

ARE WE IN EARNEST?

IN the last issue of the "Black Sash" we were told once more to "see that you are on the Voters' Roll." If you have not seen to it, then you have no right whatsoever to complain about the legislation and actions of the present Government, but appear to approve of all that is being done. Without a vote you have no chance of registering effective opposition. *Let that be very clear indeed. If you have any difficulty in finding out what to do in the matter, even at this late hour, any political organisation will help you.*

The Sash Movement exists, because of the opposition of its members to the desecration of our Constitution, and the taking away of ordinary democratic liberty from our people. The movement has made it clear that it is determined to help in removing the present government from power, and that its members will use their votes to that end.

If we are to achieve success certain essential features have to be born in mind.

(a) After an election the Governor-General asks the leader of the party that holds the majority of the seats to form the government. He can ask the Leader of ONE PARTY only—or of a coalition of course—to do so. It is quite useless, from the point of view of ousting the Government, if all the opposing parties TOGETHER gain that majority. *The Governor-General must ignore that. He can deal with one Leader only.*

(b) In the past "ghost voters" have appeared on the roll, sometimes in fairly large numbers. Every Black Sash member in her own area can be of enormous help in discovering these, and having them removed from the roll. A few examples can illustrate this.

(i) A man has died but his name may still be on the roll. It is essential that the attention of the electoral officer concerned is drawn to this whenever such a case occurs, so that the name may be removed. If not there is the opportunity for someone to impersonate that voter.

(ii) *There is a home in your neighbourhood which could at most house 5 voters, but 14 are registered there. Not an unheard of occurrence! Why? A large number of voters has been known to be registered on a vacant plot! The Electoral Officer concerned cannot be expected to know this; the people who live in the neighbourhood can.*

(iii) You may say there has just been a new biennial registration which would have altered all this. You mean **should** have altered all this. But an enumerator who was too tired to visit all the homes in the area allocated to him or her may be one who took a chance, and did not make sure. We raise our voices soon enough if someone forges a signature on a cheque. Forging signatures on registration cards is a greater crime, for it may affect the whole country. Remember a seat can be won by a majority of one vote. It may be yours!

What can we do about all this, you may ask?

1. Form numerous small vigilance committees—especially in the marginal areas.

2. As soon as the provisional voters' roll is available have your committee **WORK** at the voters' roll. Please note the emphasis is on **work**. Any political organisation will show you how to do this.

The members of the Sash have fearlessly demonstrated their opposition to the deeds of the Government. Now there is the opportunity for real sacrifice and effort, for setting aside personal grievances and excuses and helping to return a Party with a sufficient number of seats to oust the Government. Nothing else will avail us.

Are we in deadly earnest and prepared to do everything in our power to achieve this?

A WORRIED MEMBER.

The Voice of the Church

We have invited leaders of the major Church groups in South Africa to declare their Churches' attitude to the problems of race and colour which beset our Society.

In the July issue the REV. DR. WEBB spoke for the Methodist Church. This month the RIGHT REVEREND AMBROSE REEVES speaks for the Anglican Church of the Province of South Africa.

AS a self-governing province of the Anglican Communion, the Church of the Province of South Africa, takes its stand in racial matters on the statement issued by the Bishops of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference which declared, "that all men, irrespective of race or colour, are equally the objects of God's love and are called to love and serve Him. All men are made in His image; for all Christ died; and to all there is made the offer of eternal life. *Every individual* is therefore bound by duties towards God and towards other men, and has certain rights without the enjoyment of which he cannot freely perform those duties. *These rights should be declared by the Church, recognized by the State, and safeguarded by international law.*" For this reason the Anglican Church believes that the only national policy which is morally defensible is one that gives the fullest measure of development to the members of all racial groups. We believe that it is morally wrong to follow a policy which has as its object the keeping of any particular ethnic group in a permanent position of inferiority, and are persuaded that racial discrimination in this country is directed to this end. Because of these convictions the Anglican Church cannot approve of apartheid.

While it is true that linguistic and geographical reasons mean that many of our African and European members normally worship in different places, this does not mean that we approve of the principle of segregation. No one has any authority to exclude any church person of any race from any one of our churches if such a person presents himself there for that purpose. Further, those of every race are to be found sitting together in our Synods and on our boards and committees taking their full share in framing legislation for the conduct of church affairs and in shaping the policy of the church. Our clergy of all races meet together regularly in our clerical societies, and from time to time preach in one another's churches. The Bishop is equally the Father-in-God of all churchpeople in his diocese, whatever may be their colour. There are 750,000 Africans in the Anglican Church in South Africa, double the number of white people. It is small wonder that in such a church there has been, and still is, an uncompromising condemnation of South African racialism.

An examination of the charges delivered by the Bishop in these last years, as well as many resolutions of both Provincial and Diocesan Synods shows

clearly that the church is very sensitive to the needs of any who are underprivileged, irrespective of the colour of their skins. This is inevitable, for as the Provincial Synod declared in 1950 "We are a multi-racial church." We know that when some of our members suffer we are all involved, and are therefore deeply concerned with the needs of our neighbour, irrespective of the racial group to which he may belong.

In particular the Anglican Church has been deeply concerned by the constant stream of legislation which has discriminated between the white citizens and the rest of our South African community, to the serious disadvantage of the latter. This we consider to be one of the most disturbing features of our times, for we believe that one of the basic requirements for any healthy community life is that all men shall be equal before the law, and that men shall not be discriminated against because of their colour. The Anglican Church is firmly convinced that the day must come when every racial group must have some effective voice in the government of our country, and be enabled to make the fullest contribution of which they are capable to its welfare. For the coming of that day we shall not cease to work and to pray.

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- C. Mrs. M. Gilfillan, Glen Heath, Conway, C.P.
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