

urban areas. Today however, they are being brought within the ambit of the pass laws. Teams of government officials from the Native Affairs Department are touring the country and issuing "identification certificates" to women in the rural areas and small towns. Although in many of the areas the women are yielding to government pressure and are accepting these "identification certificates," in many other areas there is strong resistance, which has led to prosecution of women, banishment of leaders and chiefs and to rioting and deaths.

WOMEN RESISTING

No women accept the passes willingly and their resistance derives from their knowledge of the manner in which their men folk have been harassed by the administrators of the pass laws in the past. In the first place, experience has shown that young and irresponsible policemen are not above arresting African women and promising to release them if they will give in to their advances. And cases are on record in which policemen have arrested women under curfew regulations and abused them. If women have to carry passes which must be produced on demand, the number of defaulters is going to increase considerably. Thousands of African women are thus going to be arrested by male policemen and the number of abuses increased commensurately.

To exemplify the sort of thing that is likely to happen: an African policeman made advances to a nurse. When she responded unfavourably, he decided to teach her a lesson. He knew that on certain days she returned home from duty after curfew, so he waylaid her one day and arrested her for being without a "special." On the way to the charge office he promised to release her if she accepted his proposal. According to the nurse, she feared going

to the police station and so reluctantly yielded to his "blackmail."

Women arrested under the pass laws will be introduced to prison life. And this will apply to young girls of the apparent age of sixteen years, as well as to adult women. Many white women support the idea of their domestics carrying passes "to bring to an end the desertions which are so easy and common." Admittedly desertions and occasional thefts by women domestics can and do cause great inconvenience, but can the inconvenience of a few women be compared with the misery of thousands of African women whom the passes will send to the courts and prisons? Can they justify the dislocation of family life caused by a mother who does not return home at night, because she has been arrested? Can they justify the suffering of young children whose mother has been arrested?

WASTE OF MAN-HOURS

Employers already complain of the labour hours which are wasted because of the large number of workers who are kept away from work daily by reason of their failure to produce a pass. Have those white women who support the pass laws for their African domestics calculated what it is going to mean to them in terms of inconvenience when "Annie" fails to turn up, because she has been "copped"? There are days when the townships are surrounded and the police demand passes. There are days when all exits from the railway stations are blocked by policemen in search of pass defaulters, when everybody who has no pass on him is picked up and taken to the charge office. It is on such days that the "missus" will wish she had not supported passes for African women.

Morning Market In Pretoria

WE are greatly indebted to our Chairwoman, Mrs. Lang, for taking the initiative in, and bearing the brunt of, a most successful Morning Market and Rally on the 4th September, 1957. For this Market Mrs. Lang gave her charming garden. Apart from being a great success financially and bringing in £88 17s. 8d., the Morning Market was a very pleasant rallying ground for members who so often meet in less agreeable circumstances, and usually in silence!

Mrs. Dora Hill came over from Johannesburg and spoke most effectively about the dynamic force that the Black Sash had been and would continue to be. No one who heard Mrs. Hill speak on "Why we go on" could be in any doubt about the urgency of protesting where and whenever possible.

Besides the tea, convened with great efficiency by Mrs. Zacchy Taylor, there were several stalls. Mrs. Lang, helped by Mrs. McMillan and Mrs. Becklake, ran a sweet stall of home-made sweets. Mrs. Simpson and Mrs. Thorpe did a brisk business at a cake stall. Miss Barrett and Mrs. Monson ran a

miscellaneous stall at which they sold everything, including Penguins (which rather disappointingly turned out to be books). Mrs. Wallis and Mrs. Souter ran a Tombola Table, handsomely bedecked with articles we had dragooned our grocers and chemists into giving us. The flower stall was a family affair almost entirely stocked by Mrs. van der Byl with the most exquisite spring flowers from her garden, sold by herself, her sister, her daughter and her daughter-in-law.

Apart from stalls there were three "competitions," one for a beautiful fairisle jersey knitted by Mrs. Wallis, one for a most enticing twin set made by Mrs. Simpson, and one for the best-dressed doll in town begged and exquisitely dressed by Mrs. Lang.

Special medals should go to three of the stallholders, Miss Barrett, Mrs. Simpson and Mrs. Wallis, who went straight from their stalls to keep the four-hour vigil at the Union Buildings.

MARGARET BRINK,
Acting Secretary.