

NATAL COASTAL

THE Black Sash was glad to share the work in organising the multi-racial Natal Convention held in April.

The Convention rejected apartheid and pressed for consultation among all South Africans, irrespective of race.

The Convention considered its theme "Sharing the Future: Natal Takes Stock" under three heads: political, social and economic.

Mrs. Sheila Johnson of Howick writes:

"I found the Convention most stimulating. Discussion in the six study-groups was lively and surprisingly free from acrimony. The 220-odd delegates represented religious, political and university organisations, the medical profession, commerce and industry, race relations, social services, various municipalities, as well as numerous independents, so a wide cross-section of opinion was obtained. Political parties were permitted to send observers, not delegates, and the Progressive, Liberal and Federal Parties were represented.

"We had nine Sash delegates—two from Natal Coastal and seven from the Midlands—and Pietermaritzburg Sash members worked extremely hard at the registration and information tables, as well as selling meal tickets. Mrs. Corrigan and Mrs. Strauss were members of the Convention Organizing Committee and did yeoman service. Dr. Edgar Brookes was the Convention President."

BORDER

AT the first of two open general meetings an ex-Town Clerk of East London spoke on municipal law and procedure. Many questions were asked about African housing. As a result of interest aroused, the committee is endeavouring to organise a visit to the local African location to view (a) the typical shanty-town area; (b) municipal housing from the early stages to the most recent home ownership scheme; (c) hostels, schools, crèches and recreation centres; and (d) the 50 specimen houses for the emergency housing scheme.

The last of these is particularly interesting. The African housing position in East London is such that it is necessary to erect some 3,500 one-unit emergency houses. The Municipality has called for tenders and the erection of specimen houses. Fifty specimens of all types (mainly prefabricated—timber, asbestos, steel and concrete blocks) in a variety of designs have been erected. It is understood that the price range does not reach far beyond R100. It is felt that here might be found the temporary answer to the Union-wide housing problem.

At the second meeting a speaker dealt with aspects of day-to-day living in the Indian community.

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employees who considered him an outsider. When we had heard nothing for six months we believed that he was dead.

Meanwhile his wife had no means of livelihood. With her mother and the helpless child she could not go to work. So she tried to find a lodger. The first choice was a widow who was willing to look after the home, but turned out to be an alcoholic. The next woman was suitable but she had her reference book out of order and Mrs. Nguma dared not take her in.

By August she was destitute and I made application for her to receive pauper rations. This was turned down because she was married to a Rhodesian and "it was her duty to have gone to Rhodesia with her husband." In desperation I wrote to the local paper and told Mrs. Nguma's story in brief. This resulted in help from about 15 people, and I was able to keep the family going.

At the end of January, 1961, came a letter from her husband. The address was Bulawayo where he had just found a job, and he wanted me to send his family to him. This would cost between £20 and £30, but how can the bedridden old mother and the crippled child make the journey?

I cannot say how this tragic story will end.

CAPE EASTERN

The sale of Easter eggs and novelties proved a successful fund-raising venture for the Region in April.

Addo Branch have worked to arouse public interest in conditions in the Bontrug location, a survey of which is published elsewhere in this magazine.

The first multi-racial tea party was held at the end of April. Nine women were present and all were enthusiastic about planning similar meetings in the future.

Education Bill

DURING the first three months of 1961 Durban Sashers collected signatures against the Education Advisory Council Bill, working under the auspices of the Natal Education Vigilance Association.

Mrs. Jean Hill was the main organiser for the whole of Durban and district and was chiefly responsible for the collection of over 22,000 signatures. She is to be warmly congratulated on this tremendous undertaking.