

# TOWN PLANNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

## AN ARCHITECT'S CRITICISM

Strong criticism of the town planning in Johannesburg, Durban, Capetown, Pretoria and other large centres in South Africa was made by Mr J. S. Cleland, Chief Government Architect, at the Pretoria Rotary Club luncheon to day.

Mr. Cleland said that the functions of the department carried the designing and erection of several kinds of buildings required by the Union Government, the provinces and other subsidised institutions such as universities. The architectural section had a greater variety of work than any other similar section in any part of the world. It had to deal with the designing of coinage, stamps, and last year it even built a sugar mill in Natal. Spread over three years the Department had dealt with 568 buildings, 120 bridges, valued at about £4,700,000, as shown in the report of the department from 1926-27. During the same year were completed 295 buildings worth over £500 each and with alterations, additions, repairs, renovations and 46 bridges at the total cost of £1,447,383 and, contrary to public conception, there was very little red tape in this department. Touching on the lack of interest shown in town planning, Mr. Cleland said there had been a deplorable lack of forethought in respect to the future possibilities of towns and the result was now being seriously felt in the lack of open spaces and squares. Traffic difficulties were increasing owing to the motor car, but during the past 10 or 15 years municipalities had not taken any really concerted action to deal with the question.

Following a suggestion in Capetown that the war memorial be erected in the Avenue with a fine, large lay out and ornamental water, the scheme was enthusiastically taken up by the Town Council. As a result of this successful choice there was every hope of a special body being arranged for the improved town planning in Capetown.

Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria, he went on, and other large towns were growing rapidly without very much co-ordination or action being taken in regard to the general lay out of South African towns. He suggested that active bodies should be formed to deal with town planning and consist of the town clerk, a member of the Council, the town engineer, the town architect, a representative of the Government, a representative of the railways, and two architects. The professional men he said would do the work and the others would be the driving force to push it through.

Mr P. V. Pocock, who presided, congratulated Dr. N. M. Hoogenhout on his appointment to the important position of Director of Education for the Transvaal, but he thought the province as well could be congratulated on obtaining the services of so excellent a man fitted for the post.