

Mrs. BALLINGER'S RESIGNATION

MRS. BALLINGER'S resignation from the leadership of the Liberal Party has come as a great blow. But to say that her decision was unexpected would be untrue.

For some time Mrs. Ballinger has felt that it was no longer possible for her to continue to carry the dual burden of her responsibilities as a representative of African voters and those which her position as leader of the Liberal Party entailed. Her burden was undoubtedly made greater by the Party's inability, for financial reasons, to provide its leadership with the organisational support which it was entitled to expect. As a result, as leader of the Party, Mrs. Ballinger found herself involved in additional responsibility and worry which should never have been hers. She has carried all this nobly for two and a half years, even at considerable cost to her own health.

The first two and a half years of the Liberal Party's life have not been easy ones. It was not to be expected that they would be. The early days of a new organisation are bound to be difficult. Ordinary members of the Party will probably never know all that Mrs. Ballinger has done during this time. But those who have worked with her will, and they will have learnt to appreciate the great value of her practical experience and good-sense.

As leader of the Party Mrs. Ballinger will be greatly missed. It is good to know that she will still be with us as a member, as a counsellor and as a friend.

PARTY NEWS

NATIONAL AND CAPE

The National Committee will be meeting in Cape Town on January 14th. In addition to routine matters for discussion the Agenda will include the questions of the Party's Agricultural policy, a Constitutional policy, and that of the appointment of a new leader in Mrs. Ballinger's place.

The Cape Provincial Congress will be held over the same week-end as the National Committee meeting. It will commence with a public meeting which will probably be held in the Banqueting Hall of the Cape Town City Hall on the night of January 13th. On December 23rd a Christmas Dance will be held in Cape Town to raise funds. It is hoped to sell something in the region of 1,000 tickets.

The first printing of the Handbook has already sold out and a further issue has been ordered and should soon be available.

The second meeting of the Eastern Province Regional Association of the Party took place at Grahamstown on November 27th. Members from Port Elizabeth, East London, Grahamstown, Alice and Kingwilliamstown attended. These meetings are held occasionally to afford members of the region an opportunity to meet one another and to discuss matters of common interest. On this occasion the meeting was also held to enable members to discuss and finalise resolutions for the Cape Provincial Congress. The chairmanship and secretaryship of the Association rotate amongst branches and at this meeting, Mr. Stuart, of the Alice Branch was elected as chairman in succession to Mr. David Lang of Port Elizabeth.

TRANSVAAL

After a lull in activity while many members were working for Dr. Friedmann, the Party has resumed work with the greatest vigour and the last six weeks have been some of the most active and profitable in the history of the Division.

Here are some of the things which have been done. Two successful and widely-publicised meetings have been held in collaboration with other organisations to protest against the police raids. A successful members' meeting was held, despite the fact that bad weather kept a number of people away. Three hundred pounds has been raised in donations from sources outside the Party. Four well-attended house-meetings have been held, and a number of new members enrolled as a result. A new branch of the Party has also been started in Kimberley. Finally,

a statement by the chairman, protesting against South Africa's withdrawal from UNO, was given prominence on the front page of one of the Johannesburg newspapers.

NATAL

In Natal a public meeting was held at Edendale on November 19th. Speakers were Jordan Ngubane, Hans Meidner and Peter Brown, with Dr. E. Cassim in the chair. The meeting was followed by a lively discussion and a number of new members were recruited to the Edendale Branch.

Finding that a public meeting, scheduled to take place at Pentrich on December 4th, would have clashed with local festivities, it will now take place later in the month. It is hoped that this will lead to a branch being formed in Pentrich. House-meetings have been held in Durban on two occasions during the month and new members have been brought in. In the first fortnight of December two others were planned, one for Stanger and one for Raisethorpe. The Coastal Region will round off its activities for the year with a braaivleis to be held at Kloof.

The last month has been a most successful one as far as fund-raising goes. Donations from members and non-members have brought in close on a hundred pounds and the Inland Region of the Party conducted a most successful Christmas Gift Stall in Maritzburg, which made over fifty pounds. Next year we will aim higher and hold the same sort of stall, on a provincial basis, in Durban.

Final drafts of a new pamphlet in Zulu are being worked out. The pamphlet is in two sections, the first dealing with the rôle of the Liberal Party in South Africa, and the second summarising the Handbook. Once the draft is complete, printers' quotations will be obtained for printing the pamphlet in Zulu, Xhosa and S. Sotho.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

May I comment upon Debit No. 1 in the Liberal Balance Sheet of the October issue of *Contact*?

I do not know exactly what "the colour problem" is to which Mr. Adam Clayton Powell refers. I do not know the standards by which he measures such a problem. But the implication of your report is that there exist in Great Britain forms of discrimination or inequality with which any South African is familiar. Hence it is recorded by you as a debit.

My impressions, in two places outside London, have been different. In London itself, when I arrived in England a month ago, I saw no colour bar in restaurant or on bus; in the train to Cambridge an Indian was one of the six in my compartment; in Cambridge I have yet to see an instance of discrimination on grounds of race or colour; the same can be said for Oxford, which I have visited; in the University itself there is no distinction in dining-hall, chapel, residence, or pub; at a meeting of the Dominions Fellowship Trust, members from every Commonwealth country gathered together for tea and conversation; in sport I have seen no discrimination.

In fact, a mind policed by past prejudices and fears has suddenly been freed. A South African student has begun to see freedom in a new and bright light. He has seen in Great Britain what Mr. Alan Paton, as he showed in his recent address to the Natal Provincial Congress, would so earnestly see in "the beloved country". For him, the debit referred to should really be a credit.

Yours faithfully,

MICHAEL NUTTALL.

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

November 8, 1955.