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African Architect; the Journal of the Association of Transvaal Architects. 1913 vol 2: 1-12 p1-206

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food and blankets, etc., which will be a great convenience to natives in their long waits between trains. The whole of the platform floors and the surrounding walls, dado high, are to be lined with local slate. These slate dadoes make it possible to wash out the platforms with a hose without spoiling the walls. There are permanent book and fruit stalls in the centre of the platform.

Provision has been made in recessed panels on the walls for railway notices and advertisements, and it is hoped thereby to restrict somewhat—at least in the station buildings proper—indiscriminate placarding with hideous posters. Advertisers will, it is hoped, realise the value of small, neat advertisements placed in new surroundings.

The two upper floors above are reached from a principal staircase in the north-east corner of the building with access from the main loggia; and there is also an auxiliary service staircase in each of the wings. The rooms and corridors on the first and second floors are both well lighted and ventilated, and will provide accommodation for at least two Government departments. The building is of fireproof construction throughout, the floors and ceilings being of concrete, reinforced with wire-woven fabric.

The whole of the furniture for dining and waiting rooms, etc., has, as far as possible, been made of South African woods by Messrs. Gurney and Co., of Johannesburg. The contractors for the whole building were Messrs. Prentice and Mackie, of Pretoria.

It is intended to lay out a considerable portion of the ground in front of the station with formal avenues, fountains, grass lawns, combined with ample space for the approach of the new electric tramway service and all wheel traffic.

The Railway Workshops and Staff.

The Mechanical Department of the South African Railways is controlled from Pretoria, where the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. D. A. Hendrie, is stationed, governing the works at Pretoria, Durban, Salt River, Bloemfontein, Uitenhage, and East London, each of which is under the supervision of a mechanical engineer directly responsible to the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Particular care is exercised in training up the Colonial-born youths in the various trades, and technical education is encouraged to a very great extent amongst the apprentices in all the large centres, attendances at the night classes being in many cases compulsory and fees for instruction remitted to students showing special aptitude. The Pretoria workshops are controlled by Mr. G. G. Elliott, mechanical engineer.

SYMBOLICAL STATUARY.

For the Sir Alfred Jones Memorial Committee, Liverpool, Sir George Frampton, R.A., has prepared designs for a group of symbolical statuary, and these have been accepted. The question of a suitable site is still under discussion. The Liverpool Architectural Society recommends that the approaches to the pier-head should be laid out in such a manner as to afford sites for this and other works of monumental statuary, and this suggestion has commended itself to the favour of the memorial committee. It remains now to be seen what attitude the Corporation of Liverpool will take towards the proposal.

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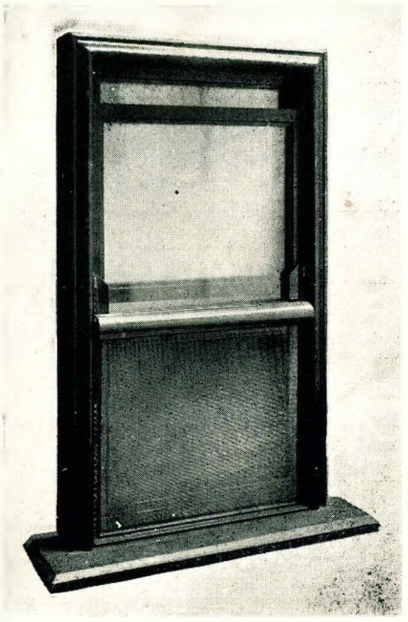

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REVIEW OF BOOKS.

"THE PRINCIPLES OF STRUCTURAL MECHANICS TREATED WITHOUT THE USE OF HIGHER MATHEMATICS." By Percy J. Waldram, Lecturer on Structural Mechanics, Architectural School, Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. Publishers: B. T. Batsford, 94, High Holborn, London.

We have received a copy by last mail of a most valuable work, which we recommend to our readers. In reviewing the book, it may be pointed out that the indigestibility of the average treatise on structural mechanics has evidently impressed the author with the need for a more readily assimilable statement of the principles underlying constructive practice. In the work under review he has, therefore, endeavoured to set forth simply and clearly, and upon a method readily applicable to actual practice, without much mathematics, an explanation of the mechanical facts with which the architect and engineer have daily to deal. The practical engineer well knows that methods and formulæ, of a very simple character and comparatively few in number, will enable him to solve most of the problems set before him, but it is imperative that he should have understanding of the natural laws with which his formulæ conform so that he may be able to apply them freely, intelligently, and confidently. Books upon this subject are often written with an intention of mathematical completeness, which, however useful to the man who is already master of the elements, has upon the beginner a merely bewildering effect. The tyro, unable to see the wood because of the multitude of trees, abandons his quest in despair—or buys another book in the hope of better luck. The author's endeavour is to impart to the student from the beginning a firm grip of the vital principles, which, by enabling him to fully understand the construction of the formulæ he will use, will put him in a position to handle them with certainty. And all the subjects treated in the book are explained by reference to these essential laws. Such terms as moment of inertia, radius of gyration, and others which are sometimes dealt with as incapable of other than mathematical expression, are defined with clearness, and arch and dome stresses, deflection, and column theory are also simply explained. Graphic statics are used only in their proper sphere as useful short cuts, but the use of the slide rule is fully explained. A feature of the book is the chapter on wind pressures, a valuable item in which is the summary, by Dr. Stanton, of the results obtained from the experiments at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. The book may fairly claim to give all the theory of the subject which is required by the architect, and also to be a desirable and systematic handbook for the young engineer.



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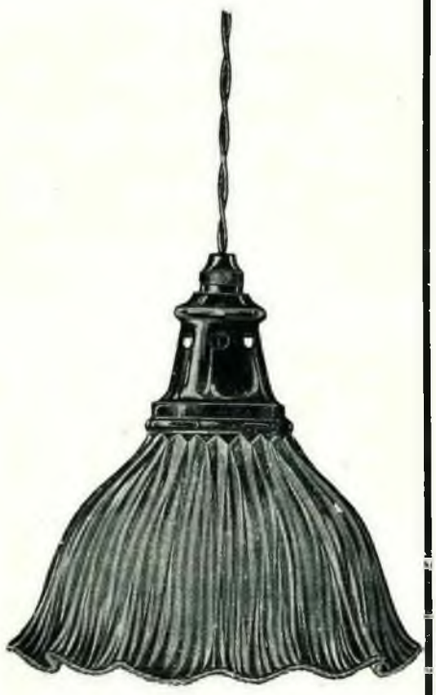

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The legal position of an architect in carrying out a large building contract (says "the Building News") is always difficult, and it is often made more so by being doubtful. He is admittedly the agent of the building owner; but he also acts with peculiar powers as between him and the contractor; as he does further between the contractor and the sub-contractors. Finally, he may also be the arbitrator appointed by the parties; or he may find that he has become such by the effect of the contract made between them. In these various legal aspects of an architect's position, it is not surprising that questions should rather often arise for solution by the Law Courts. The case of "Ashwell and Nesbitt, Ltd., v. Allen and Co.," though deciding nothing new, and being based mainly upon the facts proved, is of some general interest to the profession, as showing the sort of questions that may crop up quite unexpectedly in the course of practice. There the plaintiffs sued the defendants as contractors for a job in Regent Street, for work done and materials supplied to them under a sub-contract for the supply of hydrants and radiators. The architect had issued his final certificate, which covered the £377 now claimed by the plaintiffs; but the defendants said they had not actually received the money from the building owners. It appeared that there had been some dispute in regard to the plaintiffs' goods, as there is so often, and also that the contractors had made some arrangement with the building owners for the settlement of their account, with extras, by payment of cash as to part, and the balance being taken in prior lien bonds upon the property.

A Prima Facie Case.

The plaintiffs' case was, prima facie, at all events, unanswerable. They held the architect's certificate for the amount of their claim, and they contended that they had nothing to do with the mode of payment arranged between the building owner and the contractors who had dealt with them, and whom they were suing. Undoubtedly, without the architect's certificate the plaintiffs could not have succeeded; but, with it, the only question was, how it could be got over by the defendant. It appeared in evidence that the architect had signed the certificate upon the surveyor's report that it was correct and in order, and without any further enquiry. But that, of itself, is nothing for which to set aside a final certificate otherwise conclusive, Mr. Justice Coleridge so held, pointing out that no loss or injustice had resulted to the defendants. In the end, he ruled that, as the defendants, or the building owner, had had the benefit of the plaintiffs' goods and work, and as the plaintiffs had obtained the architect's certificate, and the defendants had been fully paid, in one way or another, the plaintiffs were entitled to recover the amount of their claim, and so he gave them judgment accordingly, with costs. This case was gone into very fully, and lasted some days. But it cannot be said to have decided anything really new, and it was, of course, only the decision of a single judge, sitting without a jury. Still, as the defendants' council raised several points of law in his argument, it may be as well briefly to consider their purport and effect upon the general position of architects' certifying.

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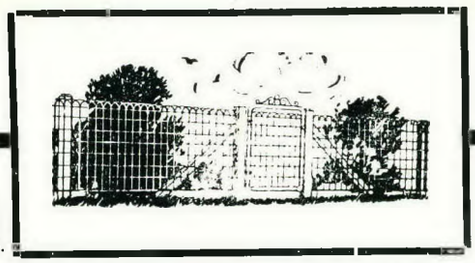

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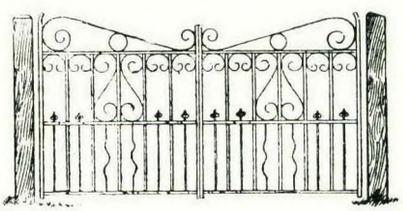

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Notice to Issue Certificate.

For instance, it was suggested that the architect should not have issued his certificate to the defendants without first giving notice of his intention to do so to the defendants or the building owner. But the only case that was quoted in support of this strong view was one in which the architect had been an employee of the tramway company sued. It was also urged that as the architect must, or should, have known of the disputes between the parties as to the number of radiators supplied, he ought not to thus have given this certificate. But the judge held that the architect had a right to do as he did, and that all this did not enable the defendants to go behind the certificate given. It was further argued that the old stringent rule of law as to the conclusiveness of an architect's certificate had been somewhat broken in upon by recent decisions. It is true that latterly the idea of an architect being also an arbitrator between two parties has come into greater prominence than formerly. It may also be said generally that an architect is often legally regarded as standing in a quasi-judicial position between the parties. From this broad view it is inferred that he must always act as an arbitrator, and so be absolutely independent and impartial in regard to all parties. But this point depends mainly upon the building contract, which is being acted upon, and whether or not there was any arbitration suggested or required. It does not seem to make it necessary that, as a rule, an architect should enquire of the building owner, or go into outside facts, before giving his certificate to a sub-contractor for work done and materials supplied according to specification. If such an argument could be supported as being generally applicable, the ways of an architect as to certifying would be rendered even harder than they are now. The principle of law still holds good that a final certificate is final and conclusive, unless the contract practically brings in an arbitration, or, of course, unless mistake or fraud and collusion can be proved.

Complex Contracts.

Building contracts vary a good deal, and they are apt to be both complex and complicated. So we sometimes find that an apparently clear clause as to certifying is found, on construction, to be modified by vague provisions regarding arbitration, which bring the architect into a quasi-judicial position to all parties. Doubtless these clauses have always been well considered; but when they come to be legally construed by the Courts, they are sometimes found to bring about unexpected results; and it would seem to be wiser, if it were possible, to keep the architect's power of granting final certificates clear of doubt and confusion. Of course, this point that an architect has become an arbitrator under the contract may cut either way. Thus in the well-known case of "Chambers v. Goldthorpe," L.R.—C.A. (1901) I. K.B: 624, where there was the usual certifying clause, but also another as to arbitration, it was ruled that although the certificate granted was final and conclusive, yet as it had been given by the architect acting as arbitrator, he was not liable to an action for negligence by the building owner for having acted in excess of his functions. In this case, his character as arbitrator shielded, as it were, the professional position of the architect, and prevented a claim for negligence succeeding against him, because he had, in fact, carried out his duties under the contract in a quasi-judicial manner as an arbitrator, at least constructively.

(To be continued.)

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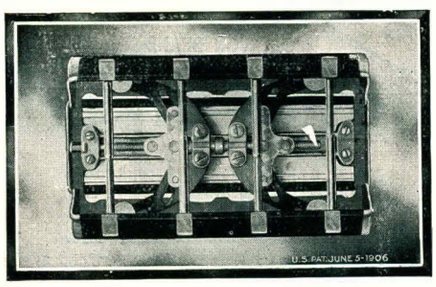

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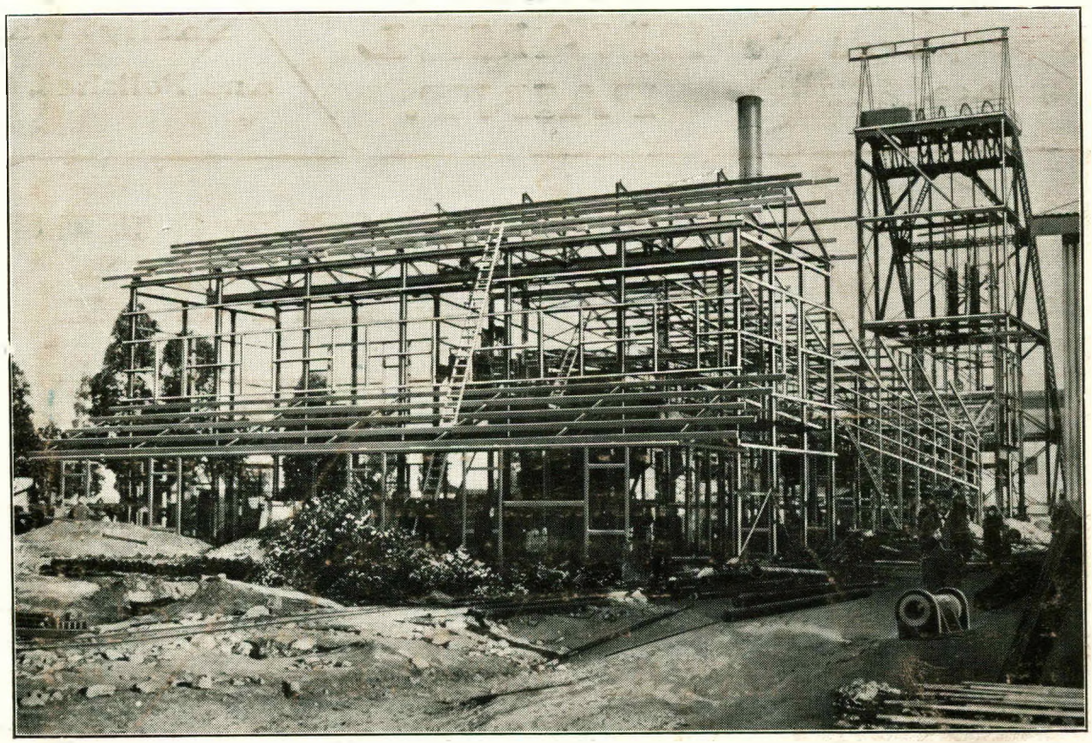

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