

THE PRESIDENT

This speech was delivered by M. B. Naidoo, vice-principal of the Sastri Indian College, Durban, at Caux (Switzerland) on the 15th July, 1954. The occasion was a world conference of the Moral Rearmament Movement.

YESTERDAY was the anniversary of Paul Kruger and it is only fitting that as a South African I should pay homage and tribute to the memory of a great South African whose vision and statesmanship had paved the way for South Africa's economic prosperity. One cannot help admiring a man who carried in his veins the blood of the Afrikaner and one who derived his inspiration and his entire philosophy of life from the Holy Bible. At the twilight of his political career, he found Asylum along the beautiful shores of lake Geneva and his troubled mind seared by the frustrations and sorrows of the events in South Africa, found solace and divine fellowship in the precincts of Caux.

Whatever be our political and social disabilities, as South Africans, we cannot help but recognise the greatness of one who will for ever be revered as one of the most illustrious sons of our country.

M. B. NAIDOO.

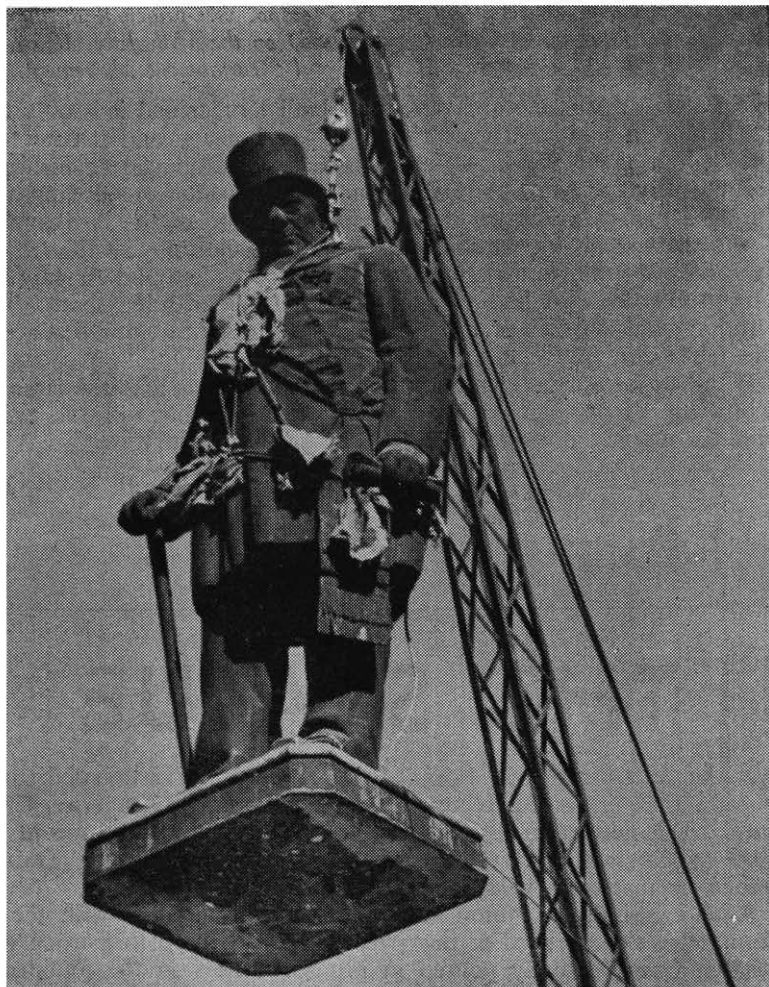
Caux,
15th July, 1954.

THE STATUE

ON the 20th of August, 1895, Mr. P. Samuel Marks donated £10,000 for the purpose of erecting a statue of President Kruger on Church Square. This gift from a rich Jew of Johannesburg, was meant as a gesture of goodwill and esteem by all the subjects of the Transvaal Republic no matter to what denomination they belonged.

A young sculptor, Anton van Wouw, was instructed with the task of completing the work. For this purpose he had to go to Europe where the statue was eventually poured in bronze in Italy in the foundries of the famous Bruno.

Unfortunately the war intervened with the result that the statue could not be erected on the pedestal which was prepared to receive it on Church Square. After the war the British authorities ordered the removal of the pedestal. Eventually, after many wanderings, the statue was erected in



*The huge bronze statue hangs grotesquely
in midair*

front of the Pretoria railway station in 1925. **It was whispered that Church Square was reserved for a statue of Lord Roberts . . .**

After much bickering and heartbreaking arguments, permission was at last granted for the removal of the Kruger statue to Church Square. On the 29th of June, the statue was slowly but firmly placed on its pedestal in the centre of Church Square. The unveiling ceremony will take place on the 11th of October on which occasion the Hon. Dr. D. F. Malan, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, will be the principle speaker.

President Kruger has at last come home to his people . . .

THE EXILE

ON the 14th of July, 1904, one of the greatest sons of South Africa, a man who made an imperishable impression on the minds of all South Africans, died in Clarens, Switzerland, as a voluntary exile.

"On the morning of the 14th, at four minutes past three, His Hon. the President, passed away peacefully. He suffered no pain," wrote Mr. H. C. Bredell, his private secretary, seven days later.

With his tragic death came to an end four heartbreaking years that he had spent in Europe whilst in the meantime his fair country was occupied by British troops and the independence of the Transvaal had consequently been irrevocably lost. During the first period of his stay in Europe the old President became the symbol of independence and freedom to the minds of the people of Europe. At the time of his death however, after the independence of his country had been destroyed, he retired into obscurity without thereby causing the memory of his tragic greatness to disappear from the European mind.

President Kruger, in his last moments, was assisted by his son-in-law, and his daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Frikkie Eloff, and by Mr. Bredell and Dr. A. Heymans, his personal physician.

Bredell, relating these last sad days, stated that the President carried his terrible burden with a super human stoical calm and uncomplaining physical indifference. While his strength was slowly failing him and the last moments drew inexorably near, his thoughts were continuously with his defeated people. *"No complaint, however, or sign of dissatisfaction was heard or noticed,"* wrote Bredell. God's decision was to him final and was to be accepted without question.

When the British troops occupied Pretoria on the 5th of June, 1900,