

# REPORTS ON A YEAR'S ACTIVITY

**D**EDICATED members of the Black Sash lost none of their spirit in the protracted struggle against the many aspects of repressive legislation that afflict the non-white citizens of South Africa.

The Black Sash was severely handicapped this year by the plethora of elections which absorbed the energies of members.

The following reports show, however, that the Regions in spite of serious difficulties, made significant headway in the plan of action laid down by the 1960 Black Sash National Conference.

## CAPE WESTERN

**T**HE most important work this year has lain in efforts to hold a Multi-Racial Conference and/or a new National Convention truly representative of all the races.

Efforts were continued to focus the attention of the public on the differences between reference books and identity cards and the real hardships caused by the pass law system. The fight against Group Areas was intensified owing to the fact that large areas were proclaimed in the Cape Western area during the year, and proposals regarding others have been published.

### **National Convention**

Members assisted in organising and supporting the meeting called to protest against the ban on the Coloured Convention Conference held in the Rondebosch Town Hall on Monday, July 10th, 1961, attended by at least 600 people.

When the Coloured leaders decided to form a larger group to assist in bringing about support for the idea of having a new National Convention called by the Government, Mrs. Stott was elected to a Provincial Consultative Conference Committee which met on October 14th.

A Cape Provincial Continuation Committee was elected to pursue the matter, and Mrs. Stott was included as a member.

### **Group Areas**

Four meetings on Group Areas were attended by large audiences. A petition was signed by 800

Somerset West residents asking the Group Areas Board not to move the Coloured residents of the town.

Another meeting was held in Rondebosch to help the people affected by the Black River proclamation. Dr. Van der Ross was the speaker. At a gathering in the home of Mrs. Mary Birt, a petition was launched.

### **Brains Trust**

A brains trust was held in Sea Point on "The Road Ahead."

### **Pass Laws**

A meeting on pass laws at Green Point was very poorly attended in spite of a panel of good speakers.

### **Advice Office (formerly called Bail Fund Office)**

The Athlone Office has been open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the year. Volunteers to work in this office are urgently needed.

Wellington Branch has done much to assist Africans in the Boland.

### **Demonstrations**

In Cape Western ten demonstrations were held between March and May, one against Group Areas, another against provisions of the General Laws Amendment Bill; there was a token stand with a poster reading "Justice demands a National Convention of all Races"; and seven stands took place in city and country areas enumerating all the legislation opposed by the Sash, starting with a poster "Help to Right these Wrongs."

### **Tours of Regions**

In the Lowveld Region Mrs. Stott spoke at four branch meetings. Cape Eastern was visited in April. During May Mrs. Stott went to Johannesburg where she attended an executive committee meeting and a meeting of all members. She also met representatives of Natal Coastal and Natal Midlands Regions. In July Mrs. Stott did a week's tour of Cape Eastern Region and held meetings at Addo, Port Elizabeth, Adelaide, Salem, Grahamstown, Cradock and Graaff-Reinet. She spent a day visiting King William's Town and Peddie and spoke to officials there.

## Interviews

Towards the end of 1960 Mrs. Stott and Mrs. Sinclair spent two hours with Mr. de Wet Nel and his adviser, Mr. Smuts, pleading for revision of the Eiselen Line policy and its resultant break-up of African homes. Although this request was refused outright, Mr. Nel said he would arrange for better co-ordination between heads of Bantu Authorities. Later Mrs. Stott saw officials in Cape Town.

Early in 1961 Mrs. Stott and Mrs. Stoy interviewed the Town Clerk regarding the City Council's ban on non-white shows in the Muizenberg Pavilion. They also interviewed Mr. Day, Secretary to the High Commissioner for Rhodesia and Nyasaland, concerning the plight of foreign Africans in South Africa. Later Mrs. Stoy interviewed Sir John Maud, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, on the same subject.

Mrs. Stott had an interview with the Divisional Council re the plight of Africans living at Grassy Park who were ordered to move from decent brick buildings to plots of sand at Nyanga. Eventually Mrs. Stott obtained financial assistance to build eight homes for those people affected who were allowed to live with their families.

## Propaganda

The Region ceased producing its own leaflets and relied on the magazine instead. In addition, newspaper publicity was procured for specific cases of hardship suffered through various apartheid laws. One of the most successful was that of Mr. Sikade (Kleinbooi). This story appeared in the *Cape Argus* magazine section under the title "Endorsed Out." Some twenty Sash statements appeared prominently in the local Press. A journalist made a short newsreel of work in the Bail Fund Office.

## Ad Hoc and Other Committees

### (a) Archbishop's Conference

Meetings were held throughout the year. A call by the Hon. Mr. Justice Centlivres for a new National Convention was published with names of prominent signatories. The sub-committee on Poverty plans to hold a conference on Poverty early in 1962.

### (b) S.E.R.F.

This committee has become a branch of Defence and Aid, which deals with legal aid, bail and assistance for families of those arrested for

political offences. The welfare work of S.E.R.F. was taken over by the Society of Friends.

### (c) Defence and Aid

Four Sash members are permanently working as individuals on this committee, which the Sash helped to establish.

### (d) Anti-Group Areas

This committee wound up its activities, but the Black Sash will carry on the work.

### (e) C.A.T.A.P.A.W.

This committee was dissolved.

### (f) Council of Education

Regular meetings of the Council of Education, formed September, 1960, have taken place. A public meeting in the City Hall was organised on February 6th at which Professor McMillan and Professor Bruwer spoke. A memorandum on the Education Bill was sent to the Select Committee by the Council of Education and a separate one by the Black Sash. Petition forms asking the Government to withdraw the Education Bill were circulated to all members and the forms with 6,999 signatures were handed to M.P.s for submission to the Minister of Education.

## Library Apartheid

A letter was sent to the Administrator asking for an interview to discuss library apartheid. This was not granted. Petition forms against library apartheid were given to members who returned the forms with 960 signatures.

## Langa Courts

Until May 1961 volunteers sat at the Langa courts regularly but after that it was decided that these women could be more usefully employed on case work at the Advice Office, or elsewhere.

## Legal Aid for Africans

Through Mr. Dichmont legal aid, *pro amico*, may be obtained for any cases involving removal of human rights, i.e. pass law cases. Defence and Aid has dealt with many such cases. Thanks are recorded to Mr. Dichmont and his panel of lawyers.

## SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL

**S**OUTHERN Transvaal Region's programme for 1961 was a full one, despite the fact that it did not cover all the activities suggested for the year at the national conference.

### **Lectures, Brains Trusts, etc.**

A **Brains Trust** was held in March, with Mr. Philip Birkinshaw as question-master. The subject was "Education—What Should be its Aims?" Efforts to obtain a Nationalist speaker, or even a speaker in favour of Christian National Education, were unsuccessful.

The **Education Conference** held at Witwatersrand University in February was attended by many of our members and tape-recordings of all the speeches will become available. For many months Branches have used the recording of Professor Pistorius' outstanding introductory address, four tapes of which are now in circulation.

**Indian Education in the Transvaal** was the subject of an interesting talk at the February general meeting by Mrs. A. M. Cachalia, and the Teaching of History in Transvaal Schools was dealt with by Miss Eleanor Hawarden at the June general meeting.

At a multi-racial forum held in April, Mr. G. M. Pitje dealt with the **Pass Laws** and their effects on the African people. The only members of the audience in favour of influx control were two members of the Johannesburg City Council, who were nevertheless obliged to admit that it was morally indefensible.

Mrs. Cachalia spoke on **Group Areas** in August and gave an account of the effects of the Act on Indians; later Mrs. Hill gave a similar address.

### **The Need for Constitutional Reform**

Mr. Donald Molteno's recorded talk has been constantly in demand throughout the year for Branch and "tea-party" meetings.

### **Contacts**

The Multi-Racial Forum was the first major effort of the year to establish contacts between the races, and it was hoped that the talks on "Johannesburg—a Multi-Racial City" would be the first of a series. The tremendous organisation entailed, however, makes it virtually impossible to organise on any scale without the assistance of a wider group.

The Region has, however, been able to continue with the Experiment in Consultation launched last year by Mrs. Morris. With the help of Mrs. Fleischman, and a small sub-committee, Mrs.

Morris has started a series of fortnightly get-togethers with a group of African women.

The last three meetings have been devoted to discussion of municipal affairs. Mrs. Kathleen Mitchell gave an address on "How Our City is Run"; Mr. Patrick Lewis, Chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee of the City Council, addressed the last meeting on African housing in the Johannesburg townships.

The meetings are held in an office in the city, for the convenience of the African women. The atmosphere is informal and friendly and the Black Sash women have been delighted with the response from the African women.

### **Defence and Aid Fund**

There is a possibility that this Fund will have to close down its welfare section owing to lack of funds, and the Black Sash women who are doing the work feel that this would be a tragedy. The families receiving aid would be destitute if the assistance, however inadequate, were to cease; at the same time the confidence that has been built up between Whites and non-Whites would be lost.

### **Federation of S.A. Women's Congress**

Three members attended this Congress in August as representatives of the Black Sash. Following a discussion on African housing, alleged evictions for non-payment of rent are being investigated by a special sub-committee of the Region.

### **Fact-Finding**

Several members visited the Municipal Non-European Affairs Department in Johannesburg, and were shown the ramifications of the **Pass Laws and Influx Control**. They were also taken on a bus tour of the South-Western Native Townships.

Two members went to see Mr. O'Brien, a magistrate, to discuss his reported statement that **Identity Cards and Reference Books** were exactly the same, but obtained little satisfaction from the interview. Subsequently, they wrote detailing the differences between the two documents. No reply has been received to the letter.

Most of the investigation into **Group Areas** is being carried out by branches in Rustenburg, Pretoria and Witbank, where Group Area proposals are under consideration. **Rustenburg** obtained signatures to a petition against the removal of the Indians. In **Pretoria** representa-

tives of the Black Sash were invited to give evidence before the Group Areas Board. In Witbank members are attending Municipal Council meetings to find out what is proposed in connection with the removal of the Indians.

Two members of North-Western Group have been attending Fordsburg Court regularly. During the Alexandra removals visits were paid to Wynberg Court by members of the Committee.

An excellent memorandum on **Library Facilities** has been drawn up by Mrs. Emery of Bryanston.

Following a report that large quantities of **milk products** were being exported at a loss, letters were written to the Dairy Control Board, the Secretary for Health, and S.A.N.T.A., asking that these foodstuffs be kept in the country and sold at a loss to our undernourished people in the townships.

After the **Family Life Year Conference** in Pretoria, Miss Anna Marais, who represented the Black Sash, wrote to the Afrikaans Press pointing out the hollowness of the admirable sentiments regarding family life expressed by the all-white delegates, in the light of the disruption caused by the white man's laws in the family life of the Africans.

She also wrote to Dr. Nicol, who had presided at the Conference, and was Chairman of the Continuing Committee, asking what the attitude was to the proposal made in Witbank that Indian children over the age of 16 should obtain permits to reside with their parents.

### **Demonstrations**

The **Protest March** held in March, against South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, was the biggest demonstration of the year. In May, a demonstration calling for a **National Convention** was held on the steps of the City Hall.

The following week a series of stands was held each evening at the peak hour, groups of four to eight women standing at the exits from the city.

### **Publicity**

Since the protest march, there has been much better publicity in the local Press. Reports of activities have appeared from time to time, official letters from the Black Sash have been published in full, satisfactory interviews with the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Star*, and an article on the multi-racial consultations, headed

"Experiment in Multi-Racial Consultations," was asked for and published by the *Star*.

### **Programme of Action**

One of our most important tasks is to work towards a **National Convention**, and a good deal of work has been done in that direction.

The Region started to organise a **Courtesy Campaign** several months ago, through the initiative of Waverley Group, but it is now giving its full support to the much wider campaign which is being launched in Johannesburg at the present time.

### NATAL COASTAL

**T**HE Region has had a difficult and discouraging year in many ways, but things are looking brighter in that the members of the disbanded Durban and Highway Branches who attend meetings are finding them interesting and are becoming enthusiastic. Attendance at meetings steadily increases and it is hoped that Durban and Highway may soon start up on their own again. In the meantime, the Pinetown/Westville Branch has formed a Group which is doing the Regional work and holding members together.

### **Association with Other Organisations**

Members regularly attend meetings of the multi-racial **Association of Durban Women**.

Members have also assisted the **Natal Education Vigilance Association**, and recently manned tables for a week in Durban to distribute pamphlets and enrol new members. Unfortunately the drive was not a success owing to the apathy of the general public.

Members are still supporting the **Institute of Race Relations** in efforts to obtain enfranchisement of non-Whites in local government. To date all attempts have been unsuccessful.

### **Other Activities**

A stand with posters was held in protest against the zoning of Cato Manor as a white area.

At an All Branches Meeting in February, 1961, Mrs. O'Callaghan, of the Natal Mildands Region, gave an informative talk on the vocation of the Black Sash.

Towards the end of 1960 the Region sponsored a symposium organised by Mrs. Hill to celebrate

the Centenary of the arrival of the Indians in Natal.

Councillor Higginson addressed a meeting sponsored by **Durban Branch** on "Indian Housing" and showed a film taken by the Durban City Health Department to illustrate his talk.

Many members attended a meeting addressed by Miss Munro arranged under the auspices of N.E.V.A. Here the idea of a petition against the Education Bill, which was already circulating in the Transvaal, was mooted. Sash members played a significant part in organising the petition in Durban, Queensburgh and Westville.

Several members served on the committee for the relief of detainees. When the State of Emergency ended, the Detainees' Fund was closed, but the committee was reconstituted into a local branch of the "Defence and Aid" — a body set up to assist in legal expenses and the care of families in cases involving civil rights and liberties.

Durban Branch wrote many letters to the Press protesting against the tapping of the Durban Municipal telephones, and on various other matters during the year.

Mrs. Herries Baird continues as a one-woman Branch at **Umzinto** but she has no compunction in making other people work, and was responsible for collecting eighteen pages of signatures for the Education Bill Protest Petition.

**Pinetown/Westville Branch** has been able to help the Region considerably with donations.

Regular monthly meetings were held at which Mrs. Adams, the branch Parliamentary Officer, delivered comprehensive papers on events in South Africa and reactions abroad, leading to lively discussion. The chairman was a delegate to the Natal Convention.

Since deciding to carry on the work of the Natal Coastal Region alone, the Pinetown/Westville Branch has been most active.

A Courtesy Campaign is going ahead in quiet personal efforts. Several members wrote to the newspapers urging the Durban City Council to erect bus shelters for non-Whites in areas where they were most needed. This matter was passed at a Council meeting and it is hoped that shelters will be erected soon. A letter was sent to the Council advocating higher wages for its non-white employees and this, too, was passed.

Members regularly attend meetings of the Durban City Council.

Mrs. F. A. E. Powell, J.P., the original "Prisoners' Friend", who has worked in and around the Durban Magistrates' Courts for 31 years, was invited to speak at the July meeting. Mrs. Powell did not feel that anything would be accomplished by two women sitting in one of the Courts. To give her practical assistance in her valuable work, several members have arranged to drive her when she has to visit the gaol, etc., as she is no longer able to drive herself.

Thirty-six members attended the August meeting to which had been invited members of the Indian Women's Cultural Group. Nine of them came and members had a chance to talk to them during tea. Thereafter Mrs. Mayat spoke on "Comparative Religion," which held the audience enthralled for over an hour. Later the Political Review was read to enable guests to join in the discussion. It was revealing to hear their views on the new Minister of Indian Affairs, and of the new Indian University on Salisbury Island.

Members were told that a certain history book prescribed by the Province and used by the Durban Indian Girls' High School, contained views expressed in words which were offensive and hurtful to the Indian community. The Chairman asked our Indian guests to find out how many of their schools were using this book, and it was decided to ask N.E.V.A. to go into the matter also.

## NATAL MIDLANDS

THE Regional Chairman, accompanied by Mrs. O'Callaghan, made a tour of the Region in June. Mrs. O'Callaghan gave talks on "The Role of the Sash" in an attempt to stimulate interest in the branches.

### **Natal Convention**

Natal Midlands was represented at the Convention by Mrs. S. Johnson, Regional Chairman, and six delegates. Pietermaritzburg Branch members manned registration and information tables each day and sold meal tickets. Mrs. Corrigan and Mrs. Strauss were hard-working members of the Convention Organisation Committee.

## Lectures and Brains Trusts

In May **Pietermaritzburg Branch** held a Brains Trust on Race Integration. Mr. McQuarrie was question-master and the team consisted of Mrs. Dyer, Mr. Appollos, Mr. Berthoud, Mr. M. G. Naidoo and Mr. Jordan Ngubane.

**Howick Branch** supported a meeting of parents addressed by Miss Munroe on the Education Advisory Bill, sold 20 copies of *Education for Isolation* and later collected signatures for the petition against this Bill.

**Kokstad Group** arranged a house meeting to play the tape recording of Prof. McMillan's talk, made at an All Branches meeting towards the end of 1960, on the Education Advisory Council Bill. This resulted in a public meeting addressed by Dr. McConkey on the Education Bill and despite bad weather there was a fair attendance. From this an Education Vigilance Committee was formed.

At the July meeting of the **Matatiele Branch** members listened to the recording of a talk by Mrs. Sylvia Nel on Education. This record has been played to friends as has the record on Human Rights by Prof. Pistorius.

## Contacts

Each month a multi-racial tea party is held by the Pietermaritzburg Branch. These take place at the homes of members. On two occasions the party has been invited to the homes of non-Whites. All these events have been happy and successful.

Mrs. O'Callaghan and Miss Friday represented the Pietermaritzburg Branch at a conference held by Durban Indian Ratepayers on the Municipal Franchise.

Youth meetings have been held once every three months by the Pietermaritzburg Branch. A group of young people of all races was taken on one occasion to a Symposium at the University, and given coffee and sandwiches afterwards. The second meeting was held at Mrs. Hey's home, where entertainment was provided.

## Fact Finding

Of 2,000 copies of a leaflet on the **Pass Laws**, 400 have been sent to Southern Transvaal Region and the rest will be used in the Region during the coming year.

The Indian Community in Maritzburg organised a successful mass protest and prayer meeting

against **Group Areas**. The Chairman of the Pietermaritzburg Branch, Mrs. O'Callaghan, represented the Sash and was one of the speakers. Members of the Pietermaritzburg Branch attended a City Council meeting at which the Council's attitude to Group Areas was debated. The Branch was represented at the opening session of the Annual Conference of the Natal Indian Congress held in March, 1961.

## Demonstrations

Pietermaritzburg Branch did a ten-hour vigil with posters against Group Areas in March. They also held four stands on four successive days in May, two of which were against the General Laws Amendment Bill. A stand against the Censorship Bill was held in June.

## Propaganda

A letter was written to the S.A.B.C. commenting on the onesidedness of a large part of news broadcasts on the English transmission. Several letters by the Chairman of the Pietermaritzburg Branch were published in local newspapers.

The theme of education was chosen for a series of house meetings to culminate in a brains trust. Accordingly, three house meetings were arranged, the first with Mrs. W. A. D. Russell as the speaker on Secondary Education, the second at which Prof. McMillan, head of the Faculty of Education at Natal University, spoke on University Education, and the third at which Mr. Basil Oscroft, ex-Inspector of Bantu Schools, spoke on Bantu Education. These meetings have been highly successful and it is hoped to arrange a Brains Trust early in the new year.

## Branch Activities

Individual members of **Ixopo Group** are trying to further Sash aims to "Build bridges across the colour bar" wherever possible and to educate members of the voting public towards greater political awareness.

**Kokstad Group** report that after the unfortunate bus accident experienced by the troupe of "African Follies" Sash members collected clothes and magazines for those in hospital. They were visited there by Mrs. Phillips.

Pietermaritzburg Branch is represented on the newly-formed Human Rights Committee by Miss Friday and on the Group Areas Resistance Committee and the Action Committee for Freedom of Education by Mrs. O'Callaghan.

The Sash in Pietermaritzburg has gained stature from the work it has done on these various committees. It is particularly noticeable that the Indian Community has a high regard for the work of Sash.

### CAPE EASTERN

**A** TOUR of the Region was undertaken by the National President in July. For a week she addressed two public meetings a day. Mrs. Stott's visit was the highlight of the year and members who heard her were inspired to greater efforts by her splendid example.

#### **Propaganda**

The recording of Mrs. Sylvia Nel's lecture on education has been used extensively in town and country branches and has been lent to other organisations. Branches find that these recordings of speeches are most useful and have asked that more be made available.

#### **Activities**

**Bontrug Survey:** At the beginning of the year members of the P.E. and Addo Branches did a survey of living conditions among the African people in the Bontrug location. This survey, together with reports, was sent to the Minister of Bantu Affairs, the Native Commissioner in King William's Town and other officials. This has been fully reported in previous issues of the magazine. Mrs. Stott interviewed a number of officials regarding the conditions in this location.

**Multi-Racial Tea-Parties:** A most successful venture of the P.E. and Walmer members has been the holding of multi-racial tea-parties. About 30 women of all races attend, giving all the opportunity of discussing various social problems. There are talks at each party on subjects like "Bantu Customs" by Mrs. Jolobe, a member of the African community. Invitations to these tea-parties are much sought after.

**Institute of Race Relations:** Co-operation has continued on a number of new projects—the next being a conference on wages, early in the new year.

**Education Advisory Council Bill Petition:** The Eastern Cape Branches all took part in the collection of 2,320 signatures for the petition against the Education Advisory Council Bill.

**Press Statements:** Statements protesting against the Group Areas, pistol clubs for women, and

the exclusion of Africans from Family Year celebrations, were made to the Press. An article written by Mrs. Levey on "Hardships caused by Pass Laws" was published in the *Evening Post*.

**Native Commissioner's Courts:** Mrs. Pirie attended a morning session of the Native Commissioner's Court during the period of the mass arrests prior to the Republican celebrations.

**S.A. Convention Movement:** The first conference of the Eastern Province Region of the S.A. Convention Movement was held in Port Elizabeth in October. A number of Black Sash women attended the Conference and Mrs. Pirie was elected to the Regional Committee.

**Newsletter:** It was decided at the Regional Conference that, in addition to the usual letters to Branch Chairmen, a monthly newsletter be sent to all members informing them of the activities of the Regional Council and other Regions.

**Speakers:** Mr. B. B. Ramjee addressed the Regional Conference on the Group Areas Act.

**Pass Laws:** Mrs. Pirie addressed three Church Women's Organisations on the Pass Laws and the Catholic Women's Association on "Poverty."

### BORDER

**T**HIS year Border has had to face a drop in membership, but those who remain are determined supporters and firmly convinced that the work undertaken by the Sash is essential. Some small successes have been achieved, and the Border is hopeful that enthusiasm will spread.

#### **Activities**

In East London regularly monthly meetings have been held on various subjects. Guest speakers dealt with the Natal Education Conference, the day-to-day living in the Indian communities, Municipalities and how they work.

A multi-racial discussion evening of an informal nature was held at the home of one of the East London members. This proved so interesting that requests were made for more discussions.

**Queenstown Branch** invited two African teachers to address the members and fourteen interested non-members. They spoke on Bantu juvenile delinquency and in the course of their talk discussed municipal beer-halls; the lack of schools and crèches; the difficulties in which African teachers worked; the lack of jobs for those who had achieved an education; and the

over-riding question of the terrible poverty of the vast majority of African families. After this meeting the local location superintendent was approached with a view to visiting the night school and location.

### Protests

A protest was made to the East London City Council and the Group Areas Board in Port Elizabeth against the proposed re-zoning of Milner Estate housing scheme for Coloured people. It is at present a sub-economic estate for under-privileged White people, and the protest was based, not only on the enormous expense to which the Council would be put to replace the housing, but also because the Council had provided proportionately more amenities for under-privileged Coloureds than Whites. This does not, however, alter the serious Coloured housing situation in our city.

### Pass Laws

Cases have been investigated with some success in East London. Members also investigated without success an individual case under the Group Areas Act. A sub-committee has been organised to go into pass law offences to see what can be done in alleviation.

The members in *Idutywa* are taking an active part in the local Christmas carnival which will

### EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS is the last issue of *The Black Sash* to be published under the editorship of Mrs. Desirée Berman. Henceforth the magazine will be administered by the new headquarters region—Transvaal, and the editor will be Mrs. Dorothy Grant.

The retiring editor thanks all those who have so generously supported her during the past three years and wishes her successor good luck in an eminently worthwhile task.

bring all sections of the community together in a full day's enjoyment of sports and competitions, plus singing by African school children.

### Border Bulletin

The Bulletin has been sent out in two special editions. The first of these, entitled "The Black Sash and You" and "What We Have Done" was issued in response to repeated requests at our Regional Conference last year for some form of written answer to questions repeatedly asked by prospective members. The second edition dealt with the Border resolution submitted this year to National Conference regarding Sash membership.

## JUDGES AND POLITICIANS

—Continued from page 23

Election, Basson is now ensconced in the safe U.P. seat of Bezuidenhout, and Fagan will receive a Senatorship. Fagan, still active at 72, took his share in the recent electoral campaign, and stood up to Nationalist heckling, often abuse, like a seasoned warrior. I feel sure that the Senate will be the richer for his presence.

This by no means exhausts the list of Judges who have been unable to resist the lure of political life. F. W. Beyers, always an intense Nationalist, set the fashion about 25 years ago, when, within a few months of his retirement from the Appeal Court, he stood for a Free State constituency, but without success.

Tielman Roos, it will be remembered, stepped down from the Appellate Division in 1932, hoping to head a new Coalition Government which would lead South Africa out of the then pre-

vailing economic doldrums. But his venture failed and he returned to practice at the Bar, dying a few years later a sadly disappointed man. Both Beyers and Roos were politicians first and Judges second.

This is not to suggest that while on the Bench our Judges are politicians; on the contrary they are sedulous to avoid any appearance of mingling in politics. They regard their function as strictly non-political. Sometimes an interest in political matters is inescapable. Every five years, for instance, a panel of three Judges has to redelimit South Africa into electoral divisions. Sometimes, though happily rarely, a Judge is appointed to a Commission whose functions are of a political nature, as happens in other countries as well. But I am happy to say that "the Judge is stronger than the politician." This means that, even if a man has been a controversial party politician, he forgets his politics when he goes on the Bench.