

1, Kildare Road,
Claremont, Cape.

Dear Sashers,

In these days of violence and sensation, we find it difficult to sit down and write about normal, everyday events in the Sash. Scarcely is the newsprint dry and the newspapers delivered to us, with ever more depressing news, than something new hits the headlines and yesterday's news is dead and to-day's news is even more terrifying. "The pendulum can only swing so far" is a thought that carries many people through and one can only hope that these few weeks are a turning point and perhaps betoken a swing from our very Dark South Africa to the wonderful future that we in the Sash envisage for our country.

Those of you who were able to attend our monthly All Branches meeting last Monday, will have carried away with you the memory of a truly touching and unforgettable scene. Mrs. Ballinger was presented with a white-gold Sash badge, as a token of our esteem, on her enforced retirement from Parliament and few could fail to be moved by the words of Mrs. Petersen, Mrs. Stott and Mrs. Roberts, apart from those spoken by Mrs. Ballinger herself. Her talk on the "Pass Laws" was most informative and, as was said at the time, we look forward to seeing her take her rightful place in Parliament once more.

At the All Branches meeting, ways and means were discussed for providing practical help for distressed Africans in the locations and it was agreed that members should try to collect money and send it into the office. C.E. and Cape Western would work out the best way of using the money, in co-ordination with existing parties who were organising relief. There are those who may feel that now most have gone back to work, no money is needed **but** they must bear in mind the numbers of women and children who have been left destitute by the death or arrest of their menfolk. This is something everyone can do and however small each amount donated, it will add up to a useful total. It is not enough to sit "cluck-clucking" sympathetically, this is your chance to know you really have helped.

One of the best meetings the Sash has ever arranged was held at the Claremont Civic Centre on Monday, March 28th. It was addressed by Dr. H.J. Simons who explained the exact meaning of the Pass Laws, by Mrs. E. Stott who spoke of the human suffering and hardship which are caused by the Pass Laws and citing cases with which she personally had come in contact, and Mr. Donald Molteno who gave his solution to the Pass problem.

We feel that those who were not at the meeting will be much enlightened by the new leaflet on Passes which was handed out at that meeting and which has been highly praised by all who have read it. Those who have not seen it should obtain copies for themselves and their friends from the office for, after reading this pamphlet, no reasonable person will be able to argue that passes are essential to law and order, peace and happiness. We have ordered an especially large quantity to meet the demand.

It would be appropriate here to remind you that the need for help in the Bail Fund office becomes increasingly urgent. Only twelve women are working there and many more are needed. One morning per week or even per fortnight would ease the situation enormously so please phone Mrs. Jolly (69-4582) and tell her that you will help. This appeal is to the distressingly large number of women who really do very little for us - or for any other organisation. Please don't turn a deaf ear to this appeal, nor say you don't know anything about the work and wouldn't know what to do. Every bit of help that is offered will be welcome and usefully used, and the experience gained will be most enriching.

Before the regulations became particularly sticky, we were able to organise a stand outside Parliament in opposition to the Banning Bill. Members stood in groups of eleven, in shifts from 2 until 4 and although the public galleries were full, some of those who were "off duty" managed to listen to the debate in the House.

At the March All-Branches meeting an appeal for help was made for clothes, money, books or writing materials for banned

persons. Anything that you would like to give would be welcome and everything would be useful, if not for the banned persons themselves, but for their families, generally left destitute and in dire need of help.

We asked Mrs. Henderson to tell us what plans have been made for Union Day. It seems strange to be considering such a thing but plans HAVE been made and we hope they will be able to be carried out. Mrs. Henderson says "Since last quarterly news sheet, the main activity of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Archbishop's Conference has been **planning** of the procession and dedication ceremony on Union Day. The procession will assemble on the foreshore at 11 a.m. and the ceremony will take place in the Drill Hall at 12 noon. Conference is being recalled on Saturday, 9th April to make all the final arrangements. A very wide cross-section of the community has been invited in an effort to get the widest possible support for the procession and ceremony. To have any real significance we will need thousands of people present on that day and planning is going on as to ways and means of publicising it. One plan, produced by the Black Sash, together with an offer to carry it out, has been accepted by the Co-ordinating Committee and that is to distribute a large number of balloons, with a suitable slogan on them, together with leaflets, in town and the suburbs on the Saturday morning before Union Day. Thousands of leaflets will also be distributed. Do please make every effort to bring as many people as possible to this procession and ceremony which WILL be symbolic of the feelings so many South Africans of all races.

Turning to the lighter side, we have to thank Mrs. Mary Schurr of Bellville Branch for her account of the picnic which Elgin branch organised. Mrs. Schurr says "On Sunday March 20th, the Elgin Black Sash branch organised a very enjoyable picnic at Mrs. Watermeyer's farm. We followed the arrows from Granny Smith's stall, as requested, sometimes wondering whether we were on the right road and we eventually came to the farm. We found a lovely picnic site under lots of trees, next to the river. Tables were under the trees, with vegetables, fruit and jams for sale, with cool drinks, and at another, members of Elgin Branch had prepared food.

"About 90 people were present and the very good cold lunch and excellent coffee was much enjoyed by all. After lunch, first the younger and then the older ones bathed in the river; it was really lovely picnic weather. After tea, served with delicious home-made biscuits, most of us left for home. Everyone enjoyed the day out and we are most grateful to Elgin for a very happy day."

We close this letter on a very sad note. It is with the deepest regret that we report the death of Mrs. John Syme. Few Sash members did not know her personally and her enthusiasm was such that the dullest and most unpleasant job was tackled by her with her unfailing good humour. We have her to thank for most of our wonderfully professional posters. No matter how busy she was, nothing was too much trouble for her. She gave invaluable help in both the Regional and the Bail Fund offices every week and she will be mourned not only by us, but by her African friends. The Sash has had no more ardent member nor one more deeply loved and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

"BLACK" and "SERP".