

LIBERALS IN PARLIAMENT

PARTY MEMBERS may draw encouragement from the fact that the effectiveness of the Party's representatives, in their onslaught on the apartheid policies of the Government, has grown during the present session.

Take, first of all, the frequency with which the Liberals spoke during the debates on the Native Laws Amendment Bill alone:

	2nd reading	Committee	Report	3rd reading	Total
Mrs. Ballinger	1	22	6	1	30
Mr. Stanford	1	17	7	1	26
Some equivalent Labour figures were—					
Mr. Hepple	1	22	5	1	29
Mr. Lovell	1	13	8	—	22

Consider, secondly, the sustained quality of our members' arguments in the light of the burden of work placed upon them and the petty and poisonous type of attack with which they are constantly faced.

In Committee of Supply, on the Labour and Native Affairs votes, Mrs. Ballinger spoke frequently. Africans, she said, are no nearer to having a living wage today than they have ever been, and quoted reliable figures to the effect that on the average they fall short of such a wage by £7 11s. 5d. per month, this figure constituting approximately 50 per cent. of the wage actually received. She suggested a reason: "The levels that are established under the wage regulating machinery have tended to be related to (the) traditional standard of living of the people who do the job", without cognizance being taken of the fact that in the case of Africans the traditional standard is far too low for the requirements of civilised living.

On the Government's handling of the P.E. dock strike, Mrs. Ballinger observed: "My memory goes back to the days when we heard a lot in this country about the Hoggenheimers . . . The very people who are descended from those who put up that fight for a living wage are now talking as no Hoggenheimer or capitalist ever spoke about their workers; and they are talking about people, who on all the evidence, are actually at starvation level. They put up this fight against people who earn the miserable amount of 11s. 6d. a day for probably three or four days in the week". She had hard things to say about the Minister of Labour's contention that the demand of 25s. was refused because it was "unreasonable", and his remark that if industrial peace could not be obtained "in a decent way", it would be enforced. What is even more significant, she tried and failed to get an unequivocal statement both from the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Native Affairs that either of them accepted responsibility for seeing that the wages and labour conditions of urban Africans were adequate. "I contend", she said, "that the responsibility of the Labour Department is to control and organize the whole of the labour field. If the Minister is not doing that he is abandoning his responsibility to the community in general".

Mr. Stanford's detailed account of the reactions which he has gained from his Transkei constituents to the Bantu Authorities Act (Hansard cols. 6,575-6,581) repays careful reading, especially as it was given in the context of a smear campaign from the Government benches, in which he was accused of misrepresentation, and an attempt was made to drive a wedge between the African electors and their representatives in the House. Whether this campaign is to be regarded as a softening-up process leading ultimately to the removal of the Africans' representatives from the House is, perhaps, too early to say. Our members are to be congratulated on having driven the Government to such undignified behaviour.

"The latest name for apartheid that has been produced, appears in the report of the Native Affairs Department", said Mr. Stanford on another occasion, "and that is 'autogenous development' (*eiesoortige ontwikkeling*). My medical friends tell me that 'autogenous development' is the term for a cancer".