

Were You on the Voters' Roll?

SASHERS IN ACTION

EARLY in the morning my friend and I set up a registration table in the middle of our shopping centre and waited for our first customers. We did not wait long. We were well known in our small town, so people stopped to chat. Soon business became brisk. We had our moments of fun and our moments of irritation. There were those who, when asked if they were on the voters' roll, tossed their heads and marched off without answering; and those who took it for granted and walked on without checking. Others thought it was all a huge joke.

Mrs. J, a thorn in our flesh at every election, satisfied herself that she was on the roll and then left in a huff because we refused to cross off her neighbour, who she was *sure* would vote for the republic! One woman went to great lengths to explain to her companion how to vote, but as the companion seemed bewildered, she rapped out: "Dolly, you *must* vote, and see that you vote properly. Remember, even ONE vote can get Verwoerd out and the Queen in!"

Very Indignant

An elderly woman became very indignant when she found she was not on the roll. "Born and bred here," she muttered, "lived here all my life." Questioning revealed that she had never signed a registration card. When the little green card was handed to her, she exclaimed angrily: "Ask for permission to vote? Never! Why should I? This government is really going too far." She stalked off, still muttering.

A flood of commercial college students who attended lectures near by suddenly poured round our table, gaping and whispering. "Any 18-year-olds?" we asked. "Here, here!" they cried, pushing a struggling youth towards us. The youth flushed and shuffled his feet while we assured him there was nothing to worry about. Finally he confessed that

"I know I really should have registered as a voter, but it's so difficult to find time. Mondays I always have my bridge club, Tuesday is the maid's day off . . ."
— *Cape Times.*



he hadn't any money. "But it's free," we explained. "Free!" The cry went up, and several students came forward to be "done". Thereafter whenever classes were dismissed we shouted: "Come and register! All 18-year-olds free!" and no doubt thinking they were getting bargain prices for the day only, many took the plunge.

An African came to register. I had known that it would happen sooner or later, but, cravenly, had hoped that someone else would be sitting there to cope with such a situation. I explained carefully that this was for registered voters only, and that it had nothing to do with us. But what could I say when he pointed out that he wanted to vote against the republic, and that this was his country? "Immigrants come across the seas and they can vote, but I, who was born here, cannot vote," he said. I was as uncomfortable as if I had personally deprived him of his vote. He went on arguing, and although I hated using the phrase "whites only" in the end I had to. There was no other way of convincing him that he could not fill in the card.

As he walked off, I thought how ironical it was that this man was pleading for the right to vote while the young students across the street had to be persuaded to make use of the vote they had.

— SHEILA NEWMAN.

I notice that a lot of people in the Press say that we are all small men in Parliament. Well, I think we represent the public and the Press pretty well, and, therefore, if we are small the people outside must be small, too.

— Mr. R. A. Butler.