

## THE FLAME OF FREEDOM (Contd.)

paper reporter took her turn to guard the flame, and afterwards wrote about "the experience she would never forget". Although the vigil was for *women only, many men stood beside us, silently registering their protest against the Bill, and signifying their support of the Black Sash.*

Many were the comments we overheard, some irritating, some amusing, some touching. Perhaps the most telling, the most uplifting, was the remark one man made to his little son: "Stand closer, my boy, and have a good look — for this is history!"

### Overheard

"Ag, pleeez, deddy, won't you take us to the Vigil? We want to chuck tomatoes at the Bleck Sesh girls!"

"Constable, arrest that man behind the lamp-post—he's got an egg in his hand!"

"I can't arrest a man because he has an egg in his hand—it might be his lunch!"

"Don't give up until you're Vorster, ladies!"

"The only sign of decency they've shown is to use fresh eggs!"

### SUNDAY NIGHT

Young man, having used all his ammunition:

"Come on, chaps! We've got to go to Church now!"

## Cigarette Lighter



## Why We Have Protested

ON the 12th May, the General Laws Amendment Bill, commonly known as the "Sabotage" Bill, was published, and for a day or two the country considered the implications of its drastic and far-reaching provisions. Then the protests began. In the weeks that have followed, protests have swelled; newspapermen, politicians, businessmen, churchmen, lawyers and laymen—all have combined to condemn the wide terms and definitions and the harsh penalties of this Bill, and have pointed out the dangers of placing comprehensive and arbitrary powers in the hands of one Minister and his unknown successors.

The Minister of Justice has claimed that this is a measure to preserve democracy, and that the principle of the Bill is to combat sabotage and curb Communism; and he has asked the country to accept his assurance that it will be used only against those who are guilty of these offences. Lawyers have pointed out, however, that many of the clauses of the Bill violate the Rule of Law, and that the definition of sabotage is so wide as to endanger persons who are anything but saboteurs in the real sense of the word. Also, the fact that the Suppression of Communism Act has already been used against declared anti-Communists, and the manner in which the Minister himself replied to the Second Reading debate on this Bill by decrying many of his critics and opponents as Communists or Communist-inspired, must detract from his assurance in this respect.

The Black Sash has repeatedly declared its opposition to the creed of Communism, and, as a law-abiding organization, it accepts that it is the duty of a responsible government to deal severely with any person proved guilty of sabotage or violence. Nevertheless, in our opinion this Bill constitutes a threat to fundamental democratic freedoms and principles, including one of the basic principles of parliamentary democracy: that all citizens have the right to oppose and criticize government policy, and to work for a change of government.

For these reasons, Black Sash Headquarters in Johannesburg decided to hold a continuous vigil to demonstrate total rejection of this Bill, and Regions and Branches in other parts of the country followed suit.

"I'll be judge, I'll be jury",

Said cunning old Fury,

"I'll try the whole case

And condemn you to death!"

LEWIS CARROLL—"Alice in Wonderland"