

his evidence to have been the fullest and most important placed before it. The draft legislation following the commission's report was submitted to him by Sir Richard Solomon in a letter 13 July 1904 stating "The Government has not decided whether the Ordinance will be introduced this session or not but in case it is I should very much like to have your views on the draft Ordinance especially on those clauses of it which affect owners' rights. I shall be very happy indeed to discuss any objection you may have to the introduction of the ordinance this session or which you may have to any of its clauses at any time convenient to you."

## COMMISSIONER

ON 28 July 1902 Viscount Milner appointed Johann Rissik and Walter Solomon Webber and John Wagner as commissioners to enquire into the working of Law 8 of 1886 dealing with the occupation of farms and to consider and report what alterations and amendments were required. On 22 October 1903 the Attorney-General wrote thanking Johann Rissik for his services on the commission. On 28 February 1903 Johann Rissik was made a member of the conference on railway matters. On 9 June 1903 the Colonial Secretary Mr. W. E. Davidson wrote requesting Johann Rissik to become an official visitor to the Lunatic Asylum in place of Mr. Curlewis who had been appointed a Judge. The letter stated that the Medical Superintendent was excellent but "*aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*. He too finds the visitors a powerful lever for extorting improvements out of a parsimonious Government. Will you help us by taking this honorary office?" — Johann Rissik accepted.

On 26 June 1903 Dr. Mansvelt, formerly Director of Education in the Z.A. Republiek and then secretary in Amsterdam of the Vereeniging Zuid-Afrikaansche Voorschotkas wrote Johann Rissik that he had been appointed a member of the Vereeniging because of the great services he had rendered to the Boer cause.

## A REFUSAL AND AN ACCEPTANCE

AFTER the Vereeniging Peace Treaty had terminated the war on 31 May 1902, the British authorities invited Johann Rissik to become a member of the paid Legislative Council under Crown Colony Government. Although without bitterness for defeat which ended both his Republic and his own employment, he would not serve in a British nominated legislative body not responsible to the people by popular vote. He therefore declined the invitation. He agreed however to make his great talents and experience available in the reconstruction of the Transvaal and Orange Free State by accepting the invitation on 24 June 1903 of Sir Arthur Lawley Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal, to become a member of the Inter-Colonial Council of those two colonies. The Council which had been created by Order-in-Council on 20 May 1903 controlled the Central South African



*Johann Rissik and his four sons, 1903*

Railways in those colonies as well as the South African Constabulary, Education, Surveys, &c. On 29 June 1904 Viscount Milner wrote Johann Rissik asking him to accept reappointment to which he agreed.

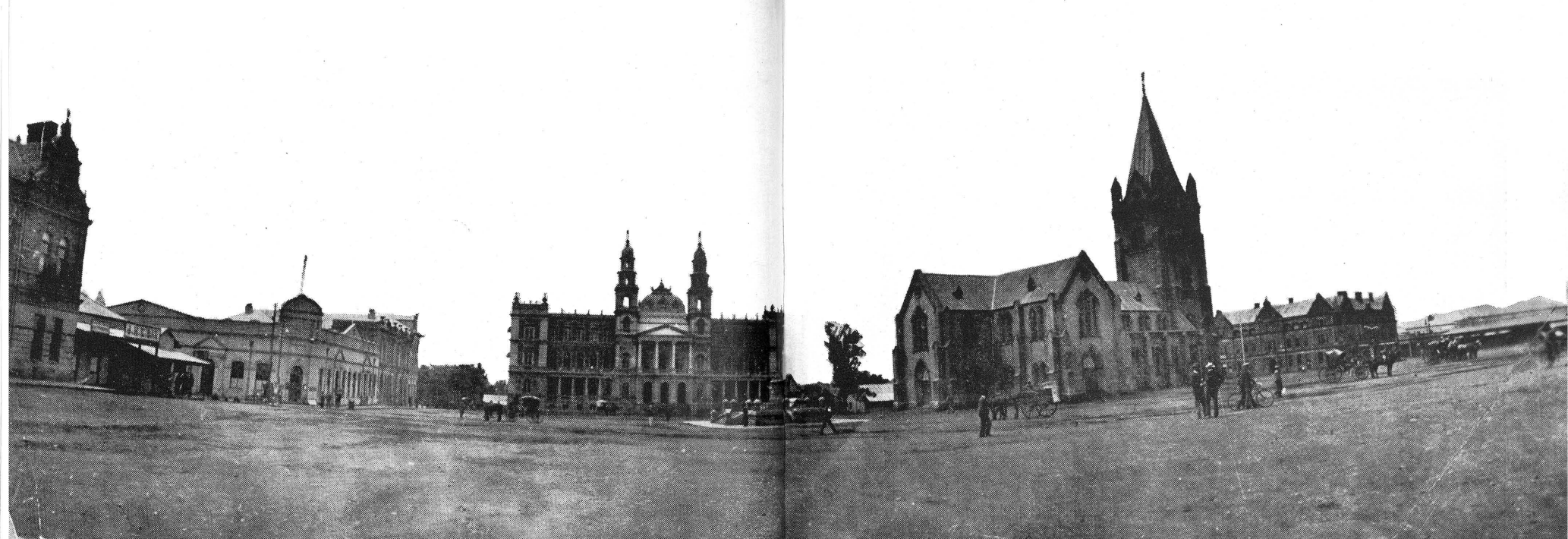
The secretaries of the Inter-Colonial Council were two of Milner's "Kindergarten" of very young Oxford and Cambridge graduated public servants — the Hon. R. H. Brand afterwards a distinguished banker Lord Brand and P. H. Kerr, later Marquis of Lothian and secretary to Prime Minister Lloyd George in World War I. Rissik resigned from the Council when elected a member of the new Transvaal Legislative Assembly and on 21 February 1907 Lord Selborne Governor of the Transvaal, wrote thanking him for his valuable help.

## **PATRICK DUNCAN**

**J**OHANN RISSIK'S hard and varied work done freely and free in the service of the Transvaal and Pretoria brought him into close association with the much younger "Kindergarten" members who grew to value this association very highly. On 28 August 1904 one of them Patrick Duncan, subsequently Governor-General of South Africa, wrote: "My dear Rissik, I intended to come and see you this afternoon to say good-bye but I found so many things to be done that I have not been able to get outside the house. The tracks of Colonial Secretaries going home are like the footprints of the animals in the fable who went to call upon the lion. They all led forward as the fox observed when his turn came, but none backwards. I hope I may be privileged to be an exception because I do not want to be away from this country. I feel that I owe much to it for having had the presumption to take a hand in governing it knowing so little of the country and it's people as I did and do. In any case I must always remember the kindness and consideration which I have always met with from yourself and Mrs. Rissik who might have been excused for leaving me severely alone to learn from my own mistakes."

On 22 February 1907, two days after Het Volk under General Louis Botha had won the election under Responsible Government and Johann Rissik had been elected Het Volk member of Parliament for North Central Pretoria, Lionel Curtis another "Kindergarten" man in a letter of thanks for "a gift of delicious fruit" from Linschoten writes: "This is a country in which a friendly hand is often reached out at times when and from quarters in which one least expects it. As a member of the beaten side I should like to congratulate you on a victory clean-won all through. This victory wisely used may be handled to make South Africa the prosperous and peaceful country it might be".

On 16 October 1903 the Assistant Colonial Secretary wrote to Johann Rissik "Pretoria Water Supply Commission. In reply to your communication of the 14th instant stating your willingness to act on the above Commission but pointing out that you yourself are interested in a water right



*CHURCH SQUARE, PRETORIA NORTH, ABOUT 1900*

in Trevenna, I beg to inform you that this fact was already known to the Government. It was felt however that your knowledge of the water question of Pretoria was such that it would be very difficult to fill your place on the commission. For this reason I am directed to say that the interest you mention is in the opinion of the Government no reason why you should not continue to act on the commission seeing that as a matter of course you would withdraw from the deliberations of the commission while they were considering your case. I am further to express the satisfaction of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in learning that you are prepared to act on the commission”.

### **HILLCREST**

**JOHANN RISSIK** owned a portion of the quitrent farm “Uitvalgrond No. 67 District Pretoria Ward Aapiesrivier” to the East of Pretoria. The British authorities after occupying Pretoria in June 1900, put various buildings on this ground including a blockhouse whose water filled moat was a welcome swimming pool for the Rissik sons and friends. Rissik

Station named after Johann Rissik, dates from this period, and recently his name has been attached also to the Parliamentary Electoral Division “Rissik” in that area. Between 14 April 1904 and 26 October 1910 Johann Rissik established on this ground the township of Hillcrest where educational and religious bodies benefited from his generosity and the Rissik Hall contributed to the amenities of the neighbourhood.

### **PUBLIC DUTIES**

**ON** 27 May 1904 Johann Rissik was made a member of the Commission to enquire into the financial relations between the Government and the local authorities. In June 1904 at the request of the Council of the Transvaal Technical Institute, the Colonial Secretary appointed him a Pretoria member of that council. On 16 January 1905 he with J. A. Nesor of Klerksdorp and others became members of a Commission under the Chairmanship of Judge J. W. Wessels to enquire into methods for the better conservation of the water supplies of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony.