

New Town Hall in Potgietersrust.

OPENED BY MR. CHARLES
MAGGS.

The people of Potgietersrust will long remember Friday last for on that day there was a most important happening in the history of the Town. Mr. Charles Maggs, first Mayor of Potgietersrust and still a property-owner in the town, had come there for the express purpose of performing the official opening ceremony of the new Town Hall.

This very attractive and picturesque piece of architecture stands in a prominent position in the centre of a huge square commanding an uninterrupted view on all sides of the town. The structure is pleasing to the eye and reminded the writer of some of the artistically designed edifices, many bearing a definite suggestion of Moorish influence, to be seen in East Africa. There is nothing obtrusive or blatant about the style: rather is there a light, nimble clean-cut idea running throughout. The little archways and porches and balcony overlooking the wide veld and from whence in the future many public and possibly political pronouncements may be expected, is out of the hackneyed order. The delicate open work plaster ornamentation at the back of the stage in the hall proper is effective. The circular stage which is usefully deep will prove a boon to theatrical companies and the comfortable-tip-up chairs add to the appearance of the general surroundings. In the Council Chamber there are hung a couple of photos of past Councils and seated in one, dressed in the style of many years ago—full-skirted, bustled, leg o'mutton sleeved and pancake hatted was the first Town Clerk (a lady) of Potgietersrust. A built-in cupboard in teak from which the present and future Mayors of the town will dispense hospitality filled its important niche. The chamber is a bright room in which for the good of Potgietersrust and its citizens one hopes many bright schemes may be hatched. There are roomy cloak rooms and the Town Clerk's office is amply fitted with sliding-door cupboards wherein the weighty documents of the town's Administration will be kept. There is a feeling of roominess everywhere: a little library, too finds a place and the inner court one can imagine being laid out by and by with a square of lawn, a fountain and a lily pond right in the centre.

Mr. L. S. Meintjes, Chairman of the Council and his Councillors, Town Clerk and other officials are to be congratulated on their new Municipal Buildings and the citizens may feel proud of their public representatives who have conducted the scheme through.

The Councillors associated with Mr. Meintjes in the Council at the present are Mr. L. Taylor, Mr. J. F. Venter, Mr. J. C. van Zyl, Mr. J. de Villiers and Mr. J. L. van Niekerk. Mr. P. de Boer is the excellent Town Clerk.

Councillor L. Taylor laid the foundation stone of the Town Hall in October, 1931.

Mr. Gerard Moerdyk was the architect who evolved the artistic plan and the contractor was the late Mr. W. L. Pietersen. Messrs. J. S. Calitz and C. H. Coetzee carried out the work after the death of Mr. Pietersen.

Floating proudly in a stiff breeze was the Union Flag at the top of a fairly high mast erected in close proximity to the entrance to the hall. Beneath it were gathered hundreds of young children from the town's schools carrying mugs for they were to be guests and have all kinds of goodies when the serious part of the business was over.

Round about three o'clock the Mayor and Mayoress accompanied by Councillors and their better halves, Mr. Jubb (Resident Magistrate), Mr. D. Naude, M.P.C., Dr. Andrews (Mayor of Pietersburg), Cr. A. F. Symons, of Pietersburg, Mr. P. Elffers (Town Clerk of Pietersburg), Cr. Max Marcus (ex-Mayor of Pietersburg), Mr. Joe Edelman, Mr. and Mrs. Gildenhuys, Mr. Gerard Moerdyk, and Mrs. Moerdyk, and Dr. and Mrs. Leftwich appeared on the Town Hall steps. Before them was massed a huge crowd of townfolk and in a semi-circle were placed the children. Everyone in Potgietersrust must have assembled on this big occasion. The Mayoress was wearing a smart ensemble of