



neither' said Johann regretfully. 'But you recite?'. I asked. 'Not even recite'. The affair ended in Johann indulging in a flowery panegyric of myself, and naturally I returned the compliment with equal enthusiasm, and soon afterwards we left the hall together amid resounding cheers. That was the spirit in which the whole contest was carried on. On polling day Johann defeated me, but it was a defeat which left no unpleasant sting, and I quote the whole episode to illustrate the essential loveableness of the man."

The "Het Volk" party won the election and General Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister of the Transvaal. Over the signature of the Governor Lord Selborne, Johann Rissik was on 4 March 1907 appointed Minister of Lands and Minister for Natives in the Transvaal and a member of the Executive Council of the Transvaal. The other Ministers were General J. C. Smuts, Colonial Secretary, Mr. Jacob de Villiers, Minister of Mines and Attorney-General, Mr. Hull, Colonial Treasurer and Mr. E. P. Solomon, Minister of Public Works. The Rand Daily Mail's leader on 5 March 1907 was typical of South African comment on Johann Rissik's appointment — "To Mr. Johann Rissik who it was at one time thought would be Minister of Mines there have been entrusted the Departments of Lands and Native Affairs. From the very first it was regarded as certain that he would be included in the Ministry and it is significant that in whatever capacity he had been selected his appointment would almost certainly have met with approval". The "London Times" in discussing the new Transvaal Cabinet said "The British People hold in esteem the whole of the new Ministers especially Messrs. Rissik and de Villiers".

As Minister for Native Affairs Johann Rissik successfully carried out the Government policy of replacing the repatriated Chinese labourers in the Witwatersrand gold mines by native workers without any dislocation of the mining industry. He also represented the Transvaal in negotiating the Mozambique Convention with Portugal. As Minister of Lands he bought for the Transvaal Government the land which it had chosen as the site of the future Union Buildings and on which they now stand.

On 15 April 1909 the Transvaal Colonial Secretary General J. C. Smuts, formally opened the new Pretoria Boys' High School of which one boarding house was named Rissik House after his colleague in the cabinet Johann



*The Rissik brothers, Pretoria, 1892. Left to right: Frederik Hendrik (b. Linschoten 18.6.1855, d. Arnhem, Holland 23.2.1909), Cornelis (b. Linschoten 18.2.1865, d. London 1928), Gerard Hendrick (b. Linschoten 16.5.1867, d. Pretoria 3.7.1918) and Johann Friedrich Bernhard*



*Recumbent Atlas at Union Buildings, Pretoria, 28 April, 1913 before  
Johan Rissik fixed him atop the East tower*



*Johann Rissik and his elder brother F. H. Rissik painted by their uncle  
Professor Sybrand Altmann*

Rissik and the second Solomon House after another colleague E. P. Solomon.

### **ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TRANSVAAL**

**O**N the establishment of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, Johann Rissik became the first Administrator of the Transvaal where his character, ability and tact guided local government, education, hospital and road policies.

He and Mimmie Rissik were host and hostess in Pretoria and Johannesburg to the Duke and Duchess of Connaught when they visited South