

## LIBRARY PLANS

### ARCHITECTS WATCHING THE COUNCIL

#### NO BANNING DECISION YET REACHED

Following on the publication, for the first time, of the authentic views of the Institute of South African Architects in connection with the position that has arisen over the competition for the design of the new City Library, much public interest has been created by the possibility that architects may ban the competition if the Council's draft conditions are not amended.

The registrar of the Institute of South African Architects stated to-day that because of the very big part architectural competitions play in the career of architects, the institute is compelled to take the most serious notice of the present Johannesburg Library competition. It is felt that the future of all architectural competitions in South Africa will depend upon the precedent created as a result of the present dispute.

The institute feels that by suggesting various alternatives to the City Council it has met every reasonable demand for protection that could be expected. On the other hand the Municipality has offered no protection to architects against the abuses which have from time to time resulted from the inclusion of a clause of such a nature as Clause 29.

The contentious clause referred to reads as follows:

"The assessor may in his discretion desire to recommend to the Council that no scheme of sufficient merit for adoption has been submitted, and in that case the competition shall be cancelled and the premiums paid to the authors of the designs placed first, second and third in order of merit. The Council in that event shall be free of all further liability whatever in the matter of this competition."

Any further action which may be taken by the Institute of Architects depends entirely on the result of the meeting of the City Council to-day, when the Library Committee brings forward its recommendations.

The conditions of the architects competition provide premiums of £500 for the first design, £300 for the second, and £200 for the third.

#### MR. MOERDYK AND

#### MR. CROCKER

### RENEWED ATTACK ON THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Replying to Mr. H. J. Crocker's criticism of the views by Mr. Gerard Moerdyk on the conditions for the architectural plans of the Johannesburg City Library, Mr. Moerdyk, in an interview to-day, said: "I read Mr. Crocker's remarks, presumptions and regrets, in last night's Star and wish to repeat my accusation of anti-South African feeling in the Library Committee. Not only is their action anti-South African, insulting and against etiquette, but, compared with the dignity and general air of satisfaction with which the competition for the Bloemfontein Town Hall is being conducted, they have thoroughly mismanaged the whole affair and prejudiced their cause in quarters that might have proved helpful later on.

"The committee entirely ignore the South African Institute of Architects, and, over their heads, approach the Royal Institute in London.

"Secondly, the committee ignore entirely the advice given them by the Royal Institute and rush in where angels fear to tread by appointing their own assessor; of course, a man without the slightest experience of South African conditions. The humiliation of it! Making South African architects, with their wealth of local experience, traditions, and desire of creating a distinct South African architecture, dance to the tune piped by an assessor from overseas, though paid for by Johannesburg.

"These subtleties may be beyond the understanding of Mr. Crocker, but the insult is very real indeed.

"Why, may I ask, is Mr. Crocker so inordinately keen on retaining his freedom of choice after once having chosen? You cannot be married and enjoy single blessedness at the same time without courting trouble. The Library Committee did have a liberty of choice. They could choose any architect they liked within or without South Africa.

"They decided on a competition. Let them accept the conditions of a competition. The contemplated loophole is open to abuse, it has been abused in the past and may be abused again."