

THE BLACK SASH

Vol. 1, No. 1

JANUARY, 1956

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INTRODUCING OUR GROUP

FOR some time now the leaders of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League have felt the necessity for a Newsletter which will report the activities of the League, keep the regional groups in touch with one another and discuss, in authoritative articles, aspects of the present constitutional crisis in South Africa.

In the middle of November a meeting was held in Johannesburg, at which the policy and aims of the Newsletter were discussed. The following principles of policy were agreed upon:—

1. The League is a pressure group, to be used for the restoration and encouragement of political morality and the preservation of Constitutional Government.
2. The League wants to make people realise their personal responsibilities in a democracy.
3. The League wishes to inform its members on political matters.
4. The League wishes to draw the two sections of the European population together.
5. The League is a bilingual group and wishes to encourage bilingualism.
6. The League wishes to disseminate news about its activities.

The mission of the Newsletter is thus a crusade, and it is in a crusading spirit that we hope to conduct it. A certain amount of moral indignation may be expected from us, and it will be justifiable. We are out to convince, not only our members, who know it already, but hundreds of thousands outside our ranks that the present Government is, first and fore-

ONS STEL ONS GROEP VOOR

MAG ons onself voorstel? Die leiers van die Vrouebond vir die Verdediging van die Grondwet het al geruime tyd die noodsaaklikheid besef van 'n Nuusbrief, wat verslag sal gee van die werksaamhede van die Bond, wat sal sorgdra dat die streke met mekaar in voeling bly en wat, in gesaghebbende artikels, aspekte van die huidige grondwetlike krisis in Suid-Afrika sal bespreek.

In middel November is 'n vergadering gehou in Johannesburg, waar die beleid en die doel van die Nuusbrief bespreek is. Die volgende beleidsbeginsels is vasgestel:—

1. Die Vrouebond is 'n groep om druk uit te oefen vir die herstel en bevordering van politieke sedelikheid en vir die instandhouding van Grondwetlike Regering.
2. Die Bond wil mense laat besef dat in 'n demokrasie, elkeen 'n persoonlike verantwoordelikheid het.
3. Die Bond wens lede in te lig oor politieke vraagstukke.
4. Die Vrouebond hoop om die twee seksies van die Europese bevolking saam te trek.
5. Die Bond is 'n tweetalige groep en strewe om tweetaligheid te bevorder.
6. Die Bond wil nuus versprei omtrent sy werksaamhede.

Die taak van die Nuusbrief is dus 'n kruistog en dit is in die gees van kruisvaarders dat ons die taak onderneem. 'n Sekere mate van verantwoordiging aan ons kant kan verwag word teen die rigting wat die Regering tans inslaan en dit is heeltemal geregverdig. Ons is daarop uit om, nie net ons lede nie, wat dit alreeds weet, maar duisende mense buite ons geledere te oor-

most, committing a grave spiritual offence against the soul of South Africa and that the country's honour is being besmirched. Our Constitution is something much more than words written down on a piece of paper. It was written by some of the wisest and greatest men in our history, not infallible, indeed, but endowed with the rare gift of sincerity. They had been through a very dark valley, and they strove to ensure that their country should be spared that agony again. Their object was "Strength Through Unity."

And now their work is, coldly and deliberately, being undone, not by the will of the people of South Africa, but by the leaders of the minority party bent on maintaining themselves in power at all costs. It is this

DEDICATION

IN pride and humbleness we declare our devotion to the land of South Africa, we dedicate ourselves to the service of our country, we re-affirm our loyalty to the contract of Union which brought us together. We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals by which our Union was inspired, of mutual trust and forbearance, of sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. We pledge ourselves to resist any diminishment of these, confident that this duty is required of us, and that history and our children will defend us.

So help us God, in Whose strength we trust.

degrading cynicism in the political life of our country that we must fight with all our strength.

But indignation, uninformed, is not always enough. We hope to supply our readers with facts and arguments which will demonstrate, not only the immorality of the Government's present course, but the folly of it, from the point of view of the country's material welfare and its danger in a divided world.

The name THE BLACK SASH was inevitable. For one South African who knows the formal title of the League there are thousands who have heard of the Black Sash Women. It is an honourable name. The Newsletter will try to uphold their ideals.

tuig dat die huidige Regeringsgroep voor alles 'n ernstige vergryp pleeg teen die siel van Suid-Afrika en dat die land se eer besoedel word. Ons Grondwet is baie meer as woorde op papier geskryf. Dit is geskryf deur van die verstandigste en grootste manne in ons geskiedenis — natuurlik nie onfeilbaar nie, maar toegerus met die seldsame gawe van opregtheid. Hulle weg het deur 'n donker dal gelei en hul strewe was om te voorkom dat hul land 'n tweede keer so'n foltering sou moet deurstaan. Hul doelwit was „Mag deur Eenheid.”

En nou word hul werk koelbloedig en opsetlik tot niet gemaak, nie deur die volkswil van Suid-Afrikaners nie, maar deur die leiers van 'n minderheidsgroep, wat daarop uit is om aan die bewind te bly, laat dit kos wat dit wil. Met ons hele vermoë moet ons veg teen hierdie verlagende sinisme in ons politieke lewe.

Maar verontwaardiging, sonder kennis, is nie altyd genoeg nie. Ons hoop om ons lede van feite en argumente te voorsien, wat nie net die onsedelikheid van die Regering se huidige gedraglyns sal bewys nie, maar ook die dwaasheid daarvan, waar dit die land se materiële welvaart betref en haar gevaar in 'n verdeelde wêreld.

Die naam, DIE SWART SERP, was onvermydelik. Vir elke Suid-Afrikaner, wat die for-

INTERIM NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

President:

Mrs. Ruth Foley

National Chair:

Mrs. Jean Sinclair

Senior Vice-Chair:

Mrs. Nell Green

Second Vice-Chair:

Mrs. E. Kirkness, Pretoria

Secretary:

Mrs. D. Dietrich

Treasurer:

Mrs. Dora Hill

Committee:

Mrs. M. Dey; Mrs. D. Rankin; Mrs. R. Fouche; Mrs. N. Davidoff

mele titel van die Vrouebond ken, is daar duisende wat van die Swartserpvroue gehoor het. Dis 'n eerbare naam. Die Nuusbrieff sal probeer om hul ideale te handhaaf.

DIE SENAAATWET: BELANGRIKE FEITE

ONS Grondwet, die „Zuid-Afrika Wet, 1909,” bepaal dat die Parlement bevoeg is om die wyse te reël waarop die Senaat na afloop van 'n tydperk van tien jaar vanaf die totstandkoming van die Unie saamgestel word. Die Regering het dus heeltemal konstitusioneel gehandel toe hulle die Senaat gedurende November 1955 ontbind het. Alle Senatore, behalwe die vier Naturelle-verteenwoordigers, moes toe hulle setels ontruim.

VERGELYKENDE SYFERS VAN NUWE EN OU SENAAAT

	Nuwe	Ou
(a) Senatore deur die Goewerneur-Generaal benoem	16	8
(Die helfte van die aldus benoemde Senatore word gekies op grond hoofsaaklik van hulle grondige kennis met die redelike behoeftes en wense van die gekleurde rasse in Suid-Afrika.)		
(b) Van elke Provinsie soveel Senatore as wat gelyk is aan een-vyfde van die gesamentlike aantal van Parlementêre kiesafdelings en Provinsiale kiesafdelings:		
Transvaal 68+68 gee	27	8
Kaapprovinsie 54+54 gee	22	8
O.V.S. 13+25 gee	8	8
Natal 15+25 gee	8	8
Suidwes-Afrika (2 benoem en 2 verkies)	4	4
Naturelle-verteenwoordigers	4	4

Die Regering het dit dus nodig geag om die Senaat byna tweemaal so groot as voorheen te maak. Die rede daarvoor word duidelik wanneer die syfers vir die gesamentlike sitting van albei Huise teen die end van hierdie artikel bespreek word.

VERKIESINGSMETODE

Senatore word nog, soos in die verlede, deur die sittende L.V.s en L.P.R.s gesamentlik gekies. In die verlede is die verkiesings volgens die beginsel van proporsionele verteenwoordiging gehou, waardeur elke kieser een oordraagbare stem gehad het. Hierdie inwikkelde stelsel het as gevolg gehad dat die minderheidsparty 'n sekere mate van verteenwoordiging geniet het. Die nuwe Senaatwet het hierdie stelsel afgeskaf en elke kieser het nou een nie-oordraagbare stem vir elke Senator wat verkies moet word. Natuurlik beteken so'n stelsel van 'n meerderheidstem dat die Regering, wat die meerderheid in Transvaal, die Kaapprovinsie en die O.V.S. besit, al die setels vir die drie Provinsies in die Senaat verkry.

Wat dit in die praktyk beteken is dat duisende teenstanders van die Regering in die twee grootste Provinsies hulle stemreg, wat die Senaat betref, verloor, iets wat heeltemal teenstrydig is met die beginsels van demokratiese goewerment.

GESKILLE TUSSEN DIE TWEE HUISE

Die Senaatwet bevat drie klousules wat voorsiening maak vir geskille tussen die twee Huise. Hulle is, kortliks:

- (a) Indien die Volksraad 'n wetsontwerp aanneem wat belastings oplê of met geld ten behoewe

van die Staatsdiens handel, en die Senaat dit in dieselfde sitting verwerp, dan kan die wetsontwerp aan die Goewerneur-Generaal vir sy handtekening voorgelê word.

- (b) Indien die Senaat enige ander wetsontwerp verwerp, moet daardie wetsontwerp met die volgende sitting weer deur die Volksraad aangeneem word. As die Senaat onverstandig genoeg is om dit vir die tweede keer te verwerp, dan mag dit ook aan die Goewerneur-Generaal voorgelê word.

Die vraag mag dan wel gestel word: Waarom dan 'n Senaat?

- (c) Gesamentlike sittings van albei Huise is nog nodig vir enige wetsontwerp wat betrekking het tot die verskanste klousules, nl. die kleur-lingstemreg en die gelyke taalregte.

Nou word dit duidelik waarom so'n groot Senaat nodig was. Daar is in die Volksraad 159 setels en in die Senaat 89. Die Regering moet verseker wees van twee-derdes van hierdie totaal van 248, nl. 166. Tel by die 94 Nasionale setels in die Volksraad die 77 Senatore wat saam met die Regering sal stem (dit sluit die 8 Natalse Senatore en die 4 Naturelle-verteenwoordigers uit), en die totaal van 171 gee die Regering baie maklik die begeerde meerderheid van twee-derdes—laat die Volkswil geskied!

M. E. FISHER

FEIT EN FANTASIE

DIE FANTASIE: Ag, hierdie Regering is darem nie so sleg nie—wat het hulle nou eintlik gedoen wat so erg is?

DIE FEITE: Nouja, dit hang natuurlik af van jou definisie van wat sleg is. As jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding dat die Senaat, waarin die minderheid ook geregtig is om 'n stem te hê—en vandag is jy heelwaarskynlik een van daardie minderheid—nou grotendeels uit 'n klomp Nasionale jabroers bestaan, wat die belastingbetaler—alweer jy—duisende pond per jaar gaan kos nie; as jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding om opsetlik die gemoedere van kindertjies—miskien ook jou kindertjies—te verdraai nie, sodat hulle vir ewig en altyd hulle medeburgers terwille van Strijdom en sy kliek sal haat; as jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding dat die Minister van Buitelandse Sake die mag het om jou paspoort te weier of te kanseleer sonder appél aan die Geregshof nie; as jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding om 'n pas te moet dra, soos hulle in die Kommunistiese lande moet doen nie; as jy dink dis nie 'n slegte ding dat die prys van alles wat jy moet koop daagliks styg, terwyl die Regering jou geld mors aan sulke goed soos die Bevolkingsregister en Staatsinligtingskantore wat heeldag aan 'n ongelowige wêreld verkondig wat 'n pragtige, wonderlike inrigting die Strijdomregering is nie; as jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding om jou vriende in 'n gevaarlike wêreld te beledig en vervreem nie; as jy meen dis nie 'n slegte ding om die land se ervare soldate in die pad te steek of om dit vir hulle onmoontlik te maak om soldate te bly nie; dan het jy gelyk—die Regering is tog nie so sleg nie—en, wraggies, dan verdien jy ook net so'n Regering!

THREADS FROM THE SASH

WE understand that the Minister who recently addressed his constituents at HAENERTSBURG, Transvaal, was considerably depressed at having an audience only of eight. Nevertheless, we are not sure that he was grateful that 12 Black Sash women augmented the numbers.

* * *

NOTHING reveals our essential unity more clearly than an episode at NABOOMSPRUIT, when Pretoria visited it for a first Black Sashing. At a meeting afterwards, to form a branch, two women who spoke only Afrikaans wept with joy to find themselves at last members of a group of loyal South Africans. Pretoria was as greatly moved.

* * *

CENTRAL CAPE reports that mail from Johannesburg is arriving in a condition which denotes either gross carelessness in handling, or an interest on somebody's part in the contents.

* * *

IN October PORT ELIZABETH was honoured by a visit from the Minister of Defence. It is a pity that he found it necessary to avoid those who most desired to welcome him—thus repeating a pattern of behaviour first exhibited at BRAKPAN.

* * *

A SPECIAL vote of thanks goes out to those who have organised the Black Sashing of a Minister in their area without contact with headquarters. SKUKUZA, MIDDELBURG (Transvaal), BARKLY EAST and IXOPO are four areas that we know of. If there are any more, please tell us!

* * *

IN an article in "The Forum" on the Black Sash, written by a Strijdom supporter, we read that "jokes were bandied about good-naturedly among the delegates" to a Nationalist Party Congress at BLOEMFONTEIN. The Black Sash women who attended this Congress and listened to these "good-natured" jokes, suggest gently that a carbolic mouth-wash should be used by such "jokers." Their "jokes" so offended a member of their own party, that he was moved to enter the hall and remonstrate with Mr. Strijdom about them.

* * *

WE congratulate MIDDELBURG (Cape) and WHITE RIVER on the enthusiasm for our League shown among the younger generation. The progress of a nation depends on the quality of its youth.

* * *

SOME time ago, a country contact was asked to form a branch of the League in her town. She wrote: "I am afraid I could not find sufficient workers willing to face the inevitable ostracism in social life and boycott in the business world." We

are warmly grateful to all those in similar difficult areas who have had the courage to face these fears and prove them groundless. The less courageous will not, we hope, refuse to participate in the future benefits reaped by the courage and faith of their fellow women.

* * *

AN ESTANCIA sympathiser writes: "Ignorance of the SIGNIFICANCE of what is happening, on the part of both political parties, is a danger." It must be our first task to enlighten our members through our Newsletter.

* * *

WE thank DURBAN for their excellent suggestion that members should give ten-minute talks, during the tea-break interval, to employees at women's stores.

SASHER

O.F.S. REGION "HAUNTS" CABINET MINISTERS

On August 30, Mrs. N. Green and Mrs. M. Kerr addressed a meeting of women in Bloemfontein and a Branch was formed, with Mrs. H. O'Connor as Chairwoman, and Mrs. R. Kruger as Secretary. (At a later meeting Mrs. P. Ollemans was elected as Vice-Chair.) The following day a meeting was held at Westminster and a Branch formed there, with Mrs. R. Wood as Chairwoman and Mrs. N. Gilbert as Secretary.

The test of the Branch came on September 13, when a Nationalist Congress opened. Black Sash women from Bloemfontein and Westminster took up their positions before the Congress opened and were rudely pushed and jostled by members of the Jeugbond and others. After the Prime Minister had entered the hall several sashes were snatched or torn and four of the women were forced into the foyer. Reinforcements from Johannesburg and the Reef towns were hurried to Bloemfontein to give support to the local members. Their coming was greatly appreciated and a strong bond of comradeship was forged. The women continued to "haunt" the Ministers during their stay in Bloemfontein and ended up by pursuing Mr. Schoeman when he took a trip by rail trolley through the Free State to Coalbrook. A party of Black Sashers followed and awaited him at every stopping place. Finally at Coalbrook they joined up with women who had come down from Johannesburg to meet him.

In the last week of September Mrs. Penelope Bond and Miss Margaret Bond of the Johannesburg Branch offered to do a recruiting tour of the Eastern Free State. They were accompanied by Mrs. O'Connor and Mrs. Ollemans. Meetings were held at Harrismith, Bethlehem, Ficksburg, Westminster and Wepener. A Branch was formed in Harrismith and Bethlehem members decided to form part of that Branch, while Ficksburg linked up with West-

THE BULL AND THE BLACK SASH



(With acknowledgments to Bob Connolly and the "Rand Daily Mail")

minster. Useful contacts were made at Wepener, and a later visit resulted in the formation of a Branch there.

In all these places it was noticeable that there was considerable fear of joining the movement, either through fear of causing ill-feeling among neighbours, or through husbands' fears of intimidation or of losing business. In many cases these fears are unfounded but they are difficult to counter, so that it is a very hard struggle in the Free State. The most successful Branch is the Westminster one,

where the members have not only given freely to the funds of the League, but are also active members. Bloemfontein has the highest number of members but only a very small minority are prepared to do any sashing, so that the whole burden falls on a small handful of women.

Senator de Klerk was "haunted" on his five-day visit to Bloemfontein at the end of October, and on one "haunt" clerks of the P.W.D. threw stink bombs, hoping vainly that the Black Sash women would be forced to move.

THE STORY OF THE WOMEN'S DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTION LEAGUE

A GROUP of silent women, each wearing a black sash to which is fastened a white card bearing the words „EERBIEDIG ONS GRONDWET”—that is a familiar sight to-day in all the larger cities and in many of the smaller towns of South Africa. The curious, the uninformed, the tourist from abroad, all ask: “What are they doing? How did it begin?”

It began with the meeting on a bright Sunday morning in May, 1955, of six women, Mrs. Jean Sinclair, Mrs. Ruth Foley, Mrs. Elizabeth McLaren, Miss Tertia Pybus, Mrs. Jean Bosazza and Mrs. Helen Newton-Thompson. A meeting of citizens of Johannesburg to protest against the Senate Bill had been called for Wednesday, May 25, and these women, angered that the Government should dare to tamper with the Constitution, felt that the women should take action, and decided to march to the protest meeting. They 'phoned their friends, who in turn 'phoned their friends, banners were prepared, the Press co-operated with front page news, and on the Wednesday afternoon Johannesburg saw 2,500 women march in silence from Joubert Park to the City Hall. There, among others, Mrs. Hoernle spoke, moving many to tears.

Overseas newspaper and cameramen were deeply impressed, but not more so than the women. So deep was the emotion aroused in that historic march, so great the resentment at this piece of political cynicism, that a meeting was called a week later to consider further action. Fifty women came, and a Committee of twelve was elected with Mrs. Ruth Foley as Chair, and Mrs. Jean Sinclair as Vice-Chair. It was decided that two petitions would be organised, one to the Governor-General, asking him not to sign the Bill, the second, in the event of his refusal, to the Prime Minister, petitioning him to repeal the Act or resign from office. These petitions were to be signed by women only.

TIME was of the essence. The Senate Bill was being debated in Parliament, and this newly-formed Women's Defence of the Constitution League had at best two weeks in which to collect the signatures. The more cautious begged the women to desist from an impossible task. Difficult it was, but not impossible. The preamble to the petition to the Governor-General, a piece of fine prose and reasoned argument, was printed by Friday, and that week-end petitions were sent out to 290 towns in the Union, to unknown people in the faith and belief that the country must feel as the women of Johannesburg did. That faith was not misplaced. In spite of postal delays, difficulties of communication, amateur organisation and lack of money, 100,000 signatures were collected from women in ten days, 25,000 from country districts alone, and many from Nationalist centres in spite of evident fear of reprisals.

Mrs. Foley visited the main centres of the Union. Pretoria too was mobilised, and almost overnight the Women's Defence of the Constitution became world news. On June 16th Mrs. Green, the League's Secretary, flew to Cape Town with the petitions, which were presented to the Governor-General, but in vain. The Bill was signed, Parliament rose, and the Prime Minister was asked to meet a deputation

in Pretoria to present the second petition. He refused, and appointed Mr. Schoeman his deputy. Women from the length and breadth of the Union gathered in Pretoria. Banners bore the names of every town and village where the petition had been signed, and the silent march to the Union Buildings took place. The dramatic 48-hour vigil in the grounds of the Buildings had had to be kept secret and divulged to League members only just before the march. Yet sixty slept there on that freezing night of June 28, and over a hundred on the second night. A deep spiritual feeling of comradeship made hardship trivial, and determination took deeper root.

The women dispersed. The vigil was over. Government newspapers proclaimed that the protest had ended.

Then the second phase began. On July 18 Cabinet Ministers saw the first four women begin a vigil at the Union Buildings, a vigil which was to be maintained on every working day until Parliament should sit again in January, and on the following day for the first time in history a Cabinet Minister returning from Europe was met at the Airport by twenty-four silent women whose black sashes bore the words „EERBIEDIG ONS GRONDWET.” He and his colleagues were soon to learn the meaning of that emblem and those words, addressed to their consciences.

THE “Black Sash,” Jean Sinclair's brilliantly simple idea, captured the imagination of the world, and more and more women came forward to join the League and to be a constant reproach to the men responsible for dishonouring the Covenant of Union. Day by day the organisation grew and spread. No Cabinet Minister could feel safe from reproach in his comings and goings, no Nationalist Party Congress but saw the silent mourners.

But “Black Sashing” was only the outward symbol, as it were, of the work of the League. Public lectures, drawing-room meetings, formation of branches, propaganda and pamphlets, all these were designed to inform the public and awaken South Africa to the death of democracy in her midst. Never before had the women of this country been so politically conscious, or so firmly drawn together, irrespective of their party-political affiliations, in one common effort.

Demonstrations were planned for all important political occasions. On August 10, at the nomination of Nationalist Party Senators, Black Sash women invested the Raadzaal in Pretoria, and on November 12, after the dissolution of the Senate, great demonstrations took place in thirty-five South African cities and towns. In Johannesburg thousands of women again marched through the city carrying a great book draped with a black sash, symbolising the Constitution, and stood in vigil around it all of that day. In Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Bloemfontein, East London, Pretoria, and many Reef and country towns, women showed their protest in similar fashion. On November 25, the day of the election of the new Senate, the four Provincial capitals saw further protests by the women of the League, while other centres held silent vigil.

FROM that first Sunday morning tea party in May a great organisation had grown until it became necessary to hold the first National Conference which took place in Port-Elizabeth on November 29 and 30. This was followed by the election of an interim National Executive to organise and correlate the whole of the nation-wide activity of the League. With the opening of Parliament on January 13, 1956, the

Black Sash women again demonstrated their unchanging protest against the Senate Act and all that it means to South Africa. As long as the Government continues on its catastrophic course, so long will the Black Sash be seen as the emblem of the anger of the ordinary people of South Africa against a politically immoral regime.

HOW THE SENATE ACT WORKS

OUR Constitution, the South Africa Act of 1909, provides that Parliament may change the structure of the Senate any time after the expiration of ten years from the date of Union, so that the Government acted constitutionally in dissolving the Senate in November, 1955. All Senators then vacated their seats, except the four Natives' Representatives.

COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR NEW SENATE AND OLD

	New	Old
(a) Senators nominated by Governor-General	16	8
(One half of such Senators to be selected on the ground of their thorough acquaintance with the reasonable wants and desires of the coloured races of S.A.)		
(b) From each Province elected Senators equal to number of Parliamentary electoral divisions plus number of Provincial electoral divisions, total divided by five:		
Transvaal 68+68 gives	27	8
Cape 54+54 gives	22	8
O.F.S. 13+25 gives	8	8
Natal 15+25 gives	8	8
South West Africa (2 nominated and 2 elected)	4	4
Natives' Representatives	4	4
Total	89	48

The Government has thus seen fit almost to double the size of the Senate. The reason becomes apparent when the figures for the Joint Sitting of the two Houses of Parliament are considered later in this article.

METHOD OF ELECTION

Senators have always been elected by a joint sitting of the M.P.s and M.P.C.s in each Province. The voting was conducted on the principle of proportional representation, each voter having one transferable vote, an intricate system designed to give the minority party a certain measure of representation. The new Senate Act abolishes this system, giving each voter one non-transferable vote for each Senator to be elected. By this system of straight majority voting the Government, which has the majority in the Transvaal, the Cape and the O.F.S., naturally makes a clean sweep in the election of Senators in these three Provinces.

The practical result of this system of voting is that in the two major Provinces of the Union thousands of non-Government supporters are disfranchised as regards the Senate, a practice contrary to the principles of democratic government.

DISAGREEMENT OF HOUSES

The Senate Act contains three clauses providing for a disagreement between the Houses. They are, briefly, as follows:

- Should any Bill imposing taxation or dealing with public moneys be passed by the House of Assembly and rejected by the Senate, it may then go straight to the Governor-General for his signature and become part of the law of the land.
- Any other Bill, passed by the House of Assembly and rejected by the Senate, must come up again at the next Session. Should the Senate again be foolish enough to reject it, it too may be sent to the Governor-General for his signature.

It may well be asked: Why have a Senate?

- Joint sittings of the two Houses are still required for any Bill referring to the entrenched clauses, namely, the Coloured Vote and the equal language rights.

It now becomes apparent why the Senate had to be so greatly increased in size. The House of Assembly has 159 seats, the Senate 89. Of this total of 248 the Government must be sure of two-thirds, namely, 166. Add to their 94 seats in the House of Assembly the 77 Senators likely to vote with the Government (this excludes eight Natal Senators and Four Natives' Representatives) and the total of 171 gives the Nationalists a comfortable margin—let the Volkswil be done!

M. E. FISHER

NOTES FROM WITBANK

ON November 25, four of our members did "silent vigil" outside the Witbank Post Office and the Magistrate's Court from 10 o'clock to 3 o'clock. They changed positions every half hour; 18 women took part and 15 new members were recruited.

On December 12, our demonstration took the form of "black sashing" and a prayer meeting. Four Black Sashers stood outside the Witbank Post Office from 10.30 to 11.30, while five women stood outside the Magistrate's Court.

After the sashing, a short prayer meeting conducted by the Rev. Wm. Croll, assisted by the Rev. Mr. McKay, was held in King George Park.

T. BELL

DIE SWART SERP

REGIONAL CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

BLOEMFONTEIN

C. Mrs. H. O'Connor, P.O. Box 245.
S. Mrs. S. Kruger, 5 Friendholme, West-
burger Street.

CAPE TOWN

C. Mrs. E. Stott, 6 Bishop's Court Road,
Newlands.
S. Mrs. M. Henderson, Cranborne House,
Salisbury Road, Wynberg.

DURBAN

C. Mrs. D. W. Barker, 65 North Ridge
Road.
S. Mrs. M. Scott, 77 Ridge Road.

DURBAN NORTH

C. Mrs. Bance, 65 Balmoral Drive.
S. Mrs. Langshaw, 43 Balmoral Drive.

EAST LONDON

C. Mrs. D. Curry, 3 Carisbrooke Road,
Stirling Ext.
S. Mrs. B. Spence, 20 Conniston Court,
30 St. Peter's Road.

JOHANNESBURG

C. Mrs. B. Barker, 6 Porter Avenue,
Melrose North.
S. Mrs. E. Maclaren, 28 The Valley Road,
Westcliff.

KIMBERLEY

C. Mrs. M. Hitchman, 2a Dalham Road.
S. Mrs. K. Smith, 11 Lodge Road.

MARITZBURG

C. Mrs. M. Corrigan, Midhouse, Swart
Road.
S. Mrs. G. Wildman, 419 Prince Alfred
Street.

PORT ELIZABETH

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