

At the Cape Western Regional Conference held on Monday 15th April, the following were elected to the REGIONAL COUNCIL :-

CHAIRMAN. Mrs. M. Petersen.

VICE-CHAIRMEN. Mrs. E. Stott and Mrs. N. Robb.

SECRETARY. Miss F. Thorne. TREASURER. Mrs. B. Willis.

Mrs. H. Spottiswoode. Mrs. M. Roberts. Mrs. M. Birt. Mrs. M. Stoy.

Mrs. M. Henderson. Mrs. H. Struben. Mrs. J. Pare. Miss M. Dent.

Mrs. N. le Feuvre. Mrs. N. Day.

DEMONSTRATIONS.

There have been several stands since the last newsletter. On 25th Feb. the Sash stood outside Parliament during the 2nd reading of the Police Amendment Bill.

There were at least 222 women in the stand against the University Apartheid Bill on 15th March. This stand was round the islands in Adderley Street, and at the bottom of the Avenue.

Again, on 21st March, the Sash stood outside Parliament in protest during the 2nd reading of the Native Laws Amendment Bill.

On the night of 2nd May, with, at the most, nine hours notice, 225 of our members stood round Parliament at 9.45 p.m. This coincided exactly with the 3rd reading of the Native Laws Amendment Bill. Just after 10 p.m. the House rose and each Member of Parliament had to pass the rows of silent women on his way home.

COUNTRY ACTIVITIES.

40 members from SOMERSET WEST, STELLENBOSCH, DURBANVILLE and ELGIN sashed the arrival of Dr. Vervoerd at a meeting in the Stellenbosch Town Hall. There was the usual counter demonstration by students. After 10 minutes of question time Mrs. Spottiswoode asked Dr. Vervoerd a question about Government interference with Universities. An answer was given and then the meeting was promptly closed, though 30 minutes of question time had been promised.

In HERMANUS and SOMERSET WEST sashers stood to mark the tabling of the University Apartheid Bill on March 16th. On March 21st all country branches took part in a mass stand to mark the 2nd reading of the Native Laws Amendment Bill.

ALL BRANCHES MEETINGS.

All members are welcome at the All Branches meetings which are held at the Cecil Hotel every first Monday of the month at 2 p.m.

NATIVE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL CONFERENCE.

On May 4th an all day conference, sponsored by the Black Sash, Institute of Race Relations, National Council of Women and Civil Rights League, was held to discuss what could be done to prevent the Native Laws Amendment Bill from being implemented.

This Conference was largely the result of efforts which had been made during the past two months by the Cape Western Region of the Black Sash to bring about concerted action on the part of all organisations affected by the Bill.

The delegates at the Conference voted in favour of the following resolution which will be placed before their respective committees for ratification.

"As each of these organisations represented at this conference is in fact fulfilling a vital function in the community there can be no question of any one of them permitting itself to die.

"It is therefore unavoidable that a multi-racial status quo be preserved in every case, and accordingly this conference recommends to its constituent organisations that :-

- a) All such organisations should continue to function as before and stand together as one united body.
- b) Each and every one of the organisations represented here should lend its full support to any one or more of them singled out for attack by the Government under the Bill.
- c) That ways and means be devised to give effect to (a) and (b)".

A continuing committee was elected by the delegates to explore practical means of concerted action; to organise a protest march in Cape Town on Saturday 18th May and call a similar conference at National levels.

VERY IMPORTANT.

Please remember that when wearing sashes we do not talk, whisper or figet in any way whatsoever.

BRANCH COMMITTEES.

Our congratulations and grateful thanks go to all the Branch Chairmen and their hard-working Committees over last year. Within two months of the Regional Conference all Branches will have elected their new Chairs and committees. Good luck to them!

BLACK SASH BIRTHDAY.

25th May marks the second birthday of the Black Sash. Much has been done during the past two years, but there remains much more to do.

CIVIC AFFAIRS.

It is quite clear that the Cape Town City Council has no intention of co-operating with the Government's policy of apartheid. Its answer to the proposals of the Skakel Committee for Van Riebeeck's Day is confirmation of that. On the other hand, pressure from the Provincial Administrator for Apartheid at Steenbras, has forced the Council to vote money for separate facilities for coloured visitors. This move was strongly opposed by some Councillors.

Councillor Honikman's motion of March 28th against University Apartheid was passed by 15 to 2. It is unfortunate that so few Councillors considered the motion of sufficient importance even to vote.

Members of the Black Sash, who are eligible are urged to join rate-payers associations and to see that they are on the voters roll. It is only by taking an active share in Civic affairs that it is possible to ensure that the Council will continue to guard the interests of all citizens.

NATIVE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL PROTEST MARCH.

Two days before the March Sashers helped in arousing public interest by distributing multi-coloured pamphlets in the city, and the day before, a convoy of 25 placarded cars drove through the city for an hour while hoppers distributed more pamphlets. 300 large posters had been on motor cars for 4 days beforehand.

The Protest March by members of all sections of the community took place in Cape Town on the morning of Saturday 18th May, to demonstrate against the Native Laws Amendment Bill. Starting in Dock Road, where a loud bell tolled for half an hour before the March, the procession accompanied by two bands advanced up St. George's Street six abreast, carrying banners which declared in English and Afrikaans, "We claim the right to freedom of worship" and "We claim the right to freedom of association". The Protest March was led by Bishop Lavis, the Dean Cape Town, Professor Beinart (Race Relations and Civil Rights), Mrs. Grieve (N.C.W.), Mrs. Petersen (Black Sash), and the Rev. Brown (Church Council).

The Dean, the Very Rev. T.J. Savage, gave a short address which began, "This great gathering is not an act of defiance but an act of duty". He continued, "Whatever our position in the world whatever our race or colour, in prayer before the Throne of God we are all equal and no State official can take away from us our right to approach our Heavenly Father together as His children."

PROPAGANDA.

The trouble with this Department is that it seems either to include everything the Sash does, or to find itself emptied of all content by the activities of Demonstrations, Education, and Parliamentary Sub-committees. The tendency is rather to swing from feeling that one is required to run the whole show to feeling that one is getting in everybody's way.... But to our muttons: one tangible achievement is the eventual appearance of a long-awaited booklet of four excellent talks organised by Cape Western's Education Sub-committee last year. They are "Principles of Constitutional Government", by Professor Beinart; "The Background to the South African Constitution", by Professor L.M. Thompson; "The Curtailment of our Liberties", by Advocate Gerald Gordon, and "The Challenge and our Response" by Professor Monica Wilson. This liberal education, stimulatingly presented, is offered at the remarkable price of one shilling!

Still "on the stocks" are assorted notions in diverse stages of development: leaflets to bring home to the ordinary citizen how direly current legislation can affect us all; letters to the Press as a regular contribution to Sash propaganda in which the members of all Branches should share; a wider distribution of the Black Sash Magazine, especially outside the circles of the converted; spreading the Sash message by means of motor-car rear-window "stickers", and other such small persistent reminders.

Things are looking up for this Sub-committee now that Mrs. Struben has consented to bring her talent and energies (strangely unexhausted by magnificent success at Fund-Raising) to its service. Its vital Press-liaison work has been most ably carried on by Mrs. Stott, since Mrs. Power went overseas: Sashers will not need telling that our press publicity has been maintained at a level of effectiveness that is unusually high for any organisation that has reached the stage where news-value novelty has worn off it, in the Editorial assessment of public opinion.

FUND RAISING.

The final Fund Raising total for April 1956 to March 1957, was a very praiseworthy one. The Branches raised £1,210 and the Regional Council £645, making a total of £1,856. Fifteen Branches exceeded their targets, whereas only two did not "get there". This is a wonderful effort, and we hope the result will be as good this year. Your Editors, "BLACK" and "SERP".