

# MOERDYK DENIES POLITICAL MOTIVE IN MONUMENT

**M**Y ideal is that everyone who leaves the Voortrekker Monument will be a better Afrikaner than when he entered," said the monument architect and designer, Mr. Gerard Moerdyk, when he addressed the Pretoria Business and Professional Women's Club yesterday.

There had been no political motive in the erection of the Monument, which would stand as a symbol of the sacrifice of the Voortrekkers who had established white civilisation in South Africa.

The question had often been asked, "Why a monument? Why not a hospital or a home for the aged?" The answer, said Mr. Moerdyk was that a Voortrekker hospital would in the course of time become only a hospital minus historical significance.

**Ten times the amount spent on the Voortrekker Monument had been spent on hospitals.**

"When a visitor to this country asks to whom does this country belong? Did you not take it from the blacks?—The answer will be there for all to see in the historical panels surrounding the walls of Heroes' Hall."

## BLOOD AND TEARS

The price paid by the Voortrekkers in making South Africa a fit place for human habitation had been a fearful and cruel one in blood and tears.

There were no revolting scenes depicted on the friezes. The Native had not been presented as an unworthy being, but if the dramatic history of the Voortrekkers was to be shown graphically, the treachery and murders which dogged the Trek had to be shown.

**The Natives on the friezes were modelled from fine specimens of Zulus. No injustice had been done to anyone.**

When the rays of the sun on December 16 shone through the aperture in the dome of the Monument and fell on the "sarcophagus" of Piet Retief and his men, "we will stand with bowed heads saying, 'Ons vir jou Suid Afrika,'" Mr. Moerdyk said.

## VAST CHARACTER

Africa had a character of vastness which dwarfed the works of man and made his architectural efforts look puny.

"That is why I have tried to give the impression of immensity."

The Trek was the greatest single deed in South Africa's history. In previous ages empires had failed to penetrate the mystery and dangers of South Africa, but the Voortrekkers, their wives and families and ox-wagons had faced these dangers with fortitude and had established white civilisation.

Mr. Moerdyk spoke of the difficulties with which he was faced in choosing a design.

**Like the Voortrekkers when in doubt he consulted the Bible, and from a passage in Abraham—"He built an altar"—got an inspiration.**

The altar, a symbol of sacrifice, took the form of a "sarcophagus" of Piet Retief and his men who were murdered by Dingaan. This was the heart, and the rest was built around it.

## KEEP AWAY OPPOSITION

The wall of ox-wagons was symbolic of the old Voortrekker lager defence, and would keep away from the shrine of Afrikanerdom anything which opposed its ideals.

Heroes' Hall symbolised the centenary of the Battle of Blood River and the destruction of the Zulu might. Around the walls of this hall, friezes in chronological order depicted the history and events of the Trek.

The greatest care had been taken in depicting the events authentically.