van vroue wat in hierdie diepe erns optree.

The Secret Of Our Strength

“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

—Isaiah. Chap. 30: Verse 15.

THE Black Sash movement has adopted these words from the Bible as a text, as a statement of faith, and we think that they express something that is fundamental to the way in which we go about our business.

Although the Black Sash relies largely on publicity to further its aims—it would be pointless if nobody knew anything about it—the ordinary methods of claiming attention, which generally entail making a noise, have been avoided. For one thing, the Black Sash has a high moral purpose in attempting to remind the Government and its followers of their duty to build a nation instead of destroying one, and in this context many of the publicity devices which are natural enough in the commercial world would be out of place. Moreover, the vast majority of women who have joined our movement have done so only after a great deal of thought, and, in many cases, with some reluctance. They don't want to be in the public eye; they don't want to push themselves forward; they detest the limelight. They are only working for the Black Sash because they feel they cannot stand aside and see the nation torn in two without lifting a finger to stop it. With this kind of membership the band-wagon approach to our work would be unthinkable. The real seriousness

Laat ons egter nie te waardig word i.v.m. ons metodes nie. Die stigters van die Swart Serp het besef dat stilte moontlik die sterkste wapen sou wees in 'n wêreld wat grotendeels aan lawaai oorgegee is, en hulle was reg. Hulle het mensekennis besit, en hierdie mensekennis het wonderwerke verrig. Die stille erns van die betogings het uit die staanspoor aandag gedwing, en dit bly aangrypend. Die toneel van 'n halfdosyn vroue met swart serpe, wat botstil staan met oë grond-toe gerig, bly steeds aandoenlik en gedagteprikkelend vir diegene wat dit sien. Met ander woorde is bewys gelewer dat die krag van die beweging inderdaad in stil-wees bestaan.

Boonop was dit irriterend vir diegene wat die Swart Serp wou irriteer. Hul gewete is teen wil en dank geprikkel. Ministers het hulle vererg oor die alomteenwoordigheid van lede van die beweging—presies wat die Swart Serp beoog het. Stille betogings—soveel meer doeltreffend as die uitjouery en geweld wat politieke aangeleenthede gewoonlik kenmerk—het hulle laat sweet. As bewys hiervan kan mens die reaksie van die alledaagse Nasionalis sowel as die ministers aanvoel. In ligsinnigheid het hulle toevlug geneem om hul onrustigheid te probeer verberg. Ministers het agter flou grappies, hul handlangers agter uitjouery, probeer skuil—uitjouery wat alhoemeer plat geword het namate die geweteprikkeling toegeneem het. Ons moet hulle nie veroordeel nie; dit is maar die gewone reaksie van die persoon wat onseker van sy saak is. Dit was egter treffende bewys van die doeltreffendheid van ons optrede.

Ten laaste moet ons aan die meer algemene betekenis van die woorde in Jesaja aandag skenk. Hulle konstateer 'n waarheid waarvan ons almal bewus is, hoewel ons dit nie altyd kan toepas nie. Die woord „vertroue” beteken in hierdie verband 'n innerlike sekerheid dat mens se oortuigings juis is. Dis iets wat die denkende mens nie dikwels besit nie, maar wat des te kragtiger is wanneer hy daarvan bewus word. En wanneer hierdie sekerheid hom in die bewussyn vestig, soos dit by lede van die Swart Serp gebeur het, kom daar 'n geweldige toename kan krag. Stilwees en vertroue skep nie alleen krag nie; hulle is terselfdertyd die vrugte van innerlike krag.

of purpose that brings women to the Black Sash is reflected in the seriousness, even solemnity of our methods. The silent vigil is completely appropriate as a demonstration by people who are in that mood of earnestness.

But let us not be too pompous about this matter of our methods. The founders of the Black Sash also realised that, in a world largely given over to noise, quietness might be the most telling way of capturing attention. And they have been proved right. There was more than a touch of worldly wisdom here, and it has been shown to work wonders. What captured the imagination of the public at the beginning and still holds their attention is the quiet seriousness of the protests. The sight of half-a-dozen women wearing black sashes and standing motionless with downcast eyes in rain or heat was uncommonly impressive, and it must always be moving and thought-provoking to the most casual passer-by. In other words, quietness was showing itself to be, in a very real sense, the strength of the movement.

It was also, let us face it, irritating in a quarter which the Black Sash was determined to irritate. Here was the still, small voice of conscience made visible. Cabinet ministers were annoyed to find themselves constantly confronted by Black Sash women, which was exactly what the Black Sash intended. The silent protest, so much more effective than the jeer, the heckling or the violence that are the more common ways of making your presence felt in political circles, was getting under their skins. If proof of this were needed, it could be found in the reaction, not only of Cabinet Ministers, but of the ordinary Nationalist rank and file. They took refuge in uneasy attempts to make light of the Black Sash, which is a perfectly normal reaction of people who have been disturbed more than they care to admit. Ministers tried to escape with a half-hearted joke about the women on vigil; the ordinary Nationalist in the crowd resorted to ridicule and abuse, increasing in vulgarity the more their consciences were pricked. They are not to be blamed. They are only doing what we all do when we are uneasy in our minds. But they were proving the value of our methods.

Finally, to return to the more general meaning of the words in Isaiah. They state a truth

DIE GEWIGTIGE KRUISIE

DAAR is in Suid-Afrika omtrent 14 miljoen mense en omtrent 1½ miljoen kiesers.

Die Regering, wat die wette maak, wat deur die hele 14 miljoen gehoorsaam moet word, word gekies deur 1½ miljoen mense. U stem beslis dus die lot van 14

— d.w.s. omtrent 9 mense. Eén van die mense is uself, 1½ één is 'n blanke kind en 7 is nie-blankes, wat geen seggenskap in die Regering het nie, behalwe dat hulle saam 3 blanke verteenwoordigers in die Volksraad kies.

Hierdie syfers is nie heeltemal juis nie, want die stem van die kieser op die platteland is meer werd as die van kieser in die stedelike afdeling en die stem van die kieser in S.W.A. is meer as driekeer soveel werd as die van enigeen in die Unie.

Maar hoe dit ook sy, die verantwoordelikheid wat op elke kieser rus is ontsaglik—dit laat 'n mens stilstaan en dink.

Vra uself die volgende vrae, want binne enkele weke staan ons voor 'n algemene verkiesing en rus daardie verantwoordelikheid op die skouers van elkeen van ons, wat die voorreg geniet om 'n kruisie op 'n stembriefie te mag sit.

1. Weet ek genoeg van die politieke beleid van al die partye, wat kandidate gaan stel?

2. Bestudeer ek daardie beleid met my verstand of stem ek volgens pure gevoel?

3. Is ek gereed om die beleid van die party, waarvoor ek stem, teenoor die stemlose nie-blanke uit te lê en te regverdig?

4. Sorg my party vir besprekings met nie-blanke leiers omtrent die wette wat hulle almal sal moet gehoorsaam?

5. Weet ek of die 11 miljoen nie-blankes daardie beleid goedkeur en dat daar dus vrede en voorspoed in die land sal wees?

6. As die stemlose nie-blankes die beleid van my party nie goedkeur nie, aanvaar ek dat die Regering die beleid op hulle sal moet afdwing selfs al kos dit geweld en bloedstorting en dus agteruitgang?

7. Probeer ek persoonlik om genoeg omtrent landsake en wêreldsake te leer om my party se beleid te help beïnvloed?

8. Onthou ek dat Suid-Afrika 'n deel is van die Wêreld en hom moet aanpas by wêreldrigtings?

9. Watter gevolge sal die beleid van my party hê op die brood-en-botter probleme van almal?

10. Watter toestande sal my party se beleid skep vir die toekoms van my kinders?

Ons moet probeer om op hierdie vrae eerlike antwoorde te gee en die hele vraagstuk van die verkiesing diep en ernstig te beskou.

As daar onluste in die lokasies plaasvind, as daar moeilikheid kom onder die werkers, as die buiteland

Suid-Afrika vermy as beleggingsterrein, as daar onregverdigte wetgewing aangeneem word—dan rus die skuld op al die bevoorregte mense, wat die reg het om te stem. Hulle het òf glad nie gestem nie en dus uit slapheid of vrees hul plig versuim, òf hulle het vir 'n onverstandige beleid gestem, of hulle het nie ywerig genoeg gewerk om genoeg ander kiesers te oortuig van die wysheid van hul gekose beleid nie; m.a.w. hulle het tekortgekom in hul plig teenoor hul land en het die stemreg nie met genoeg wysheid en genoeg doeltreffendheid uitgeoefen nie.

Of sou dit miskien moontlik wees dat ons blanke Suid-Afrikaanse kiesers sal moet erken dat ons nie bedeel is met bo-menslike kennis en wysheid nie en dat dit dus vir ons moeilik, indien nie onmoontlik is nie, om te besluit wat die toekoms moet inhou vir elf miljoen mense wie se menings ons nie eers probeer uitvind nie?

Sou dit kan wees dat die verantwoordelikheid om so 'n gewigtige kruisie op 'n stembrief te teken te groot is vir ons en dat ons 'n plan moet maak om die verantwoordelikheid te deel met meer as net 1½ miljoen uit die 14 miljoen Suid-Afrikansers?

Dis al lankal tyd dat ons diep hieroor nadink en tot verstandige, regverdigte gevolgtrekkings kom, wat dan moedig en met wysheid ten uitvoer gebring moet word. Laat ons kinders ons nie verwyte dat ons te lui, selfsugtig en kortsigtig was „om 'n plan te maak” nie, sodat ons vorentoe kan beweeg en, met behoud van die vrede, die uitdaging van die nuwe toestande in Suid-Afrika en in die wêreld kan aanvaar.

N.G.

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BUT WHAT WILL DR. VERWOERD SAY?

EDITORIAL (Continued)

of which we are all aware, although we cannot always put it into practice. The word “confidence” in this case, of course, means an inward knowledge of the rightness of one's convictions, which is something that does not come easily or often to thinking people, but is all the stronger when it does come. And when it does come, as it does to members of the Black Sash, it brings with it an unusual access of strength. This is a two-way traffic. Quietness and confidence not only produce strength in themselves, but they are also the result of possessing strength.

WHY I LEFT SOUTH AFRICA

By MARIE DEELMAN

(The author and her husband are South Africans; both come from families with their roots deep in South African history and both love this country deeply. The decision they took was a painful one. We ask our readers, when they have read this article, to ask themselves the question, "Do I follow the same course, which, in its way, is a courageous one, or do I stay and fight for an improvement in the moral climate of my country? If the latter, what am I doing about it?")

WE have been living in England for three years now, and I would not easily return to South Africa. I deeply love the country where I was born, particularly the Cape, where my father's people came from, and where we lived for the last nine years before we left. I feel hurt, and angry, at the thought of what has been going on in South Africa; things which made it imperative to leave for our conscience's sake, and which have made it impossible, morally, for us to return.

These things have many aspects, but the over-riding reason for our leaving is the fundamental inhumanity, the extraordinary mental arrogance, of those South Africans who have the good fortune to have been born with white skins. One would take it to be an acquired virtue, rather than sheer chance, that they are so privileged, and the worst feature is that it permeates practically the whole white population, irrespective of party allegiances. We are all guilty of it in greater or lesser degree.

Apart from this point, though arising partly from it, there are the policies of the Nationalist Government, which we find utterly repugnant, and there is the question of increasing violence and gangsterdom impinging more and more on all your lives. The whole situation is such that I simply do not want my children to grow up in the moral climate at present prevailing in South Africa.

Too Late for Goodwill?

Though no one actually mentioned to us the saying about rats leaving a sinking ship, I am sure many of our acquaintances thought it of us. They did talk about the need for people of goodwill to try to help the position. Our answer is profoundly depressing, but it is a conclusion which we have been unable to escape, and which has only been arrived at after long and painful thought. It is too late for goodwill; we have passed the time when the hand of friendship should have been held out to the African, and by so doing have forfeited our right to a stake in the country. What André Siegfried calls "the rising tide of colour" can not now be stemmed by any Canute-like manoeuvres, and the harm that has been done will have inescapable consequences. Overseas writers have spoken of our guilt-complex (as a characteristic of our nation, meaning the European portion of it.) Well, we had it, and we knew we had it, and from the point of view of peace of mind it has been well worth while exchanging your delightful physical cli-

mate for this somewhat depressing one. Our present spiritual climate more than makes up for it, and indeed when I visited South Africa a year ago, I sensed an almost palpable tension from the moment I landed in Johannesburg. It was like assuming an invisible burden, and to shed it on returning to England gave one an indescribable lift of the spirit.

Where Nationalist party policies are concerned, consternation is a mild word for our feelings at the various bits of news as they filter through. The manoeuvring over the constitution, the childish boasting and showing-off when so-called success was achieved (or, indeed, at any political point scored); the inhumane Bantu Education Act; the church worship limitations, the tampering with mother-tongue education (we ourselves are an Afrikaans-English combination); the gratuitously insulting way in which the flag question and the playing of the British National Anthem were handled—all these things have caused wry laughter as well as righteous indignation in England, and we personally have a kind of fascinated, horrified "What next?" feeling whenever we see a South African newspaper. (We get two regularly, one in each language.)

Change of Government Not The Answer

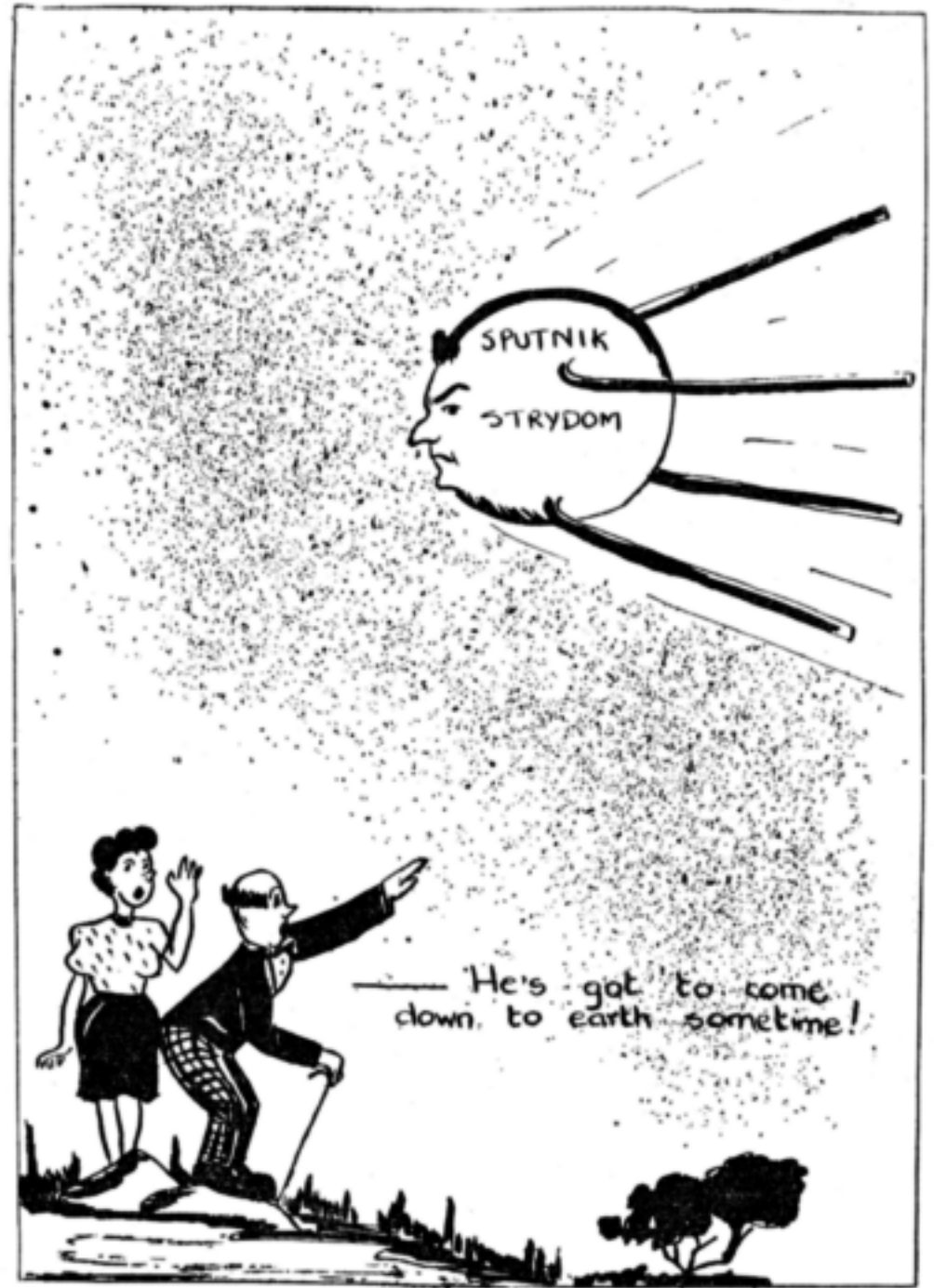
The problem is that if we accept the premise that white South Africa is fundamentally unjust, we cannot regard the replacement of the Nationalist by the United Party with any particular optimism. Nothing that has been said by any politician of either main party has given any indication of a change in outlook; nor, we believe, do the majority of you view with any pleasure the possibility of a new, really fair deal for the African. It would mean a drop in your standard of living, and **while no one in a responsible job fears competition in his own field from the African for many years to come, yet there are obviously many who do in fact only hold their place in the social strata by reason of their white skins.** These may well fear the intelligence and quickness to learn of the more advanced African, and indeed if they were living in Europe, they would, equally, find life a lot tougher. There has been a major, if unwillingly recognised, revolution in England, and the hitherto privileged classes are struggling for very existence. They disliked it, naturally, but they are learning to adjust themselves, and beginning to compete again in terms of present conditions. The same sort of thing, with different participants, will come in South Africa. The white-skinned aristocrat will be the sufferer, and one can scarcely blame him for trying to arrest things now, while power is still in his hands. What he forgets is that putting a lid on a volcano can only work for so long, and the tighter he tries to clamp it down, the worse the eventual explosion.

Two more things, perhaps, need saying. One is that people in England, and ourselves in particular, have followed with admiration the activities of the Black Sash women. Whether your work has had any

significant penetrative result is difficult for us to judge from here, but surely the cumulative effect will become more and more apparent as time goes on. We hope so, and wish you well.

English Attitudes to the Union

My final point concerns the attitude of English people to South Africa, particularly the Press. We read, perhaps, amongst the more responsible of the newspapers, but we have found most comment on South Africa to be fair, well-informed and objective. We simply have not seen the unfair criticisms certain of your politicians moan about so often. With ordinary folk, who know nothing about Africa, one finds curious misapprehensions and inconsistencies. But they literally cannot envisage a state of affairs where two sorts of buses, two sorts of benches, two sides of a counter are necessary to carry on the daily business of life, although your African servant can cook your food and bring up your child. Such interference with personal liberty is inconceivable to them. On the other hand they have very little idea of just how backward and how primitive large numbers of Africans still are, for they judge them by the ones who come over here for their education. They do not, however, judge white South Africa harshly. They nearly always say something like this: "You must have difficulties we simply do not understand, and we'd rather not express any opinion as to whether you are handling things rightly or wrongly." But always, there is very great interest in African problems. My husband has given many talks on various aspects of the country we abandoned, and is still being asked to address bodies like Toc H, Rotarians, Y.M.C.A., Soroptimists, women's clubs and schools. In other words, it is recognised here that the problem in South Africa is one of the most pressing, and the most important, in the world today.



THREADS FROM THE SASH

A very pleasant surprise packet has reached us from the **Lowveld**. It contained two cheques, both earmarked for the Magazine. The one of £5 is from an anonymous well-wisher overseas, to whom the Magazine is sent regularly and who considers it "a most admirable publication." The second, of £25, is a donation from the Region and represents the first instalment of profits made on Lowveld's book-marks. It is with great restraint that we refrain from printing this item in letters two-inches high!

* * *

In December a well-attended meeting was held at **Stutterheim, Cape**, when Mrs. D. Curry, Regional Chair of Border, and two Regional Executive members came from East London to address members. There was also an excellent turn out of members from Kei Road. After Mrs. Brundie, of Stutterheim, had opened the meeting with the Black Sash prayer, Margaret Pollock addressed the meeting on "Education" and Moira Thompson on "Job Reservation." Altogether a stimulating event.

Demonstrations took place in many parts of the country to mark the opening of Parliament last month. As was fitting, the demonstration arranged by **Cape Western** was particularly spectacular. More than 150 members stood shoulder to shoulder along the centre-islands in Adderley Street, some of them bearing placards, while the centre-piece of a float mounted on a lorry was prominently displayed at the Government Avenue gates of Parliament during the lunch hour (Picture elsewhere in this issue).

* * *

The visit of Mrs. Petersen and Mrs. Spottiswoode, from Cape Western, to the **Cape Midlands** Region in November was a heartening success and left members with a renewed determination to carry on, whatever the difficulties. Those areas where numbers are small have a right to expect help and encouragement from the larger Regions and this is an excellent example of how it can best be given.

OUR DUAL INHERITANCE

The British Heritage In South Africa

1.—The Fundamental Freedoms

(South Africans seldom pause and give thought to the fact that it is their great good fortune to have inherited much in their present way of life from two great streams of culture. This is the first of three articles by MARGARET KANNEMEYER on the British Heritage and at the end of this series a similar three articles will be published on the great contribution of the Afrikaner peoples to the history of South Africa.)

PEOPLE who belong to a mixed nation, as we South Africans do, have the good fortune to be heirs to more than one stream of tradition, and so our lives are—or should be—enriched beyond the ordinary by the human wealth that has been handed down to us. Whether as individuals we come of mixed descent, or regard ourselves as exclusively English or Afrikaans South Africans, the two currents of European influence stemming from England and the Netherlands are blended into the lives of every one of us. If we are to use our unusually broad national endowment as fully as possible, we must take stock of ourselves, and of our country's past, and try to understand the importance of the beliefs and the institutions to which we have been born. Only if we remember why our heritage is valuable, shall we be able to defend it, and develop it worthily.

What, then, have people of English descent given to South Africa? Cricket, of course; and a place in the British Commonwealth. But their three greatest contributions have been, I believe, the winning of freedom of speech and of the press, and the establishment of parliamentary government; the growth of an indigenous South African literature in English; and the commercial and economic development of the country's resources.

When Britain first occupied the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, the original founders of the settlement, the Dutch East India Company, and the Dutch state, had virtually ceased to exist. The Company had ruled despotically, by proclamation, through a Governor and a council of officials. Almost the only administrative change which British rule brought at first was that the Governor ruled without a council. With a civil service and a legal system inherited from the old regime, his power was virtually absolute.

The predominantly Dutch civilian population over whom the Governor ruled had always been accustomed to an arbitrary system. Those who disliked it moved away, trekking beyond the frontier. The British occupation brought British immigrants. These new South Africans were settlers in the true sense, who came to establish permanent homes; and when conditions did not please them they did not leave, but set to work with determination to change their environment, and bring it closer to their ideal.

Dignity of the Individual

The most precious thing these Englishmen brought to South Africa was a belief in the dignity of the

individual human being, a conviction that all men, being equal in the sight of God, must be equal also before the Law. During the first half of the nineteenth century they fought a long-drawn but victorious battle to secure for themselves and all South Africans the three fundamentals of liberty, the freedom of the press, the right to hold public meetings, and the privilege of being ruled by a parliamentary government on the Westminster model.

It was a shock to Englishmen of the Age of Reform to find themselves subjects of a British colonial government which denied them these personal freedoms which they regarded as the irreducible minimum.

The first restriction they encountered was that forbidding meetings, no matter how respectable. A gathering at Bathurst in 1821 to protest against an unpopular Landdrost resulted only in its organiser, Thomas Philipps, being deprived of his appointment as a Heemraad. Meetings in Grahamstown and Cape Town to plan assistance for needy families were prevented by Somerset's notorious Proclamation of 24 May, 1822, reminding all South Africans that by "the Ancient Laws and Usages of the Colony" anyone calling or even attending a public assembly not expressly sanctioned by him, was guilty of "a high misdemeanour and is severely punishable for such offence."

In 1825 the same restriction prevented Cape Town's leading citizens from forming a Literary and Scientific Society, because, it appears, the Governor feared it would provide a platform for his old adversaries Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn.

These men, with Greig the printer, were struggling with Somerset for the right to publish newspapers free from government supervision. Lord Charles sought to make the Fiscal censor, and to exclude any discussion of local politics. The journalists refused to accept conditions which made the honest exchange of ideas quite impossible. At last Fairbairn went personally to London when a liberal government came to power, and returned with the guarantee of a Press Ordinance, which was based on English Law, and made printers and publishers answerable only to the law of libel.

When a popular free press was established the political education of the Colony was rapid. Developments in England and the empire were closely watched, and the general trend was towards the abolition of privilege, the widening of the franchise, and colonial independence.

Judicial System

Revision of the English criminal law was directly responsible for the Cape Charter of Justice of 1828, which gave us professional judges, and the jury system. The great Reform Bill of 1832 in Britain



The above float, designed and made by members of the Cape Western Region, made a great impact on Members of Parliament and public alike when it was stationed at the gates of Parliament at the opening of the last session.

led in South Africa to the establishment of a Legislative Council, slave emancipation, and the Local Government Ordinances of 1836, which initiated municipalities. Step by step, South Africa achieved political maturity. Democratic local government paved the way for larger administrative units. From the Road Boards of 1848 spring our modern Divisional Councils. Many religious and educational bodies won autonomy, giving their members experience in the management of affairs. The success in particular of the five-yearly Synods, allowed by the Dutch Reformed Church from 1834, led men to dream and plan for the day when secular affairs could be organised on as wide and representative a basis.

The Legislative Council of nominated members failed because they lacked the confidence of the public. There was constant agitation for its reform, and, in 1848 Sir Harry Smith gave a general permission to hold public meetings, to facilitate the plans going forward to establish fully democratic government. This by chance opened the way to political organisation immediately before the colony was threatened with the immigration of unwanted convicts. The momentous anti-convict agitation which followed, and actually compelled the home government to defer to colonial views, demonstrated beyond all doubt that South Africans were able and ready to manage their own affairs.

In 1854 the Cape was granted a Legislative Assembly, made up of representatives of every dis-

trict, meeting annually; the vote was given on a property qualification, irrespective of race. From the beginning this first South African parliament proved worthy of its great English model, and the tradition which it soon built up provided the ideal which later South African legislatures emulated.

Thus the Dutch colony, in which no civic liberties had been known during the hundred and fifty years of its existence was transformed in the first half century of British rule into a democratically governed country where the individual was assured of his rights, and all men were free to develop to the full their own potentialities, and those of the country itself. The change was not brought about by the British government; it was patiently wrought by South Africans of British origin who believed that their aims were good, and who trusted their successors to uphold their own high standards.

Margaret Kannemeyer.

"One of the main reasons why I left the Nationalist Party is the Government's persistent white-apartheid policy, the object of which is to drive the two white races in this country systematically apart. My credo is that English and Afrikaans-speaking citizens of this country should be building together. Let us give our descendants the heritage which they so richly deserve."—*Tielman Roos.*

Farmers And The Government

IT is all to the good that there should be the widest possible discussion in the "Black Sash" of the problems facing our country. It is, therefore, gratifying to find in the January issue three letters dealing with the article "Farmers and the Government."

That article was intended to present one aspect of the poverty problem. This was appreciated by E.L.S., the writer of the first of those letters. In my opinion, that problem, because of the injustice of poverty in a world of potential plenty, is the most important and urgent problem facing the whole world to-day. Even the United States, which is looked upon as the home of great wealth, has a large number of extremely poor people. An Economic Group of Congress, in 1955, reported that 10 per cent. of the families in the United States had such small incomes that they must live in the direst poverty and that another 12 per cent. were very poor.

But it is in Africa and Asia that the most grinding poverty exists and it is there that the greatest danger is present of the peoples being led to follow the will-of-the-wisp of Russian Communism. That tragedy will be avoided only if the nations of the West solve the problem of poverty each in its own country and so can convince the poverty-stricken masses of Asia and Africa that they come to them as friends and helpers and not as exploiters. What is happening in Indonesia and what was said and done at the Afro-Asian Conference at Cairo ought to be sufficient warning of what is needed.

The problem of poverty could be solved quite simply. The difficulty lies in the apathy of the voters in so-called democratic states and in the opposition of those vested interests which possess the power to exploit the masses. Poverty is caused by our present land system which allows the owner of land, as distinct from the user, to demand a ransom price or rent for permission to use it. The Bible tells us that "The earth is the Lord's" but our law has made it the landlord's. Although he did not make it, it is to him we have to pay for permission to live or work on it. That is true whether we are farmers in the country or workers in the town, in factories, offices, or mines.

It is in the context of that larger issue that the article, "Farmers and the Government," was intended to be considered. Obviously farmers who are on rented land are at the mercy of their landlords. But small farmers even if they own their land free of debt are badly handicapped by our present system, while young men who want to take up farming to-day can, because of the inflated price of land, do so only under a crippling load of debt.

The writers of letters No. 2 and No. 3 probably had in mind these suffering small farmers. It was not with them that that article dealt. Their direct influence with the Government and the Control Boards is not decisive. It is the large landowners, who farm, who exercise immense pressure on those bodies. It is they who use the poor struggling farmer as a stalking horse to get high prices out of

which they will reap huge profits. These large producers, some producing 50,000 bags or more of maize a year, are making fortunes as a result of the prices fixed by the Control Board. The minimum nett profit provided for per bag is ten shillings; for the big farmer it is probably much higher than that. To the small producer, whose output is 100 bags a year or less, the fixed high price means little, but to the 50,000 bags man it means a minimum profit of £25,000 clear.

It is not likely that the writers of the letters would wish to defend such a position. There is, however, another and more serious aspect of the matter that should be considered. As a direct result of the enormous profits which can be made because of those high prices the price of farming land has doubled or trebled. This has put huge fortunes into the pockets of the big landowners. It has given them the power to charge exorbitant rents to their tenants or when they sell land the price is so high that the buyer is crippled financially before he begins to farm on it. Because of this debt or his high rent the small farmer, even with those high prices, finds it hard to make ends meet.

The writer of the third letter uses the stock argument of the big farmers that they "actually subsidised the consumers to the extent of millions of £'s" by having had to sell their produce here at prices lower than those ruling overseas. It is true those prices were higher than ours but it is by no means clear that we could have found buyers at them. The United States had colossal surpluses which it could not sell. But in any event that is beside the point. Our farmers were receiving the benefit of the country's protection and were paying very low wages to their labourers, so that it was inconceivable that any Government in war time would allow food prices to soar to a level which would have meant an even greater degree of malnutrition than we did have. It must be remembered that at the time very stringent measures were taken against shopkeepers to prevent profiteering. Also it is generally forgotten that before the second world war farmers were heavily subsidised at the expense of the consumers. In 1938, producers were guaranteed 8s. a bag for their maize when the world price was much less. In fact, they could get only 5s. 9d. a bag at the coast after they had paid railage to the ports. To make up the difference to the farmers the price to consumers was raised to 12s. a bag.

It was abuse of their powerful influence by the large farmers and the evil effects of that abuse that the article was intended to expose.

F.W.L.

"I do not believe that a single party should try to create a Senate if it can be helped. On the structure of our institutions a single party should decide only when all consultation and co-operation have failed, as happened in connection with the present Senate, in view of Strauss' obstinacy."—"Dawie" in *Die Burger*.

POVERTY AND CRIME

By I. M. ISACOWITZ

I RECEIVED in my post a few days ago a manifesto from an aspirant candidate for parliamentary honours. In this manifesto, he deals with our outstanding problems.

Regarding crime he says—"Bring back the Bobby on the beat." We read our daily press and how do the leaders of our State deal with this vexing problem: they call for harsher sentences, the "cat-o'-nine tails" and death penalties. I consider it a shocking indictment against our society—one which claims to be civilised, enlightened and democratic—that their sole contribution to the solution of this problem takes but two courses: protection and vengeance.

Why has there been no effort to get to the root cause of our dilemma? Why does our government party and our main opposition studiously avoid mention of the nature of the disease? Is it because they are both so busily engaged in their opportunist political pursuits—so involved in their efforts to capture as many European votes as possible—that they are prepared to allow our real, grave and urgent problems to spread malignantly through the body of our society? It is this fear which for years has prevented our main political parties from facing up to our problems squarely and honestly. As a result they almost appear to us today to be insoluble in their immensity and gravity.

Whilst one must admit that in the most well-ordered society one still has crime, and whilst one must also admit that criminals appear from each and every stratum of our society, poverty and all it entails is the largest single contributory factor to crime and the development of criminals.

We have chosen to so build our society, that four-fifths of our urban population, our non-European people, exist on a sub-economic basis—in fact the vast majority are living below the breadline, the minimum subsistence level. Abject poverty has forced a situation upon these people where, in most cases, both parents are required to work all day. This factor has almost completely eliminated parental control, guidance and discipline. It has considerably weakened the family unit, and has gone a long way towards destroying family life—an essential factor in the development of children as responsible members of society. It has also meant that the vast bulk of non-European children are left entirely to their own devices all day long. They have not sufficient educational facilities and have almost no recreational facilities at all.

This poverty has also meant that a very large proportion of our non-European peoples can never afford to marry. This has led to the large number of illegitimate children roaming our streets. Children with no homes, no parents to fend for them or guide them, children totally unwanted by society. They are thrown on to the streets and are required to exist by their wits. To them to steal food and clothing is not a crime against society, but an absolute essential in their struggle for survival.

And what of those non-Europeans who do aspire to emerge from these depths? Every avenue of skilled employment is closed to them. Because they are black, they must forever remain unskilled, or, if they are fortunate, semi-skilled labourers. What does all this add up to? It adds up to poverty, hunger, cold, disease and privation: it adds up to frustration and hatred.

It has led to a complete absence of any feeling of responsibility towards, or respect for, our society, our so-called democratic institutions and ourselves. It has led to a completely different concept of right and wrong. Many, who have grown up in these cruel and bleak conditions, do not consider it wrong to rob, to steal, to assault and to murder. It is from here that we are spewing forth criminals by the hundred. Is the answer more "Bobbies on the beat?" We shall require, in another generation, an enormous army of policemen to protect us. Is the answer the hangman's noose and the "cat"? Has the hangman's noose prevented the committing of murders? Have lashes, ordered by the Minister of Justice for certain crimes, meant the elimination of these crimes? On the contrary, since these harsh measures were introduced, serious crime has become far more acute.

We are witnessing not a crime wave, but the logical development of existing conditions. While protection is necessary and the criminal must receive his just deserts, there is only one way to tackle this problem—we must not only treat the symptom, we must attend to the disease. We must allow these people to emerge from their present sub-economic state, to one of economic sufficiency. We must allow them the opportunity of developing whatever skills they possess. We must allow them the opportunity of owning and renting homes on an economic—not sub-economic basis. We must provide adequate educational, recreational and health facilities. We must allow them to have a direct say in local and national administration and government.

If we do these things, not only will we remove them from their present state of poverty, squalor, disease, hate and frustration, but we will develop in these people a responsibility and a respect for the way of life in which we believe. We will develop in them a desire to participate fully in our society and a desire to assume the responsibilities which flow therefrom.

Should we do these things, we will enter upon an era of racial co-operation, mutual respect and harmony. Should we not follow the course of Christian dictates and common humanity, our lot will be one of fear, hatred, insecurity and distrust. Despite our army of police and our harsh retaliatory measures, we Europeans will become prisoners in our own homes. It is we who will be behind bars and burglar-proofing, fearful for our lives and security.

The situation calls for courage, a keen sense of justice and a desire to face the facts. Have we these qualities to meet the challenge?

FACT AND FICTION

FICTION:

In his New Year message to the people of South Africa, the Prime Minister, Mr. Strydom, gave it as his opinion that relations between the Union's different racial groups had steadily improved in 1957, in spite of efforts by certain individuals and organisations to disturb them and even to stir up animosity against the Union beyond her borders.

FACT:

This is one occasion when we should dearly like to accept the Prime Minister's words as fact, but when we review the political events of 1957, we can, with deep regret, find no basis for his facile optimism. The treason trials alone, which have dragged on for month after weary month in Johannesburg and have brought bitterness and privation to many of the accused and their families, are sufficient proof that the Prime Minister is wrong. If that were not enough, the oppressive Apartheid legislation of the past session, plus many departmental measures, are enough to cause such bitterness in our multi-racial country as may take many years to eradicate, if indeed that is still possible. Does Mr. Strydom really feel that Dr. Verwoerd's Native Laws Amendment Act, against which all the opposition parties fought for many bitter weeks in Parliament, has endeared the white man to his non-White fellow-citizen? Or the Nursing Amendment Act? Or the University Apartheid Bill, not yet an Act of Parliament? Or the difficulties placed in the way of an African advocate, trying to practise in Johannesburg? Or the Group Areas Amendment Act, squeezed through in the dying days of the session? Or job reservation?

These tragedies concern relations between White and non-White. What of those between White and White? Is the Prime Minister so blind that he considers race relations improved by the Flag Act, by the abolition of "The Queen" as a National Anthem, by the constant pinpricks to the English-speaking people of South Africa, or by the flouting of the wishes of the parents of the Hendrik van der Byl and other parallel-medium schools?

This pathetic blindness of the Prime Minister appears to go further. Not only is he content to ignore the tragic consequences of his policy of Apartheid and to make this bland announcement that race relations have steadily improved during the past unhappy year, but he goes further. He condemns the efforts of certain organisations and individuals who have attempted to mend what the Nationalists have broken and to bridge the gulf Apartheid has created. In other words, the greatest fiction of all is that Apartheid is a sacred doctrine, whereas it is only a political slogan, and until that fiction is removed, there can be no hope of better race relations in South Africa.

M.E.F.

FANTASIE EN FEIT

FANTASIE:

In sy Nuwejaarsboodskap aan die volk het mnr. Strydom, die Eerste Minister, die mening uitgespreek dat die verhoudings tussen die Unie se verskeie rasse-groepe verbeter het in weerwil van die pogings wat sekere individue en liggame aangewend het om die verhoudings te verstoer en om vyandigheid teen die Unie buite sy grense aan te wakker.

FEIT:

Dit sou verblydend gewees het as ons die Eerste Minister se mening kon aanvaar. Wanneer ons egter die politieke gebeurtenisse van 1957 in oënskou neem, kan ons tot ons spyt geen regverdiging vir sy optimisme bespeur nie. Maand na maand het die hoogverraadsaak in Johannesburg voortgesleep, met ontbering vir vele van die beskuldigdes en hul gesinne, en hierdie verhoor is op sigself voldoende bewys daarvan dat die Eerste Minister dit mis het. Hartstogtelike bitterheid is verwek, en dit is gaandeweg versterk deur die onderdrukkende wetgewing van die laaste parlamentsitting. Hierdie wetgewing, en die departementele maatreëls wat daarmee gepaard gaan, het so'n mate van teensin in die lewe geroep dat dit kwalik uitgewis kan word. Meen mnr. Strydom nou werklik dat dr. Verwoerd se Wysigingswet op Naturellewette, wat die opposisie wekelank hardnekkig bestry het, die verhouding tussen blankes en nie-blankes verbeter het? Of die Wysigingswet op Verpleegsters? Of die Apartheidwetsontwerp i.v.m. die Universiteite? Of die struikelblokke waarmee 'n nie-blanke advokaat te kampe gehad het toe hy in Johannesburg wou praktiseer? Of die Wysigingswet op Groepsgebiede, wat tydens die doodsnykke van die laaste sitting ingelei is? Of die bepalinge waardeur nie-blankes van sekere nywerheidsbetrekkings uitgesluit word?

Bogenoemde maatreëls raak die verhouding tussen blankes en nie-blankes. Wat nou van die verhouding tussen die twee blanke bevolkingsgroepe? Is die Eerste Minister dan so bevooroordeeld dat hy die Vlagwet as 'n verstewiging van die verhouding beskou? Of die uitskakeling van "The Queen" as 'n volkslied? Of die onophoudelike ergernisse wat Engelssprekendes moet verdra? Of die minagting waarmee die ouers van die Hendrik van der Byl en ander parallelmediumskole behandel word?

Die betreurenswaardige wanbegrippe van die Eerste Minister strek nog verder, want hy bepaal hom nie by sy onverklaarbare aankondiging dat rasseverhoudings verbeter het nie. Hy veroordeel nog boonop die individue en liggame wat streef om te herstel wat die Nasionaliste afgebreek het en om die skeiding te oorbrug wat ten gevolge van Apartheid ontstaan het. Met ander woorde herhaal hy die growwe wanvoorstelling dat Apartheid 'n heilige leer is, terwyl dit in werklikheid slegs 'n politieke slagspreuk is. Tot tyd en wyl hierdie wanvoorstelling uitgeskakel word is daar geen hoop op beter rasseverhoudings in Suid-Afrika nie.

M.E.F.

Southern Transvaal's Christmas Fete

By T. PYBUS and V. TUNBRIDGE
(Convenors)

IT gives us both real pleasure to report that the Southern Transvaal Fête was an unqualified success—and our very grateful thanks go out to all Branches whose hard work and whole-hearted enthusiasm made it so. The nett profit, after deducting all expenses, reached the most gratifying figure of £731.

As many know, the weather was perfect and the setting in Mrs. D. Hill's beautiful garden, so kindly handed over to us for the occasion, could not have been improved upon. The Black Sash turned up in large numbers, not only to work, but to buy.

On the verandah was Mrs. Jean Sinclair's needlework stall. Mrs. Sinclair had put in weeks of hard work at her machine to make the beautiful display of goods she had on sale and her stall netted £220 15s. Our very sincere thanks go to her for her truly magnificent effort.

At the Houghton flower and plant stall the workers took £20. Considering that this was mostly from small 1s. and 2s. sales this result was most gratifying.

The Christmas Fare and Cake section—sponsored by Waverley, Illovo, Hillbrow, Linksfield, Mountain View and Parkview—was a hive of activity until the tables were bare and the large variety of lovely cakes, home-made jams, sweets and mincemeat testified to the enthusiasm with which the job had been tackled. It is not surprising to learn of the substantial sums collected by these Branches—Waverley/Illovo/Hillbrow making £151; Linksfield/Mountain View £70 and Parkview £15. A grand total of £236.

Beyond the cake stall was "Kensington Provisions," where there was an excellent variety of cooked meats, salads, provisions and fresh produce. This stall was also besieged by buyers and resulted in a cleared table and the excellent contribution of £55.

"Teas" were sponsored by Parktown and Sandringham. They had their tables and chairs scattered on the grass, the service was admirable and the teas well patronised by all. They handed in the splendid amount of £23.

On the main lawn Hillbrow ran a White Elephant Stall. Mrs. Rafferty and her helpers had worked non-stop to make their stall a success and bring in the sum of £41 and we feel our special thanks must go to her for her grand effort.

Orange Grove had specialised in Dolls and Christmas Decorations. Weeks of work had gone into the making of the original decorations and dolls' clothes, which were much appreciated by the old and proved fascinating to the young. The goodly sum of £75 was the result!

Distraction and Entertainment was provided for the children by Rosebank and Sandhurst, who put

This South Africa

(Readers are invited to submit contributions to this feature. A prize of 5s. will be awarded each month to the reader submitting the first-mentioned contribution.)

"A senior official of the Education Department said, "It does happen that schools deviate from the syllabus. It is up to the inspectors to control this kind of thing. **The Department does not require a progressive approach to the syllabus by school principals.**"—*The Star*, 23/1/1958. (5s. to Ruth Hall).

"South Africa is generating a white gangsterism as well as a black one, and for much the same reasons. Where economic pressures erode the blacks, moral pressures erode the whites. A fundamental fear of the future washes gullies in both communities."—*Leader in Africa South*, January-March, 1958.

"The Special Branch of the South African Police, which is being formed to deal with contraventions of the Group Areas Act, will possess sweeping powers, including the authority to enter any premises at any time of the day or night, without notice, to get information."—*Rand Daily Mail*, 29/1/1958.

"We believe that the Government knows that its popularity is fast on the wane: that it has nothing more to offer the electorate now that its apartheid policy is sticking in the mud of reality."—*Leader in The Daily Dispatch*, 20/1/1958.

"Cricket has come into existence to provide recreation for the rich British upper class, who never do any work themselves and who are thoroughly bored by the eternal idleness. For the young Afrikaner time is much too precious to go and stand around on the cricket field for three to five days."—"Willem" in the *Volksblad*.

"The Government wants Parliament to approve of the death penalty for armed robbers. But no steps are planned to get to the root causes of the breakdown of respect for the law among the African and other non-White communities."—*Evening Post Comment*, 18/1/1958.

CHRISTMAS FETE (Continued)

on two excellent Puppet Shows, a fishpond, cold drinks and sweets, and in 1s. tickets, sixpenny drinks and penny sweets made the surprisingly large amount of £14 14s.

Craighall did not actually sponsor a stall, but gave us all invaluable help by giving and painting the posters, sending helpers and giving donations. Modderfontein also did not sponsor a stall, but held a private cake sale and sent us the most acceptable donation of £10 10s. as their contribution. Florida and Roodepoort manned the Black Sash Table, where they made £25 selling polish, bookmarkers, etc. Our thanks to them too. Rustenburg must also be thanked for their donations and patronage and Lowveld sent us a lovely box of lavender bags and pot-pourri fresh from their gardens.

Incident At Blouvillei

At Blouvillei in the Cape the sand
And stunted bush go hand in hand,
And Native shelters list and lean
Like men who droop in a shebeen,

Here is a stable, bare and clean,
And on the table a machine
And scraps of cloth and coloured wools,
And knitting needles—these are tools
For education, so I've heard,
And schooling must be registered.
But here twelve children, out of school,
One man, one woman, broke the rule
And called their sewing/knitting class
A cultural club. But here, alas,
Here is the law, and it has seen
Behind the teacher's threadbare screen.

Jeffrey Ntloko gave the room,
Mrs. Sanqela left her broom
To teach, with needles and with wool;
And this policemen deemed a school.
They searched, they took the old machine,

The needles, wool; Jeffrey was seen
In court, and all his guilty tools
Were spread before him with the rules.
Two nights in gaol; then, freedom bought,
Six months he waited for the court
To set him free. The case is done
Jeffrey (who's seventy-six) has won.

At Blouvillei in the Cape the sand
And stunted bush go hand in hand.
The rain comes down to water-log
The flat-lands into one vast bog.
It's cold at Blouvillei, cold and damp,
And nothing much to eat but samp.
But while it rains twelve of the crowd,
Twelve lucky ones, will be allowed
To knit and sew—God sees right through
Skins black, skins brown and pale écru.
He even sees right through the white,
All men being levelled in His sight.
Expatriation there must be,
And after? Pardon makes men free.

EVELYN L. WEST.

REGIONAL CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

BORDER.

- C. Mrs. D. Curry, 3 Carisbrooke Road, Stirling Ext., East London.
- S. Mrs. M. G. Pollock, 106 Devereux Avenue, Vincent, East London.

CAPE EASTERN.

- C. Mrs. A. Pirie, 68 Westview Drive, Port Elizabeth.
- S. Mrs. R. Pearse, 49 Bird Street, Port Elizabeth.

CAPE MIDLANDS.

- C. Mrs. Conroy, Watergift, Box 53, Beaufort West.
- S. Miss Conroy, Watergift, Box 53, Beaufort West.

CAPE NORTHERN.

- Chair: Mrs. M. Owens, 7 Howie Road, West End, Kimberley.
- S. Mrs. B. Buck, 3 Poole Street, Kimberley.

CAPE WESTERN.

- C. Mrs. M. Petersen, Beacon House, Klaassens Road, Wynberg, Cape.
- S. Mrs. Stoy, 1 Kildare Road, Claremont.

LOWVELD.

- C. Mrs. Sandenbergh, Eastry, Plaston, Tvl.
- S. Mrs. B. Tracey, Pleasant Hill, Box 17, White River.

NATAL COASTAL REGION.

- C. Mrs. M. Scott, 16 Chelmsford Road, Durban
- S. Mrs. A. G. Haysom, 28 Ridge Road, Kloof.

NATAL MIDLANDS.

- C. Mrs. M. Corrigan, 306 Alexandra Road, Pietermaritzburg.

NORTHERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. C. M. F. Lang, 91 Manning Street, Colbyn, Pretoria.
- S. Mrs. Wright, 9 Victoria Avenue, Waterkloof, Pretoria.

ORANGE FREE STATE.

- C. Mrs. H. O'Connor, P.O. Box 245, Bloemfontein.
- S. Mrs. R. Kruger, 4 Van Heyningen Street, Bloemfontein.

SOUTH-EASTERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. M. Fourie, Box 222, Springs.
- S. Mrs. E. Gouldie, Marievale Mine, P.O. Marie-shaft, Transvaal.

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. D. Hill, 41 The Valley Road, Westcliff, Johannesburg.
- S. Mrs. W. Grant, 2 Hope Hall, 20 Von Weilligh Street, Johannesburg.