

PARTY NEWS

NATIONAL AND CAPE

Members of Parliament have been kept extremely busy lately and have played an important part in opposing the Senate Bill. In her speech during the first reading of the Bill Mrs. Ballinger said "Even supposing this move by the Government to secure its intentions does in fact prove legal, it is, we believe morally unsound. Whatever the legal position may be, the framers of our constitution perfectly clearly intended not that a fundamental change should be introduced in our constitution in regard to the rights that are entrenched, by a packing of the Senate, but that they should be changed by a weighty support from the general public"

More recently Mrs. Ballinger and Senator Rubin have created something of a sensation by the disclosures they have made concerning the opening of Liberal Party mail and the extremely pertinent questions they have asked the Ministers of Posts and Telegraphs and Justice in this regard. So far there have been no satisfactory answers given—nor are there likely to be. One wonders what the fate of the unfortunate who put the wrong letter back in the wrong envelope is to be? Liquidation?

Outside the Parliamentary field there has been a certain amount of Branch activity and a number of suburban meetings have been held during May. Galley proofs of the Handbook are ready and the book itself should be complete by the time the next Contact appears.

TRANSVAAL

During the weeks after the Senate Bill crisis was precipitated members of the Liberal Party were active in organising protests against the Bill. Contact was established with the Labour and Federal Parties and with prominent individuals, and a joint action committee was established. Federal and Anti-Republican League representatives later withdrew on the grounds that the Transvaal Anti-Republican League committee should act as the co-ordinating committee. A petition was submitted to the mayor of Johannesburg to hold a meeting on the City Hall steps. Immediately the United Party organised 23 of its City Councillors into submitting petitions and in this way control of the meeting held on May 25th passed into the hands of the United Party, although it was nominally non-political. In view of the fact that Mr. P. A. Moore of the U.P. was to speak, both the Labour and Liberal Parties attempted to get the speakers to whom they were entitled as petitioners to address the meeting. They were refused.

Nevertheless, 10,000 copies of a pamphlet issued in the name of the Liberal and Labour Parties were distributed at the meeting and very few were left in the streets afterwards.

At the same time the two Parties experienced great difficulty in obtaining publicity for their views on the Senate issue. Their joint statements were simply not published, nor was an official letter from the Liberal Party, nor were several letters from private individuals which expressed a liberal point of view.

NATAL

The Coastal Region office in Durban has been in full operation since the middle of May. It has been attractively furnished and is being made use of increasingly by members.

A public meeting was held in the Caxton Hall, Durban on May 26th and was attended by about 200 people. Speakers were Advocate H. E. Mall, Mr. Jordan Ngubane and Mr. Alan Paton. The meeting was held primarily as a protest against the Senate Bill.

In the Inland Region a talk on "Disabilities of Africans in South Africa" was given by Mr. Njisane in Pietermaritzburg on May 16th. The talk was open to the public and about 80 people were present to hear Mr. Njisane speak most tellingly, especially on the indignities and frustrations Africans must put up with under the Pass Laws.

Again, in Maritzburg on June 5th, Alan Paton moved "That the policy of the Liberal Party is the solution to the problems of South Africa" at the Students' Parliament of the Indian Technical Students' Society. He was supported by Mr. Paul Phillips. Although the Liberal Party has only a handful of members in the Parliament the motion received considerable support from non-members and was eventually carried by quite a handsome majority.

During June meetings have been arranged to take place in Estcourt, Kokstad, Stanger and Raisethorpe. Branches in the Maritzburg area are to co-operate in an attempt to establish new branches at Pentrich and Howick before the end of the year.