



INFORMATION MUNICIPALITY STELLENBOSCH.

J A N U A R Y, 1957.

1. DAY AND NIGHT SERVICE : ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT.

It has been the Council's policy as far as possible not to interfere with private enterprise and it is for this reason that it has refrained from establishing a service of its own to carry out repairs to electricity installations on the consumer's side, as this is catered for by local electrical contractors.

It has recently been brought to its notice - and the Council always appreciates the co-operation of the ratepayers in bringing to its notice any difficulties which they experience - that there are cases of hardship on individual consumers. It realises that it may be very awkward indeed if the electricity supply suddenly fails at inopportune times, for instance during the night.

Whereas there is always somebody on duty at the Power Station, who naturally will invariably do his best to communicate with a member of the staff who is capable of attending to such complaints, it is a different and somewhat difficult matter to make sure that somebody is available at all times.

The Council has decided in principle to institute a

24-hour service which would cover its undertaking up to the sealed fuses on the consumer's meterboard. Everything beyond that, would still have to be dealt with by private enterprise. The conditions under which this service will be inaugurated, will be made known in a later issue.

It is no doubt appreciated that preparations to make a service effective, must be rather extensive, because they involve the possibility of telephonic communication and the provision of transport.

2. WELCOME TO THE TOWN CLERK.

I.M.S. extends a hearty welcome to Mr. M. J. Smith, who has assumed the duties of Town Clerk on the 1st January, 1957. It sincerely hopes that Mr. and Mrs. Smit and their little daughter will soon feel fully at home at Stellenbosch and have no difficulty in settling down under circumstances which are completely to their liking.

Mr. Smith was born at Kroonstad in the Orange Free State, where he went to school and passed his matric. His university education he obtained at Pretoria where he studied Law.

In the year 1950 he entered the Public Service in the Department of Education, Arts and Science. In 1951 he decided to leave the civil service and to enter the municipal field of activity. He obtained a post in the Department of the Town Clerk, Kroonstad. His promotion was rapid and in the year 1954, he was appointed as the Town Clerk.

Mr. Smith has always had a liking for the Boland, so that his appointment as the Town Clerk of Stellenbosch is the realisation of a wish that has been with him for a long time. His

interests are manifold and they include all social work and sport. His experience has been varied and valuable and I.M.S. has no doubt that Stellenbosch will fully reap the benefit.

3. WHEN MUNICIPAL RATES AND SERVICE CHARGES ARE DUE.

The beginning of the year brings with it many financial commitments and the Council has felt that the position should, and could, be eased by making it possible for the ratepayers to spread their payments over a reasonable period.

As there may be uncertainty in the minds of ratepayers as to when they must settle their accounts, the following information is advanced which shows how the dates have been "staggered".

The Service Charges (for Water, Sewage Disposal and Rubbish Removal), must be paid not later than the 28th February, 1957, if the ratepayers concerned, wish to avoid the surcharge of 10% which, according to regulation, must be levied as from the 1st March, 1957.

The Owners Rates become due and payable on the 15th March, 1957. After that date, there is still a period of grace of 3 months, which ceases on the 14th June, 1957, after which date the Municipal Ordinance requires the Council to collect interest at the rate of 7%.

It must be emphasised that the above relates to 1957, and that as a result of amendments of regulations, or a resolution of the Council in connection with the rates for the year 1958, the dates may be changed.

4. THE APPLICATION OF MANURE IN GARDENS AND THE FLY NUISANCE.

Complaints are received from time to time regarding the

fly nuisance and it is frequently suggested that this nuisance must be caused by manure which is brought to properties for use in gardens.

As manure which is not properly rotten provides suitable conditions for the breeding of flies, the municipal regulations regard the keeping of manure which is not properly rotted as an offence. The maggets are easily discernible to the eye, and action can be taken against anybody that causes a nuisance of this kind. In cases of doubt, inspections could be carried out if the Chief Health Inspector is duly notified.

It must be pointed out, however, that not only manure, but accumulations of other decaying matter which produce warmth as a result of the fermentation that goes on, may provide ideal conditions for the breeding of flies.

Action is taken in all cases where such cases comes to the notice of the Municipality and the co-operation of the public in reporting undesirable conditions would be greatly appreciated.

5. CONCRETE HISTORY IS A BUSINESS ASSET.

I.M.S. wishes to draw attention to what it regards as a very interesting and valuable essay by Mr. Raymond Henniker-Heaton, Director of the Phillimore Ives Memorial Gallery, which appears in the issues of the Eikestadnuus of the 9th and 16th November, 1956, and which with the kind permission of the Eikestadnuus, we are including in this issue.

"What we constantly see, we are apt to like. And what we like, tends to fashion our way of thinking and our lives.

This is true of all things in our immediate surroundings. Particularly architecture, sculpture and pictures - good, bad

and indifferent. Our visual sight and all that it implies is a target for what man makes and maltreats.

Against noise, food adulteration, air pollution, violence to body, mind and character - if the calumniator is known - the law protects us. But against the pollution of our art sense, or even ordinary good taste, there is no protection. That we must grapple with ourselves.

In all countries, in recent years, atrociously designed and meaningless buildings have been erected without hindrance, creating environments especially bad for children who live with them - the effect being incalculable and beyond repair. But characterless or blatant objects of all dimensions are bad for every age.

On the lowest denominator a sense of values in art is tantamount to having ordinary good sense. Which - in any case - we all flatter ourselves we possess.

What we rarely understand - and rarely pretend to - is that art values - even if unrelated to our vocation - have a business import. This idea is neither irrelevant, nor based on sentimentality. Although it may wander in that direction.

'I love ruins, especially when covered with ivy', a remark attributed to a sentimental elderly woman - on being introduced to a famous archaeologist - and perpetuated on the stage by the famous - almost immortal - Marie Lloyd.

Yet sentimentality may, indirectly, be a better agent in preserving a precious tradition than the instinct of the business man - pre-occupied with daily takings - or the encyclopaedic mind with facts detached from practical needs.

Antiquity and learning are good companions - if not too intimate, spiritually and romantically. Stellenbosch is favoured - we

hope - in both respects. As the university widens its scope, more young men and women annually enrol. The ordinary population of Stellenbosch is rapidly increasing. An interest in the historic background must not lag.

It is not the educational nor sentimental aspect of Stellenbosch which I wish to stress, but the business value of its historic background. I write, of course, without knowledge of what has been planned, or intended, although I know that the Mayor and Council have a lively and constructive interest in preserving as much as possible of what remains in a concrete sense of early Stellenbosch.

My interest in this subject stems chiefly from many years on the Committee - in London - of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, nicknamed "Anti Scrape". An organisation with tradition and considerable achievement in saving the historical character of England. It rescued many buildings of art and historic value from destruction, mutilation and ghastly restorations, involving churches, Abbeys, houses, taverns, forges, water mills and numerous windmills.

Whatever the future of Stellenbosch, its historical significance as the second earliest settlement, will be an asset. Indeed its antiquity will grow in importance with the town. And what we destroy or neglect today, will be sorely regretted in the years to come.

It may be asked how, and why, the past is a potential business asset. I shall refer to one aspect: After Cape Town, it has no rival in the matter of history, and we know that the number of tourists who visit the Union each year is infinitesimal compared to what it will be fifty, indeed twenty-five years hence.

What does the intelligent, and perhaps not so intelligent, tourist enquire about on his travels? Not much about the present or the future; speculation about cruising in outer space, does not occupy his mind. He becomes something of a historian. He wants the past, by preference that linked with the country he is in. He enquires about shops which sell "antiques".

In Cape Town he finds much evidence of the past. Leaving there he makes for Stellenbosch, chiefly for its history - which he has heard or read about.

In both Cape Town and Stellenbosch he has a different attitude of mind than when visiting any other city or town in the union. He expects to see concrete evidence of its history. In that sense he is very much of a materialist. From overseas visitors to the Phillimore Ives Arts Gallery, we have learnt that more than a printed or verbal account will be necessary to keep busy any contemplated hotels to meet the tourist situation.

The concrete evidence of the past in Stellenbosch we know, resides chiefly on Die Braak (at least it is the most conspicuous evidence) with an impressive approach from the main streets and business area.

One day, in the winter, I looked across Die Braak from the Post Office at the group of buildings. It was after a severe storm. The buildings looked unusually clean and naked, but impressively classical. At the same time the Burger House among them stood out clearly as the "piece de resistance".

It was inspiring. Without appropriate arrangement a fine Rembrandt in a barnlike room will not look much of a Rembrandt, and this also applies to the Burger House. It

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was an accidental effect, but it eloquently told me what could be done with discreet arrangement.

There are structures which should be preserved as part of a unit as a setting for the Burger House, even though they contribute more in the way of harmony than age.

But what is the magic of the past? Were not bad things produced then? A good question.

Yes, bad things, in terms of art, were made in the past, perhaps not quite so bad as today. Possibly more restful. Modern facilities for slick performances were not available. Also the bad past has mellowed by time. The present badness will not have time to mellow. Such buildings will come down. New ones will take their place. (Perhaps the salvation of the future.) A bad modern monstrosity mellowed is too horrible to contemplate."