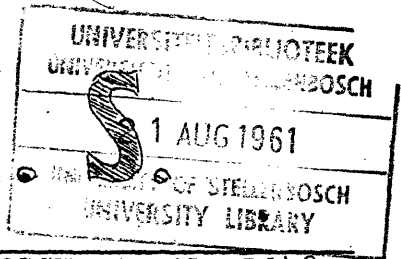


I . M . S



No. 29. STELLENBOSCH, April, 1948.

INFORMATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF STELLENBOSCH.

1. PAVING ON SIDEWALKS.

Several months ago the Council was approached by the Students Christian Association (S.C.A.) with the request that it pave the corner of the sidewalk immediately in front of their premises, the firm undertaking to pay all expenses. The Council undertook to do the work on this condition. The start was somewhat delayed by other work that had to be completed first. But eventually a start was made and now the work has been completed. Some 600 square yards of cement cover the ground in front of the business premises. Such a large piece of cement presents the danger that cracks may appear in the surface. By careful planning this can be avoided, or rather allowed for, along the grooves where the cracks are not apparent. The fact that the Millstream runs underneath the ground that had to be paved, added to the cost and the difficulties, but fortunately the job has been completed and the S.C.A. can face many south casters knowing that much dust will not enter their building, or even the winter rains with their mud and dirt. The cement paving guarantees that muddy feet will be a thing of the past. Mr. Malan, the Town Engineer, reckons that it costs the Municipality approximately 4/6d per square yard to do the work.

Three firms in Bird Street have also asked that the sidewalks in front of their premises be paved in the same way. One firm is so anxious to have the work done that it has paid in advance, while another firm has promised to pay as soon as ever a start is made. In our busiest streets paved sidewalks will mark a great improvement. Let us hope that in due course the whole business area will be properly paved and that the many encroachments on the sidewalks will disappear. It is unfortunately true that many premises encroach on the sidewalks and tend to make narrow streets still narrower.

## 2. A FOREMAN, A MASON AND TWO DAILY LABOURERS.

Visitors to the Cape Peninsula and to the Bolland in general are impressed by our beautiful architecture. Unfortunately it is only too true that the names of many of our craftsmen have not been recorded. We know the names of an architect like Thibault and a sculptor like Anreith and recently it was possible to draw attention in I.M.S. to the remarkable career of C. Hager who built some ten churches ninety years ago. The craftsman who knows his job, confers a real boon on his own and succeeding generations. For this reason I.M.S. may be pardoned for referring to a few of our many fine workmen.

The foreman referred to above is Mr. Gert Mey who has been in charge of many gangs of boys but who has in recent months laid the paving in front of the Town Hall and who has just completed the cement work in front of the S.C.A. building. When Mr. Mey started laying the stones at the Town Hall he was not convinced that it would be satisfactory to fix them in cement. So he started with another form of substratum which would allow grass to grow

between the stones. It was thought that the grass would hold the stones together, that it would soften the overall impression and that possibly cement would have a deadening effect. For days Mr. Mey and his assistants worked, but peace of mind did not come his way. Eventually he decided in consultation with Dr. P.J.S. de Wet and Mr. W. Blersch that a cement bedding was the best solution, that the stones should be laid near each other and that very little cement should actually be visible. Once he had found his clue the work progressed steadily. The completed job reflects credit on his perseverance and good craftsmanship and taste. And the work at the S.C.A. is so successful that it will be repeated elsewhere.

The daily labourers are Mr. Mey's two Native assistants. Johnson has been with him for four years. He and his family are housed in Kaya Mandi. His shy nature does not permit him to indulge in conversation but he knows the ins and outs of whatever is at hand. He is a real assistant because his chief works and he assists in everything. Johnson speaks Afrikaans and English when it is absolutely necessary to use the tongue in addition to the hands, back and feet. The third member of this team spoke neither of the official languages. When Mr. Mey was asked how he got along with him, he replied that he regarded him as dumb. "If he understands neither Afrikaans nor English, how do you make him understand?" "That is quite easy", was the unexpected reply. "He listens not to my words, but to the tone of my voice. It does not matter what I say, it only matters how I say it." For some three years the three people worked together, when at last the most silent of the party decided that he would revisit his reserve. In

due course he left. After reaching his home, Alfred caught cold and within a fortnight he had passed away, but his work can still be seen in front of the Town Hall.

But we also mentioned a mason. He is a coloured man, Marthinus Silvester, who has been in the Council's employ for more than nine years. Marthinus built the wall behind the Theological Seminary several years ago. More recently he has constructed the low walls along the Millstream in front of the Town Hall. In fact all the walls and masonry on the Town Hall side are his. He has a remarkable capacity for carrying on alone day after day. The job that will take months and months to complete does not frighten him. He just carries on quietly with a smile.

### 3. HOSTEL FOR GIRLS IN BUSINESS.

It was anticipated that the Housing Commission would give a favourable reply to the request to sanction a loan for buying a suitable piece of ground for the Girls' Hostel. The Commission is allowed to advance 90% of the loan and in this case it was willing to do so. The remaining 10% has been found from another source. The responsible committee has been able to procure the ground that they so much wanted to acquire. It borders on Alexander Street and is almost two morgen in extent which means that there will be space for some forms of sport. The ground was the property of Mrs. van der Byl and it is to be hoped that arrangements can be made whereby admission to the Hostel grounds can be obtained from Market Street as well as from Alexander Street. The ground under discussion is near our business area and also near the railway station. It borders on the mango-shaped grass

island which is formed by the divided Alexander Street. The Hostel will also have the additional advantage of being near Bergzicht with its sporting facilities and the proposed A.C.V.V. club centre. We understand that an architect has already been appointed and therefore there is good reason to believe that the work will progress smoothly.

#### 4. ART GALLERY, ART CENTRE, ART CLASSES.

The Government was approached some time ago to assist with the starting of our Art Gallery at Grosvenor House. We are glad to announce that the responsible Minister has been prepared to make a generous contribution of £2,000, not yet confirmed by letter. On behalf of the public of Stellenbosch I.M.S. would like to assure Mr. Hofmeyr of our gratitude and appreciation.

An art centre is not quite the same thing as an art gallery. The art centre is a place where art is taught. In Rondebosch, for instance, you have the Frank Joubert Art Centre, while at Worcester the Hugo Naude Art Centre is to be found. Various people have urged that Stellenbosch should also have its own art centre. It is even known that the Education Department in Cape Town would welcome the creation of such an institution. If it sanctions an art centre, it also assists with building costs and staffing. As no building is at present available for such a centre, the matter cannot be pursued at the moment. It will, however, be clear that the Art Gallery in Grosvenor House will be an added inducement to start an art centre at Stellenbosch as well.

In the meanwhile the Arts and Crafts Department of the Faculty of Education of the University of Stellenbosch is willing to assist

boys and girls to get some help with handicraft and art tuition. In a circular to the schools the particulars are set forth. The scheme provides that children can get training at the University on certain afternoons and that only a nominal charge is made for the use of materials. Students in training at the University will assist with the work under the supervision of Messrs. Badenhorst and Visser, the lecturers responsible for teaching the subject.

#### 5. THANKING THE PUBLIC.

As a result of the rains that have fallen and the cooler weather that has set in, the Public Works Committee (its Chairman, Councillor C. F. Smit had been given power to act in this matter) decided on 23rd March, 1948 that the restrictions that had been placed on watering of gardens, could be somewhat relaxed. The Committee decided that it would be lawful to water gardens between 5 o'clock and 8 o'clock in the mornings and during the afternoons. During the time that it was only permissible to water gardens in the morning period, the public co-operated magnificently and thereby retrieved a difficult situation. I.M.S. has pleasure in voicing the gratitude of the Council. It was not necessary to take legal action against a single offender. Public spiritedness does indeed mean doing things as well as foregoing privileges which the public weal demands.

#### 6. THANKING THE JUNIORS OF 1947.

The Junior Students of 1947 celebrated their Junior Day or Spring Day in the traditional style. The procession through the streets and the floats were on as grand a scale as in the past. One is

also glad to know that all the fun and the merriment did not blind the participants to the needs of the less privileged. The Juniors collected money for the Anti-Tuberculosis Fund. This Fund assists necessitous cases who are not receiving hospital treatment. The Committee in charge of this work represents almost all the responsible bodies in the town and it has recently taken a step forward by appointing a full time nurse to do visiting. The appointment means incurring additional expense and for that reason also the £100 donated by the Juniors of 1947 is most welcome and highly appreciated. Unfortunate indeed is a University city where there is a spirit of town versus gown. Far happier the city where it is a case of town and gown.

#### 7. CHRISTMAS STAMPS.

During November and the first days of December Christmas Stamps were again sold in the schools, boarding houses, offices and business establishments of Stellenbosch. The inmates working or living in them gave handsomely. Even boards of public or commercial bodies assisted splendidly. The result is that some £450 could be sent to the responsible national committee. This committee has seen fit to allot the large floating cup to Stellenbosch for the achievement of 1947. The organisers of the work locally wish to thank the public and also the young and very young members of our community. The Sunshine Homes carry on partly because of their strenuous exertions.

#### 8. FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN OLD STELLENBOSCH.

It is proposed occasionally to write something that may interest those who like to dwell on

the yesterdays as well as on the todays. For this number of I.M.S. we confine our attention to the Magistrate's Court and the Police Station in Plein Street. How long have the magistrates been doing their work at this particular spot? Who were the first occupiers of the plot? Who have occupied it since? These and similar questions are briefly answered below.

In a book kept in the Surveyor-General's Office in Cape Town it is indicated that transfer of the whole property on which the Magistrate's Office as well as the Police Quarters are situated was given to Roelof Jonasz on 14th July, 1716. The size of the plot is given as 5 by 12 roeden, a roede being 12 feet. On the east the property borders on the "plein" of Stellenbosch, i.e. where Grosvenor House is now situated, and on the west it borders on the street next to the Graveyard, the latter having extended from the present Plein Street to the present Church Street. The abovementioned Jonasz received transfer of his property just a year before the Kerkraad acquired the site on which the Dutch Reformed Church still stands.

A subsequent owner of the plot was the voorleser (church clerk) and schoolmaster, Christiaan Krynauw. The latter had come to Stellenbosch in 1761 and had been appointed church clerk and schoolmaster. He seems to have given satisfaction to all concerned until his life became so full that he did not find enough time to teach. When pressed for time he got his wife and children to officiate for him, thereby incurring the displeasure of the church authorities. By 1783 Krynauw resigned from his official duties and possibly then went to occupy his own property. While he was church clerk he would naturally have



occupied the house specially reserved for the local incumbent of the office. Krynauw died in 1787 and in the same year his widow sold the property to the magistrate H.L. Blettermann. It is interesting to note that the civil servants of those days had as little ready cash as present incumbents for Blettermann had to raise a fairly large bond.

In 1823 the property passed into the hands of the Government. Lord Charles Somerset had come to the conclusion that the education of slave children between the ages of 4 and 10 should be taken in hand. He had a letter written to the authorities at Stellenbosch in which he charged them to have a proper schoolroom built for the young slaves. The local people suggested that the property of Blettermann be bought instead and gave as their reason that the house itself could be used for a magistrate's court, or rather as a court room for the landdrost and heemraden, while the annexe, a building of 80 by 18 feet, could be used for the slave school. It is likely that the annexe had been the slave quarters of Blettermann's household. The Governor approved of the proposal and allowed the necessary alterations to be made in the annexe. By 1824 the school building was ready and the first Government schoolmaster for the slave population could be appointed. After some delay the local missionary Erasmus Smit was duly installed. Blettermann's house had thus become the local seat of Government and the annexe the first Government slave school in the country districts.

Erasmus Smit's stay at Stellenbosch does not seem to have been too happy. His missionary board were not able to pay him as much as he

desired and so he resigned as missionary in 1828 while retaining his position as teacher. His children attended the local English school but Smit had to lodge a complaint because the schoolmaster had flogged his eldest son Salomon unduly. While the complaint was being investigated Salomon stayed at home, but no sooner had he returned to school or he received another thrashing. Subsequently Smit also appealed to the school committee on behalf of another of his children. To make things worse for him, the new missionary, A.D. Lückhoff, who was appointed early in 1830, was a great success and his school proved to be more popular than Smit's, which was drained of its pupils. By 1832 Smit left and the slave school was merged in that run by Lückhoff on behalf of the Stellenbosch Missionary Society.

With the removal of the slave school the spacious building could be put to other use and in due course the public school presided over by Humphrey McLachlan was moved thither.

McLachlan occupied the building until his school was closed down in 1865. In the place of the Government school, the residents of Stellenbosch started their famous Stellenbosch Gymnasium. The local board of guarantors had to provide their own school and so Dorp Street became the educational centre for a while. As a result of growth in the new institution, new premises had to be found and so by arrangement with the government the guarantors obtained possession of the old quarters in Plein Street, on condition, however, that when they did not require the building for educational purposes any longer, it had to revert to the Government.

In 1874 then the old building became the seat of the Gymnasium and of the newly formed Arts Department. For the classes of the Arts Department additional rooms were erected at the back of the old annexe. Entrance to them was from Ryneveld Street. Some of the names connected with the school and the Arts Department, e.g. those of Professors Mansvelt, MacKenzie, MacDonald and Gordon, are still well known in Stellenbosch.

After the Arts Department under the name of Victoria College, had moved to its new premises in 1881, the school remained on in the old buildings but in the course of time it also wanted more space and better buildings. The school has in fact changed its abode three times since leaving Plein Street.

And now it is mooted that the Police may be leaving the building in the not too distant future. When the new Magistrate's court is built, will it be on the old site or on a new one? If on a new site, will it be worth while retaining the old building?

#### 9. PERSONAL.

I.M.S. is glad to record that the condition of Dr. M.A. Diemont has steadily improved since he took ill on 20th March. Dr. and Mrs. Diemont attended the tea at the Town Hall given in honour of the visiting parliamentary Cricket Team. When almost all the guests had left, Dr. Diemont took seriously ill, but as has already been said, his condition is much improved.

We are glad to extend a warm welcome to Sister J. L. Wessels, who has come to do the work

of visiting nurse for the Anti-Tuberculosis Committee. We trust that her work will be productive of much good and that she will be very happy among us.

10. TRAFFIC CONTROL.

If the ever increasing traffic in the town is to be controlled in a satisfactory manner, co-operation of the public and the Traffic Officials is essential. On the one hand there are complaints that the town is being over-controlled, and on the other hand demands that much more should be done.

Quite recently a prominent member of our community handed us a list of dangerous irregularities which had come to his notice. He had a narrow escape. Another motorist cut a corner. When this was pointed out to him, his excuse was that he had signalled.

The list is -

- (a) Cutting corners.
- (b) Cycling two and three abreast in narrow streets.
- (c) Lorries going at more than 20 miles per hour in narrow streets.
- (d) Drivers starting from rest without looking to see if another car is about to pass them.
- (e) Pedestrians and cyclists darting from behind cars to cross a street without satisfying themselves that no motor car is about to pass.