The Growth and Development of

the Master Builders Association in the Cape Peninsula.

by

Peter Edward Butt

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Architecture and Allied Disciplines of the University of Natal, Durban in complete fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science (Building Management).

Cape Town. January 1984.

NOTE

I herewith declare that this entire dissertation is original and my own work. Where quotations have been made from previously published works the relevant information regarding the source of the quotation has been included in the Notes for that specific chapter.

I also wish to state that this document has at no time been submitted to any other university for degree purposes or any other reason.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like to express my sincere thanks to Mr George Strachan, a Life Member of the Master Builders' Association of the Witwatersrand who, in the early days of my research, provided me with much encouragement and assistance. The document took far longer to produce than I had anticipated but I trust it will meet with his approval.

I am deeply indebted to Mr Les Sisson, Director of the Master Builders' and Allied Trades' Association (Cape Peninsula), who allowed me such free access to the historical documents in his care and I thank Mrs Yvonne Dodds for her cheerful assistance on numerous occasions.

A number of the older members of the building industry assisted me in obtaining a deeper understanding of the past by recalling events and personalities and to each of these I am grateful. Mr Harry McCarthy, and the late Mr Tom Pattullo were among them.

To those who provided me with constructive criticism during the production of this document and who patiently read through the various draft copies, I extend my thanks. Mr John Moyle, Professor Ivor Prinsloo, and particularly Professor Barrie Biermann need to be specifically mentioned.

Mrs Evelyn Pickering-Dunn gave me invaluable help in editing the final manuscript and without Elmarie Pretorius' typing skills the document would not have been produced. My special thanks to them both.

Finally I am grateful to my wife, Daphne and my daughter, Amanda who put up with my air of preoccupation for so long.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

History, the record of the lives and accomplishments of our forebears, has always held a fascination for some people, myself included. In contrast, however, there are others who echo the sentiment expressed by Henry Ford in his famous statement "History is bunk", insisting that since the past is beyond recall only the present need concern us, with due consideration being given to the future. In recent times however, a greater interest in history has become manifest and a lively concern over the circumstances and surroundings within which normal men and women of the past lived their lives is being catered for by a steady stream of books chronicling aspects of bygone eras. In addition, a growing desire for the preservation of everyday articles from those times has become apparent. The building industry has made an enormous contribution to history in that the vast bulk of the tangible remains of earlier years exists in the form of 'bricks and mortar'.

In the erection of the stock of buildings, services, and amenities with which civilised man surrounds himself, three basic processes have to be completed. There has first of all to be a design stage. This can be either one where the overall concept of the project together with a fair amount of the detail work is conceived in advance; or it can be one that proceeds on an ad hoc basis where work continues with just a basic idea in mind and individual problems are overcome as they present themselves. There must, of necessity, be a construction phase where the actual erection takes place, translating the dream into reality. In addition the various materials and components required for the project need to be acquired or manufactured. In the distant past, (and in small projects even today) all

these three processes could be accomplished by one man or a small team of men and women, for example a family erecting a simple home. However such structures were not only small, but also seldom of a permanent nature. As projects grew in size and complexity there came a polarization of these three processes encouraged no doubt in part by the fact that certain individuals displayed talents in specific directions.

Thus it is that in the organised building industry of today the same three basic subdivisions are apparent. They could be called:-

1. The Professionals - consultants, specialist advisors
2. The Constructors - contractors, subcontractors, craftsmen
3. The Suppliers - merchants, manufacturers.

The evolution of this structure has been a slow process although its crystallization into the form familiar to us today has in fact taken place over the past one hundred and fifty years. Unhappily, and for reasons that are touched on in this document, not only have the three subdivisions become clearly demarcated but separation and polarisation have taken place with individual members in each of the sectors tending to be extremely jealous of what they see as their specific group rights. In addition to this, a differential level of acceptability has come about in the eyes of the general public. Thus we see, in general, that the Professionals have attained a standing above that of the others. Those involved in the Suppliers sector have achieved respectability through their involvement in the market place which, particularly in recent years, has been seen as having legitimate worth as a career. However those who earn their living through participation in one or other aspect of the Constructors sector have yet to be accorded full recognition as socially acceptable members of

the community. Of course those builders who have been especially successful in a material sense have found a ready welcome into what is commonly called 'society' only to find that they are then considered to be on an equal footing with even unsuccessful professionals.

There is no doubt that in some way education is tied up with this seemingly unfair arrangement of things that smacks somewhat of the Victorian class system. Each of the professions associated with building has had its own discipline taught at universities and other institutions of higher learning for a considerable time. Architecture and Engineering have been specific fields of study for learned men throughout the ages and a large number of ancient books on these subjects are still preserved in libraries around the world. Commerce has become a field for a good deal of research and investigation, notably since money has become of such extreme importance in the daily lives of men and women. It is this all-pervading sense of the value of money that has, to a large degree, been responsible for the Quantity Surveyor graduating from being seen as a humble 'counter of bricks' to his present role as the 'accountant of the building industry'. Of course the passage of time has assisted this process since more and more graduates from university courses for Quantity Surveying and for Commerce are making their presence felt in the business world. The organised building industry, however, has only just embarked on a course that incorporates university training into its preparation of young men for careers within its extensive boundaries.

The building fraternity itself must carry a degree of the blame for this state of affairs for their has been little serious attempt made to build up a storehouse of accumulated knowledge and experience, a backbone

of solid theory behind the practicality of building. In short, there is no discipline of building that becomes the common heritage of all seeking to make their careers in the industry. Most builders, it would seem, have concerned themselves but little with the wider issues of life, being content to remain deeply involved in merely their own affairs. So, in the eyes of the average person, a builder is little more than a skilled labourer executing the designs of others with materials supplied to him, and all too often this is done with the aid of unsophisticated, if not primitive, equipment. Little wonder then that most people would be hard put to it to recall even one builder of the past who contributed toward our historical heritage. Architects, engineers, famous entrepeneurs will be recalled but not builders, even though their contribution was at least as important as that of the 'professionals'.

To redress the balance in some small way I have tackled this document. As an enthusiast for building itself, as an admirer of much of what it has accomplished and as a person who has come to love so many of the individuals within this industry, I sincerely hope that, in due course, a person more qualified than myself will chronicle in a scholarly way the achievements, triumphs and disasters, of the Constructors of the past. In the meantime, I hope to be able to record some of these accomplishments and a few of the personalities, and to see them in the context of the recent history of this country, thus capturing some of all that they did, all that they achieved.

SECTION 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Whan a man dothe begyn to bylde his house or mansyon place, he must provyde (sayth Jhesus Christe) before that he begynne to bylde, for all thynges necessarye, for the performacion of it, leste that whan he hath made his foundacion, and can not fynysshe his worke that he hath begen, every man wyll deryde him sayange, This man dyd begyn to bylde, but he can not fynysshe or make an ende of his purpose, for a man must consider the expence before he do begyn to bylde, for there goth to byldynge many a nayle, many pysses, many lathes and many tyles or sklates or straws, besyde stones or brycke, besyde workmanshyp and the implements...."

Andrew Baard, "The book for to lerne a man to be wyse in byldynge of his house for the helth of body and to holde quyetnes for his soule, and body." London 1549

Building is a fundamental human activity. The provision of shelter from the elements is basic to the survival of man. If marooned on an island, each of us would fashion some form of dwelling from whatever is to hand and would thus leave behind an imprint of our passing. Even a habitable cave would be modified or adapted to our liking. Such alterations might take the form of structural changes to make our habitat more suitable for continuous living or, perhaps, painting on the walls as decoration, or to fulfill a creative urge, or to record for posterity some outstanding exploit. Man is the only animal who adapts the surroundings to his needs rather than fitting himself to the environment and, in so doing he makes, to a greater or lesser extent, a permanent impact on the world around him.

This innate ability to build manifests itself still in the squatter camps, the 'favelas', the 'Crossroads' of our time, where men and women fashion dwellings for themselves out of the oddments of industry, the flotsam and jetsam of civilization. These simple homes offer not only shelter from the excesses of the weather but also an opportunity for self expression, and the fine assortment of building types and shapes that spring up in such areas well reflects the diversity existing in mankind. Is it any wonder then that most men seem to have an ability to understand building and its elements, so that each one becomes a critic of the built environment? Thus traditional forms and shapes of building appeal to this sense of rightness and are found pleasing whilst new or innovative attempts are often viewed with suspicion, if not outright revulsion.

In the recorded history of mankind it has been only during the last few years that a specialist trade of building has developed and grown into an organised body. In previous times, it was when men cooperated to build large community structures that skills other than simple common sense and careful craftsmanship were needed. In building his own home a man normally followed the traditions of his family or the local community, based as they were on pragmatic reasons such as the availability of material. And, whilst he might not build it all himself, still he undoubtedly played a large role in the preparation of materials and in the final erection of the structure. As communities grew there came to be more opportunities for individuals to specialise in work that they preferred and so there would develop degrees of craftsmanship in specific skills with certain persons or families becoming recognised as the builders or handymen of the group. The Bible tells us in Genesis chapter 4 that Jabal "proved to be the founder of those who dwell in tents and have livestock" whilst Tubal-cain was the

"forger of every sort of tool of copper and iron". Hence, if some community project were to be envisaged these persons would naturally be appointed to take the lead. From this specialization, and the unhappy quirk of man's nature that makes him ready to profit from the labours of his fellows, grew the need for contracts of work, legislation of wages, regulations regarding structures, and the whole complex network of restrictions that now prevail.

In the heyday of the Roman Empire agents, known as 'Curatores', played a prominent part in organising, planning, and accomplishing projects through the appointment of groups of craftsmen, somewhat similar to the modern subcontractor. So it would seem that, like so many other things, the modern system of Construction Management was foreshadowed by the Romans. From this relatively high degree of sophistication things deteriorated with the fall of Rome. Thereafter much reliance was placed on the skill and craftsmanship of the individual worker, not only in construction and erection but also in design. Gradually the master masons became very skilled in all aspects of the erection of the grand edifices required by Church or State, the only client bodies of the day. They performed duties in estimating quantities, directing labour and general contract administration as well as working in the 'trasour' or ' traycinge house' where much of the detail design work was done. In mediaeval England written agreements for the performance of work between a community and the local building craftsmen were already in use, as witness the contract for the reconstruction of Catterick Bridge in Yorkshire in the year 1422. Here the parties to the contract were several local authorities on the one hand and "Tho. Ampilforde, John Garette and Robert Maunselle", on the other. These men were described as masons and the contract stated:-

"Yat ye foresaides Tho., John, and Rob. schalle make a brigge of stane oure ye water of Swalle at Catrick be twix ye old stane brigge and ye new brigge of tree, quilke foresaid brigge, with ye grace of God, salle be made sufficiant (and wor)kmanly in mason craft accordand in substance to Barncastle brigge, after ye ground and ye water accordes of twa pilers, twa land stathes, and thre arches."

The contract also included a time limit, though it is not apparent what damages would have been paid in the case of a default in this respect:-

"And ye saides John, Tho., and Rob., schalle this foresaid brigge sufficiantly in mansoncraft make and fully perfurmist in all partiez and holy endyd be ye Fest of Seint Michille ye Arcangelle quilk yt shalle fall in ye yere of our lorde God Mle CCCCXXV"[1]

This was at the time the normal approach to the construction of major projects, the direct employment of craftsmen by the owner or his agent and coordination of the work rested with the client as did the supplying of materials. Under this system were produced many of the fine edifices that we treasure today as part of our architectural heritage, and here we should include the bridge at Catterick which, much altered, still stands today.

With the dissolution of the monastries in 1540 the State became the major client, followed in due course by individual landowners who vied with each other in the erection of stately homes. During the construction of these elaborate buildings the sites were now becoming better organised and normally used a system of resident, semi-permanent staff. Geoffrey Chaucer acted as Clerk of the King's Work at the Palace of Westminister, whilst one Edward Fitz-Odo was the Keeper of the Works. If ever a man received an incentive to complete a contract on time it was he, for it is recorded that

Henry III commanded him to finish the royal appartments by Easter using a thousand men if necessary "even as you would avoid Our ire and indignation".[2]

By the time of the Great Fire of London in 1666 this system of direct labour was flourishing and men such as Christopher Wren accomplished great things using it. However, the system had its shortcomings and it needed a man of Wren's stature to handle it effectively, for his obligations included design, supervision, control of the work on site, and the scrutiny of accounts. As time progressed enterprising master masons branched out to become employers of men on their own account so that by 1751 some master bricklayers were offering what could be called a 'package deal'. Men like Ralph Simons and Robert Grumbold, both of whom worked in Cambridge, began to emerge as architect, cum mason, cum contractor. The pattern was thus set for more famous men, for example, John Nash who left a lasting mark in the late 1770's as a carpenter, cum architect turned builder.

So, when Johan van Riebeeck opened the first chapter in the modern history of the Cape of Good Hope a large part of man's habitat was still being constructed by craftsmen or handymen directly for themselves or others, without the need of an organised industry specialising in building. Van Riebeeck himself was to be a builder for his commission was to establish a settlement and "... to take possession of the said Cape and to hold it as a place of refreshment, a small defensive Fort shall be constructed there, which (as far as can be judged), can best be situated near the Fresh River."[3] Whether he saw himself in the role of a 'builder' in the wider sense of the word, as one who founds an empire or initiates a process that will continue long after his death, is doubtful. He appears

to have been truly a 'Company Man' and, in dutiful obedience to the wishes of the Heeren, he was content to see things their way and simply establish a refuelling station for the arduous but rewarding journey to the East Indies.

With his complement of soldiers and the sailors from the vessels that bore them to this unfamiliar land, he was well equipped to start work on those structures that would be needed immediately: a fort, storehouses and simple accomodation for the men. Military men in those days, as still today, were skilled in the erection of certain basic types of structure. This was particulary the case at that time since a new branch of the army was in process of development, the "practitioners of the new and mainly structural branch of military science were known as 'ingeniarii', a fact which helps to explain the curious persistence of the comprehensive adjective 'civil' to qualify all other engineers,..."[4] That he lost no time in getting the work started is recorded in archival material. Dropping anchor in Table Bay on April 5, 1652, by the 18th the site had been marked out. In a letter dated the 13th of May, work was reported to be underway. The following day he recorded the dimensions of the Fort and some of the problems already encountered were described and with a further letter he enclosed drawings of the structure under construction. This original fort was a timber structure covered with sods and it was named 'Goede Hoop'. The walls were the same height as the present Castle, some five metres, and the distance between each of the four bastions was about of eighty metres, making it a not inconsiderable structure. It was surrounded by an eight metre wide moat whilst within the fortification were wooden living rooms and a large dining hall. Thus there was established at the Cape a victualling station and in the words of the first Governor, "a lonesome melancholy place where there was nothing to be done but barter cattle with the lazy, filthy Hottentots."[5]

Building work executed at the Cape during this period was thus done largely by military men, possibly with assistance from carpenters and other skilled craftsmen drawn from the passing fleet. The Fort was built according to accepted military practice, 'like a field work' according to Gijsbert Heeck, a surgeon who visited the Cape in 1658. The houses were similar in pattern to those of the 'Fatherland', but suitably adapted to the local climate and materials. A dissertation on the background to Cape Colonial Architecture expressed it this way:-

> "The official architecture would tend under any regime to follow loyally the authoritative pattern of the administering power; but the work of the anonymous craftsman would tend to follow what was to hand, what had been done before, and what seemed best to do the job."[6]

Van Riebeeck had suggested the building of a stone fort but at that time the Dutch East India Company was not in favour of expending too much money on the settlement. It was Zacharias Wagenaar, the second Governor who was in command at the Cape from 1662 to 1666, who finally received the plans of "the Royal Fortress which your Honours intend to erect here". The political situation then prevailing prompted a more serious view of the defensive arrangements at the Cape since Charles II had been restored to the throne of England and Dutch/English rivalry increased in intensity. The Company therefore decided to send one Isbrand Goske to the Cape to take charge of the erection of a new structure, dispatching him in 1665 on board the 'Nieuw Middelburg' for the colony. Pieter Dombaer, a military engineer was given charge of the actual building operations, although at that time no plans were to hand. The delay in the production of these plans, copies of which are still extant, was, according to some sources, due to 'their Honours' wishing to erect a fortress on as modern a concept as possible,

and the science of military fortification was then undergoing a major revision, due to the advanced thinking of Sebastian le Pretre de Vauban, a French military engineer. However other writers contend that the effect of Vauban's thinking regarding military engineering came too late to have affected the design of the Castle.

Under the control of Goske, Pieter Dombaer began work. He was assisted in the setting out of the site by a Surveyor and Fiscal, Hendrick Lacus, and in the actual construction by master mason Douwe Gerbrandtz Steyn and carpenter Adriaan van Braekel. The formal stone-laying ceremony took place on January 2nd 1666 with four stones being laid, one by the Governor (Wagenaar), one by a member of the clergy (Johan van Arkel), one by a prominent merchant (Sieur Gabbema) and the last by Lacus, representing the Law. Work continued in fits and starts over many years as the political climate blew hot or cold, although progress even during times of activity was slow due to the workforce that was available. Wagenaar was instructed to detain upwards of three hundred soldiers from passing ships to assist in the preparation of materials and in the actual construction. As an experiment in conscripted labour it failed as it was hardly conductive to good productivity, the men preferring to drink rather than work, such that they were eventually forbidden to drink before 6.00p.m. and were threatened with being chained to their wheelbarrows.

Abraham van Riebeeck, second son of the First Governor and himself a Company representative, called at the Cape in 1676 en route to Batavia and he left a fine description of the new fort as it stood at the time:-

"Before we went aboard we however first went to inspect the new Fort which stands to the right side of the old fort towards the Salt River.

It consists of 5 bastions, all built up very high of hewn stones, which cost great toil, both in obtaining them and in making use of them. These stones are, for the most part, got from or near the Lion Hill, about 1 or 1,5 feet below the surface where rocks like churches are found. In order to tear away the stones for use long holes are bored in them, filled with powder and stopped up, and then this is fired so that many rifts are made, after which work must be done with crowbars and other tools to tear them apart. Thus already very many deep and large pits are to be found in the Lion Hill, from which the stones have been extracted. When these stones have thus been obtained, they must then be transported on carts drawn by 6 oxen to the new Fort, which also is very costly, since each cart can transport 3 or 4 stones only because of the weight. These stones, irregular as they are, are set together as best as possible and practicable and mortared with lime, and filled with smaller fragments between stone and stone. With such stones and masonry are built not only the Fort, but also many of the freemen's houses, which now have been built here in large numbers, with gardens behind them, both around the new Fort and behind the Devil's Hill, as also to the left of the old fort, where it resembles a little Town".[7]

So the town itself was beginning to take shape and a number of the buildings now preserved as national monuments were begun during this period. Abraham Bogaert, who was an Upper-Surgeon on the ship 'Vosmaar' which anchored in Table Bay in July 1702 during the governorship of the younger Van der Stel described the town thus:-

"The town, lying a good musket-shot to the west of the Castle, stretches from the sea to the Table Mountain, and at the back touches

the outermost slopes of the Lion Hill. It has wonderfully increased the number of its houses since the Company chose this place for a settlement, beginning in the year 1653 (sic). All are built of stone, and few are higher than one storey because of the mighty force of the winds that blow there, for which reason also they are roofed with thatch. They look very well from far off because of the snow-white lime with which they are plastered outside, and many shine with Dutch neatness; but none more attract the eye of the observer than those of Fiscal Joan Blezius, and of Burgerraad Henning Huizing, both finely built and higher than all the others. It now boasts of a Church built in the Dutch fashion and adorned with a fair sized tower, in which on Sundays the Word of Truth is preached. It is set in a large cemetery surrounded by a stone wall".[8]

Of the two houses mentioned by Bogaert that of Blezius can be identified as Leeuwenhof, the present home of the Administrator of the Cape, although not the identical building. This farm was originally granted in 1693 and was acquired by Blezius some four years later whereupon he erected a dwelling of some sort, and obviously an impressive one at that. The other house in Bogaert's account cannot so easily be identified but it must have been a fine edifice, not only by the evidence of this eyewitness, but also because Huizing's other house, Meerlust near Faure, still stands, at least in part, and gives evidence of the good taste of its builder and owner.

Other buildings that have survived to our day are the Old Slave Lodge (now the Cultural History Museum), the Koopman's de Wet House, the Old Town House, and the Lutheran Church complex, though obviously changes have taken place over the years. The settlement was growing and maturing and had already become far more than the casual watering place originally intended.

It was becoming a colony in its own right and civilization (at least as recognised by the European nations) was spreading inland to such places as Klapmuts, Stellenbosch and Tulbagh. Small domestic units were being built by these settlers of which one example still extant is the Schreuder House in Stellenbosch whilst Stegman's Pos in Muizenburg also reflects to some extent the domestic style of architecture then being built. In addition the world famous Cape Dutch style of architectural expression was beginning to emerge to grace the natural beauty of this, the fairest Cape in all the world. Yet there was no organised building industry as such, and really what need? Such renowned and diverse structures as the Taj Mahal (1630) and the Palace of Versailles (1682) had been constructed at this time without a building industry as presently understood and many years had yet to elapse until world conditions favoured its development.

The small colony suffered the usual fluctuating fortunes that accompany all of man's endeavours with the world political scene and natural disasters, for example disease, playing major roles. In 1781 France was involved in the American War of Independence and, as Holland was her ally, the British decided to occupy the Cape to challenge this alliance. News of the impending attack was leaked out to the French with the result that a force under Bailli de Suffren engaged the British expeditionary fleet led by Commodore Johnstone and inflicted enough of a defeat on them to cause a delay. Mercenaries were employed by the Dutch East India Company to help defend their East Indian colonies and as a consequence comparatively large numbers of foreign troops landed in Cape Town during 1781. The majority were French but they included the Swiss Regiment of the Count de Meuron who arrived as late as 1783 with Lieutenant-Engineer Louis Michel Thibault among their number.

This influx of people, who must have formed a very large proportion of the population, gave rise to a spectacular building boom, notably in the area of housing. The slopes of Signal Hill began to be developed and must have formed a fashionable and quite charming suburb to the flourishing town. However, with the sudden change of fortune that took place in Holland from 1793, when France invaded that country in an attempt to establish the Republic of Batavia (finally brought to birth in 1795), the mercenaries were withdrawn though some, including Thibault, remained behind to add to the cosmopolitan nature of the population. The lower income group soon moved into the area around Rose, Chiappini, and Strand Streets, soon thereafter deterioration set in until finally the area, known as 'Die Slamse Buurt' was declared a slum. Restoration of certain areas of this Malay Quarter has recently taken place and at the present time the cycle has moved right round with the area once again being regarded as fashionable.

Although some of the buildings erected during these early years have, happily, survived most of the men who built them have long since faded into obscurity. There are notable exceptions and Louis Michel Thibault, Anton Anreith and Herman Schutte live on in the memory as architect, artist, and builder respectively. The first two in particular being widely known and respected for their part in beautifying this lovely town. Other names come to the surface now and then, often due to research being conducted on some specific aspect of our history. In writing the life story of Thibault,[9] Huguette de Puyfontaine recorded that one J Hergenheim, bricklayer, lost his employment with the Company after an inspection of gale damage to a section of the defensive battery that had been constructed by this artisan. This was because the engineer, Thibault, concluded that the damage was not

entirely due to the force of the inclement weather. A master mason, one A Schoonhuyzen, also incurred the wrath of the French engineer for behaving in an 'uncouth manner' before him. JN Weldt, bricklayer and JG Mocke, who was described as a contractor, joined forces in order to compete against their most prominent rival Hermanus Schutte but with what degree of success remains undiscovered. However it is known that Mocke was responsible for the building of the Sendinggestig Kerk still standing in Long Street and now a museum. On occasion the work of these men is quite literally dug up and the excavations at the Golden Acre site, when the brick water channel that conveyed water from the small reservoir to a point convenient for the refilling of ship's barrels was uncovered, is a case in point.

But notable changes were taking place in the whole system of building development, as in so many other spheres, and the Cape's future was soon to be linked firmly with the growth of the British Empire. Such diverse events as the Great Fire of London in 1666 and the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century were to exercise a significant influence on the building industry and its structure contributing to the rise of the professions, the separation of design and construction, and the development of the building contracting firm as we know it today.

The future of any small settlement, such as the Cape, must always rest firmly on developments overseas between the major powers and suddenly yesterday's friends were today's enemies and the first British occupation took place. The Treaty of Amiens brought Britain and France together again and Napoleon, supporting his ally Holland, insisted on the return of the Cape to the Dutch. The peace was short lived however and in 1803 war was declared and the burghers at the Cape began preparing for another invasion.

At eight o'clock on the morning of January 4, 1806 a large fleet was sighted by the signalman on Lion's Rump, who seems to have been an Irishman, since he reportedly notified the town that there were "twenty ships on the horizon and as many out of sight."[10] By the 6th a landing was effected at Lospard's Bay (known now as Melkbosch) and within two days Cape Town had been entered by British troops. In the words of one Captain Carmichael of the 72nd Regiment:-

> "....the 59th regiment marched in that evening and took possession of the lines. The rest of the troops lay on their arms at the mouth of the Salt River until three o'clock p.m. next day, at which hour the British flag was hoisted on the Castle, a Royal salute was fired by the ships of war, and the Highland brigade marched to Wynberg. We thus without much difficulty got possession of the capital."[11]

Section 2

Section 2. Notes.

1. J J Jusserand, English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages, London, T Fisher Unwin, 1888, p58.

2. P M Shand, Building-The Evolution of an Industry., Token Construction Co. Ltd., 1954, p69

3. E Rosenthal, 300 Years of the Castle at Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia Printing Works Ltd., 1966, p13.

4. P M Shand, op cit, p15.

5. A F Trotter, Old Cape Colony - A Chronicle of her Men and Houses from 1626 to 1806, Cape Town, The Cape Times, 1898.

6. B E Biermann. A contribution to the study of the origins of Colonial Architecture at the Cape. Ph D Thesis Architecture, University of Cape Town, 1952.

7. R Raven-Hart, The First Fifty Years of Dutch Colonisation as seen by Callers Two volumes, Cape Town, A A Balkema, 1971, p189.

8. Ibid., p193.

9. H R de Puyfontaine,Louis Michel Thibault 1750 - 1815 Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1977

10. Men of the Times Johannesburg, Transvaal Publishing Company, 1906, p51.

11. Ibid., p52.

SECTION 3. EARLY DAYS - DEVELOPMENT AT 'HOME'.

Introduction

That the year 1806 marks a turning point in the development of the settlement at the Cape, and thus of the whole of South Africa, needs hardly to be stated. Political affairs had reached a climax and the colony had finally been committed into English hands. Thus, at last, a feeling of stability was brought to the area and progress at the Cape would in future be linked with developments in England, so often referred to as 'Home' in the local papers and magazines of the period. As far as the building industry is concerned the pattern of growth evidenced in that land from the Georgian period through to the reign of Queen Victoria is clearly reflected at the Cape and it is this pattern that concerns us now.

Among the forces then at work at the heart of the burgeoning British Empire, then approaching its finest flowering, some were of major importance and their influence could readily be seen in all aspects of life. Others, however, appeared to be of lesser significance and had a bearing only on the building industry itself. Yet, the repercussions of many of these developments were to make themselves felt in all stratas of society, from those who owned property, to those who paid rent.

Of these forces the rise of industrialization was perhaps the single most important, and for those involved in building it brought in its wake a sudden demand for factory and workshop buildings as well as a tremendous need for accomodation to house the mushrooming labour force, because of the concentration of these increasingly more mechanised

industries around the major commercial centres. Many cities, whose population had previously grown at a fairly even rate, were faced with sudden expansion of alarming proportions. The population of London, for example, almost doubled in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century from about 900 000 to nearly 1 700 000, whilst the previous fifty years had seen a growth of less than 225 000.[1] This trend was to accelerate, for by 1901 the inhabitants of this great city numbered 6 581 000.[2]. New pressures were thus being exerted on both the individual and the community and old problems, now presented in a new guise, called for a re-assessment of the existing order of things. It thus became an era of down-to-earth practicality linked with an approach to the spiritual side of life that, in general, viewed the then existing order as 'right and proper' and allowed an acceptance of such practices as child labour that is hard to understand by today's standards. Well has it been labelled an era of 'Prosperity and Piety'.[3]

The radical shift in the social structure of the land, from that of a largely rural population scattered in numerous small towns, villages, and hamlets, to one where vast numbers of people were huddled together on the outskirts of each city brought about significant changes in the field of human relations. It became the age of the organization. Men, ever gregarious, finding themselves torn from the setting in which their families had grown for generations, sought new friends, new alliances. A sense of belonging that had been left behind in the village needed to be replaced and each one found for himself individuals with similar background, common interest, or shared beliefs. Together they forged themselves into social groups, labour unions, professional institutions. Not that this was the only motivation: the demands of an increasingly

commercialized system forced industries, not only to expand, but to organise themselves into some form of structure that would better be able to cope with the requirements of commerce and also more effectively protect their individual interests.

The roots of many of these new organizations can be seen in similar associations of earlier times, the Companies or Guilds. However, these, appear to have been markedly different to later developments in at least one aspect - they encompassed far more than any modern trade or professional society. Almost every aspect of a man's life seems to have been influenced by the guild; and there is little doubt that his outlook and pattern of life were far more affected by his membership of such a guild than those of his counterpart today who has his name included on the roll of a professional or trade association. The indications are that religious and spiritual values were included in the sphere of influence of the guilds, but little can be proved in this regard, though the existence of organizations such as the present day societies of Freemasons is perhaps a sign of the direct link that once existed between ones trade and ones spiritual affiliation.

So we find both employer and employed at this time grappling with the problems thrust upon them by the changing scene. Both were engaged in a search for new answers to old problems, seeking to develop associations that would adequately represent their interests, each well aware that the old methods would no longer be able to cope with the new pressures. They appreciated too the strength that comes from speaking with a common, united voice when dealing with those who now appeared on the other side of the fence. That development was polarised in this manner is revealed by the

large gulf that had opened up between a workman and his master. It served to highlight, too, that the guilds, with their restrictive entrance requirements and the limitation placed on their membership by the arduous apprenticeship system would be unable to meet the demands of an age of commercialism.

Yet, just as the problems were in fact ancient ones, so the solutions that were being explored were not new, just variations on an old theme. For example, associations of workmen aimed at collectively being able to exert pressure on employers had come into being a century or so before. The club for journeymen wheelwrights, for example, had been strong enough by 1718 to indulge in strike action in an attempt to obtain easier working hours and better pay.[4] As a result of the growth of commerce and industry the population in England grew during this period from some nine million to over thirty two million.[5] However, it also fostered the development of more progressive associations and thus laid the foundation of the modern Trade Union movement. The guild system that had originally sprung to life sometime prior to the start of the twelfth century, and which represented both Master and Man, succumbed finally to the impact of industrialization. It must be stated that the majority of the guilds had sometime earlier begun to lose their influence: many had been severely weakened financially by the monetary demands of a succession of monarchs engaged in a variety of conflicts with other states. Also, a serious blow for many of them had been the loss of so much of their property in the Great Fire of London.

Thus, with the social structure of the so-called civilised Western world in dissarray, new stratas of society were forming. Both employer and

employee were forced to discover new ways of handling their relationship, one to another, as well as the difficulties caused by the pressure of the times on the pursuit of their respective vocations. The industry as we know it today was about to appear and the rise of the separate bodies from which it is constituted should now be considered.

The rise of the Architectural profession.

At the beginning of the period under consideration architecture had come to be considered a genteel pursuit, one that could be, and was indulged in by members of the nobility, without the benefit of any formal training, apart from the requisite visit to Italy and the other cultural centres. Pattern books, like those produced by Batty Langley, were commonplace and generally attempted to recapture the glories of ancient Greece or Rome, or more accurately the romantic ideas regarding them that then prevailed. However, although architecture could be freely practiced by anyone who had the means, the time, and the inclination the trend was inevitably toward the profession as we know it today. One eminent architectural historian, John Summerson, in discussing the architects of what he calls the golden age (from 1763 to 1793) pointed out:-

> "The fact is that an 'architectural profession' very nearly in the modern sense, did at last exist. There were men in practice, here and there, who were neither civil servants (like Wren), placemen (like Archer), nor pensioners of the aristocracy (like Kent or Gibbs), but who were something different from mere surveyors or tradesmen with a rule-of-thumb capacity for design. The professional gentleman-artist-architect had arrived".[6]

But, although the bones of the profession may have been in evidence at that relatively early time, they had yet to be organised into some form of cohesive skeleton let alone to be fleshed out to the body we know today. One of the tremendous advantages from which architecture benefitted at this time, and one that had a distinct and lasting influence on the future of the profession and its relationship to the other members of what is commonly called the building team, was that prominent and capable men of good standing in the social structure embraced architecture as a career. Notable among these were William Chambers and Robert Adam. To quote Summerson once again:-

> "Both had initial advantages of breeding, education and financial security; both had the support of Court influence right at the beginning of the new reign. Yet temperamentally they were as unlike as Reynolds and Gainsborough (the parallel is a significant one), Chambers setting a policy of sensitive, eclectic conservatism, Adam initiating what was at once recognised as a revolution in taste, and in the whole approach to domestic design.[7]

It was this sort of man who gave to architecture its respectability and who helped elevate the profession in the eyes of the common man to a level that, largely, it retains today.

Speculative building was on the rise due to the increased needs of the growing population and thus in many instances the man who practiced in the fledgling profession of architecture was also involved in other aspects of work that form no part of the modern architect's role. Thus we have architect/surveyors and also architect/builders, with Robert Adam being one of the latter. But there were also builder/architects, men whose main

livelihood was construction, generally of domestic work, who did their own design without the need of the newly found artist cum architect. Such a man was James Burton who was building in the Bloomsbury area of London at the beginning of this time period, though reportedly in a somewhat questionable manner. By the time of his death in 1837 he had become a man of substance having erected houses to the value of some two million pounds and had rendered valuable aid to that famous architect and developer, John Nash. In recognition of such services Nash agreed to educate Burton's son for a career in architecture and Decimus Burton rose to a prominence not far behind that of his mentor.[8]

The first move toward the creation of a professional society for architects was made in 1791 at a meeting held in The Thatched House Tavern, London when the four architects there gathered resolved to the Architects Club.[9] This was however very much an exclusive group, with membership confined to those who had already distinguished themselves artistically. Although it started with high ideals it seems to have rapidly become little more than an elite social club. By 1819 another somewhat similar organization was formed called the Architect's and Antiquarian's Club,[10] obviously spawned by the popular feeling then prevailing that looked so favourably on the heroic past. Then, in 1831 came the formation of the Architectural Society whose main objective was given as "the advancement and diffusion of Architectural Knowledge by promoting the intercourse of those engaged in its study."[11]

A year later there occured an event that had a significant effect on the social history of England and one that proved critical to the infant profession of architecture. This was the passing of the Reform Bill that

gave to the average citizen a freedom that he had not before possessed. The formation of some form of effective professional society now became a necessity. For, not only were individual architects under pressure from the economic climate, but large numbers of unscrupulous and unqualified persons were now setting themselves up as architects. Barrington Kaye in his book on the development of the profession[12] points out that the existence of such a society is one of the hallmarks that identifies a discipline as in fact of professional standing, and more than just a skilled craft. Among the functions of such an association would be to provide a guarantee for the building public that its members were not only competent but that each was also a person of integrity.[13]

At this period, too, public opinion of architects in general had taken a turn downwards. This was due in no small measure to the charlatans, already mentioned, who fought for any work that was available, misleading the client with estimates of cost that were deliberately kept low and, in addition, exacting a commission from the men who finally executed the job.[14] Thus from this background there came, in 1834, the initiative to start another association for architects; and one that would attempt to tackle the abuses then rife. This time the meeting took place at The Freemasons Tavern and as a result the Society of British Architects came into being. One of its rules of conduct stated, under the heading 'Disqualification of Members and Causes for Removal', that any member "having any interest or participation in any Trade or Contract connected with Building" would be liable for expulsion. It was from this Society that the Institute of British Architects was formed later the same year under the presidency of the Earl de Grey. The former Society was disbanded in its favour. The rule regarding action to be taken against those members

who engaged in any aspect of building work was retained, which rule was to have a marked effect on the development of the industry and its associated professions. By 1837 the Institute had been granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation.[15]

However the new Institute did not cater satisfactorily for all those who were working in the field of architecture and a number of other organizations came into being during this period. In 1842, for example, James Wylson was the prime mover in the founding of the Association of Architectural Draughtsmen. In 1847 this grew into the Architectural Association, due primarily to the efforts of Robert Kerr and Charles Grey.[16] Again, in 1884, due to the fact that Associate Members affiliated to the Institute had no say in the running of its affairs, the Society of Architects was formed with Colonel Ellison as its first President. This Society, which opened a South African branch in Johannesburg in 1906, finally merged with the institute in 1925 once adjustments to the Royal Charter granted all members a greater say in how the Institute should function.[17]

Thus after a number of years of uncertainty there emerged two leading associations: The Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association. The former being a professional body in the sense expounded by Barrington Kaye, and the latter 'a highly organised voluntary educational institution'.[17] Part of the reason for the hesitant growth in the early years has been stated to be the need for members of the profession to rid themselves of the stultifying effects of patronage by the nobility, as well as the furore that raged over the attempt to accurately distinguish between the artist and the tradesman.[18] As a result of the

emphasis placed on the artistic side of the architect's work and the attitude of condescension toward those who work with their hands in the actual construction of buildings, a sizable gulf developed between architects and builders. Since, to a large extent, the emphasis in architectural education remains on the design aspects, little is being done to narrow the gap.

The rise of Civil Engineering as a profession

Civil Engineering is somewhat pompously described in the Royal Charter granted to the Institution of Civil Engineers as 'the art of directing the great sources of power in Nature for the use and convenience of man...', and in this sense it has been serving mankind for a considerable period of time. The quotation in an earlier section of this document, dealing with the erection of the Catterick bridge in Yorkshire, describes what would be today a work of civil engineering. However it is John Smeaton, who lived in the latter half of the eighteenth century, who is generally credited with being the father of the profession and the first to use the term civil engineer. He apparently borrowed the term from the French and used it mainly to distinguish the work that he had his fellow engineers were involved in, from the somewhat similar endeavours of military engineers.

In 1771, on the 15th March, Smeaton met with a small group of other engineers at the King's Head Tavern, Holborn and together they formed the Society of Civil Engineers.[20] It was, probably from its inception, intended mainly for the top men of the profession, which fact is indicated in that the meetings were arranged weekly, but only during the

Parliamentary session. The purpose of the association appears to have been simply the interchange of ideas on a friendly basis with the meetings being a place '...where they might shake hands together, and be personally known to one another: That thus the sharp edges of their minds might be rubbed off, as it were, by a closer communication of ideas, no ways naturally hostile;...'[21] This amicable atmosphere apparantly did not prevail for too long as a clash of personalities later cast a pall over the gatherings and by 1792 the club, for it was little else, was defunct.

Smeaton himself died that same year but by early 1793 the first meeting of a new society, of which he had agreed to become a member, was held. This new Society of Civil Engineers appeared on the 15th April 1793, duly complete with a constitution and three catagories of membership that effectively retained the exclusiveness of the earlier society. In honour of the original founder it was later reconstituted as the Smeatonian Society of Civil Engineers.

Many prominent engineers of the period became members of the Society but there were notable exceptions, Thomas Telford being one. So, although civil engineers had an association early on, by no means could it be called representative. The initiative for a more comprehensive body came in 1818 from a group of young men working in the profession. Under the auspices of Henry Robinson Palmer, at that time in his early twenties, a meeting was held on the 2nd January, rather soberly at Kendal's Coffee House in Fleet Street. The main purpose behind this organization was not in any way to challenge the older body with its august membership, but to act simply as a guide and stimulant for young engineers. This was clearly manifest in the original constitution, since the rules included one that

restricted membership to persons between the ages of twenty and thirty five. Weekly meetings were held and discussions were to revolve around important matters currently affecting the profession, the relative merits of newly published items and a review of new information or recent discourses.

The Institution of Civil Engineers, as it was known, was for a time carried along by youthful enthusiasm, but by 1820 it was found advisable to rescind the age limit rule, and the dozen or so young members decided that a prominent engineer should be approached to stand as president. Overtures were made to Thomas Telford and, somewhat hesitantly, it seems, he accepted. His apprehension appears to have sprung from a genuine feeling of humility rather than a reluctance to associate himself with what might have seemed to be an enthusiastic group of young men with rather grandiose ideas. He applauded their efforts, praised the concept of the Institution and agreed to their proposal saying that "... a sense of duty and gratitude induce me to accept the office until a fitter person can be selected."[22]

From this time on the Institution was well set, although growth was initially quite slow, reaching approximately 120 members by 1826. The granting of the Royal Charter in 1828 was quite a remarkable achievement for an Institution started by a handful of enthusiastic young engineers, particularly since there was already a society in existence, peopled in fact by the most famous engineers of the day. The Charter gave the young organization the seal of approval and established it as the representative body for all civil engineers.

Until 1847 with the formation of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers this one organization served all branches of engineering, the term 'civil engineer' being used as Smeaton first applied it. The spectacular success of the railways meant a rise in status for the 'locomotive engineers' and they began to feel inadequately represented by the existing institution. Additionally, the rapid increase in knowledge and its application to engineering problems of all kinds militated against any one man being able to keep up with all the various aspects and this led to the rise of specialization. Thus, other professional institutions serving specific branches of engineering, were not long in appearing.[23]

It was also during the nineteenth century that civil engineering contracting grew into the industry it is today, moved by the same forces that were shaping the building industry: industrialization, mechanization, and the growing complexity and increasing size of individual projects. It took until the end of the First World War, though, before any form of association among firms working in the contracting field took shape. In 1918 a group of contractors based in London formed the Public Works Contractors' Association in order to better regulate labour problems and to form a common front. By the following year, a move to make this a national body was underway and on the 30th June 1919 the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors came into existence with thirty four members. Viscount Cowdray became the first President.[24] Included in the list of founder members were firms with names that are still known today, Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons, John Mowlem & Co., and Pauling & Co. among them.[25] The main aims of the Federation were naturally in the fields of labour relations and contractural conditions, although establishment of good relations with the building industry and the furtherance of education were also high on the priority list. Today the Federation includes all the major firms operating in the civil engineering contracting business.

Engineering as a profession thus rose to prominence during these critical years and has retained its popularity in the eyes of the public, due in no small measure, perhaps,to the glamour attached to the work it embraces. There is something awe inspiring in a monumental dam or a soaring bridge; modern man's fascination with mechanical contrivances, witness the enduring appeal of steam locomotives, well serves to perpetuate the favourable image accorded to mechanical engineers. In contrast, the average person tends to take buildings for granted, unless they either offend his sensibilities or are of such a monumental scale as to become more works of the civil engineers art than the builder's craft.

The Quantity Surveying profession appears

The proverb has it that it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good and this would seem to be quite apt in considering the origins of the Quantity Surveying profession. Many of the historians dealing with this aspect trace the roots back to the Great Fire of London in 1666, but then, most of the professions and the industry itself received a boost due to the unprecedented amount of work that had to be accomplished after the holocaust. One historian, however, actually attributes the architect Sir Robert Smirke with the introduction of quantity surveyors as a distinct class, stating that, prior to his time, systematic measuring had been relegated to skilled clerks in architects' offices.[26] However there seems to be little extant evidence to confirm this statement. Smirke it is true, was a prominent architect, almost the 'establishment' architect of his day, and is mainly remembered today for his work in designing the British Museum. At the height of his power he is reputed to have declined even to

consider any job that was less than £10,000 in value. It was also as a consequence of the fear, held by many, that he would be handed, (on a plate, as it were), the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster destroyed by fire in 1834, that led to an architectural competition being held for this project; the Houses of Parliament by Charles Barry assisted by the remarkable A N Welby Pugin being the result.[27] So no doubt Smirke wielded enough influence to have had a considerable effect on the birth of the profession if he had wished, but, that he was responsible for almost singlehandedly bringing it into existence, appears unfounded.

The year 1834 stands as quite a noteworthy one, not just for the conflagration mentioned above, but also since a number of associations were formed that year. The Society of British Architects had had its first meeting in January at the Freemason's Tavern and at the same venue on the 27th June, the Land Surveyors Club came into existence. This was a repetition of earlier events, for in 1791 the Architect's Club had come into existence to be followed in 1792 by the Surveyor's Club, an association formed by architect/surveyors who were excluded from membership of the earlier club.[28] No doubt part of this repetitious behaviour stemmed from the fact that the founder members of both fields were well acquainted with each other and were aware of developments taking place in the related disciplines. This, together with the pressures exerted by the times in which they lived, forced them to adopt similar methods.

Following the normal pattern the Land Surveyor's Club declared its' aims to be higher than simply that of forming a social arrangement. Its members wished to establish themselves as of professional status above that of what they called, inferior 'artisanate' surveyors, to build up a

reputation for integrity and honesty, and to work to an agreed scale of fees. Education and representation to authorities were also included.[29] However the Club's high sounding aims foundered in the mad commercial scramble that marked the railway age, together with the exploitation that became so prevalent in the development of the many speculative housing estates. It continued to exist, but due to its failure to meet its aims, there arose amongst some of the members a desire to reconstitute the Club and renew those ideals that had been forgotten.

So, on the 23rd March 1868, with the venue now the Westminster Palace Hotel, an association was finally formed that would meet these desires. It was the Institution of Surveyors and, on the 15th June at the first General Meeting, John Clutton was elected its President. In his opening address this prominent man, whose wealth and respectability helped to put surveyors on the social map, bemoaned the tardiness with which surveyors had acted in establishing an association.[30]

> "It will scarcely be deemed credible, when architects, builders, engineers, and even their subordinates, clerks of works and foremen engineers, have their institutions, and when every trade down to the most mechanical handicraft has its mutual benefit association or provident club, that a profession which is in close connection with the practice of construction and engineering, standing midway between the two, should have no common centre for the reception and radiation of professional intelligence and assistance."

The profession as such had now come into existence, although men practising as quantity surveyors on an independent basis had been around for some time, one of the most notable being James Waller. He had reached

prominence by the 1820's and many notable members of the Institution had been articled to him.[31] But it was the general atmosphere of professionalism, together with the increasing use of the contract-in-gross, the need for more accurate estimating, and the stricter control of costs, that brought the former measurer out from architects' or builders' offices where he had been languishing, into his own place in the sun. The Institution received a Royal Charter in 1881.[32]

The competition for the new Houses of Parliament also served to bring the surveyor prominently to the attention of the public: one Henry Hunt, once also an articled pupil of James Wallen and later to be his partner, provided an estimate for the project to Charles Barry that was outstanding in its accuracy, particularly in view of the somewhat sketchy information on which it was based. Hunt was a man of considerable experience, as well as one who came from a building background, for in years prior to this he had rendered quantity surveying services to such notable builders as Grissel & Peto, who were actually to build the Houses of Parliament.[33]

So the major professions related to building all made their appearance as organised bodies during this period and, partly due to the nature of the work for which each was responsible, and partly due to the pattern of society that then prevailed, a distinct stratification took place. One of the prime objectives in the formation of each of these associations was to protect the interest of their members and to define the boundaries of their fields of expertise to prevent unauthorised incursions on what were seen as their rights. That, in order to accomplish this, it was found necessary in some cases to denigrate those with differing views

and to cast aspersions on their honesty and attempt to minimise their contribution to the production of buildings, is a sad reflection of man's feeling of self importance. To be fair though, in those far off and seemingly halcyon days, no one could see the world shaking events that lay ahead, nor the long term effect of decisions that were taken then in the radically changed world that lay on the other side of 1914.

The rise of the Building Contractor.

On what was now beginning to be seen as 'the other side of the fence' developments were also taking place, the most significant of which was the appearance of firms who operated as building contractors in the modern sense of the term. For the first time a man who was in the business of building came to the fore. It was he who contracted with the client for the whole of the works and who carried the responsibility for construction and erection from start to finish; it was he who employed tradesmen of all kinds over whom he excercised direct control and for whom he endeavoured to find a series of contracts such that they could be continuously in his employ. The growth of such all-embracing firms was encouraged by a number of factors then prevailing, not the least of which was the emergence of the building professions.

As in so many fields of human endeavour one of the major influences that favoured rapid development in this area sprang from military considerations. At the start of the period under discussion the aura of Napoleon and French expansionism cast a shadow over much of life in Europe, and the Cape Colony came directly under this influence. The

pressure that this exerted, which radically changed the appearance and structure of the building industry, came through the Barrack Office. Troops had traditionally been billeted in private dwellings but with the great increase in the strength of the standing army this became impracticable and the building of specialised accomodation was a necessity. This function, originally allocated to the Royal Engineers, was in 1796 handed over to a civil authority with a Civil Comptroller being appointed in 1816.[34] Owing to the urgency of the work and the size of the individual contracts, it was found easier to deal with one person who carried full responsibility for the building works than to contract directly with individual workmen for specific sections of the job. Thus was born what became known as the contract-in-gross, or all-trades contract, a system of contracting closely related to our modern concept of a building contract.

A number of building firms were at one time or another employed in the construction of such barrack accomodation but that of Alexander Copeland, who was in partnership with Henry Rowles, emerged as the most prominent, such that he was dubbed 'the emperor of barrack builders'.[35] He carried out contracts all over the British Isles and in the period from 1796 to 1806 is reputed to have handled work of this nature to the tune of some £1,500,000.[36] However evidence seems to favour the idea that although Copeland could truly be said to be the building contractor for each of the barracks he erected, he did not attempt to employ men on a continuous basis, but set up a team for each contract.[37] However a pattern was being established and the size and nature of the contracts he specialised in favoured this method of operation, as did the great volume of speculative building that was then under construction. The rush to house the swarms of people flocking to the cities was on, and many saw it as a relatively easy way to make a lot of money in a short space of time.

Speculative building was by no means new; it reached back at least to the sixteenth century and probably to the time when rent was first exacted from a tenant. Many of the gentry involved themselves in this field due to the existence of large areas of suitable land over which their family had jurisdiction. Much of it could not be sold as such, but the development of the 'peppercorn rent' system encouraged speculators to take a lease on the land and develop it at their own expense. Under this system the lease was let at a nominal, or 'peppercorn' rent, for the first few years during which period development of the land could take place. The subsequent rental was then being raised to a more realistic level and remained so until the end of the lease. Many were the men from all walks of life who were encouraged to procure a lease, build a house, and then sell the balance of the lease with the property. Little capital, one authority says as little as £100, was required to set a man up as a speculator in this fashion.[38] As a system, it was open to much abuse, and many were unscrupulous men who ventured into this lucrative field. One of the most noteworthy in the early development of London was Nicholas Barbon, builder, speculator, and fraud extraordinary.[39] Men such as he, gave the industry a bad name. Writing in the London Tradesman in 1747 one R. Campbell remarked: "It is no new thing for these Master Builders to build themselves out of their own homes and fix themselves in jail with their own Materials."[40]

James Burton, father of the architect Decimus, has already been mentioned and among the more respectable and generally sucessful speculative builders might be noted the firms of Chapple, May & Morritt, and James Sim but their names have largely passed into oblivion. That of Thomas Cubitt, however, has remained more firmly fixed in the transient

hall of public acclaim. Cubitt along with his brother Lewis, who later branched out as an architect, first appeared prominently on the speculative building scene in Bloomsbury in the 1820's, but he had been successfully contracting for a number of years already. He started on his own in 1812 with a job involving the re-roofing of the Russell Institution, and a year later, he built his first speculative venture with finance obtained from members of the Carpenters Company to which he belonged. In 1815 he entered into a contract to build the London Institution and it was with this project that he took the momentous step of deciding to employ all his own men and to endeavour to keep them continuously in his employ; to become, in fact, a building contractor.[41]

Among the factors that influenced Thomas Cubitt to make such a move on this particular project were the extremely stiff penalties that were to be applied in the event of non-completion within the specified period. Obviously it would be easier to meet a tight schedule if one could exercise direct control over each workman rather than have to rely on what amounted to a range of subcontractors. The boom in building, then existing, would also have played a part, as continuity of work could be seen to be within reach. The Victorian spirit of independence and the adulation accorded to self-made men and the exaltation of the entrepeneur during this time must also have influenced Cubitt to go on his own. However, factors that directly affected his decision would undoubtedly have been the contract-in-gross, the increasing size and complexity of buildings, and the ever greater role being played by mechanization.

The industry itself was very much in a state of flux owing to these factors, and at least two public enquiries, in 1812 and 1828, point

out the general feeling of anxiety that then prevailed over anything to do with building. The latter enquiry, too, had come more or less as a direct result of the collapse of the newly completed Customs House in 1825, due, it was discovered, to faulty foundations. This disaster, the blame for which was laid at the door of the then Surveyor of Buildings, Mr Laing, served to highlight the serious consequences of 'jerry building'. Also from this later enquiry, there emerged the fact that most builders of repute, and both Thomas Cubitt and Henry Rowles gave evidence to this effect, favoured the contract-in-gross, whilst the majority of architects preferred the direct contract made with individual workmen.[42] Typical of the reaction of the average architect to the all-trades contract is the following quotation from a book written in 1840:-[43]

> "As if modern buildings were not designed slightly enough, as if the spirit of good building were not otherwise sufficiently depressed, as if the quality of science employed in English architecture were not sufficiently low, to the other evils is added in an eminent degree, that of bad execution in an enormous number of cases; and this results almost entirely from the work being performed by contract."

The influence of the Reform Act of 1832 can also be considered for, favouring as it did the rise of the bourgoisie, it helped to demarcate a period in which the nature of the client changed. Building came out of an era of basically nobility or state funded contracting to one where the merchant trader and commercial manufacturer played an important role and the demand, as a consequence, was for the builder to compete in the market place. This meant competitive tendering for which the contract-in-gross was more suitable. The demand for stricter control over time and costs during the building process was also more easily satisfied if one firm took

the responsibility for the complete construction of the job. Additionally, a building contractor as such, could build more cheaply than a number of independent workmen, because he could more easily employ mechanization, he could buy in bulk, and he could attract the best craftsmen since he offered some form of security in employment.

It was against this background that in 1834 a number of the leading contractors got together and formed The Builder's Society. One of the aims in the formation of this association was to enable employers to formulate common attitudes towards labour and wage problems; but, since trade associations for building employees were at this time considered illegal, this aspect was not brought to the fore, though there is little doubt that the members used the new society in that way.[44] Openly the aims were more altruistic: 'to uphold and promote reputable standards of building through friendly intercourse, the useful exchange of information and greater uniformity and respectability in building.' [45] The low standards set by the average speculative builder and the increase in profiteering at this time, no doubt contributed to the desire of reputable men for an association that would in some ways guarantee for the client a fair deal, and protect the reputation of honorable members of the building fraternity.

In 1859 Parliament granted building employees the right to form trade associations and the direction taken by the Builder's Society changed toward that of a learned organization, disseminating knowledge and sharing experience. In 1884 it was incorporated under the new Companies Act and the name was changed to the Institute of Builders, the emphasis being firmly laid on excellence in building, honorable business practice, upholding standards of membership by examination, and generally acting as a

professional body in the field of building construction.[46] Up until 1925 only employers were allowed to become members but from then on membership, at least to the lower levels, was open to all involved in construction, who could meet the entrance requirements by examination. The year 1956 saw the end of even this form of discrimination and under its new title of the Institute of Building, adopted in 1965, it has displayed the 'freshest and most unique approach of any qualifying association and learned society in combining the service of both professional and commercial concerns individually and collectively.'[47]

With the emphasis of the Builders Society moving away from its role as a trade association, a need for such an employers body manifested itself, and regional associations began to appear. Among the first was the Central Association of Master Builders, formed in London in 1859 and later to become known as the London Master Builders Association.[48] In 1865 the Manchester Master Builders Association was formed and the proliferation of such regional bodies during the latter part of the century brought the need for a central coordinating body, thus, in 1878 the National Association of Master Builders of Great Britain came into being in which the basis for the modern organization was laid. The name was changed in 1901 to the National Federation of Building Trade Employers of Great Britain and Ireland and finally, in 1928, this was abbreviated to the National Federation of Building Trade Employers, the NFBTE.[49]

There are other bodies representing employers in the building industry such as the Federation of Building Sub-Contractors, affiliated to the NFBTE, and the Federation of Associations of Specialists and Sub-Contractors. But, the principal organizations that fill an equivalent role to that of the professional societies are the two previously discussed.

The growth of the Trade Unions.

Owing to my own background in the building industry, as well as the source material available to me, the viewpoint adopted in this dissertation has been one taken primarily from the side of the employer; but no account of the growth of the industry could successfully be written without consideration being given to organizations that have been developed to cater for the employee. When considering the full picture presented by the history of the Trade Union movement the canvas is so vast that any coverage I attempt can only be cursory, with highlights chosen somewhat arbitrarily to emphasise aspects which have a direct bearing on my subject. The subject of most concern will the interaction between these trade associations and the employer organizations.

Immediately, on tackling the body of literature dealing with trade unionism, one is brought face to face with the scholarly and extensive work done by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Their book The History of Trade Unionism was published in 1894 and has been variously described as 'a monumental work','an immense and valuable work'. 'a landmark' or other similar laudatory expressions. Many of the opinions expressed in their volume, which was revised and republished in 1920, are quoted as if they were established facts, not to be disputed. In recent years though, further research has led to a modification of this view, although the value of the work done by the Webbs' is never questioned. One statement which has gained general credence, and which reappears in much subsequent literature, is that unions of workmen, in the sense of trade unions, developed in the latter part of the seventeenth century and owed little, if anything, to previous craft organizations. 'The supposed descent in this country of the

Trade Unions from the Craft Guilds rests, as far as we have been able to discover, upon no evidence whatsoever'. 'We assert, indeed, with some confidence, that in no case did any Trade Union in the United Kingdom arise, either directly or indirectly, by descent, from a Craft Guild'.[50] A typical article on the history and activities of trade unions subscribes to this view in stating that, although no date can be assigned to the origin of the unions, they were not numerous until the eighteenth century and that, in spite of the fact that there were journeyman's combinations prior to that date as well as skilled workers' societies, these were of only a local nature and not to be considered as the precursors of present day unions.[51]

More recent histories however begin to see more positive links between the unions and the crafts or guilds.[52] A E Musson in his book on the British Trade Unions, points out that the craft societies of skilled workmen provided, in his opinion, the basis for modern trade unionism until well into the nineteenth century.[53] Although critical of the Webbs in some aspects of their work, he points out that they did see the main influences at work that gave rise to the modern movements in the 'widening gulf between capital and labour, conflicting class interests, capitalist competition and exploitation, working class grievances in regard to wages, apprenticeship, etc., and the breakdown of protective regulations, both of guild and state.'[54]

One feature that has come out of modern research has been the growing appreciation of just how widespread and well organised the craft guilds were, on a national basis. Evidence has come to light to show extensive, tightly knit organizations that existed, helping to confirm the

belief that they grew from earlier associations back in medieval times even prior to the Norman conquest.[55] Even as early as 1388, when the Crown insisted that all such guilds set down openly their rules, there was a complete network of them among the so called 'third estate', that is the realm of the working man; the other two estates being the knights and the church in that order.[56] Of the eight building craft guilds associated with the City of London, a number had been granted their Royal Charter by the early fifteenth century. In fact, with regard to the Carpenter's Company, the historian Maitland, writing in 1739, speaks of it as an ancient fraternity and gives its date of incorporation as 7 July, 1344. The noted historian John Stow, however, gives the year of incorporation as 1477, although he agrees with Maitland as to the day and month.[57]

The aims of each of these guilds were basically the same as those of modern trade unions: mutual aid and assistance, together with the strength that comes from numbers and a common voice. Often they were tied to a specific church where a candle, a 'wax', was kept burning at the expense of the society to help to insure benefits in the future life as well as the present one.[58] There is no record, for example, to say which of the patron saints was appealed to by the Carpenters Company, but it is thought probable that it was the Virgin. However, like the Grocers Company, they may have spread the risk over a wider area by invoking the protection of All Saints for they maintained lights in both St Mary's Spital and All Hallows, both of which buildings were in close proximity to the Carpenters Hall in London.[59] Of the building trades, masons and carpenters were the most important and, in these early years, they were recruited in large numbers by the reigning monarch, the major client, for work on numerous castles and palaces. In 1359, for example, there were up to 1600 masons at

work on Windsor Castle for Edward III. The itinerant nature of these trades however, meant that the first type of organization they formed was the local lodge, established basically at any site where work would be continuing for a period of time. Masons in London, for instance, only set up a guild similar to those existing in a large number of other occupations at the behest of the Mayor in 1356. Some time later all associations of workmen in the building trade were banned by order of Parliament, due apparantly to demands being made by these organizations that were holding the employers to ransom and impeding progress. However, societies, as well as others, continued to flourish, a shadow of things to come.[60]

During this time the gulf between master and workman continued to widen, and the fact that Parliament had to step in with regard to the building trades showed that many masters were unable to control their workforce without outside authority. Evidence of the growing rift became apparant in the development of two classes within the ranks of many of the craft guilds, the yeomanry and the liverymen. The latter, as the name implies, adopted special and, in many instances, ostentatious dress, the 'cloathing', for use on feast days and ceremonial occasions. This was to distinguish themselves from the rank and file. Into this class fell the masters, whereas the working man and masters over small workshops consitituted the yeomanry.[61] So the development in later years of two classes of organization, one for the employer and one for the employee, was apparantly foreshadowed in the division that occurred in the guilds.

Additional factors in the downfall of the traditional craft guilds were the financial demands made by the Crown and the Great Fire of London. The devestation wrought by the fire left its mark on the building industry.

Owing to the tremendous amount of work that had to be accomplished, Charles II decided to throw the rebuilding of the ravaged city open to free trade. Instead of the guilds being able to control the influx of skilled men and regulate their employment and remuneration on traditional lines, men were given freedom to work where they would for whatever wage they could.[62] In addition, the trade was full of 'King's Freemen', ex soldiers from the Cromwellian era who had been given carte blanche to pursue any work for which they were fitted, whether or not they belonged to the appropriate craft organization. The trade societies were thrown into confusion and many of them never recovered in spite of the fact that they remained in existence for many years.

The time was ripe for a change and the watershed year would seem to be 1799 when the Combination Laws were passed, to be modified in detail, if not in spirit, the following year. Due to problems occurring between men and masters in the millwrights' trade an appeal was made to the government for laws to enable the masters to bring the men to heel. This appeal was taken as a signal for the introduction of sweeping legislation that, in effect, made it unlawful for any worker organization or 'combination' to exist. It was 'an odious piece of class legislation', according to historian Aspinall,[63] The effect was, however, not to frighten the men from forming any kind of association to protect their interests, but merely to send them underground. In fact the evidence seems to indicate that the government was not actually against the existence of such societies, but was merely seeking to control them when they 'combined' for evil ends, such as wage demands or strike action. Many worker associations existed quite openly at this time.[64] The mottoes that appeared on some of the coats of arms of these societies seem to support this view: the Brushmakers had on their rather elaborate device the legend 'United to Protect not Combined to Injure'.[65]

The Combination Laws were passed partly due to the wave of hysteria brought about by the revolutionary spirit then prevailing in Europe. However, they were used more as a threat than as effective legislation. More often than not illegal associations of workers were prosecuted under other laws that carried far more serious punishments than did the Combination Laws. The Acts of 1799 & 1800 in fact represented not so much a sudden and unexpected reaction against workmen's associations, as the culmination of a long series of earlier laws, which numbered about forty.[66]

The reaction to the new laws was not long in coming and they were repealed in 1824 largely due to the efforts of Francis Place and Joseph Hume, who spearheaded a move to allow trade organizations not only to exist, but also to be legally recognised. Thus the Act of 1824 set aside not only the Combination Laws but also prevented trade unions from being punished under earlier legislation. As a result, in the words of the Webbs, 'Trade Societies accordingly sprang into existence or emerged into aggressive publicity on all sides.'[67] In the forefront of subsequent developments were the building trade associations.

The first national carpenter's organization was known as the Friendly Society of Operative Carpenters, or commonly the 'General Union', and it came into existence in 1827, playing a leading role in the fight waged by the men against the embryonic 'contracting system'. In 1829 the first union for bricklayers was formed and in 1830 the Operative Builders' Union, which sought to get all the building trades under one authority, but which lasted a scant three years. Leeson states of this move for general unification within the building industry, that 'it cannot be unconnected

with the amalgamations of the older building craft organizations in many towns outside London which date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,....'[68] Then came the most dramatic amalgamation attempt of them all: the formation of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union by the idealist and social reformer Robert Owen.

A factor that contributed to the phenomenal growth of the trade union movement at this time was the Reform Act of 1832. Promising a greater role in political affairs for the middle classes it elicited a good deal of support from the workmen, even though they themselves were not included in the new dispensation. Most journeymen, however, looked to the masters of the smaller workshops, who stood to gain from the Act, trusting that once these received their new freedom, they would deal sympathetically with their unrepresented workers. The London branch of the Society of Brushmakers recorded '3 Cheers for Reform and King William' at their meeting on the 27th April 1821. The result though, in the words of William Kiddier, historian of the Society of Brushmakers, was that 'The Masters joined hands with the rest of the ruling class and left the Journeymen isolated. A significant gesture was that. Nay, call it a shock: for such it was: as in that hour the damnation line of CLASS sharper and deadlier than ever, ruled off WORKING MEN as the eternal enemies of CAPITAL.'[69] A somewhat emotional outburst but the result was even as stated. Deprived of the vote directly the men turned to the unions as their voice and politics entered ever more prominently into the activities of the trade organization.[70]

On this wave of feeling then, the 'Grand National' established in 1833 grew apace. Conceived as an all-embracing union for the building

trade it spread to include a wide diversity of trades, skilled and unskilled. A group of agricultural labourers led by the Loveless brothers met in the village of Tolpuddle, at the house of Thomas Standfield, to form a lodge of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers that was linked to the 'Grand National' and in swearing the oath of allegiance they were arrested. Tried by a vindictive judge, John Williams, they were sentenced to deportation under the law prohibiting the swearing of illegal oaths.[71] A massive demonstration at Copenhagen Fields outside London, which was organised by the GNCTU together with a petition bearing a quarter of a million signatures, took the government by surprise. Fearful of making concessions, and thus fostering the rise of the working class movement, the sentence on the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' was allowed to stand but by 1836 it had been reversed and the men returned to England at government expense.[72] The GNCTU suffered a severe setback due to the harsh action meted out to this group of workmen and this, together with internal strife, caused it to collapse. The Operative Builders Union, which like many of the societies of skilled men, had held aloof from Owen's "Grand National" also came to an end and trade unionism entered what would probably today be called 'a period of consolidation'. It was not dead, as the Webbs' would have readers believe, but survived, although under straitened circumstances.[73] One aspect of the Tolpuddle incident that seems to point to developments in the future, is that the majority of organizations who sent deputations to parade at the Copenhagen Fields, and reports mention that upwards of 30 000 men took part, would not have admitted the unskilled Dorchester labourers to their fraternity. A new feeling of brotherhood among all working men, irrespective of trade or skill, was becoming apparent.[74]

Depression now gripped the land with the deepest troughs being in the early 1840's and recurring in 1846 and 1847. Men were out of work the whole country round, and the 'tramping system' (by which unemployed men were supported by the society to which they belonged to take to the road along a specified route in search of work finding accomodation and food at the various lodges along the way,) collapsed. Some societies, seeing the foolishness of sending men away from their homes in search of work that was known to be non existent, allowed the men to stay with their families and receive a small weekly benefit, setting a pattern for future trade unions.[75] Others assisted their members to join the great emigration rush, then in full swing. America, Australia, and New Zealand were the main beneficiaries, although South Africa did receive some attention prior to the discovery of diamonds and gold. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers claimed some twenty six overseas branches at this time, with a fair proportion of them being in South Africa.[76]

Development was not entirely stagnant for it was during this period that the Webbs' so called "New Model" trade unions appeared. Musson maintains that these unions, far from being new, were very strongly based on the pattern of the older ones, with similar objectives and basically identical structures although there were proportionately more unions that did not cater exclusively for the skilled workmen of one specific trade, but that aimed for a wider membership.[77] The fight for legal status was now on. One highlight was the builder's strike of 1859 & 1860 which hinged on the request for a nine-hour working day. The London Trades Council was formed to consolidate the strike action and gained wide acceptance even beyond the city limits, and it campaigned openly for amendments to the law. The Sheffield outrages of 1866, acts of violence and intimidation against

individual workmen active in the unions, focused attention on the undesirable aspects of the unions and in 1867 a Royal Commission was established to investigate the whole question of labour organizations. A court decision handed down in the same year ruled that the unions, as they existed, had no legal standing whatsoever, nor had their funds protection from the law. This challange brought a new spirit of unity among the unions and, ovecoming a division in their leadership, the Trades Union Congress was formed in 1868. Under this new centralised leadership they fought for the right to exist. The Trade Union Act of 1871, together with later legislation, put them firmly on a lawful footing with freedom to indulge in collective bargaining and strike action.[78]

So by the late 1800's after many a setback, well organised, legal unions representing the workmen had been established, ready to face the challanges of the future. Unhappily, due to their historical background, they stood in a position of confrontation to, rather than cooperation with, the professional bodies and the associations of masters.

Summary.

In reviewing this part of man's history one cannot help but be impressed by the important role it plays in the area of social and industrial relations. So many major influences at work, so many significant events occurring all of which have left a permanent mark on modern society. It was an era of change, of the adoption of new policies and methods, of adaptation to new circumstances. It seems to have served as a melting pot, a crucible in which the old and the new were compounded to spawn an era of discontent. Perhaps here we see the seedbed in which

was planted the crop we are reaping today: the rise of the ethic of self-advancement. It was perhaps the genesis of the paradox of the collective preaching of human values and responsibility to individuals who wish to know only their personal rights and choose to ignore their duties. It was an outlook that reached a horrific peak in the holocaust of World War 1 and that has continued rampant, unabated, since then.

The building industry, of course, was just as involved in this milieu as any of man's social structures. It was shaped by the forces of industrialisation, by the widening gulf between worker and master, by the breakdown of traditional arrangements and by the numerous items of legislation that were promulgated or removed to suit the changing social scene. In turn, within the industry were forces that influenced not only the structure of the trade itself, but that spread outward to affect society in general. Among these were the development of a professional heirachy and the artificial separation of design and construction; both were first clearly discernible at this time; both have made a lasting impression on our society.

With the increasing size and greater complexity of projects, specialization became inevitable and this in turn led to the demise of the 'comprehensive man', the versatile, practical man who involved himself in a wide variety of different disciplines. Eminent examples of this type of person were the railway engineers of Victoria's reign - Robbert Stephenson, Joseph Locke, and the mercurial Isambard Brunel. In fact the railways provide a fine example of how work had to be divided into specialised fields as the complexity of the undertaking grew. In the early days, as with the development of the canal system, one man took the responsibility

for all aspects of design and construction, but as time progressed and the railways spread their network further and further afield, no one man could continue to exercise sole control over all sectors of the project.

A division between architectural work and engineering work began to be made and an interesting comment on this is made by L T C Rolt in his book 'Victorian Engineering':-

> "This division of labour between engineer and architect may have given rise to that regrettable Victorian conception of architecture as a form of decorative treatment which could be applied to a building like icing to a cake. The facility with which this was achieved accounts for the proliferation of different architectural styles that marked the period."[79]

With his major accomplishments visible on all sides and his grandiose schemes for the future conquest of 'natures forces for the use and convenience of man', the engineer seems to have been the darling of Victorian society. The architect, though suffering periods of relative disfavour, was generally accepted as a member of polite company and some of them were in fact knighted for the completion of major public buildings; Smirke, Scott, Barry, and George come to mind. Architecture was considered a genteel pursuit that could with advantage be followed by the scions of noble families, along with art and archaeology. This acceptance by the upper crust in a society notable for its social stratification gave to these professions a standing that surveying was hard put to emulate. It is true that John Clutton, first President of the Institution of Surveyors, was a man of some social stature, but on the whole the surveyor was not highly considered. He seemed to be little removed from the artisan or

clerk employed by the local builder and, to make matters worse, he was intimately involved with bills and accounts, money at its commercial level, as opposed to banking which was money as finance. The profession thus started off at a disadvantage and, when the emerging architectural profession began to openly question the relevance and standing of quantity surveying as a discipline, a situation was established that has lasted down to our day.

This campaign instituted by the architect can be seen as merely one aspect of a very complicated process of adjustment, a settling into a new set of relationships, an establishment of new roles. In response to the movement toward specialization, architecture moved more definitely into the design and conception areas of building, leaving construction and erection to the builders and finance and cost control to the surveyors. In the words of Thompson '...this was the very time chosen by the architects to smear the measurers and surveyors, who were widely held to be a set of rogues, at best cantankerous, and usually dishonest, given to exploiting unwritten customary rules of measurement, which they were suspected of inventing to suit the occasion, and to falsifying measurements and prices and descriptions of materials in order to inflate the builders' profits.'[80] Architects increasingly saw themselves as men who should provide a design service on a professional level as distinct from many who where practicing architecture at the time and who saw only their own personal advantage and that of the speculative builder for whom they worked. In order to justify the move toward design, and to elevate themselves in the eyes of the general public above the level of commercial gain-seekers, it was considered essential to make the rift between the two as prominent as possible. Thus, not only did they seek to elevate

themselves and their discipline, but sought to denigrate builders and surveyors and to minimise their contribution to good building. This trend could only have a detrimental effect on relationships between the various professions. However, there is another legacy to be considered: 'The quality of workmanship achieved by craftsmen was a cause of anxiety in some quarters. One origin of this was the erosion of autonomy of craftsmen by the growing practice of drawing up full details of buildings in advance of construction in order to aid estimating. The effect was to move decisions from site and workshop to the relatively remote designer's office. Hitherto craftsmen had decided for themselves details of ornament and window, staircase and dormer, but now they were forced to yield responsibility to professional designers, often with different priorities.'[81] These words quoted from the book by CG Powell throw further light onto the undoubted effect that the separation of design and construction had, it reached as far as the workman.

One of the reasons given for this move was commercial interest, the desire to know more accurately in advance the financial committment required. This is a feasible explanation since it reflects the same trend that gave impetus to the contract-in-gross and led to the rise of the building contractor as such. But the long term consequences were disasters for under a two prong confrontation, the architects' desire to reserve design work for themselves and the clients' requirement for more accurate estimates, the craftsman was forced into retreat. His job became more and more mechanical in its demands and scope for intitiative ever more restricted. Building suffered from poor quality workmanship and indifferent detailing, for few were the architects who were conversant enough with their materials to handle them effectively. This trend has

reached crisis proportions in our day with only a limited number of building artisans able to lay claim to the title of craftsmen and only isolated architects with enough knowledge or skill to handle the plethora of modern building materials capably.

As we now turn our attention to the situation at the Cape during this period we do so with a background understanding of the ferment going on in England. The growth and development of the industry in this 'far-flung outpost of the British Empire' would inevitably be constrained by the pattern emerging at 'Home'.

Section 3.

Section 3. Notes

1. J Summerson, Georgian London,London, Pleiades Books, 1945 p9

2. G Stamp & C Amery, Victorian Buildings of London 1837 - 1887,London, The Architectural Press Ltd. 1980 p12

3. R Tubbs, The Englishman Builds, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1945 p38

4. The Times, The City of London, London, Times Publishing Company, 1927 p35

5. R Tubbs, The Englishman Builds, p38

6. J Summerson, op cit., p117

7. J Summerson, op cit., p117

8. H Hobhouse, Thomas Cubitt, Master Builder, London, Macmillan 1972 p343

9. B. Kaye, The Development of the Architectural Profession in Britain, p58

10. ibid p61

11. ibid p63

12. Barrington Kaye, The Development of the Architectural Profession in Britain, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1960

13. ibid p21

14. ibid p66

15. ibid pp75-82

16. J Summerson, The Architectural Association, London, Pleiades Books 1947 pp3-5

17. C McArthur Butler, The Society of Architects, London, W S Cowell, for The Society of Architects, 1925

18. J Summerson, The Architectural Association, p22

19. Barrington Kaye, op cit., p13

20. C M Norrie, Bridging the Years, London, Edward Arnold 1956 p11. A strange discrepancy exists as to the exact venue for this first meeting as this work on page 11 gives the name of the tavern as the King's Head whilst the Preface to a set of volumes issued by the Society itself in 1812 gives the name as the Queen's Head Tavern. As King George IV was on the throne at the time of the meeting it seems probable that the former is the correct version. The preponderance of meetings held at such taverns casts an interesting light either on the role of the Public House at that time or on the drinking habits of the people.

Section 3.

21. ibid p196

22. ibid p18

23. L T C Rolt, Victorian Engineering, Harmonsdworth, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970 p76

24. F C M Norrie, Bridging the Years, p10

25. ibid p203, where a list of the founder members appears.

26. M S Briggs, The Architect in History, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1927 p343

27. G Stamp & C Amery, Victorian Buildings of London, 1837 - 1887, London, Architectural Press. 1980 p18

28. F M L Thompson, Chartered Surveyors. The growth of a profession, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited 1968 p71

29. ibid p95

30. ibid p134

31. D F Dolan, The British Construction Industry, an Introduction, London, Macmillan Press. 1979 p5

32. F M L Thompson, Chartered Surveyors, p175

33. ibid p91

34. Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Eleventh Edition 1959, Vol. 3 p135

35. F M L Thompson, Chartered Surveyors. The growth of a profession, p84

36. ibid p84

37. H Hobhouse, Thomas Cubitt, Master Builder, London, Macmillian, 1927 p10

38. J Summerson, Georgian London, p62

39. ibid p62

40. M Bowley, The British Building Industry, Cambridge, University Press. 1966 p335

41. H Hobhouse, op cit., p9

42. F M L Thompson, op cit., p85&86

43. A Bartholomew, Specifications for Practical Architecture, London, John Williams Library of Fine Art, 1840 Chapter IX para. 22

Section 3.

44. D F Dolan, The British Construction Industry, p46

45. J Bowyer, History of Building, London, Crosby Lockwood Staples 1973 p240

46. M Davey, Building in Britain, London, Evans Brothers Limited 1964 p99

47. D F Dolan, The British Construction Industry, p46

48. J Bowyer, History of Building, p240

49. D F Dolan, The British Construction Industry, p47

50. S & B Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, London, Longmans Green & Co. 1920 p14

51. Encyclopedia Brittanica 1959 Volume 22 p374

52. I have chosen this spelling in preference to that of 'gild' frequently used.

53. A E Musson, British Trade Unions 1800 - 1875, London, Macmillan, 1972 pp49-58

54. ibid p12

55. A Aspinall, The Early English Trade Unions,

56. R A Leeson, Travelling Brothers, St Albans, Granada, 1980 p25

57. R Bayliss, History of the Craft Guilds, Article in Building Trades Journal October 19, 1979 p22. He gives the eight guilds and their dates of charter as:- The Ironmongers Company 1463, The Carpenters Company 1477, The Joiners Company 1571, The Tylers and Bricklayers Company 1567, The Plaisterers Company 1501, The Masons Company 1677, The Glaziers Company 1638, The Plumbers Company 1611.

58. R A Leeson, op cit. p26

59. R Bayliss, op cit. p25

60. R A Leeson, op cit. p36

61. ibid p47

62. R A Leeson, op cit. p71

63. A Aspinall, op cit. p.xii

64. A E Musson, op cit. p22

65. Illustration appearing in William Kiddier's, The Old Trade Unions, opp. p25

Section 4.

66. R A Leeson, op cit. p99

67. S & B Webb, op cit. p104

68. R A Leeson, op cit. p117

69. W Kiddier, The Old Trade Unions, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1930 p75&76.

70. Encyclopedia Brittanica 1959 vol 22 p374

71. AA Book of Villages, London, Drive Publications Ltd. 1980 p384

72. S & B Webb, op cit. p145

73. A E Musson, op cit. p34

74. R A Leeson, op cit. p120

75. ibid p177

76. ibid p183

77. A E Musson, op cit. Chapter 6 p49

78. ibid p61&62

79. L T C Rolt, Victorian Engineering, Harmondsworth, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970 p45

80. F M L Thompson, op cit. p92

81. C G Powell, The Economic History of the British Building Industry, p33

SECTION 4. AT THE CAPE - DEVELOPMENTS FROM 1806

Once British sovereignty was established over the Cape another colour was added to the extensive palette from which the mosaic of South African history would be fashioned and, with the passage of time, more and more of the land would be coloured pink to represent the expanding influence of the British Empire on the map of Southern Africa. This period, with its many disturbances, truly lends support to the view of one historian who maintains that South Africa has advanced politically by disasters and economically by windfalls.[1] At the time that Britain took final possession of the Cape it hardly seemed likely that it would one day rightfully take its place as a jewel in the Imperial crown alongside India for, strategic position apart, there seemed little to recommend it. The majority of the residents at the Cape had Dutch as their mother tongue and they were governed by a set of laws based on an unfamiliar system. The rest of the land seemed dry and inhospitable and it lay under the threat of the 'kafir' tribes, which were numerically large, but regarded socially and militarily as insignificant and who were to be treated much as an autocratic parent handles a recalcitrant child: by punitive excursions and wars of chastisement. Thus, on the whole, the policy of the British government at first was simply to retain the Cape and not to encourage its growth, much the same as the original policy of the Dutch East India Company. So, although this was an era of immigration the main streams bypassed South Africa and apart from the 1820 settlers, little was done to encourage people to make it their new home, and, once the Liberal government came to power in 1830, state managed emigration from England virtually ceased. Thus, although the population of the Cape doubled during the first forty years of the century this can be mainly attributed to natural causes.[2]

Of course, at this stage, there was little to attract the fortune seekers of the nineteenth century for the economic climate at the Cape fluctuated tremendously. The end of the Napoleonic Wars brought on a recession that lasted well into the 1820's and that helped to fan the smouldering resentment between the Dutch speaking farmers and the English speaking authorities. The emancipation of the slaves and the meagre compensation paid to former slave owners seems to have acted as the final catalyst that brought about a major reaction in the shape of the Great Trek of 1836. The trekkers, who were rebellious rather than revolutionary, moved off into the largely unknown interior in search of freedom from what they saw as a tyrannical power. In the process they took themselves away from the modernising influence of the industrial revolution whose tentacles were reaching out to embrace the Cape. They fled 'from the tyranny of their neighbours smoke' and adopted a nomadic, almost primitive way of life that was in marked contrast to that of their distant forbears who had lived in a tight little land of intensive cultivation and close neighbourliness.

Back in Cape Town things improved but slowly, for the Great Trek brought further reactionary tendencies in its wake. When, in 1846, Samuel Palmer, a carpenter from Clerkenwell, arrived in the city as part of an assisted immigration scheme he found that the highest wage he could secure was £1 per week so that he sold his tools and booked a passage back to England.[3] But, if immigrants found little to attract them, the same did not apply to the officers and their 'memsahibs' who were serving in India, for until the mid 1850's the Cape was a favourite watering place. The village of Wynberg being particularly singled out as a place of residence by the 'chili-grinders' as they apparantly became known locally. The influence of this group on the small population was considerable and many

of them, skilled professional men, made their talents available to the local residents. Such men, as well as the soldiers who had been based at the Cape since the days of the first settlement, played a not insignificant role in its development. Hattersley suggests that it would be hard to overestimate the services rendered by such pioneer craftsmen in the erection of the early public buildings.[4]

But things were obviously going to improve economically and, by the end of the 1840's the Cape had recovered from the depression caused by the Great Trek. Things were flourishing and they continued in this state through the brief flurry of activity that accompanied the Namaqualand copper boom of 1850. The downturn came in the 1860's and by 1862 deep depression gripped the land as a result of the Basuto wars and a particularly severe drought. The mid 1860's were among the unhappiest years ever experienced at the Cape and it was the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1867 that marked a turning point, so that by 1869 the boom was in full swing. Again it was not to last and the collapse came in 1881, followed by several years of depression that affected the whole country. Writing in "The Builder" of 1883 a correspondent stated,"...never has the Colony been known to be in such a deplorable state since '66; never were wages so low; never was there so little money to be handled. Business is at a complete standstill..." From the little town of Pietermaritzburg came a similar cry together with a practical suggestion for the alleviation of the misery, "What we want is another war and if the Maritzburg shopkeepers were to send a deputation to stir the Zulus up a bit (they would not want much stirring) it would be the finest stroke of business they have done, or will do, for many a long day."[5] But the discovery of gold on the Reef in 1886 provided a more lasting solution and by the 1890's, the close of our period, the Cape economy was progressing steadily.

At the beginning of the second British occupation Thibault was still alive, though he was not to survive long under British rule: he died in 1815. Herman Schutte was also still active and would remain so for a number of years as a prime example of the 'master builder, public works contractor, and architect'[6] that the Dutch East India Company had used to good effect, in fact, the Company had seen no need to employ professional architects whilst such men, many of whom had originally been in their employ, were around.[7] The fluctuating fortunes at the Cape made it difficult for a professional man to remain continuously in practice but, as the period drew to a close, a number of men who were to leave their mark on building activities in the city over the next few years arrived on the scene. In the words of a Cape Town architect of the period, AG Howard, writing in a building magazine in 1907, the year 1876 marked the beginning of a transition period and from that year architects would be more freely employed by building owners. "It took time to root out old-fashioned prejudices against the employment of architects, but by degrees these old ideas died out and we see today a quite different state of affairs to that which existed in 1876."[8]

Howard maintains that by 1875 there was not an architect left in Cape Town for the few that had been working in the city had by then left for greener pastures. In 1875 the most notable of the early architects, Charles Freeman, was still in the employ of the Public Works Department but he resigned the following year to set up in private practice. Freeman was, of course, famous for his involvement with the debacle over the Houses of Parliament buildings. The original scheme had been for a building situated on the site of the present City Hall and to a design prepared on the orders of Mr Scott-Tucker, the Colonial Secretary. This fell through and in 1875 the scheme was thrown open to public competition and Mr Freeman's design was chosen. However as a report in "The Building News" in 1876 put it:

"The Houses of Parliament Buildings are going as these things always do. According to the 'Cape Standard and Mail' the colonists realise they will cost £114,000 (some say £120,000 to £160,000) and not the £40,000 inserted in the competition conditions. Nobody seems to know exactly what is to be done - whether the architect, Mr Freeman, is to be made the scapegoat or whether the scheme is to be abandoned altogether."[9]

Freeman in fact departed from the PWD under a cloud and the design of the Houses of Parliament was entrusted to the Chief Architect, HS Greaves, assisted by AG Howard, among others. A short biography of Howard mentions his involvement with the scheme in this way, "the previous plans, which were supplied from an extraneous source, having been rejected."[10] That Freeman could survive such a blow to his career in a city the size of Cape Town and go on to become "one of Cape Town's most prolific and illustrious architects of his day,"[11] says much for his strength of character. A contemporary remembers him as, "..an architect of large practice who disported himself in unconventional undress, in the smallest governess cart that would accomodate his ample proportions. Though architect by profession he had a natural propensity for commerce which he indulged by obtaining the agency for a well-known firm of Scottish ironfounders. Such a combination would probably not be well regarded these days but it worked admirably then and many examples of his architecture in the Cape and Transvaal bear witness to the genius of his art for utilising ornamental ironwork in design, according to the accepted vogue of that day."[12]

Having had the field to himself for a while, Freeman was later joined by other architects, many of whom were to leave their imprint on Victorian Cape Town: Anthony de Witt gravitated to Cape Town from the

Transvaal whence he had been invited by President Burgers in 1876.[13] George Ransome arrived from Yorkshire in 1881 and worked alongside Greaves and Howard on the drawings for the House of Parliament before venturing into private practice in 1884. During the last decade of the century Herbert Baker, John Parker, John Collingwood Tully, and Charles Smith arrived, among others, and the nucleus of the architectural profession took shape.[14]

The distinction between architect and engineer had not as yet been as clearly drawn as would be the case in later times when advances in science and technology would force men to specialise. Charles Freeman acted in both capacities, as witness his card which appears inside the cover of one of the bound volumes of "The Building News", now in the possession of the Building Industries Federation, and which proclaims, "Mr Charles Freeman, Architect and Civil Engineer". Under the auspices of the Colonial government a number of individuals were appointed to handle specific tasks in the field of civil engineering. Although John Chisholm was 'superintendent of waterworks' in 1812 this was apparantly not a government post.[15] The first individual definitely appointed to the post of Colonial Civil Engineer and Superintendent of Works and Buildings at the Cape was Henry W Reveley, who commenced his duties on the 1st January, 1827. Reveley had trained under John Rennie and was entrusted with the main task of improving the harbour facilities in Table Bay, but he was apparently dismissed as incompetent in May 1828 (some sources say he resigned). What is certain, however, is that there was friction between Reveley and the Colonial Secretary. He stayed on at Cape Town though, and in 1829 he applied for and got the post of Clerk of Works on the new St George's Cathedral,[16] leaving this when he emigrated to Australia where he was to make quite a significant name for himself.[17]

The official post then became Colonial Civil Engineer and Surveyor General and the appointment went to Colonel CC Michell who occupied the position from 1828 until 1848. He proved to be a remarkably energetic and versatile man who left his imprint on the country, for among his major works were the Montagu Pass, Mitchell's Pass (the spelling is incorrect since it was named after its designer), Bain's Kloof Pass and the lighthouses in Table Bay and at Cape Agulhas. He was also a talented artist and his painting of an ox wagon negotiating a precipitous mountain pass was much reproduced and it still seen today. Incidentally, he also had a famous nephew, Field Marshall Sir Evelyn Wood.[18]

After Michell's death the post was split into two separate positions and Captain George Pilkington was appointed as Civil Engineer. He makes a brief appearance in the book "A Victorian Lady at the Cape" as one of the more agreeable companions of Miss Lucy Gray as she accompanied her brother on missionary service to the Eastern Cape.[19] Pilkington apparently was another versatile man, for a report in "The Building News" of 1859 states that, "...the number of sittings in the Green Point Chapel is to be 210. Mr GW Pilkington has sent in a tender to construct the building of Cape Town freestone. The estimated cost is £1,200."[20] He was also one who played a small role in the long saga of the Houses of Parliament, having submitted designs for a building on the original site.[21]

In reporting further progress at the Cape, with regard to the field of civil engineering, "The Building News" of 1859 mentions that work was to have commenced on the railway between Cape Town and Wellington on the 31st March and goes on to relate that, "...Mr Coode of the Portland

breakwater has been appointed consulting engineer in England for the breakwater in Simon's Bay." It then goes on to report that "...Mr Andrews, formely of the London docks is resident engineer at the Cape with a salary of £800 the first year, £900 the second, and £1000 the third. The contract has been taken by Mr Lentham of Leeds."[22] This was still in connection with the breakwater at Simon's Town.

The Cape Town Municipality also made appointments of experts from overseas, as a report in The Builder of 1884 indicates: "The premium of 250L goes to the scheme 'Sanitary' sent in by Mr Isaac Harper, son of Mr Samuel Harper the engineer and surveyor to the Merthyr Tydfil Local Board. Mr Harper is now engaged in superintending, under the resident engineer, the reconstruction of the Molteno reservoir at Cape Town."[23] Four years later it could be reported that the Municipality "have retained the services of Mr Edward Pritchard, M.Inst.C.E. of London and Birmingham, who has gone to the Cape to make a personal inspection of the district, and to prepare a comprehensive report thereon."[24] Thus as the period progresses the distinguishing lines between the various professions allied to building were becoming more clearly delineated, as would be expected, along the lines already fashioned in England.

Information on the early Quantity Surveyors at the Cape is not easy to find due, perhaps, to the rather unobtrusive nature of their work. Evidence seems to indicate one E Fricker as the first member of this profession to work in the city. He was closely linked with Herbert Baker and it was on Fricker's death that Baker interviewed AT Babbs in London to invite him to come to Cape Town to take over this position. This Babbs did with notable success, becoming one of the leading figures in the building

industry during the early part of the twentieth century.[25] The firm he founded continues to this day, still practising with Babbs' name on the letterhead. AT Babbs along with AB Reid and Herbert Baker formed an interdisciplinary building group that did much of Rhodes' work in Cape Town and environs, including such houses as Welgelegen, and The Woolsack. Another early pioneer in the Quantity Surveying field was RS Shepherd who arrived in 1902 and the firm, which is now defunct and to which the writer was articled, did quantities for many of the old buildings in the city. They had close links with the firm of Forsyth & Parker, having done most of their work reaching back to the days of John Parker, the first President of the Cape Institute of Architects.[26] Another early quantity surveyor was Henry A Adams who joined the PWD in 1902, attaining the post of chief Quantity Surveyor in 1908, subsequently dying at the early age of 35 in 1917.[27] Many architectural firms in those days produced their own quantities and, in the early documents of the Master Builder's Association, this is one of the continual complaints as many architects refused to issue any guarantee that the quantities they issued were correct.

A good deal more information is on record with regard to builders, in fact, detailed research of this period would probably reveal much about the early building firms and the work they did. The year 1810 saw the arrival of Edward Durham who settled in the city and established business as a cabinet maker, with premises in Grave Street where he also sold hardware. Ten years later he was building in his own right, being responsible for both Newlands House and the Round House for Lord Charles Somerset.[28] Durham also became deeply involved in the construction of old St Georges Cathedral, using Herman Schutte as the man principally in charge of the building work.[28] The fine building they constructed, modelled on St

Pancras Church, London, lent an air of grandeur to the view up St George's Street that has not been replaced, as many of the early photographs of its classic Greek portico testify.

Durham was also responsible for the building of Bertram House, presumably for himself, since at his death it was included in his estate. Today it is a proclaimed national monument. Durham's brother-in-law also left his mark on the city, for he was George Findlay who, in 1821, became a partner in the firm of John Cannon, timber and ironmongery supplier of Hottentot Square. Cannon later ventured into building and won the contract for the Royal Observatory, which he completed by 1829.[29] On Cannon's insolvency, Findlay took over the business and it remains to this day, albeit in vestigial form, as part of one of the large conglomerates that nowadays dominate commerce.

As is the case today the fluctuating fortunes of the country caused the number of building firms in existence at any one time to fluctuate in sympathy, with only the more stable surviving the depression years. By the mid 1850's only a handful remained and they coped quite comfortably with whatever business there was to hand. In 1859 another well-known name arrived at the Cape, RH Morris, although at the time he was just five years old. Richard Henry Morris went into partnership with a relative, Charles Algar, in 1878 but by 1880 Morris was operating on his own.[30] It was a scant two years later that Arthur Plint stepped ashore and in January 1884 he joined the firm of RH Morris, staying with it for the rest of his working life, eventually to become its chief executive.[31]

George Smart arrived in 1850 and rose to prominence both as a builder and as Mayor of Cape Town in 1894. His business partner was Thomas Ball who was also active in municipal affairs and who succeeded his partner to the chair of Van Riebeeck in 1898. George Church came to the Cape in 1879 as a member of the Royal Engineers moving first to Vryheid, where he was "the first to lay a brick in that town"[32], coming to Cape Town only after a spell in Kimberley. James Liston joined W & G Scott in 1888, but finally set out on his own in 1892, to be joined later by George Pallett.[33]

AB Reid, already mentioned in connection with Herbert Baker and the work for Cecil Rhodes, arrived from Aberdeen in 1880 and also became a prominent citizen of Cape Town, both in the field of building and as Mayor of Cape Town, which position he occupied from 1927 to 1929. With the limited number of architects and building firms in those early days there was a tendency to set up teams where one builder handled most of the work for a specific architect. AB Reid did much of John Parker's work, whereas Charles Freeman used Messrs Inglesby & Son until this firm gave up business, when RH Morris became his favourite.[34] Inglesby's were a well-known name in building as a report from "The Builder" testifies. In writing of the new extension to the Cape Town School of Art in Roeland Street, it states, "...it was built to the design of William Inglesby, a student at the School of Art since its opening and a relative of Mr Inglesby of Cape Town, the well-known builder who erected the building."[35]

Conditions at the Cape were thus ripe for development as the last decade of the century opened, for business was prospering and there were now sufficient numbers of each of the building disciplines permanently

settled in Cape Town to allow for the growth of permanent employer organizations and professional bodies. The workmen too were already organised, for the first union of men related to the building industry had been formed in 1881 when a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Great Britain was formed by members from the parent country. The first Secretary was A 'Sandy' Copeland whose long connection with the Union is actually recorded on his tombstone.[36] This Union, still exists. Another founder member was Jack Hewitt who later branched out as a builder in his own right and then moved across to become a member of the Master Builder's Association.

One dramatic change that occurred to the nature of the workforce during this period was the large scale importation of artisans from Australia, due to the scarcity of skilled 'mechanics'. AJ Benning recalls the problems that this produced in an article for the "South African Builder". He states that "by 1895 the Australians, who outnumbered all the older artisans by four to one, refused to work on the same buildings with the coloured artisans and then the trouble started. Almost every year there was friction and within a very short period almost all the coloured artisans were without work."[37]

Under these sort of conditions then, the next step was a logical one for the employers to take. Similar associations of employers were well established in England and, perhaps, some of the men who had recently arrived from the 'home' country had been members. There is no doubt that they were aware of these developments for, apart from anything else, the established building magazines were freely circulated at the Cape. The business climate was brisk and with the abundance of work came the

inevitable shortage of skilled men. The men were already organised and, with the injection from overseas of a more forceful and vociferous type of artisan, the employers began to find themselves facing serious problems so that some form of association became more than desirable; it became essential for survival. That the relatively small number of building firms then operating should have also seen the chance to force a 'closed shop' policy on the Colony was also perhaps inevitable. The temptation to exclude newcomers and preserve a lucrative field for oneself must have been strong.

Section 4.

Section 4. Notes

1. C W de Kiewet, A History of South Africa, Social & Economic, London, Oxford University Press, 1941 p89

2. A Hattersley, An illustrated Social History of South Africa, Cape Town, A A Balkema, 1969 p84

3. A Hattersley, op cit. p88

4. ibid p91

5. The Builder, London, May 19, 1883 p689

6. Preservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings in South Africa, Proceedings of a symposium held in 1959. Edited by R Immelman and G Quinn, A A Balkema, Cape Town 1968 p87

7. A Hattersley, op cit. p52

8. A G Howard, Progress in Architecture, published in The South African Architect, Engineer, and Surveyor's Journal May 1907 and subsequent issues August 1907 p196

9. The Building News, London, April 14, 1876 p385

10. Men of the Times. Old Colonists of the Cape Colony and Orange River Colony, Cape Town, 1906 p

11. D Picton Seymour, Victorian Building in South Africa, Cape Town, 1977 A A Balkema p47

12. South African Builder, August 1932, Cape Town Supplement p.xi.

13. Men of the Times p434

14. ibid pp379-407

15.

16. Prof A E Snape Presidential address to the Engineers and Scientific Society UCT as printed in Architect and Builder, May 1918, p342

17. Immelman & Quinn op cit. p26

18. Snape op cit. p392

19. A Hattersley, A Victorian Lady at the Cape, 1849-1851, Cape Town, Maskew Miller p33

20. The Building News, March 16th 1859 p252

21. A Picton Seymour, op cit. p48

Section 4.

22. The Building News, May 13, 1859 p440

23. The Builder, Sep 6, 1884 p342

24. The Builder, Sep 1, 1888 p160

25. South African Builder, October 1933, Cape Town Supplement. p.vi.

26. Men of the Times op cit. p344

27. S A Master Builders Federation Journal, Vol B No 11, June 1917 p13

28. C Pama, Vintage Cape Town, Cape Town, Tafelberg 1973 p61

29. R R Langham-Carter, Old St George's, Cape Town, A A Balkema, 1977 p16

30. E Rosenthal, They helped build Cape Town, Commemerative booklet produced by R H Morris, Cape Town 1958 p5

31. S A Builder, October 1933 Cape Town, Supplement, p.ix

32. Men of the Times, op cit. p98

33. ibid pp266-342

34. S A Builder, December 1932 p11

35. The Builder, Sep 29, 1866 p723

36. South African Builder, October, Cape Town, Supplement 1933 p.xvii

37. ibid December 1932 p13

SECTION 5. THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST ASSOCIATION, 1891.

Conditions at the Cape could thus be described as flourishing, for although the world in general was undergoing a period of depression[1], gold had brought boom times to the Colony. Along with the rest of the population, the builders had good reason to be grateful for the windfall that had brought such economic benefits in its wake. It had come none too soon, for the words of AG Howard reflect how great the financial depression of 1866 had been, it kept,

> "...the Colony under a cloud for two years at least; work was stopped all over the place and all who could do so left for pastures new; except those who were well enough off to bridge over the period of depression. The Colony seldom remains long under a cloud of depression and so it came about that once more flourishing times came round. The prosperity of the first period was due to the Diamond Fields, that of the second due to the Gold Fields. The wave of prosperity was greater than before but even as the first ten years (of Howard's period of residence at the Cape) ended in financial depression so this one terminated just before the depression of 1896. This was however nothing to be compared with the one during 1886 and 1887."[2]

So the lean years passed and, though the period of prosperity was to prove relatively short, gold fever gripped the city and great plans were made to cope with what seemed at that time to be an endless stream of good years ahead. Business premises were rebuilt or extended, new homes were constructed or old ones elaborated, and a number of familiar landmarks in Cape Town fell to the ruthless hammer of the demolisher. Perhaps most mourned of those buildings that vanished from the streets was the

Commercial Exchange, recalled today by only a street name, which had served the population so well for many years. It came down in 1893 to make way for what was to become an equally familiar landmark that has since vanished itself, the General Post Office. Further up Cape Town's main thoroughfare there appeared what Desiree Picton Seymour has called a 'spectacular Victorian pile',[3] the Fletcher and Cartwrights building, known as Mansion House. Together with the adjoining Heynes Mathew building it formed an impressive sight that graced the street scene with its ornate presence. These then were some of the outward signs of the prosperity that now pervaded the Colony and that became visible on the streets of the city. The suburbs also reflected the air of optimism, with mansions such as Trovato House and Strubenheim being erected. The latter, better known these days as the Old College of Music, cost the colossal sum of £11,000 to build.

By 1891 the boom was reaching its peak and even the builders, who are so often fiercely independent individuals who prefer to plough their own furrow, began to seek the protection that an organised framework for business can provide. Thus, during the course of the year a meeting was held at The Thatched Tavern, an interesting repetition of the pattern noted overseas, and the outcome was that it was resolved to form an association of building employers. It was to be known as 'The Association of Masters in the Building Trade.'[4]

The aims of the Association were clearly laid out at that original meeting and were summarised as being "to guard the interests of the trade generally and to promote cooperation with the authorities, architects, and owners of property."[5] A set of ten basic rules was decided upon, with six

of them dealing with the composition and management of the organization itself, and the remaining four aimed at exercising some control over the conditions under which the members were to trade.[6] The controlling body would be a Committee of Management comprising the Chairman and two additional members. George Smart, William Kitch, and one F. Fish served as the original committee, with Smart as Chairman and Honorary Treasurer.

The order in which the original ten rules were recorded is of interest, for, having first established the basic objectives of the association, which notably exclude any reference to the promotion of good relations with the workmen or any organisation that might represent them, the following five rules deal simply with proceedural matters. Then comes a rule aimed at controlling the labour force in the trade by establishing wages and hours of work, so that, if the original fifteen members included most of the prominent builders in Cape Town, a fairly tight grip could be kept on the escalation of wages. There was also provision made for assistance to members in the handling of disputes that might arise with the authorities, architects or clients. Finally, two issues that were obviously much on their minds were dealt with: that of the requirement by some building owners that the builder give personal security, and the question of the unreliability of architect prepared bills of quantities for which no guarantee was forthcoming.

Some evidence suggests that the original members were in fact mainly interested in creating a 'closed shop' situation within the trade so that all work of any significant size would be handled by them and competition would be significantly reduced. AJ Benning after having been drawn to the Reef in the general quest for quick earnings, tried to set up

as a builder on his return to Cape Town in 1891. He recalled that the Association was firmly entrenched and outsiders stood little chance of obtaining work from the relatively small number of architects then in practice. After working as foreman for W & G Scott he left once again on the trail of gold, this time at the Spreeufontein goldfields, near Prince Albert. Riches once again eluded him and he returned to the city determined to break into the select fold of builders. He managed to persuade George Ransome, the architect for whom he had worked whilst with W & G Scott, to allow him to tender on work coming from his office. Thus, by the end of 1892, the members of the Association acknowledged him as a builder and elected him to membership. Thenceforth the membership of the Association of Masters in the Building Trade grew, to peak at around fifty.

Benning's membership of the Association did not last long for during George Smart's term of office as Mayor of Cape Town (1894 & 1895) a dispute arose among the members regarding the building of offices and storerooms along the sea front, presumably in Dock Road. These premises were for Combrink and Company and would have had the effect of cutting off access to the sea at that point, the foot of Bree Street. Since an improvement scheme to open up St George's Street from Strand Street through to the sea had recently been executed at considerable expense, the younger members of the Association apparently felt that to then go and desecrate the sea front further along the road was an apparent triumph of commercialism over aestheticism. The older members were however in favour of the scheme and Benning was informed that they had no intention of taking up the matter simply because the younger members thought it important. Benning promptly resigned and from then on, in his own words, "endeavoured to break the Association I had helped to build."[7]

Whether Benning can be taken strictly at his word is perhaps open to some doubt for he appears to have been something of a "bete noir" among his colleagues. Some time later, when standing for election to the City Council, he was requested by the members of the Master Builders Association to appear before them and state his aims and intentions, the platform on which he proposed to stand for election. This he steadfastly refused to do and the Committee finally recommended to its members that they refrain from voting for him.[8] Another indication of his independence of spirit comes from Desiree Picton Seymour's book where she discusses Benning's house. This mansion, Het Loo, built in Tambours Kloof was one of the outstanding examples of Victorian domestic architecture in Cape Town. Yet part of the reasoning behind the methods adopted in its construction was to prove a point against his fellow builders who, he claimed, were making unjust profits at the expense of the general public.[9] He must have been a forthright, outspoken man, in the manner of many Hollanders, and, whilst there is no reason to doubt his veracity, he was obviously deeply involved emotionally and this reflects in his writing.

One thing that was accomplished during this time period, though apparently not directly related to the Association, was the revision of the local building regulations. The City Council had taken over the regulations used by the London County Council in their entirety but due to local circumstances these were, in many instances, unsuitable. This led to continual friction between the City Council, the local architects and the builders as to exactly what was required and what was suitable for the situation in Cape Town. Eventually it was agreed by the Council that a Joint Committee be formed in order to bring about a rationalisation of the regulations to make them more applicable to local conditions. This

committee would consist of two architects, two builders and a secretary and they began their work toward the beginning of 1896. The Committee members were John Parker and John Masey, representing the architects, and Peter Mackie and Anthony Benning for the builders. Charles Mitchell acted as Honorary Secretary. Whilst the suggestion for the formation of the Joint Committee had come from the Master Builders it does not seem to have been directly under their auspices for, by this time, Benning was no longer a member. After six months of continual work the Committee produced a revised set of regulations that were promulgated on the 19th August 1896.

There is also much evidence that points to the incompetence of many of the members of the City Council during this period. To quote Picard, "Cape Town's City Fathers between 1840 and 1890 were stepfathers in the worst sense of the word, and the few exceptions the historian can spot as tiny stars in a pitch dark sky, are only confirmation of the rule."[10] Happily for the reputation of the builders, the two members of the Association who became Mayor during this time period did so after the 1890 deadline mentioned by Picard, but both were deeply involved in Municipal affairs so that Benning's accusation of self-interest would seem to have some foundation.

The writing was on the wall for the Association of Masters in the Building Trade. It was spawned in a time of prosperity and nurtured on a diet of exclusiveness so that the proper application of the second rule, which stated that anyone "who was recognised as a master in any of the several branches of the building trade" was eligible for membership, had come too late. Perhaps dominated by an autocratic body of older members and later torn by dissension, it had not the strength to carry it through

the difficult times that were now on the way. Prosperity gave way to the economically stringent times that prevailed in the unsettled years between the ill fated Jameson Raid and the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War so that by 1898 the Association was no longer functioning. However, a formula had been established and the benefits of a strong organisation amongst the employers within the building industry had actually been experienced so that, once conditions favoured it, the birth of another organisation was inevitable; the growth of industrialization demanded it and the pattern had already been firmly laid down in England. Depression sounded the death knell of an already weakened organisation but an economic change was not far distant. The threat of war was enough to plunge the Colony into slump but the actuality of the Anglo Boer War brought it back onto the road to recovery a sad reflection of the principle that it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Business began to boom, skilled artisans were hard to find and the stage was once again set for the formation of a new association, or perhaps the resurrection of the old one, rising phoenix-like out of the ashes.

Note

An interesting fact has recently come to the writers' attention, that an Association called the 'South African Association of Engineers and Architects' was formed in Johannesburg in 1892 as a meeting point for professional men associated with the building industry. The stated purpose of the Association was that '...they considered it desirable to form an Association for the promotion of their interests, and for bringing them into closer intercourse with one another, and also with a view to advancing the engineering and architectural interests of South Africa.' In 1894 AH Reid, an architect by profession, who was the retiring President said, 'I consider it most necessary that a master builder's or contractor's

association be formed here for the purpose of keeping the trade together. I suggested the formation of such a society years ago, and it was started, but soon after died an unnatural death.' Among the prominent names included on the membership list were J Hubert Davies and Theodore Reunert, both of whom served a term as President. In time the Association became 'The South African Association of Engineers' (1898) but by that time there was a 'Johannesburg Architects's Society'. In the 1896 report of the Association of Engineers it is noted that two meetings had been held with 'delegates from the Master Builder's Association', but this body too presumably came to an unnatural end.

Section 5.

Section 5. Notes

1. C W de Kiewet op cit. p155

2. A G Howard op cit. p140

3. D Picton Seymour op cit. p99

4. South African Master Builder's Federation Journal, August 1906 p29

5. ibid p29

6. A summary of the rules of the Association and a list of members is given under Appendix A.

7. The South African Builder, December 1932 p13

8. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting March 2, 1906

9. D Picton Seymour op cit. p125

10. H W J Picard, Grand Parade, p75

SECTION 6. THE CAPE TOWN MASTER BUILDERS' AND CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION FORMATION AND EARLY YEARS 1900 TO 1903

Introduction

Up to this point my research has been concentrated on secondary sources, books and other published material dealing with the subject under discussion, but from here onward attention has to be paid to primary sources. Some published information is available on the growth of the organised building industry in the Western Cape, mainly in the form of articles appearing in one or other of the trade journals, but the bulk of the information must perforce come from original documentation from the Master Builders Association.

This information is contained mainly in the original Minute Books of the Association. They begin with to a meeting held on the 11th March 1901 in the side Hall of the Metropolitan Hall. Obviously, researching primary sources is vastly different to the culling of information from secondary sources, for it involves working with the raw data of history. This has its advantages in that it was recorded directly by those involved with the events themselves and the record contains just basic facts. It is true that they are facts viewed from a particular aspect, in this case the viewpoint of the employers in the industry, so that they must contain a natural bias, but they were also recorded 'live' and contain a sense of immediacy that secondary sources must lack. In addition the facts are 'unprocessed' and any conclusions that may be drawn, any inter-relationships that become apparent, any prevailing attitude or outlook that is sensed,can only come from the perception of the writer. This interpretative role has been a difficult one for me An experienced

historian would perhaps be able to sense feelings and attitudes in the mass of detail rather in the manner of an expert swimmer detecting an undertow, whilst swimming in the vastness of the ocean. But in this, my first venture into the realm of historical research, I find I do not possess that facility. As a consequence, I have laid more emphasis on the accurate chronicling of events as they occurred and less on the interpretative aspects. Not that interpretation is entirely lacking, for in the process of selecting events and happenings from the mass of detail, much of it trivial, recorded in the documents available to me, I have been forced to critically evaluate the records and then extract those events and decisions which can be seen to have had some significance. In that way one is, in effect, deciding on what is of historical significance and what is not.

Although both the earlier Association of Masters in the Building Trade and the later Master Builders' Association produced different sets of rules and regulations by which to run their affairs, there were many points of similarity, as would be expected. From these I have extracted six main objectives which it might be as well to delineate prior to tackling the main body of the research. They are:-

1) To guard the interest of the employers in the building industry.

2) To preserve good relationships within the trade, with merchants, suppliers, etc.

3) To represent the employers in dealing with governmental authorities and professional bodies, specifically those directly related to building.

4) To represent the employers in dealing with labour unions and other organizations representing the workmen within the industry.

5) To assist individual members and to protect their interests in specific problem situations by offering advice, support, etc.

6) To handle all general business regarding the running of the Association, including social activities.

Formation and the first year 1901

As the momentous twentieth century dawned South Africa was the scene of a bloody and pointless struggle waged between an arrogant and high handed Imperial power, convinced of its universal destiny, and a group of fervent and narrow-minded farming people, filled with a sense of divine appointment. The war was to drag on for three years and become a drain on, and embarrassment to, the British government: but it would bring prosperity to the Cape, at least temporarily. For persons living at the Cape the action seemed in some way remote, it lacked the sense of immediacy that would characterise the global conflict that was soon to lay its burden on an incredulous world. But business was booming and the nucleus of the organised building industry, so recently dead, began to stir again.

What in actuality took place is not recorded, but it would seem that several of the members of the defunct Association of Masters in the Building Trade took advantage of the boom conditions to resuscitate their association, rename it, and set it firmly on the course that it would follow until today. The motivating force behind these efforts was the same as already discussed: the increased activity in the building trade merely added a sense of urgency, for the drought of work that had caused the demise of the earlier organisation had well and truly been banished by the flood of activity associated with the War. Not only had trade revived, with its attendant demand for all sorts of building work, but the military

machine quartered in Cape Town also required the skills of building tradesmen. Additionally, Bubonic plague had broken out at the Cape, imported it is said in 1899 from India, arriving along with soldiers sent from there to pursue the war.[1] The plague swept through the Colony reaching its peak in May of 1901 when some 600 persons were in hospital suffering from the disease, with another 4000 in isolation. The Medical Officer of Health of the time, Dr Gregory, set up a plague camp at Uitvlugt on the Cape Flats and the services of many members of the building industry were absorbed in such 'plague work'.[2] By early in May one local contractor alone had work to the tune of £17,000 and it was anticipated that an additional £50,000 would need to be spent.[3]

The highly cyclical nature of the demand for building work is surely well accentuated in these events, for it was a scant three years earlier that a lack of trade due to the collapse of the gold boom had brought the first association to its knees. Yet a combination of political and other factors now stimulated trade to a period of frenzied activity and brought to the fore a shortfall of some five hundred 'skilled mechanics', comprising 250 carpenters, 100 bricklayers, 75 plasterers, and 25 painters and plumbers.[4] The first entry in the oldest extant Minute Book of the new Association deals with the intention of the members to request the Governor to send a cable to the Agent General in London that he might recruit skilled mechanics to alleviate the shortage.[5]

An interesting fact emerges out of a reading of this early Minute book and notably, the record of that first meeting held on the 11th March 1901. There is no preliminary work recorded at all, no formation of a committee, no appointment of officers, no secretary is delegated to record

the minutes, not even a proposal regarding the new name under which the Association was now to function. In fact the first meeting gives the impression of just being a continuation of an established pattern. There is already a Chairman, somebody has been briefed to take the minutes, and the business of the meeting is recorded as if it were already an established routine. With this meeting coming so early in the year, it is possible that all the essential preliminary work necessary in the regrouping of the association setting up of a committee, the appointment of officers, even the adoption of a new name, had already been accomplished by the end of 1900. An indication that this could have in fact been the case is in an existing copy of the "Articles of Association", a small, hardbound book containing the rules and list of members and which specifically states 'Founded 1900'. This handbook was issued in 1906 so that the actual date of founding could surely not have been mistaken? A printing error could have crept in but this seems highly unlikely, all the more so as the words are printed in bold type enclosed between printed lines for emphasis on the first page of the "Rules of the Association".[6]

Further confirmation of this is that in a short history compiled in 1954 by some unknown person, presumably the secretary of the Association, mention is made of the inaugral meeting that was held in the offices of 'Mr Mitchell in St Georges Street'. No record of this meeting survives, for the existing Minute Book commences with the meeting of the 11th March 1901 held in the Side Hall of the Metropolitan Hall. It would thus seem most probable that Charles Mitchell, of the firm of Mitchell and Mackie, was one of the prime movers in the formation of the new organization and that the preliminary meetings were held in his office at the end of 1900, as indicated in the 1906 Handbook (in which Mitchell is

listed as Member No. 25). Subsequent membership lists published by the early Association also show 1900 as the formation date. Of the members of the first committee elected at the committee meeting on the 1st April, three are known to have been involved with the earlier association, namely AB Reid, H Donnan, and J Jenkinson. John Jenkinson became President for the year 1901.

One of the prime motivations behind the revival of an organization of employers would undoubtedly have been the fact that the majority of trades connected with the industry were already represented by organizations of their own. Within the first year, the minutes of the Committee record the fact that they had dealings with The Society of Carpenters and Joiners, The Operative Mason's Society, The Master Plumber's Union, and the Master Plasterer's Union, whilst the Painters are reported as being well advanced in the establishment of their own union.[7] The new committee was certainly busy during this first year of operation and even at this early date the main aims of the association become manifest in its dealings. One primary aim was obviously to attempt to enlist the support of as many of the local building firms as possible, so that the members could have the advantage, and the protection, of speaking with one voice. To this end, individual members were entrusted with the task of approaching non-members to persuade them of the advantages of joining this fledgling organization. Small & Morgan and G Pallett were among those specifically singled out for attention as it was necessary to bring them into line regarding the wages they were paying to their men. The Association took a firm stand on this highly charged issue and it was essential that their position should not be undermined. These two firms are known to have been active for some time, Small & Morgan built the Feather Market before the

turn of the century for example, but neither firm was represented on the old association although both, in time, became members of the Master Builders' and Contractors' Association (MBCA) as the new organization was entitled. Obviously, the influence exerted by the association could only be of consequence if it could be seen to be able to talk for at least the majority of employers in the building industry and if each member agreed and cooperated with the decisions of the body. Thus, the fourth meeting recorded in the inute Book notes that the Secretary is to communicate with all members intimating that in future no alteration to hours of work or wage rates be entered into, without the prior consent of the MBCA. Later a resolution was circulated which stated that the demand of the Carpenters & Joiners Union for a wage increase 'be not entertained'. Shortly thereafter all members were asked to communicate with the architects for whom they were working to ask for their cooperation in invoking the 'strike clause' with regard to a dispute with the Society of Carpenters & Joiners. One member who had been accused of obtaining work in a way that infringed the normal tendering proceedures was called to explain his actions, which he was able to do to the satisfaction of the Committee. Thus, early on, control was exercised over the conduct of individual members of the Association in order to protect the interests of all in the industry and to establish their credibility as a representative body with a professional outlook.

The role of the Association in this capacity is clearly seen in its dealings with individuals and organizations of the allied trades and professions. On occasion specific members of the professions were approached. One such was Max Rosenberg, an architect, who received a letter asking for an explanation of the way in which the contract for the

Issac's building had been awarded and requesting to know what had happened to the deposits paid by members of the Association. Due to the generally unsatisfactory nature of the reply received, it was agreed that members should be advised that 'he be left severely alone'[8] At a later meeting, however, the feeling was expressed that perhaps Mr Rosenberg had not been given a fair hearing.[9]

At this time dealings with the craft unions were strained, in fact, the Society of Carpenters and Joiners called their men out on strike . This strike was to last from the latter half of April until the middle of May, only ending when a compromise was reached as to the amount of increase that would be paid: an extra one shilling a day in place of the two shillings demanded.[10] The Master Plasterer's Union also received a letter giving notice of a reduction in their wages from £4.5.0 to £4.0.0. per week, as it was felt that "they had taken unfair advantage with their demand for an increase." This was obviously an increase that had been granted at a date prior to the commencement of this book of minutes, which perhaps lends credence to the formation date of 1900 for the MBCA. However, the alternative is, of course, that the Plasterer's Union took advantage of the fact that the employers at that time had no representative body and merely demanded the increase from the individual employers. The final outcome of the matter of the Plasterers wages is not recorded. A reply was received and read out at the meeting on the 26th April but it was, perhaps wisely, decided to leave the matter in abeyance.

The Master Builders' and Contractors' Association also began taking on the role of official representative for the industry at government level and, with regard to the importation of skilled men, both

the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchison, and the Colonial Secretary, the Honorable TL Graham, were approached.[12] Persistence paid off here, for in spite of the fact that the government were averse to the importation of men, as it would mean an increase in the population which it was felt the city could hardly accomodate under the circumstances, by the middle of May a cable had been sent. Deputations from the committee also met with Colonel Morris with regard to the rates being paid to artisans employed on military work directly by the army.[13] In this connection they obtained an assurance that the wishes of the Association would be borne in mind. The shortage of Native labour was also taken up with the Colonial Secretary. This time Colonel Standford of the Native Affairs Department was also approached and both men promised to do their best to induce natives to come to Cape Town to work.[14]

Thus the first recorded year of the Master Builders' and Contractors' Association came to an end and an active year it had proved to be. The last meeting for 1901 was held on December 2nd and another aspect of the work of the Association was mentioned, that of providing social contact for members and their families. This was an area that was slow to develop, as the minutes reveal, and all that was done at this last meeting was to suggest that an annual outing of some sort should be arranged.

The Early Years 1902 & 1903

The pattern that emerges from the Minute Book for these first two years is much as one would anticipate under the prevailing circumstances. The business climate remained healthy and work was plentiful, but the peak of the boom was soon to be reached and the downturn would begin. The fact that a severe drought prevailed throughout the country during 1902 and 1903

helped to accelerate the economic downturn. However the effects on industry were not immediately felt and, with work opportunities plentiful the labour force remained restless. This may have been partly due to the continued presence of foreign artisans who, being better educated than the average Coloured or Malay workman, were more likely to be vocal in their demands for better working conditions. Benning, in his reminisces, contends that "the coloured artisan only came to his own during the latter part of the world war."[15]

The year 1903 saw this general air of restlessness come to a head for it opened with the carpenters demanding an extra 1½d per hour to bring their hourly wage up to 1/9d. This demand was refused and between the middle of January and the middle of March eight special meetings were called to try and settle this matter. By the end of the first week in February the men were on strike and it was only by the third week in March that work returned to normal, for by then the employers had acceded to the demand and 14/- per day became the accepted wage for competent carpenters. By May, the Plasterer's Union had called their men out on strike and this one was to last until September. The plumbers too were in search of increased wages and the MBCA expressed support for the Master Plumbers' Union, apparently an employer body among plumbing subcontractors, in their dispute with the Operative Plumbers' Society who were demanding 15/- per day as a minimum wage.

The committee were also deeply concerned with the establishment of proper relations with the authorities in order to gain recognition as the official voice of the members of the building industry in Cape Town. Many of the interviews that representatives of the committee had with the

officials concerned themselves with the most vexing question of the day - the shortage of skilled labour in virtually every trade in the industry. The request to arrange for the importation of skilled 'mechanics' was raised with the 'Prime Minister', Sir JG Sprigg, the Colonial Secretary, the Honorable TL Graham, and even with the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary for the Colonies, on his visit to South Africa from November 1902 to March 1903.[18] The Cape General Agent, Mr Evans, was also interviewed in an attempt to obtain his agreement on reducing the wages of 'Kafir' labourers to 3/6d. The City Council were approached at the Town House regarding the same matter, as were the Honorable Arthur Douglas of the Public Works Department and Mr Hammersley Heenan the General Manager of the Harbour.[19] In a letter from the Engineer of the Suburban Municipal Water Works, this official stated that his organization would ".....do all in their power to reduce the excessive cost of labour." The Teller also stated that they were paying 4/1 per day for Natives, with housing, and unskilled Whites received 5/- per day with housing of a better class. One half of the latter were Portuguese or Italians and the remainder British. They were employing about five hundred men. It was finally agreed among the members to pay 3/6 per diem for 'Kafir labour' and 4/- per diem for 'Cape boys'.[20]

There were further dealings with the professional men in the industry during this period, although there was not as yet an architects institute, in fact a letter was received from AH Reid (the same gentleman who had earlier been president of the Association of Engineers and Architects in Johannesburg) that they were forming a Cape Institute of Architects and "...that as soon as it was formed, they should be approached instead of Architects individually." This was in connection with a letter

sent to the architects in the city requesting that bills of quantities issued by architects for tender puposes should be guaranteed by the architect and that they should then be included with the specifications as part of the tender documentation. It was also suggested that ½" details should be made available at that stage as well. Among the architects who replied to the MBCA, mostly in favour it might be added, were A & W Reid, John Parker, CH Smith, HI Innes, H Baker & Masey, Max Rosenberg, EJ Sherwood, and Davidge Potts. A reply was also received from a gentleman by the name of Sladdin.[21]

Again, one would anticipate that during these early years the Committee would make serious efforts to establish themselves as fully representative of the employers in the building industry with the members of the professional team, and this is reflected in any analysis of their activities. In fact, dealings with the professionals and with the labour unions occupy by far the largest proportion of the work done by the committee. It is only once the credentials of the Association have been well established that the emphasis changes to the point where more attention is given to matters regarding the interests of the employers themselves.

One item that came under discussion was the matter of some form of federation between the Master Builders Associations that had been formed at various centres around the country. The Association in Durban was the prime mover behind the suggestion and, as early as the meeting of May 26th 1903, a letter from this association was read that suggested an amalgamation of the MBA's. The motivation given for the formation of such a national body was '...so that an influence can be exerted over the Trades

as a united whole...' The letter requested the Cape Town Association to express their views, which were, of course, in favour of the move. The contracting firm of Small & Morgan also forwarded to the local Association a letter they had received from the Port Elizabeth Master Builders Association in the same connection so that moves toward such a body were obviously widespread during the year 1903. But the year 1904 would prove to be the one in which serious moves were made in this direction and once this national body had been established the organised building industry can be said to have survived its birth and early infancy and to have moved into the stage of youth and growth.

However the impression must not be given that things were running entirely smoothly within the ranks of the Association itself. These were crucial formative years and success would only come if, in time, the vast majority of builders of any stature in the Western Cape could be persuaded to join and support the new body. That there wasge number of builders who chose to remain outside the fold is indicated by the attempts made to get them to join. Small & Morgan and George Pallett have already been mentioned, but there are a number of names listed in the tabulation of members of the Association of Masters in the Building Trade whose names do not appear in the 1906 membership list. Among these are George Smart and Thomas Ball, both of whom were still prominent citizens and presumably still active in the industry. But, even within the members of the Association itself, all was not well and a number of resignations took place, notable among which was John Jenkinson, the first President. He resigned in March of 1903, just a few days before the Annual General Meeting, and it seems to have been over the issue of the increase of wages to be paid to the carpenters for, at the meeting at which his resignation

was accepted, the new rates were ratified.[22] He was still not a member in June 1904, for at a meeting on the 16th of June at which a deputation from the Society of Carpenters and Joiners was present, the complaint was lodged against him that he was paying below the agreed rate.[23] The committee were powerless to act in this case since he was no longer a member. Another member to resign at the same time was Mr Hopkins who had been on the 1902 Committee, he was in fact sent a letter asking him to reconsider his decision but he seems not to have responded for his name does not appear again.[24]

Although men like George Smart and Thomas Ball were no longer playing a role in the organised building industry there were still men of stature involved. AB Reid was President for the year 1902 and held office on the Committee in late years, although his attention seems to have been focused on the broader issues of municipal service, for he is not particularly prominent in the affairs of the Association in later years. One man who played a leading role, and who was to be a rallying point for the local builders during the difficult years ahead, was John Zeal Drake. In fact he was, almost singlehanded, to steer not only the local Association but the National Federation through some of the most turbulent years of its history. In loyal supporting roles were men such as Maxwell, Donnan, Rayner, Rutherford and the first Secretary WJ Coleman who was to serve in that position for at least five years being elected into office on May 17th 1901 [25] In Appendix B a list of all those who have served on the Committee of the local Association for the whole of the period under discussion is included, and the organised industry today owes those men a good deal for the loyal support they gave and the services they rendered during the history of the Association. From its formation onward there

have proved to be willing men who were prepared to put back into the industry a good deal of time and energy in repayment for the careers and way of life it has offered them, without them the industry, and society in general, would be impoverished indeed.

Section 6.

Section 6. Notes

Note:- From this point on frequent reference has been made to the original Minute Books of the MBA and the abbreviation MM has been used to indicate 'Minutes of the Meeting held on...'

1. Standard Encylcopaedia of Southern Africa Volume 4 p379

2. L G Green, Grow Lovely Growing Old, Howard Timmins, Cape Town 1951, p155

3. Minutes of the Committee Meeting, May 8th, 1901

4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting, April 1st, 1901

5. ibid March 18th, 1901

6. A copy of this booklet is in the possession of the Master Builder's Association and held in their Cape Town Office.

7. Minutes of the Committee Meetings, April 12th & 19th, 1901

8. Minutes of the Committee Meeting, May 17th, 1901 Also May 28th & June 10th

9. ibid June 24th

10. MM, May 20th, 1901

11. MM, April 19th, 1901

12. MM, March 18th, 1901

13. MM, May 8th, 1901

14. MM, July 8th, 1901

15. S A Builder, December 1932 p13

16. MM, March 20th, 1903

17. MM, September 15th, 1902

18. MM, February 10th, 1903 (Also South Africa and its Future The Duke of Argyll et al. D E M'Connel & Co., Cape Town, Published about 1903 p 201

19. MM, September 26th, 1902

20. MM, August 18th, 1902

21. MM, July 14th & August 18th, 1902

22. MM, March 20th, 1903

23. MM, June 16th, 1904

24. MM, March 30th, 1903

25. MM, May 17th, 1901

SECTION 7. THE FORMATIVE YEARS - 1904 to 1918

Introduction

The confidence of those members most active in the resuscitation of the Association would undoubtedly have been severely shaken if they could have known how short-lived the economic boom was in fact to be. From the year of formation onwards the trend of business was consistently downwards, with only one short flurry of activity at the beginning of the second decade. The end of the Boer War had brought with it serious problems. Among other factors that contributed to a somewhat chaotic social scene were the drought that gripped the land during 1902 and 1903 and the decision, soon regretted, to import Chinese labour for the mines. The world outside was entering a period of economic prosperity, albeit linked to spiralling prices, but the wave of increased prosperity was to bypass the shores of South Africa.

Politically it was a period of instability and in the wake of the War in relatively short order there came self government for the Transvaal(1906) followed by a similar dispensation for the Orange Free State (1907) and finally, a mere three years later, union for all of the four independent entities on the subcontinent. Hardly had the new bedfellows begun to settle down together than the Great War burst upon an ill-prepared world and, to use a cliche, it would never be the same again. Truly 1914 marked a watershed in the affairs of mankind in which so much that had come to be taken for granted in the form of standards of work and performance, principles of life, social mores etc, was lost and little gained. The search for individual 'freedom' has, ironically, left the average man much impoverished.

Labour unrest became more apparent during this period and sporadic strikes in one centre after another, such as the Carpenters' Strike in Cape Town in 1905 and the more serious Miners' Strike in 1913, culminated in the General Strike in the following year.[1] But the biggest changes in the field of labour relations were to come as a consequence of the world conflict, for now the desires and aspirations of the work force would become something to be reckoned with and, as a consequence perhaps, the era of craftsmanship and of pride in one's work would be brought to an end. In its place would come the age of the pursuit of materialism and money for its own sake with one's job seen merely as a means to that end.

The Association's Office

It was during this period that serious efforts were made to establish the Association as a permanent feature of Cape Town's business scene. To this end two things would be essential: firstly a fixed, permanent office and secondly, somebody to man it - a full-time secretary. At first, meetings were held at a variety of public places, the Cumberland Hotel and the Metropolitan Hall being favoured for meetings of the general membership. The former, more convivial no doubt, being used for such gatherings as the Annual General Meeting, whilst the latter venue was utilised for special meetings, that of the 14th April 1904 to discuss the Employer's Liability Bill being a case in point. Meetings of the Committee or the Executive were held as from 1904 in an office in The Savings Bank Building. For the first time, at the beginning of 1905, mention is made of 'the offices of the Association'[2] but no address is given and it may well have been the office in The Savings Bank Building. However, a short time later the Committee specifically discuss the problem of an office of a more permanent nature and they agree to take one in Marsh's Building at the corner of Strand and Burg Streets.[3]

Exactly where Marsh's Building stood, on which corner, I have not been able to determine, but there are only two corners to the intersection and evidence would seem to favour the one higher up Strand Street. In August 1909 the Association took offices in Parker's Building which was also on the corner of Strand and Burg Streets. Where this building stood can be positively identified since it remained until recently demolished. Because this building was on the lower corner, and no mention is made of the Association having to move to temporary premises due to demolition and rebuilding (Parker's Building was built in 1904[4]) it would seem reasonable to assume that the Association was safely housed in Marsh's Building until the move was made to the new place. A G Howard, in his brief review of the streets of Cape Town at the end of the nineteenth century, as printed in the Architect & Builder, mentions Marsh's Building without specifying exactly where it stood. He does however mention the amusement afforded by the sign painted above the shop entrance, which said 'General - Marsh & Son - Dealer', an unconscious piece of signwriting humour that no doubt did much to make Mr Marsh's shop well known among the people of Cape Town.[5]

The office in Parker's Building, in common with the previous office was, it would seem, shared between the Association and Salt River Cement Works, perhaps serving the function of a more central office for the promotion of their products. Certainly, of the £8.10.0 rent payable monthly they were required to pay £3.10.0.[6] In addition, although Mr Howard of Howard & Scott, the firm then busy on the imposing new City Hall, agreed to make a table, the balance of the office furniture would have to be purchased and Salt River Cement Works were to be asked to contribute.[7] Right through the rest of this period the offices of the Association remained in Parker's Building and that grand structure, designed by Collingwood, Tully & Waters, played a large part in the early history of the Association.

The Secretary of the Association

At the early meetings of the Association it would appear that one of the members of the Committee acted in the capacity of secretary for, right from the beginning, business was conducted on accepted professional lines with minutes being recorded, read and confirmed at the following meeting, and then signed by the Chairman. A secretary is mentioned at the third meeting in the Minute Book for 1901, that of April 1st, for it is recorded that the Secretary was instructed to communicate with the Colonial Government. At this stage it would appear that the gentleman in question was Thomas Howard, partner in Howard & Scott. The handwriting in the Minute Book changes in May and again at the beginning of June and it is probably at this stage ,that Walter J Coleman, the first fulltime secretary, joined the Association. Certainly the handwriting remains unchanged for a considerable period, apart from one or two lapses,in fact until April of 1907.

Mr Coleman's position with the Association is uncertain, for at this stage, it appears they did not have a separate office where he could carry out his duties but that he was accepted as Secretary in the full sense of the word, is be indicated by the list of Office Bearers written into the front of the first existing Minute Book. For the period 1901 - 1902 Mr T Howard is shown as 'Honorary Secretary', but his name has later been crossed out and Walter J Coleman written in, whilst for the following year the designation is simply 'Secretary', with Mr Coleman listed. Whether or not he was paid for his services is not known as is the place where he carried out his duties. At a Committee Meeting held on the 8 March 1906 the matter of the Secretary came up for consideration and it was agreed 'after considerable discussion...that the matter be deferred until

after the Congress.' What specific matter concerning the secretaryship was to be discussed is not explained, but at the meeting of the 7 May 1906, when a brief list of expenditure is noted down, an amount of nine guineas is shown as the salary paid to this official. The next time this amount appears in the list of expenditure is in May and the following time in November, so that the sum was obviously paid quarterly. It may well have been that from this time on the Association was prepared to pay their secretary the sum of thirty six guineas per annum, but what happened prior to that is unclear from the existing records.

Walter Coleman's stay with the Association terminated during the first half of 1907, probably at the end of April, if he saw out a full quarter in line with the pattern of his remuneration. There was then a brief lapse when, presumably, one of the Committee stood in as secretary [8]. Then on the 12th of November it was resolved that 'Mr Thos. Bagnall be the Secretary for the ensuing year.' Thomas Bagnall did not occupy this post for very long since by September of 1908 both the office and the post of secretary were under discussion. On the 28th of that month it was 'resolved on the motion of Mr Cran, seconded by Mr Plint, that Mr D Boyd be appointed Secretary at a salary of £3 per month, with use of the office.' With times as bad as they were even the retention of the office was in doubt, but at that meeting it was decided to retain it at the monthly rent of four pounds. Mr Boyd was introduced to the gathered members at the Annual General Meeting during the next month, 'in place of Mr Bagnall, resigned.'[9]

The choice of Mr Boyd was obviously not a good one for, turn over one page in the Executive Minute Book for 1908, and the question of the

Secretary is again before the Committee, owing to Mr Boyd's resignation. Three applications had been received, from Messrs Pease, Chedburn, and Greenway and it was resolved to give the post to the last named at the same salary as had been offered to the elusive Mr Boyd.[10] The period during which Mr Greenway served the Association was difficult for everyone, not the least himself, for the economic depression deepened until the very existence of the Master Builders' Association was threatened. At a Special General Meeting held at the office on Friday 27th August 1909 at 8 o'clock and with only nine members present, plus the Secretary, the whole future of the Association was discussed. The situation was bad for the 'deficiency' reported under the heading 'Financial Affairs' was £15.17.0, and Mr Greenway was moved to intimate 'his willingness to continue to act as Secretary for the remainder of the Financial Year without other remuneration than the use of the office, provided the Association continued to pay for keeping the office clean (£1 per month).' This suggestion was readily accepted.

Of course Mr Greenway may not have been moved by purely altruistic motives, for conditions in the business world in Cape Town at that time were such that alternative employment would have been hard to find. Not to be overlooked either is the fact that the affairs of the Association could not have occupied his entire working day and he must have had additional ways of supplementing his income. The average artisan was earning 1/6d per hour which, on the basis of a 48 hour week, would have brought him in something in the region of £15 per month, whilst, according to one source, a typist of the time would have been earning on the average £11 a month.[11] All of which makes the £3 per month offered to the Secretary little enough so that it could hardly have formed his entire income. One can recall the

Minute regarding the employment of Mr Boyd, previously quoted, which said he should be offered 'a salary of £3 per month with use of office'. Thus during these difficult times Mr Greenway would at least have had an office in which to work, though whether or not there was a telephone for him to use, is doubtful. A resolution taken by the Executive in April 1909 determined that, as from the 9th of the following month, the service would be discontinued.[12] This seems to have been carried out for on the 22nd December 1910 it was agreed that 'the matter of the re-installation of the Telephone be left over till next meeting'. However, at a meeting on the 26th January 1915, which is the next occasion on which the telephone is mentioned, it is once again suggested that the service be discontinued. Thus it seems likely that it had been reconnected at some date not specifically recorded. The Secretary's part in keeping the Association alive at this time must not be underestimated, for both his position and the office itself provided a link, however tenuous, that may have played a vital role in keeping the members together. It was thus fitting that at the Annual General Meeting in 1910 heartfelt thanks were expressed to Mr Greenway. He modestly replied tht he had 'had the use of a good office'.[13]

That Mr Greenway did indeed have business interests beyond those of the Association becomes clear at a meeting of the Executive in February 1912, when he put an unusual proposition to the members. The Minute reads, 'a proposal was made by him (the Secretary) that members should subscribe the sum of £125 on a private basis for the purpose of assisting in defraying his expenses to England, in connection with the flotation of a Company for growing and manufacturing tobacco and cigars.'[14] The Association as a body turned him down with the suggestion that he approach

the members individually. What the outcome was is not recorded, but the evidence would seem to suggest that Mr Greenway did not make the trip to England so that probably the Company was stillborn.

The matter of his remuneration was not, however, forgotten for Mr Cran raised it at the Annual General Meeting in October and, after some discussion, a motion was passed by a majority (the record does not say unanimously) that the honorarium for the coming year should not be less than £25, 'and that the matter be further considered by the Executive at the end of this present year.'[15] Again it is doubtful whether anything materialised, for in 1914, at the Annual General Meeting, it was Arthur Plint who raised the matter of remuneration for the Secretary once again 'with a view to having the amount paid off and the liability discharged.'[16] Things reached a head in January 1915 when at an 'Urgent Meeting of the Executive' held on Tuesday 26th January, Mr Greenway was retrenched. The initial proposal made at that meeting included either the closing of the office completely or the hiring of a smaller room but the final decision was to retain the existing office and to give each member of the Executive a key; it was pointed out that this way the cleaning bill would be reduced to ten shillings a month! All members were to be asked to contribute three guineas on account in order to meet liabilities, including settling up with Mr Greenway. It seems his final act was to take the minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on 2nd March 1915, by which time his services had been terminated, for, ever correct, he records himself as present by name, not as Secretary, and also notes that he was requested to take the minutes by Mr H Tidswell, the Chairman. The statement of account shows that, apart from affiliation fees due to the National Federation, all liabilities had been discharged, so presumably Mr Greenway finally got his

money. Thanks for his valuable assistance and great courtesy to all the members were recorded and the matter of the appointment of an Honorary Secretary was deferred. Why the step of retrenchment was taken is not clear, but one can only assume that the Committee felt that they had presumed on the patience of their Secretary for long enough and did not wish to continue accumulating debt in the form of unpaid salary. Of course by this time Mr Greenway may have needed the money, though his tobacco venture was probably well and truly laid to rest since he could hardly have contemplated a journey to England in the middle of the World War.

At the next meeting, held on the 4th May, an Honorary Secretary is now present, by name Geoffrey Nowill Bromehead. His very distinctive handwriting appears for a relatively short period of time as the last meeting at which he officiated was held on the 7th April 1916. Nothing is recorded about his background or how it was that the Association managed to obtain his services in an honorary capacity, but he certainly helped the MBA out in a time of need. At his last meeting, the Financial Statement then presented shows the Association to be in a relatively sound position, with a credit balance in excess of twenty five pounds with all liabilities paid. Thus the time had now arrived for a fulltime person to once again be appointed.[17] At a meeting on the 2nd May the resignation of Mr Bromehead is recorded (in another hand) and the Committee agree to send him a letter of congratulations and appreciation; what Mr Bromehead had achieved is not recorded. The name of Mr A C Crichton appears as Secretary in the minutes of the following meeting, held on the 29th May, when his acceptance of the 'post of Secretary to the Association' is noted.

Mr Crichton's tenure of the post extended through to the end of the period under discussion but towards the end of 1919 he somehow blotted his copybook: Arthur Plint in his Presidential Report to the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of 1920 said, '...I had to dispense with the services of our late secretary and was fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr Bennett who has been carrying out his duties since the 1st October and who has given every satisfaction.'[18] W H Bennett came to the MBA from the firm of Stephan Brothers and actually started work prior to the date given by Mr Plint, for the minutes of the General Meeting on the 10th September 1919 record that he was present and already acting as secretary. He was to remain with the Association for a long period of time.

The S A Manufacturers' Association

As a consequence of legislation passed during 1905 by the Cape Legislative Assembly, the Master Builders' Association decided, in the words of the South African Builder, '...to widen its scope and, in association with the Manufacturer's, a limited liability company was formed under the style of The South African Manufacturers' and Master Builders' Association.'[19] The legislation that brought this about was the Employer's Liability Bill, later to be known as the Workman's Compensation Act. The purpose behind the formation of the company was explained to the general membership of the MBA at a special meeting by Mr Bagnall, the same gentleman who was later to become secretary of the MBA for a while.[20] The stated purpose was in fact to utilise the profits that would become available from an agreement reached between the new company and the Industrial Life Insurance Company, who would handle all the insurance neccessary to cover the members in terms of the new Bill, naturally at favourable rates.

The company had been proposed some months earlier and AB Reid had been elected Chairman of the 'Registered Joint Company of the Master Builders' Association and the South African Manufacturers' Association'.[21] Mr FB Smith, presumably a member of the latter association was elected to the position of Vice Chairman. The company had a capital of £500 which was issued in £1 shares and some of the original documentation is held in the files of the present Master Builders' Association.[22] By the end of that first year profits becoming available to the MBA amounted to £125.2.8.[23] Competition with other insurance companies was obviously fierce for, by mid 1909, the agreement with the Industrial Life had lapsed and the members were being urged to support the new arrangement made with the General Life

Assurance Company. The draft agreement with this new insurer was reviewed in June with the Committee by the then General Manager, Mr Lock, in June, and Arthur Plint and Secretary Greenway were delegated to sign the finalised agreement on behalf of the Association.[24] By 1911 the current President of the MBA was sitting on the Board of the General Assurance Company, not without some persuasion, since a letter had been written suggesting this move, '...otherwise the Association would be compelled to make arrangements for the accommodation of its members elsewhere.'[25]

The economic decline and the competition between insurance companies may have been factors that decided the relatively short life of the joint company. Little was being earned in the way of revenue, as witness the extended problem of remuneration for the Secretary. Also, the members were not wholehearted in their support of the chosen insurance company, probably because their own insurers were able to offer similar rates, for the Committee found it neccessary on occasion to write and suggest that individual members support the arrangement.[26] So it would seem that the purpose for the formation of the joint company faded as time progressed so that by 1912, at the Annual General Meeting of the MBA, it was suggested that the company should be wound up and the balance remaining in the books be transferred to the MBA.[27] The role of the Manufacturers' Association as joint participants in the venture is unclear at this stage as no mention is made of them although the association was still in existence, since it was the forerunner of the Cape Chamber of Industries. A newspaper article published on the occasion of the seventy fifth birthday of the C.C.I. mentioned both AB Reid , the first president, and Thomas Bagnall who served as their secretary.[28] Opposition to the proposed method of finalising the affairs of the joint company came from some of the

shareholders, so that an Extraordinary General Meeting was called at which it was agreed to put the company into voluntary liquidation.[29] From the money that would become due to the MBA, it was agreed to settle the question of overdue salary for the Secretary, but at a later Executive Meeting the 'Balance Sheet (First and Final Statement)' was read and confirmed.[30] Yet the secretary remained unpaid so that there could have been little in it for the MBA. The General Assurance Company continued to care for the interests of the members and a proposal was put forward at the end of 1912 by the National Federation that all the affiliated Associations should support the company.[31]

The Business Cycle

At the beginning of 1904 business conditions could be described as fair, such that some firms were being accused of offering higher wages in order to entice skilled men from other companies but the indications were already apparent that the boom was over. By the first quarter of the following year 'things at the Cape were very quiet',[32] and by the time the year closed the talk was of reducing the wage rate, though fears were also expressed that if this was carried too far, so that the rate was below a decent living wage, 'mechanics' would be driven to other centres.[33] This would seem to indicate that the Cape was an early victim of the countrywide depression that was beginning to grip the land. In 1906 the members of the MBA were paying 13/- per diem to competent men, but by July the suggestion was that this be reduced to 1/6 per hour, giving 12/- per day.[34] It was obviously a bad year and members were reported as leaving the trade, the city, and even the country. One member of the Committee, Charles Rutherford, joined the exodus from the land and left for England, following the stream of skilled men in the building trades who were flocking to San

Francisco in the wake of the famous earthquake and fire.[35] As the year progressed evidence of the poor state of trade became more apparent, many of the local members were in arrears, the Kimberley MBA was dissolved and finally in October Frank Turner, then President of the National Federation , was declared insolvent.[36]

The bottom of the trough of the business cycle seems to have been reached during 1907 and 1908 and in an attempt to maintain membership of the MBA at as high a level as possible the fees were reduced to £1.1.0. This did not prove to be of that much help due to the large number of members in arrears and, at the meeting on the 23 November 1908, Messrs Plint and Maxwell were appointed 'to go through the list and strike off those who are regarded as irreversable (sic), using their discretion in certain cases of offering to waive arrears, providing the subscriptions for the current year were paid promptly.' It was even suggested that a 'canvasser' might be employed to collect the outstanding monies. Wages were once again reduced, to 1/6d and later to 1/4½d but, although business remained very quiet, by the end of the following year the men were getting restless and several letters were received, notably from the Society of Carpenters and Joiners, threatening combined action if the wage rate was not increased. Wages rose to 1/6½d per hour, yet by the end of June the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society were requesting a rise to 1/9d but later expressed a willingness to accept 1/8d and this rate came into effect as from the 8th September 1910.[37] That year also saw subscriptions to the MBA up to £2.2.0 again and the financial position somewhat improved. Nevertheless activity within the Association reflected the general state of business as many of the meetings had to be adjourned due to the fact that there were not enough members present to form a quorum. Even the 1911

Annual General Meeting, called for the 12th January 1912, attracted only five members plus the Secretary and had to be postponed for a week, at which time ten members were present. Once again the question of continuing the MBA or abandoning it was discussed and before the new office bearers were elected the financial position was considered 'to ascertain whether it were possible to carry on. After lengthy discussion it was unanimously decided to continue.'[38]

As business picked up, however slowly, the issue of the rate of pay became ever more a bone of contention. The hourly rate went up to 1/8d but by September of 1912 the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society was demanding more. At a special meeting, called between representatives of both sides, it was finally agreed to increase the hours of work though maintaining the rate of pay the same.[39] The week would now consist of 48 hours with the payment of overtime to remain as previously. In addition it was agreed that a 'lock up place and hall be provided on all new jobs'. But this agreement was not to provide any lasting satisfaction, in fact even within the MBA, there was conflict with men like SA Eddy and Arthur Plint in favour of a standard rate of 1/9d per hour.[40]

The climax of the wage dispute came in 1913 when the Carpenters and Joiners finally came out on strike in an attempt to force the rate of pay up to 1/9d. The strike came into effect on Monday 10th February and, at a meeting of the Association on the following day, division within the ranks was manifest but on a vote of 5 to 4 it was resolved to 'decline to accept the men's demands.'[41] However at a meeting of the Joint Committee the following day, when representatives of both sides met to consider the situation, it was agreed to raise the rate of pay to 1/9d 'for competent

men'. By August the rate of pay for Bricklayers was also raised to 1/7½d, but by November the MBA were again under pressure to raise their rate of pay and bickering continued until the beginning of 1914 when the Bricklayers came out on strike. The then mayor of Cape Town, architect John Parker, intervened by writing a letter to the Association suggesting that 'an advice that the granting of an increase as from the 1st January next to the Bricklayers' Association would be favourably considered' and saying that if such a proposal was made 'he was firmly of the opinion they would return to work.'[42] It seemed a long shot since this would put the implementation of the proposed increase almost a year away, but the mayor's request was immediately acceded to, with seemingly favourable results.

The year 1914 started quietly and little activity is indicated in the existing records: few meetings were held and the small attendance at some meant that no business could be conducted. Once again the Annual General Meeting had to be postponed and although on the second occasion the attendance recorded was even smaller, the normal business was transacted.[43] This was at the beginning of November so that by then the Great War had broken out in Europe and its effects were already being felt. A Special Meeting of all Builders, Contractors, and Sub-Contractors was called for Saturday August 8th at 8.00pm. in the Metropolitan Hall; the purpose as set out in the display advertisment that appeared in the newspapers was to consider 'the Position with a view to taking such steps as may be deemed necessary.'[44] No record was kept of that meeting. One consequence of the War that became almost immediately felt was the cancellation of work that was yet on the drawing board or in the process of being prepared for tendering and the Secretary was instructed to write to each of the Architects in town to determine the exact position with regard

to such work.[45] At the same meeting it was decided to communicate with the Trade Unions to ascertain exactly how many men were out of work as a result of the outbreak of hostilities.

As with so many things in the affairs of mankind the old proverb rang true that "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good." Although conditions worsened at first and activity in the industry fell away even more, as the war progressed the amount of building work available began to increase. The Association obviously benefitted from this, so much so, that in his Presidential Address for 1916 John Drake could report, after reviewing a fairly successful year that 'the Membership was better than it had been for eight or nine years. The Association stood well in the eyes of the public who had learned they were out for the better conditions of the trade generally & not for self aggrandisement.'[46] But, of course, the men were once again restless and expecting pay rises: the Carpenters and Joiners were requesting a rise to 1/10½d whilst the Bricklayers and other trades were anticipating 1/9d. These increases were granted early in 1917,[47] it would seem in the form of a War Bonus added to the basic rate of pay, but by September they were looking for an increase of another 3d per hour.[48] This was rejected out of hand by the MBA but by the end of the year the request was repeated and the new year opened with special meetings being held to try and satisfy the men's demands. The War Bonus was doubled (to 3d per hour) as from the 18 January, but by March the men were demanding a further increase, even though the agreement had been signed on the understanding that it was to remain in force for a twelve month period. The basis for their claims lay in the spectre of inflation that had made itself felt during the course of the war and, defending the men's claims, Mr Morgan, a prominent Builders' Merchant, cited increases in costs during

the progress of the war. According to his figures Rent had increased by 20/- a month, Provisions by 40/-, and Clothing by 20/- during the course of the war.[49] These figures make interesting reading and if they can be taken as accurate, a fact that some of the members contested, the wage rate should have increased by 5d per hour when in fact it had gone up by about 3d, so that Mr Morgan's contention that the men had a valid claim would seem to be true. That is, of course, if one accepts the principle that wages should be directly linked to the Cost of Living.

During all this time the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society had been the most vociferous of the craft unions. They were the oldest, having been established in 1881, and their members were among the highest paid tradesmen in the industry, only those Masons who were classified as Fixers received a higher rate. Still in 1918 the Cape Operative Bricklayers' Society gave notice that they wished their wages 'to be brought up to the same level as the Carpenters namely 2/0½d per hour.'[50] This suggestion was not acceptable to the majority of the members of the MBA and, at a meeting on the 22 May, they agreed to raise the War Bonus to 3½d which, together with the basic wage of 1/7½d, brought the rate to 1/11d. Whether or not this was acceptable to them is not specifically recorded, but shortly therafter the whole question of wages was once again a major issue, since the Carpenters' Society pushed for a further increase of 4d per hour.[51] The problem was now becoming very serious, with threats of strike action being bandied about, and in fact right through to the end of the year, and the period under discussion, the dispute continued. A combined meeting was held on Thursday 29th August at which the Federation of Labour, the Carpenters', Masons', and Bricklayers' Societies and the MBA were represented. The meeting ended in deadlock. In fact, it marked the end of

an era in some ways, since it was as a consequence of this meeting that the Conciliation Board, a mechanism set up to handle such disputes, finally had to be abandoned; as is discussed in the next subsection. By the time the year ended the MBA had proposed that the rate of pay for the Carpenters would be 1/9d per hour plus a War Bonus of 6d with the other trades being paid at the established level below that. But the men were not satisfied, and there was disagreement among the members of the MBA as well so that the wage dispute will continue into the next period to be considered. There was a strong feeling among both employers and employees that the system that had recently been adopted in Johannesburg should equally apply in the Cape: that of equal wage rates for all of the building trades, painting excepted. It is interesting to note that there was not only a discrepancy between the wages of the various trades, but there was a difference in the rate of pay for white and coloured artisans in fact there were craft unions for both racial groups.

The Conciliation Board

Throughout the period under discussion, Joint Conciliation Boards were in operation as bargaining places where the employers and the men could get together to discuss mutual problems, invariably to do with the rate of pay. At the first Congress, held in Port Elizabeth in 1905, a resolution calling for the formation of such bodies was passed and the Cape Town Association confirmed this resolution at a meeting on the 19th June. However, progress was slow and it took a joint meeting between the MBA and the Trades Council in November to get any positive action.[52] By early 1906, the members had accepted the formation of a Board in principle, on the lines of the one already established in Durban and at a Committee Meeting on the 28th February the rules were considered 'seriatum'. After a very lengthy discussion they were agreed to.

The first meeting of the Conciliation Board took place on 12th April 1906 with John Rayner acting as Chairman in the absence of JZ Drake. At this first meeting it was agreed that all discussions would take place on 'recognised debating rules' and matters would be finally settled by ballot. The Board was in operation again on 1st July when grievances against Mr McGhie were heard. Also corrective steps were proposed against him, since it was agreed that he had violated the rules agreed with The Operative Mason's Society. This same body brought a far more serious problem to the Board later that year when they were in dispute with Mr McKillop over the Rhodes Memorial contract. The outcome of that dispute is not recorded in the Minute Book, but the Board and the MBA were in full sympathy with the men in 'their struggle to maintain the standard rate of wages, according to the rules now in force.'[53]

The Conciliation Board continued to function with a fair amount of success through the following years, with slight amendments made to the rules in 1914,[54] but the turbulent days of the Great War saw its downfall. Labour unrest reached a new peak, something that a number of the members found hard to comprehend and Mr Moon expressed their feelings when he said 'he did not think these men should claim an increase when men were today fighting and their wives and families were living on less money.'[55] By 1918 the future of the Board was seriously in jeopardy and the final confrontation came at a meeting on the 29th August. The meeting was under the chairmanship of Mr WB Shand and had been called to consider the dispute that then existed over the rate of pay. The men, notably the representatives from the Federation of Labour, wanted the final decision, which would normally be handed down by the neutral chairman, to be put to a ballot among all the men to determine whether or not it would be

acceptable. The MBA representatives felt this defeated the whole object of the Board and after much discussion no way round the deadlock could be found. This was in spite of the fact that a number of the representatives of the men took a view similar to that of the employers. Thus, at a meeting held on the 11th September, the MBA representatives could report that 'the Conciliation Board has ceased to exist.'

Relationships with the Workmen

As has been seen already the workmen were, on the whole, well organised and most of the trades had unions of their own to represent them, some of which had been in existence even before the formation of the original Association of Employers. Relationships between these bodies and the MBA had, for the most part, proved to be cordial. In fact, at one joint meeting Mr Thomson of the Federation of Labour was moved to say that, '...the Carpenters from 1882 up to recent years had a system of settling disputes by direct negotiations with the MBA which had worked well.'[56] This was in 1918, so that for some thirty five years direct negotiation, with the assistance of the Conciliation Board at times, had worked reasonably well. But now there was a worldwide awakening to the power that could be exercised by the working class, epitomised by the Russian Revolution, and there was likely to be an increase in the incidence of confrontation.

Bearing in mind the time period under consideration, there would obviously have existed the clear distinction between employer and workman that characterised that era, but it is interesting to note that even then there were problems developing between coloured and white workmen. In 1906 in a letter to the Plasterers' Trade Union the Committee stated that it was quite, '...prepared to treat the Plasterers fairly & firm & unbiassed

standpoint, re white and colored workmen.'(sic) [57] The problem had come up for discussion at the 1908 National Congress, held that year in Cape Town, and there had been talk about the possibility of eliminating skilled coloured labour from the building trade. The local Committee at a meeting held shortly afterwards had a lengthy discussion on the subject and '...considered it absolutely impossible to eliminate coloured skilled labour from the Building Trade.'[58] It is hardly surprising that they took this view, since the previous year the March edition of the S A Architect and Builder had bemoaned the serious loss of artisans from the Cape to Australia. Undoubtedly many of them were returning home from a period of work in the Colony, forced back by the fall off in available work. The writer mentions that in 1905 there had been some 52 870 black and white men employed in the Trade, but that these had diminished to less than a third of that number.

Some three years later, in 1911, the Mines and Works Act was passed which, in effect, placed the seal of legal approval on the colour bar and legitimised the then current feeling that racial inequalities were ordained by a higher power, an attitude unhappily still common today. The effect of this legislation was to bring into existence a number of unions that catered directly for the coloured workmen in the building trade. For example the Coloured Operatives Bricklayers' and Plasterers' Trade Union of the Cape Peninsula wrote to the MBA requesting formal recognition, but received a letter back from the Committee requesting more details of their organisation.[59] They did later receive such recognition and at a joint meeting held in 1918 Arthur Plint made an interesting and, from today's point of view, amusing statement that well reflects the current attitude. He stated that, '...the MBA had passed a resolution that the coloured man

should be paid not less than 75% of the white man's wage. They should not try to ape the white man too much and should look to Johannesburg where they turn the coloured man out.'[60] Of course it was meant sincerely and in many ways was sound advice for it might have helped them to retain those features of the coloured people that made them such a colourful race, but it was bound to fall on deaf ears as the course of history testifies. It was an interesting statement though, particularly since some time earlier the Committee had written to the National Federation expressing the view that the proposed Fair Wage Clause should apply only to white workmen, '...as no trouble has ever occurred here with Coloured labour on the question of equal wages as white labour.'[61] Not that all the members were seeking to hold skilled coloured man back for a number of them, including Mr Plint, had at times publicly expressed the opinion that if a coloured workmen were capable of equal work, he should receive equal pay. However it does appear that at this time there was a noticeable difference between the quality of work expected from a white man and that produced by coloured workman, which confirms the statement made by Mr Benning regarding the coloured tradesman recorded earlier.[62]

Relationships with the Subtrades.

The original Association was formed among building contractors only, without special consideration being given to the place of the subcontractor, many of whom had associations of their own, and the early minutes record dealings wth the 'Master Plumbers', the 'Master Painters' and the 'Master Plasterers and Modellers'. Of course it must be remembered that in those days many builders did the majority of the work themselves, using their own employees; the day of the specialist subcontractor was yet to come. There were however subcontracting firms in business at that time

and since they could rightly be considered 'masters' in the building trade it was only right that some provision should be made for them. At the end of 1904 it was decided to allow subtrades to choose a member of the Committee who would represent them and put their point of view in matters that affected them.[63] This decision was rescinded the following year and it was decided to 'offer affiliation to Plumbers, Painters, Engineers, and Plasterers.'[64] The move was a sensible one and evoked good response, for in October twenty nine new members were elected, the majority of them from the ranks of the subcontractors.[65] This situation continued for some time and contracting firms were expected to give preference to subtrade firms who were also members of the Association.A few complaints on this aspect were heard by the Committee from time to time, such as that from Mr S Stanbury who maintained that although he had made ' a speciality of building smithy work' he was not being asked to quote.[66]

Subcontracting firms were still being elected to the ranks of the MBA in 1908 but later the situation changed and the Association once again became an organisation for building contractors in the fullest sense of the word, though how they determined who qualified is not revealed. The change appears to have come about as a result of the reorganisation of the National Federation that took place at the end of 1910.[67] Certainly, at the meeting held on the 24th February 1911 alterations to the rules were discussed and a general meeting arranged when the membership would have the opportunity to express themselves on the proposed changes. The rules that were affected were those where subcontracting firms were mentioned as being included within the Association.

As a result of the changes some of the subtrades formed their own representative bodies, for example a pay demand made by the Painters and Decorators in November 1913 was referred back by the Committee of the MBA with the comment 'that it is a matter to be dealt with by the Master Painters.'[68] Towards the end of 1914 moves were again afoot to bring the subcontractors back but whether this was actually accomplished is not clear from the records. One source definitely states that this was done in 1915[69] but the existing Minute Books do not specifically mention this matter. Although some proof of the correctness of this claim appears in the records for the meeting held on August 10th in 1915 where Mr Plint suggested that all members make a weekly contribution toward 'The Building and Allied Trades Employees Fund' which money would then be donated to the 'Mayors Special Fund'. What is strange though, is that the minutes of the Committee Meetings of this period make no mention of the re-admission of subcontractors to the membership. However the South African Builder definitely states,'...the year 1915 when, in a further effort to extend its scope, it decided to admit subcontractors to membership. This considerably strengthened the Association and increased the number of members to about 100.' This article is not completely accurate. It does not for example mention that the subcontractors had previously been afforded membership and it links the S A Manufacturing Company with the subtrades, so that it cannot be taken as a final authority but it does quote definite numbers which may have been available from records no longer available.

The only record of a definite effort made to include the subcontractors came after the general meeting of all involved in the building trade at the outbreak of war. All who had attended that meeting were invited to be present at the following Annual General Meeting when it

was promised that the matter would be put on the agenda for discussion.[71] This was the meeting held on October 22nd but, as has been seen, the attendance on that occasion was so small, nine members plus two guests, that the meeting was postponed until the 3rd November. On that particular night only eight members turned up and the matter of including subcontractors in the Association was not discussed.

The National Federation.

One of the major events that occurred during this period was the formation of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers, founded on the motivation of WR Poynton of Durban in 1904. Although this is not an integral part of the history of the local Association, the Cape Town Master Builders Association were deeply involved from the early days and individual members contributed much toward getting the national body firmly established.

William Ralph Poynton was born in Australia the son of a builder who had originally established a business in Durban in 1849 but who then left for Australia, seeking better times. He returned to Natal sometime in the third quarter of the nineteenth century and his son grew up to join his father in the flourishing business he had by then established. This was in 1879 and William became not only deeply involved in his chosen career, but also very active in civic affairs. In 1903 he became President of the local MBA and during that period began to work toward the establishment of a national federation of the local Associations. This was somewhat of a change for this energetic man since he had expressed himself in no uncertain terms as being an individualist who was wholly opposed to any form of association or union of men or employers. As early as May 1903 a

letter had been received in Cape Town from the Durban MBA suggesting an amalgamation of all the Associations in South Africa, '...so that an influence can be exerted over the Trades as a united body.'[72] In January of the following year another letter from Durban carried further details of the proposed federation [73] and the rules were discussed by the members at a general meeting on the 15th February. A good deal of correspondence on the matter was exchanged with the Durban Association and finally an inaugural meeting was held on the 23rd March 1904 in Durban, although no representative from Cape Town was present on that occasion. Mr. Poynton left for a visit to England shortly thereafter and a 'Smoking Concert' was organised by the MBA to give him the opportunity to address the members on '...the recent Federated Building Assn recently formed.'[74] This meeting went off very well and in a letter of thanks Mr Poynton promised that '...he will endeavour to further the cause we all have at heart, viz the unity of Master Builders in South Africa and thus to an extent the prosperity of the Colony.'[75]

At this time in the development of a national body it was only natural that the pattern already established in England should be looked to as an example and regional federations were set up on the lines of those in the 'home country'. Early in April 1904 the MBA received a letter from the Secretary of the Cape Federation, who is not named in the records, but who could have been a Mr Mop, since he was in that position in September. It seems apparant that this gentleman was based outside Cape Town, possibly in Port Elizabeth, or even East London, both of which associations had been actively involved in the inaugural meeting. One reason for assuming the office of the Cape Federation to have been outside Cape Town is that the local Association was not at that time part of the national body and also

because Mr Mop found it necessary on occasion to communicate with them by telegram. It was only on 15th September, at a special meeting called for the purpose, that the local members agreed to federate with the Cape Colony Building Trades Employers Federation.

There was a very close correspondency between the pattern of the British Federation and that established in South Africa as is explained in the following quotation from The South African Builder:

> "The newly formed organisation equipped itself at the outset to function on the highest level in the promotion of joint and co-ordinated action aimed at the protection and furtherance of common group interests. To this end the procedures, constitution and rules of the British Federation were adopted in so far as they were adaptable to local requirements. The British pattern was duplicated, even to the extent of the establishment of Colony Federations after the style of the overseas Regional Federations. The Colony federations were confined initially to Natal and the Cape. A similar body was later established in the Transvaal. There is nothing in the records, however, to indicate whether or not the O.F.S. at any time established a "colonial body".[76]

Later in the same article the writer elaborates on the close liaison that was maintained with the British body which eventually culminated in the South African Federation becoming an affiliated association (in 1911) and,

> "...the cooperation and encouraging help received from overseas have done a great deal to shape the destiny of our own organisation."[77]

The first President of the National Federation was WR Poynton and he was succeeded in 1906 by Frank Turner from Pretoria with JZ Drake of the Cape Town MBA as Vice President. It was during Drake's absence overseas that conditions in the industry reached such a low level that Turner's company was declared isolvent. Not only were the local associations feeling the pinch, but the national body itself was beginning to falter and JZ Drake arrived back in South Africa just in time. Rather fittingly for a man whose middle name was Zeal, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the rescue work with a strong conviction that the Federation was worth the fight. Drake took over leadership of the national body at the Congress in Durban in 1907, thus serving in the capacity of President for eighteen months and seeing it through some of the most trying times in its history. In the period immediately following the formation of the Federation a large number of local MBA's had sprung into existence but by 1907 many of them had disappeared; for example, Kroonstad, Middelburg, and even Kimberley. That the concept of a nationwide organization drawing all the local bodies together survived these difficult years, is due in no small measure to the energy and devotion of JZ Drake and men like him. In the year 1911 it was found necessary to reorganise the structure of the Federation, mainly, it would seem, by the elimination of the Regional Federations which had proved largely unworkable due to the distances that separated them. Thus the MBA's became the representatives of the national body in the various centres; a special meeting was called to enlighten the members on the new arrangement.[78]

The first Secretary, and it would seem the only fulltime member of staff, was Mr W Walker from Durban. He was succeeded by James Thompson Brown, who was also Editor of the first official journal. Apparently in

1909 the Federation moved its office to Johannesburg and Mr Brown moved with them, but this is an area that remains unclear for, in his obituary published in The South African Builder in February 1923, it mentions that he had severed his connection with the Federation in 1906. One explanation could be that the year was actually 1916, for it was in the following year that the journal began to disclaim him as editor. The post of Secretary was then filled by R Tweedale Hogg.

Education and Training

From early on in the history of the organised building industry, attention was paid to the problem of education and, over the years, the industry has built up a good record in term of the encouragement it has given to any efforts made in this direction. Of course in the early stages of development, education consisted solely of artisan or trade training. At an Executive Meeting held on the 17th January 1907 a report was given of a discussion held with a Dr Muir, presumably at that time in charge of technical classes being held in Cape Town. At this meeting Dr Muir promised to give the MBA his full support in the furtherance of technical education for boys wishing to pursue a career in the building industry. Thus the Committee resolved to offer prizes to the value of £12.12.0 to students enrolled in courses specific to the Building Trade "viz. Geometry, Building Construction, Hygiene, and Carpentry and Joinery." Later, when JZ Drake was about to leave for a holiday in England, Dr. Muir recommended that he purchase two small books issued by the London Science and Art Department which outlined the courses they had to offer in those fields related to building and which would then serve as a guide to the local MBA.[79]

The next reference to technical education in the Minute Books occurs some time later and by then Dr Muir has been replaced by one Professor Bohle and at that time a small sub-committee was established to act as a liaison body with this gentleman.[80] Things did not seem to go too well with the new incumbent for, almost exactly a year later, John Drake was minuted as expressing concern over the methods adopted by Bohle, since he felt that they were 'likely to militate against success'.[81] Professor Bohle was to be interviewed. By 1913 a National Advisory Board had been established and the local MBA were called on to provide information regarding education, since an attempt was to be made to establish 'throughout the Union centres for the dissemination of Technical Education.'[82] Progress on this matter appears to have been somewhat slow but by 1916 it was noted that the City Council had promised that a sum of £40,000 would be included in the 1917 estimate of expenditure for the purpose of the erection of a Technical College.[83] (The present Technical College building actually had its foundation stone laid by His Royal Highness Prince Arthur of Connaught, the Governor General, on the 26th May 1921 and it opened officially on Friday 16th March 1923.) In 1918 the MBA were still pressing for a more rationalised view toward the whole subject of technical education and to that end re-affirmed a resolution that had been taken at Congress that a proper form of indenture for apprentices was essential and should be adopted countrywide. Shortly thereafter, a letter was received from the Secretary of the Provincial Council, informing the MBA that 'a seat on the Board of the Technical Institute has been reserved for a representative' who would hold office for three years.[84] The President, at that time Arthur Plint, was nominated but it was only in 1920 that any official legislation on the subject of apprenticeship was promulgated.[85]

Members' Affairs

This period in this history of the MBA was a difficult one as has surely become clear and there were numerous difficulties among the members, differences of opinion and the like. Mr Benning and his outspoken manner represented just one, and on occasion there were others who were just as forthright in their criticism of the executive. Again the economically stringent times caused serious problems for all of the members and not a few fell by the way side due to financial problems. In 1908 one of the oldest members, resigned, RH Morris, and this was certainly over some difference of opinion for FB Smith was delegated to see him about the matter and as a result Morris remained a member. Shortly thereafter Mitchell & Mackie threatened to pull out but the intervention of Arthur Plint caused them to reconsider. Even the President SA Eddy resigned from his position, for personal reasons and he was 'reluctantly compelled to tender his resignation as President'.[86] Arthur Plint stepped in to see out the period and carry on for the ensuing term of office, which could not have been an easy task as it was in the middle of a Mason's strike. Some of the trouble certainly related back to the control of the wage rates since some members saw this as an infringement of their rights as businessmen. This was in fact the basic reason the the resignations of WJ Cran (A B Reid's partner) and John Maxwell both of whom spoke of withdrawing in 1913, but were persuaded to change their minds.

One of the most important events involving a member of the local MBA during this period occurred in 1916, and was widely known as the 'Bothwell Case'. It arose from a contract executed by Mr G Bothwell for the Irrigation Department and which ended up in a dispute that was settled

rather high-handedly by the Department, to the severe detriment of Mr Bothwell. The MBA took a very serious view of the matter, because they saw it as a precedent. At a meeting held on the 31st October 1916, at which JT Brown, the General Secretary, was present they resolved,

> "That this meeting of the C.T.M.B.A. is satisfied that the adverse judgement in the Bothwell case is of supreme importance to the Trade and recommend the Federation to immediately take the necessary steps to prosecute the case to a conclusion favourable to the contractor and for the further purpose of avoiding similar litigation in the future and that, if necessary Mr Bothwell state his case to the Executive in Johannesburg."

A special sub committee was established and legal advice was taken and an appeal considered on the information received from Mr Knox Baxter that it would not cost more than £300. Bothwell was advised to proceed with the appeal and given the understanding that the MBA would assist financially. Sadly by, November 1917 Mr Bothwell was dead and it was left to his widow to petition the MBA for help in settling the legal costs which far exceeded the original estimate. Eventually, Mr Knox Baxter was threatening to sue for the balance of his money. In June 1918 the MBA officially informed Mrs Bothwell's lawyers that they had not guaranteed costs and that they regretfully could offer no further help. Feelings obviously ran high over this matter, for at a later meeting Mr Adams referred to statements that had been made in this connection and reported that they had been withdrawn and 'the gentleman who made them apologised for same'.

Trade Journals.

Journals published for those interested in the Building Industry in its broadest sense have been published overseas for many years. 'The Builder', for example, appeared first in 1843 as 'An Illustrated Weekly Magazine', whilst the other main journal 'The Building News and Architectural Review' came out in 1855, stating on its title page that it was 'A Weekly Illustrated Record' which was devoted to 'The Progress of Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Engineering, Metropolitan Improvements, Sanitary Reform, &c, &c, &c.'. Both these magazines were distributed in this country and bound copies of both are in the possession of the Building Industries Federation, donated to them by Cape Town member E J Nason, ex libris Charles Freeman.

The first local newspaper to cover this field was 'The South African Clay Worker and Builder' which appeared monthly as from October 1903. It was published by CF Stanier. In 1909 the name was changed to 'The South African Architect and Builder'. Proprietorship changed in February 1906 to Geo. England, although Stanier continued as Editor and by then the name had once again undergone a change to 'The South African Architect, Engineer, and Surveyor's Journal'. Publication ceased in 1907.

The first official journal of the Federation appeared on the 3rd August 1904 under the style of 'The South African Master Builder's Federation Journal'. Although published as a private venture, it was soon the official organ as the early issues proclaim: 'This journal has by special resolution of the Federation at Port Elizabeth on May 17, 1905 been confirmed as sole official organ of the National Federation of Building

Trades Employes in South Africa.' The editor and originator of the magazine was a quicksilver character by name of Jas. T Brown, who, as we have seen, was General Secretary to the Federation. In 1910 he was granted a ten year extension of sole copyright and he was presented with a gold watch in commemoration.[86] At the 1911 Congress he received another gold watch, though the reasons for the second presentation were not recorded. Later JT Brown and the Federation parted company, evidently at loggerheads, and by the latter part of 1917 each journal contained a disclaimer stating that JT Brown had ceased to be Editor and was not authorised to take part in the management or control thereof. How long this magazine continued in existence is not certain. The Johannesburg Public Library has copies on file dating to September of 1923, but by then the South African Builder had come into existence and it was to replace the former journal as the official mouthpiece of the Federation.

JT Brown was not a man to let grass grow under his feet and he was soon engaged in another journalistic enterprise, one aimed at exactly the same market; for he now appears as editor of The South African Architect and Builder, a magazine that was to remain in publication long after his death

Section 7.

Section 7 - Notes

1. De Kiewet, op cit. p167.

2. MM 7 Mar 1905

3. MM 3 Apr 1905

4. The Buildings of Central Cape Town, p102.

5. S A Architect, Engineer, and Surveyors Journal, July 1907, p182.

6. MM 3 Apr 1905

7. MM 29 May 1905

8. There is some evidence to suggest that a Mr Suther served the Association as Secretary at this time but I have not been able to positively confirm this fact.

9. MM 2 Oct 1908

10. MM 29 Oct 1908

11. South Africa's Yesterdays, Cape Town, 1981, Readers Digest, p266.

12. MM 27 Apr 1909

13. MM 10 Oct 1910

14. MM 21 Feb 1912

15. MM 16 Oct 1912

16. MM 3 Nov 1914

17. MM 7 Apr 1916

18. MM 21 Jan 1920

19. The South African Builder, Oct 1954, p89.

20. MM 9 Jul 1906

21. MM 8 Mar 1906

22. Share Certificate No 32 and the original Memorandum of Agreement between the Industrial Life Assurance Co. and the two Associations are both on file in the MBA offices in Cape Town. A B Reid signed on behalf of the S A Manufacturers whilst J Z Drake signed for the Master Builders.

23. MM 21 Dec 1906

24. MM 11 Jun 1909

25. MM 1 Feb 1911

26. MM 7 Jul 1909

27. MM 1 Jan 1912

28. MM 27 Oct 1913

29. MM 5 Feb 1912

30. MM 21 May 1912

31. MM 21 Nov 1912

32. MM 3 Apr 1905

33. MM 4 Nov 1905

34. MM 2 Jul 1906

35. MM 22 Oct 1906

36. MM 25 Oct 1906

37. MM 4 Jul 1910

38. MM 17 Jan 1912

39. MM 18 Dec 1912

40. MM 31 Dec 1912

Section 7.

41. MM 3 Feb 1913
42. MM 3 Feb 1914
43. MM 3 Nov 1914
44. The Cape Argus, Thursday 6th August 1914.
45. MM 3 Nov 1914.
46. MM 17 Oct 1916
47. MM 11 Jan 1917
48. MM 29 Oct 1917
49. MM 4 Mar 1918
50. MM 25 Apr 1918
51. MM 20 Jun 1918
52. MM 27 Nov 1905
53. MM 22 Oct 1906
54. MM 29 Sep 1914
55. MM 22 Nov 1916
56. MM 29 Aug 1918
57. MM 25 Oct 1906
58. MM 8 Jul 1908
59. MM 24 Jun 1918
60. MM 21 Aug 1918
61. MM 12 Sep 1916
62. See Section 6, page 99
63. MM 6 Dec 1904
64. MM 19 Jun 1905
65. MM 10 Oct 1905
66. MM 16 Aug 1906
67. MM 22 Dec 1910
68. MM 5 Nov 1913
69. South African Builder, October 1954 p 89.
70. Ditto. Ditto.
71. MM 29 Sep 1914
72. MM 26 May 1903
73. MM 14 Jan 1904
74. MM 18 Apr 1904
75. MM 2 Jun 1905
76. South African Builder, October 1954 p.21.
77. Ditto. Ditto.
78. MM 6 Jan 1911
79. MM 29 Apr 1907
80. MM 3 May 1910
81. MM 17 Jan 1913
82. MM 17 Jan 1913
83. MM 22 Jun 1916
84. MM 22 May 1918
85. South African Builder, October 1954 p.63.
86. MM 9 Oct 1908

SECTION 8. YEARS OF CONSOLIDATION, 1919 TO 1937.

Introduction

Having weathered some twenty years of existence, the local MBA was firmly established, which was just as well as South Africa was about to enter its most troublous period with regard to labour relations. The years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War were characterised by continuous conflict over wages, strikes and serious economic depression and the Building Industry was obviously going to be deeply involved. A good deal of the legislation promulgated during this period involved labour and employment and a great deal more was proposed but not finally written into the statute book.

Worldwide, it was a period of restlessness and upheaval as the ripples from the first world conflict extended ever wider and wider through all of man's activities. At the start of this period the Russian Revolution came to an end, its figurehead Lenin dying shortly thereafter. Fascism was on the rise in Italy, with Mussolini making his swaggering entrance onto the world stage, whilst Germany began its astounding climb to economic recovery under the hypnotic influence of Hitler. Other characters who were to rise to prominence during the second world holocaust began to play significant roles in the affairs of their respective countries: Churchill became Colonial Secretary, Stalin assumed leadership in the USSR, and Franklin D Roosevelt initiated his New Deal. Closer to home, Louis Botha died and Smuts became Premier, only to fall from power later. Man's hopes in the future of aviation soared as Lindbergh blazed a lonely trail high across the Atlantic, whilst many people saw their financial security vanish with the Wall Street crash. Although the 1914 war must take the dubious honour

of being the most important single occurence in the recent history of mankind, the period under consideration contains any number of highly significant events.

The Secretary and the Offices.

In contrast to the variety and change that had occured over the twenty or so years of the Association's existence, with the arrival of WH Bennett they acquired a reliable and dependable Secretary. He remained at his post almost to the end of this period, handing in his resignation at the end of June 1937, which was 'considered in Committee and accepted with regret'[1] but no reason for his rather sudden departure is given in the minute books. He had served the Association for close on eighteen years and they immediately took steps to replace him by nominating a sub-committee to handle the whole matter. In July at a meeting, in fact a Special Emergency Meeting though the emergency had nothing to do with the resignation of the secretary being concerned with the Electrical Contractors, the sub-committee reported that it had advertised the post, had received replies from forty seven applicants, and had selected Mr AN Thompson 'an Attorney at present practicing in Wynberg'. He was appointed as Part-time Secretary at a salary of £20 per month, with the proviso that the MBA had first call on his services.[2] Both Mr Thompson's background and the large number of applicants for the post serve to indicate the difficult economic times then being experienced.

Sometime during this period the number of the staff of the Association was increased by the appointment of a 'typiste and stenographer', but I have not been able to determine exactly when this advance took place. The last of the handwritten minutes occurs in March

1920 and athough typewritten minutes had been been used before, from this time on, they are used exclusively. This could indicate the appointment of their own typist but nothing is recorded, which is unusual as it must have been quite an addition to the expenditure. In the first Annual Report, 1923, an expense is noted for 'typewriter requisites' and the following year Mr Bennett complains that their machine, which had been purchased secondhand was now in need of replacement and he was authorised to make a suitable purchase. However, the first time that a name can be put to the anonymous assistant is in 1925 when Miss Price is given a bonus of £10 at the end of the year. Whether she had been there from 1920 there is no way of telling from the records to hand, but in March 1929 she handed in her notice 'in view of her impending marriage' and the Committee generously gave her a wedding present of £25.[3] She was replaced by Miss Siddons who was to remain with the Association for seven years, handing in her resignation in December 1936, when the Committee wished her 'every happiness in her new sphere' as she, too, was leaving to get married.[4] Miss Johnson now took over as typiste and stenographer, starting with the new year, and she was still with the MBA when Mr Bennett resigned.

As far as the offices themselves were concerned the MBA remained at the address in Parker's Building although, by the time this period ended, it was becoming increasingly clear that they were no longer entirely suitable. As early as 1927 the committee had expressed the view that they should 'devise ways and means so as to enable us to have our own Building.'[5] Little actually transpired from this sentiment and it seems to have been somewhat premature since the Association was still small in numbers and relatively young. At the beginning of 1929 the Association took over an adjoining vacant office in Parker's Building,[6] presumably in

order to accommodate the increased staff, though by this time Miss Price had been with them for a number of years. In February 1934 the rent for the offices and Board Room utilised by the Association was reduced to £10 and it became increasingly obvious that a move would soon be necessary.

Wage Problems and the Business Cycle

With the labour situation in South Africa being in such a state of turmoil it was inevitable that the effects would be felt in the industry locally: it is arguable that this is the most significant period in the history of the industry from the labour aspect. In February 1919, strike action was started in the Transvaal and it dragged on for twelve weeks to the end of April. The country was then experiencing a post-war building boom and the men began to bring greater and greater pressure to bear on the employers, demanding a better deal both in the way of higher wages and in a reduction of working hours. Things became so intolerable in Cape Town that at the beginning of 1920 at a special meeting of the Association, Arthur Plint, the then President, questioned whether in fact the builders 'could carry on under the present circumstances.'[7] The frustration evident in this statement becomes understandable as one examines the circumstances. From the 1st October 1919 the hours of work per week had been reduced to forty four, although the weekly rate of pay remained unchanged from the earlier forty eight hour week. Agreement had also been reached with the men on a further wage increase up to a level some 50% above the pre-war rate but, even before this new agreement came into operation, the men had increased their demands.[8] That their claims were not insignificant can be judged from the following figures quoted at the 1920 Annual General Meeting: Painter from 1/6 to 2/-; Masons from 2/10½ to 4/-: Bricklayers (No 1) from 2/8 to 3/6d.

In an attempt to try and deal with a situation that was highly fluid, JZ Drake put forward a proposal at a meeting early in 1920 that encouraged all the members to tender only on ' a percentage basis'. It read:-

"That owing to the difficulties in estimating for work at the present time, this Association resolves that all Public Tendering be held in Abeyance until such time as the cost of Labour and Materials become more stable and that all work be done on the Percentage Basis."[9]

As a result of this motion, it was decided to appoint a three man sub-committee to review the whole situation and report back. They met at the home of AB Reid on Monday 1st March and drafted a firm resolution which incorporated a clause suggesting that no member of the MBA tender for any work exceeding £5,000 in value unless it be done on 'the percentage basis', this being the percentage added to 'actual cost' - a suggested 15%. [10]

By the middle of the year, a strike was threatening and a Joint Wage Board was brought into existence in an attempt to try and defuse the situation by negotiations between the men and the employers. A formal constitution was agreed upon for this new joint body[11] and finally a recommendation was produced which was duly considered by the MBA at a meeting on the 18th June. In some ways this was a momentous proposal in that, it recommended a rate of 3/6d per hour for the major trades also, a positive link between the wage rate and the figures that would be included by the Cost of Living Commission in its Report due for publication on the 30th June 1920, was suggested. The MBA had actually voted not to go beyond 3/4d per hour but at a subsequent meeting of the Joint Board the rate of 3/6d was confirmed which included an allowance of 2d to be set aside for a Holiday Fund. The MBA had to bow to the inevitable and accept the new

rate, but they did so only after Arthur Plint had threatened to resign since he maintained that rejection would constitute censure of himself as the MBA representative to the Joint Board.[12]

With the acceptance of the Joint Board's recommendation two features now commonly accepted were introduced: a wage scale, linked to the cost-of-living index, and an Annual Holiday scheme that included provision for the deduction of money from the pay packet to provide funds for the men over the holiday period. The arrangement came into operation from the 5th July 1920, the date of the Joint Board meeting at which it was adopted.[13] It was not without its opponents, even though many firms had adopted the practice of closing over the Christmas and New Year period in the years before the War but having it legislated and also being involved in the collection of money was different.

Now that the immediate problem of wages had been settled a movement rose around the country to attempt to bring about a standardisation of wages between the different centres. To this end a special meeting was held in Durban in July, which Mr Adams attended on behalf of the MBA,[14] followed by a conference in October: the venue this time was Bloemfontein.[15] This conference proved to be a stormy one with the various centres sharply divided over the issue of wages. The Transvaal wanted to increase the rate to 4/- with immediate effect, whilst Cape Town felt 3/6d to be the maximum the state of trade could stand. It was finally decided to allow the inland centres and Durban to increase their rates slightly, though not to the levels they desired, and to continue to work toward some form of standardisation. The conference did suggest, however, the transformation of the local Joint Boards into Wage Boards, which was

within the scope of the Wage Board Act. Then, in an obvious attempt to match the labour unions' method of calling for sympathetic strikes, it requested the MBA's to entrust the central Wage Board with the power to call a general lockout as, and when, it considered it necessary. Much discussion arose from this last request and a number of special meetings of the Association were called, though with poor response from the members in general, to consider this important matter. Finally, the MBA came to the decision 'not to concede the power to the Bloemfontein Wages Board to call a Lock Out at the present time' [16] They also expressed doubt as to the ability of the Board, as then constituted, to perform its function, suggesting the inclusion of representatives of other employer bodies.

By the middle of the following year the MBA voted to affiliate with the National Wages Board [17] just prior to its 1921 meeting to be held in Johannesburg. By this time the boom was well and truly over and the 'Unanimity of purpose' that was such a 'conspicuous feature of the whole proceedings' (the words are those of EJ Nason, the Cape Town representative) was to try and stimulate trade and it was found essential to propose a reduction in wages, the amount of the reduction to be in region of 15%.[18] The final proposal turned out to be a 'reduction of Wages of 4d or 10%, whichever is the less'.[19] The local MBA agreed to notify the labour unions of the termination of the existing agreement and the proposal that the new, lower rates be instituted as from the beginning of 1922. Problems arose, though, over the proposed reduction, particularly in view of the link between wages and the cost-of living index. The National Federation wrote to each of the MBA's in this connection, proposing a step by step reduction in the basic wage at six-monthly intervals.[20] In so far as Cape Town was concerned, it was recommended that the wage for the major

trades be reduced to 3/2d, but once again the members of the MBA differed from the national body in that they had unanimously agreed on a 6d reduction[21] Thus a confrontation situation once again developed between the local and national bodies, but the MBA had to give way and it decided to follow the lead of the national body.[22] At that same meeting a letter was read from Mr R Stuart, Secretary of the Federation of Labour Unions in Cape Town, conveying the information that his organisation had recommended acceptance of the ruling of the National Wage Board.

Despite this agreement, though the situation remained unsettled.According to Mr Nason 'The Wage Board question alters from day to day and it is very difficult to know what to do.'[23] There was a strike on in Johannesburg again, a dispute had broken out between the SAIF (South African Industrial Federation) and the BWIU (Building Workers' Industrial Union). The economic depression was continuing and the question of a further reduction in wages was debated at length. Finally, the Wages Board recommended a drop of 3d as from the 1st April 1922 [24]but the men refused to accept it, whilst the local MBA was suggesting that by the start of 1923 the rate should be down to 2/6d.[25] This would represent an astounding drop of almost 30% in just over two years. The debate over this vital matter continued for the balance of the year with an interim reduction coming into force on the 15th September and conflict mounting over the suggestion that further reductions would be necessary. Special meetings were held and the date for the introduction of the new, lower rate was moved from February to April of 1923, but the impasse continued until, by November, it could be reported that the National Wage Board had disintegrated.[26]

The capricious nature of the wage situation can clearly be seen in the events of the first half of 1923. The year started with the postponement of the proposed reduction in wages and, as late as 5th March, the matter was still being debated by the MBA Executive. Yet, exactly one month later, the Federation of Labour Unions wrote to the Association giving the stipulated three months advance notice of an increase in wages! They were demanding an extra 2d an hour and the minutes of the meeting at which this letter was received stated "that there appears to be no ground for agreeing to any increase at present, but that we were not in favour of any decrease until such time as the Cost of Living drops."[27] Negotiations with the Federation of Labour Unions continued and finally it was agreed locally, that the status quo remain undisturbed for a period of twelve months, during which time every means would be used to reach some mutually acceptable basic rate.[28] On this basis a threatened strike was averted but a suggestion that a 1d increase be granted for every five percent rise in the cost-of-living index was rejected by the newly reconstituted National Wage Board, on the grounds that such a decision was one that should be taken on a national basis and could not be agreed at local level.[29]

The National Board was reluctant at this stage to get too deeply involved in wage disputes as the country's legislature was about to consider a sweeping new law, the Industrial Conciliation Act. Pressure of work during the 1923 parliamentary session necessitated its being held over. Thus, the new year began on an uneasy note and soon erupted into open action as the men got tired of waiting for the enactment and implementation of the new law. The Cape Federation of Labour Unions gave notice of a demand for an increase of 12½% (and in certain catagories up to 68%) to come into effect in July,[30] which demand was laid before the

National Wages Board in April and promptly turned down. The local MBA entered into almost daily negotiations over this matter, keeping in close contact with the Federation's office in Johannesburg who, at first, did not seem to appreciate the seriousness of the situation developing in the Cape. Only when a very forthright telegram was sent, did any real action ensue. This telegram sent by the MBA read in part, 'Your letter 26th instant worse than useless stop notwithstanding your assumption the Industrial Council Act came into force on 8th instant...to put it clearly we are going to be requested in the next few days to forward to Government the names of our representatives on a Conciliation Board demanded by the Cape Federation of Labour Unions failing your cooperation we shall be forced to deal with this question wholly from this end stop...'[31] This still did not have quite the desired result so that MJ Adams was dispatched to Johannesburg in all haste and at last the Federation reacted positively by sending two members of the Executive (A Andresen & J Prentice) who, together with the General Secretary (JT Moore), arrived in Cape Town on the 22nd August 1924. A meeting was held with the Minister of Labour (Colonel Cresswell) at which the formation of a National Industrial Council was stressed, Andresen in particular being convinced that ' it would be the means of bringing peace to the building industry'. The basis for this statement was the existence of the National Wage Board which attempted to fix the wages for the whole Union 'on a scientific basis according to the Cost of Living and spending power of the sovereign in the different centres' and which the representatives felt was ' the best days work ever done in the building industry'.[32] Although there were no miraculous results from the efforts of the Federation's representatives, still the local Committee felt 'they had been a source of strength and help to us in our present trouble.' [33]

In June, the local Inspector of Labour, Mr Freestone, addressed a letter to the local MBA, confirming that a Conciliation Board had been established in response to the request from the Federation of Labour Unions. He enumerated seven trade unions that were affected:-

Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers

Cape Operative Bricklayers Society

Coloured Operative Bricklayers and Operatives Trade Union

South African Operative Mason's Society

Operative Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Sheetmetal Workers of the Cape Province

South African Electrical Trades Union

Cape Province Operative and Decorator's Union

This local Conciliation Board considered of sixteen members, eight from each side. The outcome of a series of six meetings of this Board was inevitable in that two motions were put to the Board and each ended in deadlock - eight voting for and eight against![34] A Mr. Richards was appointed Mediator, but again deadlock resulted and the men decided to resort to a ballot among their members to decide whether to strike or not. At this stage Colonel Cresswell stepped in with some suggestions to try and break the impasse [35]and as a consequence the MBA decided in favour of granting some concessions. They also requested the Minister to legalise these rates as applying to the Cape Peninsula. These proposals, in the words of Mr F Bakker, the President, 'were turned down with contempt' by the Unions and a strike was called to commence Tuesday 12th August 1924 at 5pm.[36]

Colonel Cresswell now sent a letter to the MBA in which he highlighted the grave economic crisis and the 'mass unemployment on an almost unprecedented scale' and suggested a compromise which would include the granting of a 2d per hour increase and the recognition of a paid holiday.[37] After deliberation the MBA made a further attempt at negotiation, but the strike continued so that even the Mayor of Cape Town offered to mediate.[38] The dispute was seen as a trial case since the new Industrial Conciliation Act had only just been promulgated and a good deal of interest was aroused countrywide. In the House of Assembly at the beginning of September Colonel Cresswell accused the MBA of a lack of diplomacy to which they replied with an open letter of refutation published in The Cape Times.[39] By this time some 1332 men (MBA figures including both artisans and labourers) were affected by the strike and even the Editor of The Cape Times decided to involve himself in the fracas by proposing a solution to the deadlock, i.e. that a National Industrial Council be formed during a period of grace of one month and once the agreement was reached it would then be back-dated by a similar period. The MBA thought highly of this solution, anticipating that it might be more acceptable to the men since it was proposed by an independent person who was well thought of in the community. It was formally put to the Federation of Labour and at the same time a news release containing the proposal was distributed to the Press.[40]

There was an immediate response from the Labour Unions for their letter of reply bears the same date as that sent by the MBA, showing that both sides were now keen to reach a settlement. A meeting was requested by the Labour Unions to try and clarify the proposed terms and a time was set for the following day (the 9th September). The men now expressed their

willingness to return to work immediately at an increase of 2d per hour, or 'some increase',However, the MBA held out for the formation of a National Industrial Council, something the men felt to be impossible within a reasonable period of time. The discussion 'lasted all day and at 4.30 pm the President closed the meeting as there did not seem any possibility of coming to a satisfactory agreement.'[41] Further proposals were made by the MBA and published in the newspapers on the 11th but these were rejected by the men, who then came back with a counter proposal. And so things continued for a while until finally, on the 23rd September, Mr RL Stuart, representing the Labour Unions, and Mr F Bakker, on behalf of the MBA, signed a copy of the MBA's proposal to indicate acceptance in principle of the agreement. The terms of the proposal were that the men return to work at once and that negotiations over the formation of a National Industrial Council commence immediately and be completed within six months, failing which an Arbitrator would be appointed. The question of backdating any agreement was left open at that stage. [42] The strike had lasted exactly six weeks.

On the 24th October the Government Gazette came out legalising wages in the Building Industry, setting them at levels equal to those in force before the strike and establishing them as being legally enforcable as from 1st December. It did not prove easy for some of the employers to adjust their thinking on this matter of wages; many saw the legal wage as the top of a scale that should only be paid to top class artisans, whilst others who did not meet up to this high standard should be paid proportionately less. At a somewhat stormy meeting held on the 4th December, a number of MBA members admitted to paying below the rate, whilst others were appalled by this revelation. Mr Hedden came out with the

statement that 'no man had the right to sit round this table and pay less than the standard rate of pay. As men of honour we should adhere to the working rules...'

From the legalisation of wages on the 1st December 1924, a period of six months was allowed under the agreement for the formation of a National Industrial Council and, by the 21st January, intimation was received from the Labour Department that a 'Conference of Delegates' was to be held in Johannesburg on the 9th February; this was later postponed to the 23rd March.[43] At this meeting a National Industrial Council was in fact formed, with a formal constitution, drawn up and circulated for local acceptance, that made provision for District Committees. The matter of an increase in the wage rate was considered at length and in the end it was agreed to grant the lower paid trades an increase of 2d per hour, a move that was strenuously opposed by the Cape Town representatives, Messrs Bakker and Adams.[44] The revised wage rates for each region were then published in the newspapers with a warning to defaulters that failure to comply would make offenders liable to a fine of £20, 'with an additional £5 for every day on which the default continued after conviction.' Provision was also made in the wage rate for a deduction for Industrial Council funds and, in addition, the working week was set at 44 hours.

Problems arose however with the local MBA since the Industrial Council agreement neglected to specifically include provision for the 'Cape Peninsula Building Trades Joint Board and Holiday Scheme.' At a meeting held on the 9th June, the members voted on whether or not to continue with these two provisions By a narrow margin they decided to oppose the introduction of a National Holiday Scheme and voted in favour of the

liquidation of the local Joint Board.[45] The National Federation were much disturbed by this short sighted attitude, as were the members of the Federation of Labour Unions who, in a letter, made a valid point in stating '...both the Holiday Scheme and Joint Board are highly valued by members of this Federation...and I can assure you that the holiday is appreciated more than the members of your Association evidently realise.'[46] Perhaps, flushed by the successful outcome of the recent strike, the employers were beginning to act as if the wishes and desires of the men could be disregarded with impunity.

The National Industrial Council met in Cape Town in July 1925 and on the 20th, the day before the meeting, the national delegation met with the local Executive Committee and some strong words were exchanged. Mr PJ Hittinger (the Transvaal representative) was particularly outspoken in his criticism of the way the local Association had chosen to ignore the National Council, with regard to the Joint Board and the Holiday Scheme. Subsequent to the meeting of the NIC, the Joint Board was discontinued and replaced by a Local Committee of the NIC, as outlined in the Act of 1924. The Holiday Scheme was however a more ticklish issue and it was agreed that a ballot would be held in which both the men and employers could express their views. Predictably, the men voted heavily in favour of a holiday whilst the other ballot revealed that exactly the opposite sentiment was prevalent among the employers. This matter was partially resolved by the Association in passing a resolution that stated that it had no objection to member firms continuing the practice of an annual holiday on a voluntary basis.[47] But events were moving in favour of the more enlightened members for by June of 1926 the Association had to inform the NIC that it had been decided 'that the Annual Holiday in the Cape Area commence at 12 noon on

the 24th December each year and terminates 14 days later and that the first contribution to be made by Employees should take place immediately after the notice appears in the Gazette.'[48]

Among the Association's members who stood out as men of vision and compassion at this time, was MJ Adams. He went on record early in this period of dissent with an appeal to both Employer and Employee to behave with feeling and understanding toward each others' problems. He stated at a meeting of the Conciliation Board, shortly after the end of the strike, that the whole episode had been a source of pain to him and that he had felt for a long time that disputes and dissensions should be eliminated. He had made a careful study of the question of strikes and had come to the conclusion that even Employers had much to learn in the matter of employment and wages. He felt that the time had arrived when it should be understood that it takes both Employer and Employee to run the industry.[49] Characteristically he was an outspoken supporter of the Holiday Scheme and, at one stage, waged a one man campaign in its favour, stating that the members of the Association 'had done a grave injustice to the Employees in turning down the Annual Holiday' and informed them that he 'would do all in his power to re-establish...' it.[50] The Association were forced to notify the National Federation that they were in fact against the Holiday Scheme and that the motion standing on the Agenda for the forthcoming NIC meeting (held in Pretoria 6 April 1926) was in Mr Adams' name and did not emanate from them. To me, it is fitting that the Community Hall in Brooklyn is called The Martin Adams Hall and I recall this fine gentleman each time I pass it.

So a particularly torrid period in the history of the Cape Association came to an end and, with trade continuing to be brisk and the National Council functioning well, a few years of comparative peace descended on the Industry. There were wage demands and subsequent adjustments and the NIC's modus operandi was amended, but things went reasonably well until the significant year of 1932.

Apart from the existence of a Local Committee of the National Industrial Council, which was able to serve as a common meeting point for employers and the men, so that problems over wages could be at least given an airing before confrontation developed there was a more vital factor than this contributed to a peaceful period in the realm of labour relations - the building industry was experiencing a minor boom. From the formation of the NIC, for the next five or six years, the Annual Reports mention that trade 'is brisk', is 'very active', or is 'sound' and there is nothing like a full order book and continual employment to keep the peace. In the Annual Report for the year 1931, the Committee make the statement 'that during this period there has been an entire absence of any dispute or strike. It is noteworthy that since the National Industrial Council for the Building Industry came into being there has not been a single strike throughout the country.'[51] However things were not as rosy as that statement might suggest if taken in isolation; the report does go on to appeal for full support for the Local Committee of the NIC,and with good reason, for there was quite a lot of feeling being manifested against the rulings of the NIC. There was also local feeling against the Secretary, Mr McWilliams, who seems to have been somewhat officious in the execution of his duties. At a meeting on the 10 December 1930, Mr Hunter called for a motion of 'No Confidence', asking such questions as 'How many hours per

week did the Secretary spend having tea?' It became a matter for discussion at the Congress held at Port Elizabeth that year and, at a General Meeting of the local MBA in October, the subject led to a 'long and very interesting' debate. One of the most interesting facts that came out in the discussion was that the National Agreement had been a complete failure in Port Elizabeth and that several of the other Associations were threatening to withdraw from the Federation unless some change took place soon.[52] So serious had the matter become, that the Federation called a special meeting in Bloemfontein on 1 March 1932 in order to try and resolve the crisis. Cape Town was well represented at that meeting, with six members under the leadership of Mr Hedden making the trip.After lengthy discussions, it was agreed to try and retain the NIC but 'that drastic amendments be made to the present agreement to meet the wishes of the various Associations.'[53] However, after two days of negotiation at its meeting in June, the NIC failed to resolve the thorny problem of the new wage agreement: the men maintained that the old Agreement was up for alteration and that there was no question of a new agreement being discussed, which meant that wages should remain unaltered. So basically, on a point of order, the NIC foundered and a resolution was adopted in which it was suggested to the Secretary for Labour, Mr Ivan Walker, that 'immediate steps be taken to have the name of the Council removed from the register;'[54] In the end, the matter of wages was taken before an Arbitrator, Mr James Young, ex-Magistrate of Johannesburg, who delivered his award on 25 August in which the wages were not reduced to the level anticipated; the agreement was to remain in force for eight months. Truly, it could be said, in the words of the 1932 Annual Report, that 'the year under review had been most variable and starting with high hopes of increased prosperity the Building Industry closed with a note of grave anxiety.'[55]

Not that the succeeding years were to prove any easier, for the world was in the grip of a grave economic crisis. 1933 proved to be a difficult one, although hopes once again were being entertained of an emergence from economic gloom. These hopes were to prove futile. Things were in fact so tight, that the Executive Committee of the National Federation called for quotations for the printing of a poster (size 20" by 12½") which was to be displayed prominently on the members' jobs, it read as follows:-

"BUILD NOW" (in red)

Building will relieve unemployment.

South Africa can build her way back to prosperity

Proceed with your Plans.

"BUILD NOW" (in red) [56]

After Mr Young's award, which was to remain valid until 17 April 1933, a Local Industrial Council was formed to see the local industry through this interim period. It consisted of five representatives from each side with AT Babbs, the well known Quantity Surveyor and WJ Delbridge, an equally renowned architect as Co-Chairmen. This committee finally became the Industrial Council for the Building Industry for the Cape Area on the 26 February 1934, with a mandate that extended for twelve months.[57] Mr D McWilliams was appointed the Chief Agent for the local Council and WH Bennett acted as Secretary.[58] By the end of 1934 this Council was considering raising wages to cope with the cost of living by at least 2d an hour for artisans; some members were pushing for an increase for the unskilled workers as well, because their wage stood at 7½d per hour. This latter suggestion was not, however, accepted by the majority; they were perhaps to regret their shortsightedness, for it is clear from the minutes

of the period that wages for unskilled workers were becoming a major talking point in Parliament. Anyway, the final result was that, although the Local Industrial Council agreed on the wage rates to be included in the agreement, the Minister of Labour refused to ratify them until the rate for unskilled labour was both increased and laid down in the agreement with all the force of law that that would imply. Although a deputation attended upon the Minister, he steadfastly refused to Gazette the agreement until the Council made good this deficiency. Most of the members of the Association were horrified at what they saw as an interference in the due process of legislation, stating that the Minister was going beyond his authority by resorting to what was in fact a form of blackmail. Mr Plint, however was elated by the Minister's action and wrote to the President of the MBA 'I wish to express my pleasure that the Minister has refused to sign the very unjust agreement your Local Council passed...'[59] Mr F Bakker shared Mr Plint's sentiments, even being reported in The Cape Times as saying 'that the Agreement as passed was a disgrace to the Trade.' The Cape Town Association was not the only one affected by the Minister's rather highhanded decision, since it was reported at that time that only Pretoria and the Witwatersrand had an agreement that was functioning, since the Minister refused to have the others gazetted; those in the Natal area were refused on the grounds that he was not satisfied with 'the ratio as laid down for civilised to uncivilised unskilled labour.'[60] The final outcome was that the National Federation, acting on behalf of the local MBA's, finally bowed to the Minister's wishes. It must not be forgotten here that this was a period when the problem of 'poor whites' was a very serious matter that was giving the Government a good deal of trouble. The suggestion was even made by the Minister of Labour in an interview with representatives from the Federation that the Government would be prepared

to subsidise a builder who employed white unskilled labour to the tune of the difference between 8d and 1/- per hour, the respective rates of pay.[61] It was reported by Mr Adams that the Contractor then busy with the foundations of the new Groote Schuur hospital, was employing only white unskilled labour and it did not appear to be any hardship!

So, for the balance of this period the control of the industry, in the matter of wages and working conditions, rested in the Local Industrial Council under the able co-chairmanship of Messrs Babbs and Delbridge. The final agreement that concerns us now was the one that came into operation on the 28 June 1937, which it was intended would remain in force for two years. According to the agreement, wages for artisans were raised, whilst those for unskilled labour remained unchanged, since 'the rate paid in this Area was the highest in the Union.'[62] Once again the Minister exercised his authority and refused to gazette it for a period longer than one year.[63] Surprisingly enough, as the period draws to a close, we find the local Association voting heavily in favour of the re-constitution of a National Industrial Council, in spite of a review of the history of the previous body put forward by Mr Tennant. There was some apprehension expressed by the members as to the effect that the new 1937 Industrial Conciliation Act, would have on the industry.However, apart from tightening up on the keeping of records and the display of notices on site, together with a more accurate definition of the classes of business that fell within the terms of the Act, it was seen as a useful development of the 1924 Act which was thereby abrogated. Conditions generally were quiet, with no signs of industrial unrest, apart from one isolated incident in which the plasterers of one firm engaged in temporary strike action against their employer, who agreed to tow the line, so that the strike was of short duration. The vexed question of a rate of pay for unskilled labour was still taxing the minds of the authorities but at this stage no clear answer could be seen.

The Cape Peninsula Building Employers Alliance.

Early in 1925 another body claiming to represent employers in the building trade is mentioned. It was known as the Cape Peninsula Building Trade Employers' Alliance and when it actually came into existence is not certain. It was apparently an association formed among the smaller building contractors, possibly mainly house builders, and some of the members had at one time been members of the MBA. In all probability it was formed during 1924 but, since the Association was deeply involved in the pressing labour problems then besetting the local industry, its formation passed unrecorded in the minutes. However, in January of 1925 the Alliance wrote a letter to the National Federation requesting affiliation to that body.[64] A copy of this letter, together with one addressed to the Minister of Labour requesting changes to the Conciliation Board agreement, was sent to the local MBA by the Federation and a protracted dialogue developed between the two employer bodies.

The MBA wrote to the National Federation strenuously opposing any move of this other association in gaining affiliation and, at the same time, addressed a letter to the other body suggesting a meeting. A special meeting was arranged for the 11 March[65] which was attended by ten MBA members and eleven of the Alliance and the discussion centred around the possiblity of the Alliance beng disbanded and its members joining the MBA. Their spokesman, Mr Brown, maintained that most of the members felt they were considered as outsiders by the MBA, since it was believed that the smaller builder was at a disadvantage within the ranks of the Association. Since the deputation from the Alliance did not have a mandate from their members, no positive outcome to this preliminary meeting could be expected, but Mr Brown stated that they had been very favourably impressed with the discussion and they had had one or two misunderstandings sorted out.

As a consequence of that meeting a letter was written by the Alliance setting out conditions they felt should be met before an amalgamation could take place. Basically, what was requested was the formation of a completely new body from the two existing organisations, complete with a fifty-fifty representation on the executive and a new name.[66] These proposals were put to the Association's members at a general meeting and, naturally enough, were turned down. In fact a resolution, passed unanimously, stated that no good purpose could be served by continuing the negotiations. This was hardly surprising since the MBA was not only the senior body in age and numbers, but also wielded far more influence in the building world, than did the new Alliance. The membership of the MBA stood at the time at ninety and included all the major building firms and sub-contractors in the Peninsula, whilst the number of members mentioned by the Alliance was sixty-three, although this was a selective membership list, as they had 'deleted all names we cannot recommend.'[67] But the Alliance was obviously in difficulties, for a letter dated 29 July from S Moffat, the Secretary, requested the Association to set a date when their members could be received 'en bloc' and stated that 'A final wind up meeting of the Alliance is called for August 6th...' The reply from the MBA pointed out that they felt it essential that a screening procedure be adopted so that only 'Bona Fide Builders and Contractors and Sub-Contractors' would be admitted.

Negotiations between the two organisations seemed about to founder and at this point PJ Hittinger, then President of the National Federation, decided to intervene by writing a letter to the MBA suggesting that, for the sake of unity, they give an undertaking that 'all the Alliance members proposed and seconded 'en bloc' will be admitted'.[68] The MBA did not take

kindly to this interference and pointed out to Mr Hittinger that they would only accept an indicated sixty six new members if they could enquire into the status of each individual applicant and then accept them in terms of the constitution.[69] Finally, a sub-committee of the MBA consisting of F Bakker and A Briggs met with the President of the Alliance and agreed that a revised list of members would be submitted and put before the Association's members at the next General Meeting, at which time they would then be proposed and seconded 'en bloc'.[70] The revised list was discussed at a committee meeeting and it was then decided to call a Special Meeting for the 2 February and place the whole matter before the membership. This was duly done and, although only fourteen members of the Association were present, all forty-three names on the Alliance's list were duly declared elected members. It is interesting to note that WJ Brown, the spokesman for the Alliance at the initial meeting, had his name crossed off the list and was not accepted by the MBA. Of the eleven members at that preliminary meeting, nine now became members of the Association and among the list of names were some that will still be familiar to members of the local building world: D Burchell, H Church, P Egerer, and J McDonald (Electrician). Thus, the only organisation to rival the MBA in its history since 1900 finally disappeared from the scene and the membership of the Association took a sharp jump upwards. One last mention of the Alliance occurs in the minutes when it is pointed out that 'to date only six members of the Alliance have sent in their subscriptions for the current year.'[71]

Relationships with Sub-Contractors

As has been indicated earlier, there is a difference of opinion as to the role of the sub-contractor in the Association, but to me the evidence from the Minute Books is clear. The Association, re-formed in

1900, made no provision for other than General Building Contractors but this was expanded by 1905 to include Sub-Trade Specialists, only to change again in 1911 with the adjustments that were made to the rules of the National Federation. From the existing records of the Association it is clear that Sub-Contractors were still excluded from membership at the beginning of this period, although overtures were being made with regard to incorporation.

In March of 1920 MJ Adams voiced his feelings when he said during a meeting that he 'would like to see all sub-contractors join the Association',[72] which sentiment was echoed by Arthur Plint in the Master Builder's Federation Journal for the same month.[73] It was not until November though, that a definite proposal in this regard was made and it took the form of a resolution proposed by Adams and seconded by Plint. It read, in part, 'that anything to the contrary existing in our rules, regulations, constitution, or elsewhere be hereby rescinded (sic) and that a special committee of three members be appointed immediately...' A comment made by Mr Tennant at that meeting confirms the fact that sub-contractors had not recently been members of the Association, as the article in the S A Builder maintains, for he recalled the poor treatment that had been meted out 'some years ago when sub-contractors had belonged to this Association'. In February of 1921, the resolution took definite shape when a special sub-committee was appointed (of five members, under the Chairmanship of EJ Nason) to 'find ways and means of sub-contractors joining this Association'.[74] A special meeting was held with representatives of three specific sub-trades (Electricians, Plumbers, and Painters) on the 25 May but little positive progress was made. Mr Bird, of the Electrical Contractors' Association doubted that the members of his organization,

which was operating well, would ever link up with the MBA. (Evidence would suggest that this organization The Cape Town & District Electrical Contractors' Association was formed in 1905 at the time that the MBA reverted to its original function of caring only for Contractors. They certainly met in the Oddfellows Hall in January of that year and it was reported that 'nearly all the leading firms of Cape Town have joined'.) The other trade representatives also expressed their doubts; the Plumbers representatives asked what would happen to the Coloured members on their roll, since neither the Electricians nor the Painters would admit Coloured members. Mr Nason pointed out though, that they were able to become full members of the Joint Board, so that he could not foresee any valid objection being sustained. Mr Tennant expressed the view that the Painters would also be wary of joining the MBA since 'they all remembered how they were treated by the M.B.A in the past.'[75]

Nevertheless the intiative, once taken, was continued and in July representatives of the same three trades were present at a meeting when they were given the opportunity to air their grievances. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the three Sub-Trade Associations would link up with the Association for a trial period of twelve months without disbanding their own organisational structure, and subject to agreement being reached as to the subscription they would be required to pay. Nason could thus report back to the MBA membership on the 27 July that negotiations had been successfully concluded with the three trades mentioned. In addition the Timber Merchants and Joinery Manufacturers had agreed to join, provided that various minor changes were made to the constitution. The plasterer's, too, had expressed interest in joining but this time on an individual basis, as they had no association of their own. The constitution of the

MBA was changed in accordance with the wider sphere of interest and it was agreed that a change of name would be appropriate. Thus on the 29 August 1921 it was moved by Mr Reid and seconded by Mr Weir that 'the new Title be The Cape Peninsula Building and Allied Trades Association'. The revised Constitution and the Articles of Association (headed 'Founded 1900 - Revised 1921') was read to the meeting and confirmed as accepted. The name was once again changed by a resolution taken at a meeting on 28 May 1928, when the local MBA became 'The Master Builders and Allied Trade Association (Cape Peninsula).

The twelve month period of probation passed without serious incident until, on the 22 January 1923, the period was extended by another year. However, by October it was found essential to call a special meeting in order to consider the resignation of the Electrical Contractors Association. At that meeting a letter from the ECA was read stating that on the 20 September at a special General Meeting 'the majority of this Association being unwilling, and refusing to carry out the obligations attaching to Affiliation to the Master Builders Association: the Association has no alternative but to immediately sever its connection'[76] It was then proposed by the MBA that a working sub-committee be appointed to investigate their greivances, but by November they had to report that they 'had done all that was possible in the matter and all that we can now do is to accept the resignation.'[77] Other sub-trades were also not particularly happy and another special meeting was arranged for them to discuss their grievances at the beginning of 1924. The main problem seemed to revolve around MBA members doing their own painting rather than making use of the Painter members. For a time these problems seemed to settle down for little is recorded but it may be that the serious labour unrest

then being experienced drove other problems into the background. Negotiations were still being held with the ECA for, at a special meeting held in June, they expressed their willingness to rejoin 'as soon as negotiations for a proper Allied Trades Agreement are concluded.'[78] By October the President of the MBA, F Bakker, could report that seven recommendations aimed at tightening up ambiguous areas of the constitution to prevent abuses with regard to the allied trades were to be introduced.[79]

The ECA remained active for a while but most of their members were also members of the MBA so that gradually, particularly with the economic difficulties facing the country, most members found it hard to pay two sets of subscriptions and elected to remain with the Association. A letter was received from the ECA in July 1935 requesting the MBA to appoint a representative for the Electricians Licensing Board from among their Electrical Engineer members, since the ECA had now 'ceased functioning'. But by the middle of 1937 there was talk of resuscitating the ECA for the Electrical members wrote to the Committee on the 28 June stating that they felt their interests were not being properly catered for since the ECA became defunct and requesting the formation of separate Electrical Section within the Association. This proposal was accepted and a deputation of the Electrical members attended an Emergency Meeting on the 22nd July when various requests were discussed including separate meetings, direct representation on the Executive, and nominated members to serve on each of the committees of the MBA. JN Bird, then President and himself an Electrical Contractor, informed them that the MBA had no objection to a separate section but would not recognise an independent Association.

There had also been continual negotiations with the Merchants and Building Suppliers, often over the thorny question of a discount for MBA members and on the 7 April 1931 a number of them were elected as members, including George Findlay and Bull, Sellar & McIntyre, with Sam Newman joining shortly thereafter. The number of Building Merchants listed in the Annual Report jumped from six in 1930 to fifteen in 1931 and a Builders & Merchants Committee of the MBA was formed in that year for, before then, in the words of Mr Adams, 'we did not understand their difficulties and made no attempt to assist them in any way'.

Relationships with the Professions

The relationships between the members of the MBA as representatives of the building industry and the associated professions varied from cordial to antagonistic and a number of issues arose that strained them almost to breaking point. However it does seem that at this period the building industry was held in quite high esteem by the members of the general public partly due to the fact, no doubt, that a number of well known builders were prominent in civic affairs. AB Reid was Mayor of Cape Town at this time,[80] MJ Adams was a noted philanthropist and protagonist for the poorer classes,[81] whilst JR Hedden's £150 cottage, to be discussed more fully later, put the building industry in the forefront of one of the major social issues of the day. All of which served to imbue the industry with an aura of respectability that, to some degree, it has lost since.

When considering the Quantity Surveying profession of the day one name stands out above all others, that of AT Babbs a man of undoubted ability and clearsighted vision. His name occurs time and again in the records of the MBA as adviser, arbitrator, expert witness, or just as a speaker on the significant building issues then under discussion.[82] He was a natural choice for the Quantity Surveying representative on the Joint Practice Committee, a body formed among the professions and industry members that was the most important development in inter-disciplinary relations of the period. Interestingly enough it appears that the formation of such a body gained momentum from the long and acrimonious dispute that developed between the MBA and the Cape Institute of Architects over the use of the Official Tender Envelope.

The use of a special envelope to distinguish tenders submitted by members of the various MBA's from non-members had been suggested by the National Federation for some time but it was a result of a resolution taken at the East London Congress in March 1924 that matters began to come to a head. A letter from the Secretary of the National Federation dated 9 April 1924, called attention to some of the decisions taken at that Congress and with regard to the Tender Envelope stated,

> 'I enclose for your information and guidance a copy of the present envelope used in the larger Centres, where an arrangement with the Architects is capable of being carried out successfully. If it is possible to do similarly by agreement with the Architects in your Centre, the practice will be found greatly to the advantage both to your members and the Architects concerned.'[83]

The envelope was seen as a means of identifying members and non-members at the time of the opening of tenders, and since members were prohibited from

tendering in direct competition with non-members of allowing some action to be taken immediately an infringement was noted. The envelope was also seen as 'a means of propaganda', using this word in the sense of advertising rather than with the connotations it presently enjoys. The local MBA fell in with this request and notified all their members accordingly, although they found it more economical to have the envelopes printed locally than to obtain their supply from the Federation.

With the balance of 1924 consumed with the labour dispute little was done about the envelope until the new year. It was then that a Sub-Committee of the MBA met with the 'President and Vice President of the Architects' Association' who expressed appreciation for the views of the MBA but witheld any positive comment, agreeing to a joint meeting at some future date.[84] This meeting does not appear to have taken place but interviews were held by the Executive Committee of the MBA with individual architects, normally in connection with specific contracts. A case in point involved Mr Forsyth of Forsyth and Parker and the problems they had in connection with the tenders for the new building for The Cape Times.[85] Finally at a General Meeting in 1926 it was officially resolved that all members would immediately adopt the use of the official envelope for all tenders over the value of £1500.[86] It was also agreed to send representatives to two firms of Quantity Surveyors, Babbs & Labdon and R S Shepherd (could it be that at this time they were the only two firms in practice in Cape Town?) to inform them of the new procedure in tendering and to give them samples of the envelope. The President reported that a meeting between the MBA and the Cape Institute of Architects had taken place and had been 'in every way a great success and he was of the opinion that a better understanding had been the outcome of the meeting'.[87] Nothing

happened for a while. The next meeting between the MBA and the Architects was a special meeting attended by Messrs Delbridge and Perry to arrange a joint social function between architects and builders.[88] The function was enjoyable as a social occasion but not successful as a means of promoting friendly relationships as only about six architects availed themselves of the opportunity to meet the builders on a social level, in fact the MBA paid for the whole function themselves.[89] Problems were beginning to develop and one sub-contractor reported that he had submitted a tender for a job in one of the official envelopes and had been informed by Mr Fallon, the architect, that if there had been any other tenderers his envelope would not have been opened.[90]

In 1927 the problem began to heat up. Perry & Brownlee wrote to the MBA in strong terms taking exception to the letter they had received in regard to their opening of tenders of both members and non-members.[91] The architects were beginning to believe that the MBA had formed 'a ring', in Mr Hedden's words when he proposed at a meeting in May that the Association reconsider the use of the envelope.[92] He made this proposal again in October and gained some support from other members for the architects were opening both plain and official envelopes with impunity. The envelope had been introduced to bring about fair competition and some of the members felt this had now been achieved so that the use of the Full Official Envelope could be abolished. In the end, the matter was referred to the Executive Committee.[93] However before they could act matters took another turn, Reid, Delbridge, & Fallon called for tenders for the 'Original Crown Hotel' and included in the Bill of Quantities was a clause that stated that tenders had to be submitted in the envelope provided and no other envelope would be considered. The MBA wrote to the architects in this connection

and also to the clients, Messrs Lennon Ltd. In turn they received an irate letter from the architects who took 'great exception to our action in communicating with their clients and consider it constitutes a piece of officious impertinence which is without parallel in their professional experience.' The Institute of Architects now took the matter up and informed the MBA that they had circularised their members to ignore the endorsement on the Official Envelope as it tended to restrict open tendering. The Association however stood firm, though it took 'a protracted debate' to come to agreement but in the end they resolved to continue the practice and to refuse to tender in competition with non-members and that those members who had taken Bills of Quantities for the 'Original Crown Hotel' job would return them unpriced. A joint meeting was now held under the Chairmanship of Mr Duncan Baxter who stated that his chief qualification for the job was that he knew nothing whatsoever about the subject to be discussed.[94] The meeting accomplished nothing except to allow for an exchange of views with the builders putting forward their case that it was unfair for them to tender in competition with non-members since MBA members were the only ones who put anything back into the industry in the form of training, which fact the architects readily acknowledged. However in their opinion with the new Industrial Conciliation Act in force there was no need for this form of restriction. In the end the matter was referred to the respective Executive Committees for their decision but it was anticipated that the final word would come from the National Council, then in process of formation and which would include members from both professions who would be instructed to take the matter up with the National Federation directly. In the meantime the MBA Executive communicated with the Federation and ascertained that the envelope was in use in Pretoria, East London, Durban, Witwatersrand and Bloemfontein without arousing any serious opposition.[95]

January 1928 saw another letter from the Cape Institute of Architects on the matter but 'as it disclosed no new facts' the matter was left over for consideration at Congress. A meeting was held between the 'architects and the National Federation' in Johannesburg and the outcome was such that the local MBA were encouraged to continue to support the use of the envelope in every way.[96] In fact the Federation felt so strongly on this matter that it was in this connection that it empowered the local Associations to impose a fine, not exceeding £50, on any member who disregarded the rules of the Association.[97] But it seems that no serious action was taken and at a meeting in November 1929 a small sub-committee was formed to once again enforce the use of the full envelope and to inform the architects that under no circumstances would members tender in open competition with non members.[98] The tender for the new Barclays Bank Building in Adderley Street was seen as a touchstone in the issue and the MBA spoke to both the Architects and the Quantity Surveyors telling them that the MBA intended to strictly enforce their resolution. A circular was sent to all the MBA members enlisting their support for the strict enforcement of the envelope and all but fourteen of the members signed the form in agreement with the Committee's stand.[99] In the end though it seems that only members of the MBA tendered for the job so that the expected confrontation did not arise. In the light of the fact that the lowest tenderer was Mr Hoheisen, who was soon to become a key figure in the matter, it seems unlikely that the issue would have been resolved anyway.

It was at this stage that a joint committee between the two bodies was proposed. Mr Adams had in fact suggested the establishment of a Vigilance Committee consisting of Builders, Architects and Quantity Surveyors in March 1929[100] and this proposal was positively put forward to the Architects in January of 1930 in a letter from the MBA. In reply the architects agreed to a preliminary meeting but included the request;

'we ask you to be good enough eliminate (sic) from the proceedings any reference to the Endorsed Tender Envelope system - a subject which it is thought should not be re-opened, as the view of your Association and of this Institute upon the question are entirely out of harmony.'[101]

The meeting was held on the 20 March in the MBA Board Room and among eight items on the Agenda (which did not include the envelope) was the formation of a Vigilance Committee and all felt that the establishment of such a body would be 'a very necessary and useful attainment.' It was proposed that the purpose of the new body would be to 'watch over all matters pertaining to the Industry'. It does seem strange that both parties pushed ahead with the formation of the proposed committee when they could not even discuss the most pressing problem facing the local industry at the time! However they did agree on a number of other issues, such as the name for the body viz 'The Joint Practice Committee' and the composition which was to be 'two Architects, one Quantity Surveyor, and two Builders, with power to Co-opt.'[102] The names of the members attending that preliminary meeting might bear repeating they were:

Representing the Institute of Architects

WA Ritchie-Fallon, W Hawke, LA Elsworth, HJ Brownlee, & Major Milne Duncan(Secretary)

Representing Quantity Surveyors

AT Babbs

Representing the MBA

JR Hedden, JN Bird, F Bakker, MJ Adams, EJ Forster, and WH Bennett(Secretary)

Eventually, in May, WJ Delbridge and Capt LA Elsworth were appointed as representatives for the Cape Institute of Architects whilst JN Bird and MJ

Adams were to represent the MBA.[103] These men, together with AT Babbs, then formed the first Joint Practice Committee in the whole of the country and it became an arrangement that was to work very successfully in reducing tension between the participating parties on contentious issues as well as making recommendations regarding items of policy affecting the whole industry.

The matter of the Tender Envelope remained unsettled. In April 1929, a letter was addressed by the MBA to Forsyth & Parker who had once again called for tenders from both members and non-members, this time for the new factory for Bally Shoe Company. The letter was intended to explain again the advantages of the envelope and to dispel from their minds that it was an attempt to interfere with the competitive tendering system.[104] They received a curt acknowledgement and allowed the matter to drop. Another firm that continually seemed to ignore the MBA's request was that of Reid, Delbridge, & Fallon but it must be realised that architects then were in a difficult position having received a direct instruction from their Institute to ignore the MBA's request and the endorsement on the Tender Envelope that such tenders should not be opened in competition with tenders from non-members. Many of the members of the MBA were getting tired of this continual bickering and were wanting to force the position but they were prevailed upon to let their representatives bring the matter before the Joint Practice Committee.[105] However the JPC refused to discuss the issue and the Association embarked on another attempt to get their position recognised.

A letter was sent to the CIA re-affirming the use of the envelope and setting out the 'following reasons why members should continue the use of the Federated Official Tender Envelope:-

1. To bring about equitable conditions of tendering, and the performing of good work.
2. To consolidate the Association so as to give effect to the rules and regulations affecting Builders, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, also Artisans and Labourers all persons concerned in building operations.
3. To provide means for the training and educating of apprentices.
4. To carry on the work of the National Industrial Council, which cannot be legally successfully accomplished without the complete organization of the Builders.
5. To be able to deal with our members who neglect our rules, such as tendering without quantities for work over the stipulated amount, viz:- £1500(Fifteen hundred pounds).
6. To give assistance to the Builders' Federation in carrying out reforms for the betterment of the Industry.
7. To assist the Architects' Institute to give effect to its resolutions for improving conditions.
8. To maintain a decent standard of living for building trade Artisans, and also to endeavour to raise the status of the Labourers.
9. To maintain peace in the Industry.[106]

An impressive list of objectives and the use of the envelope would serve to maintain fair competition between members who were similarly supporting these aims through dues and subscriptions paid as part of their membership of the MBA.

The CIA were however unimpressed and replied by sending the Association a copy of a letter circulated to all of their members which read, in part:-

> 'In view of the flagrant interference with fair trade that would be imposed upon the building industry by the use of the Official Tender Envelope of the Federation of Master Builders, bearing the endorsement
>
> > "This tender becomes Null and Void if opened in competition with non-members."
>
> The Cape Provincial Institute of Architects hereby re-affirms its resolution of the 26 October, 1927, and warns its members not to recognise the above or any similar endorsement aiming at the restriction of open tendering.'[107]

The battle lines were well and truly drawn now. The next skirmish involved architects J Perry and WJ Delbridge (it would seem that the partnership had changed now) who were invited to attend a Committee meeting of the MBA in order for them to enlighten the members on their recent action regarding a large contract they had awarded. They declined to come but did send a letter of explanation which MJ Adams, then President, termed a bit of 'Flagrant Insolence' and he requested the meeting to give him definite instructions as he was all for forcing the issue now or, if that was what the members wanted, to forget the whole issue and scrap the resolution completely.[108] The test contract now became the new building for the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia in Church Square and the MBA resolved to declare their tenders 'Null & Void until the CIA pass a resolution fully establishing their recognition of the Official Envelope.' The Architects (Perry & Delbridge again) were interviewed as were the Quantity Surveyors (Babbs & Labdon) with little result except that

the architects felt 'we should strive to obtain the right spirit and good feeling...', provided it seems that it did not affect their tender! Eventually Mr Hawke, then President of the CIA, who had steadfastly refused to put the matter before his Institute agreed to call a meeting and discuss the subject openly. But things were reaching a climax, advocates were consulted, telegrams flew back and forth between the MBA and the Federation and back again but the whole battle collapsed when Mr Hoheisen, the lowest tenderer and an MBA member, signed the contract even though he had thus competed in open competition with non-members. Hoheisen was asked to resign his membership and replied with an aggrieved letter insisting that he had gone along with the MBA as far as he could and had signed on the direct advice of his legal adviser. He also stated that he would 'not hesitate to apply to the Courts for redress should there be any infringement of any of my rights in any shape or form whatever.'[109] Mr F Bakker at a later meeting took Mr Hoheisen severely to task saying that they had fought for years to get the envelope established but at the crucial moment Mr Hoheisen had 'not shown any cooperation or sympathy toward this Association.' In fact he pointed out that this was the first time Mr Hoheisen had attended a General Meeting and that the only time he attended a Committee Meeting was in connection with this issue and then he had brought along his legal adviser!

At last a meeting of Architects and Builders took place at which the matter was discussed and it was agreed to modify the envelope and issue one that merely bore the Crest of the Federation and stated that 'This Tender is from a Federated Master Builder' and this would then become the only envelope the architects would accept. The matter was then handled by the JPC who came up with a resolution:-

'The Cape Institute of Architects and the Master Builders' and Allied Trades' Association (Cape Peninsula) agree:-

> Not to submit, or accept for consideration, tenders for any work in any other than an agreed identification envelope, provided that where there is reason to think that the Architect or the Building Industry might suffer by reason of rigid adherence to the foregoing, the matter shall be referred to the Chairman of the Joint Practice Committee for such action as may be found possible.'

The accepted envelope was then described.[110]

However even this did not bring the matter to a close since both architects and MBA members themselves were ignoring the resolution. Eight members of the Association were invited to appear before the Committee in 1934 in this connection but only two of them (Murray & Stewart and Schulze & Zammit) turned up which moved Mr Hedden to wonder 'whether it was worth our while to waste our time in the interests of our members'.[111] The country was in a state of economic stringency and the members were ignoring the bye-laws for their own convenience such that RH Morris were moved to complain to the Association on the bad state of affairs then prevailing. In a letter dated 5 December 1934 they reportedly stated:-

> '...as a firm of 60 years standing would like to put forward certain views regarding the conditions now prevailing in the Building Industry. Their long experience does not contain any period when conditions were as discouraging as they are to-day. They did not think it an exaggeration to state that the scramble for work is pitiful and undignified in the extreme. Another phase is, members of the Association who by becoming members automatically bind themselves to abide by certain rules and yet do not hesitate to break them with impunity.'

Since the members themselves were not standing unitedly together it is no wonder that the Executive had difficulty in getting resolutions adhered to and that there was now 'an antagonistic attitude in the minds of the Architects to the Association.'[112] Mr Forster went even further in summing up the conditions prevailing in the industry at the time by saying that 'the Architects were definitely antagonistic to our Association and there seems to be no co-operation between them and the Quantity Surveyors. He maintained that we are fighting a cause for the Quantity Surveyors without any assistance from our Professional friends.'[113] The cause there mentioned was the issue of the limit above which Quantities were required for a Master Builder to tender, and naturally enough to use the official envelope for his tender, and it was this matter that was causing so much ill feeling. This problem was alleviated by the local MBA raising the limit in this issue from £1500 to £2500, at least until the matter could be ratified at the forthcoming Congress. The final resolution taken by the MBA during this period that dealt with the envelope was in January 1937 when more responsibility was put on the individual members to call infringements of the bye-law to the Association's attention when they occurred.

Even though the issue of the envelope had more or less been brought under control, tension between the Association and the Institute did not lessen since another problem had arisen by then - the matter of the Standard Form of Contract. At the 1932 Bloemfontein Congress the members of the Federation were informed that the Joint Drafting Committee, which consisted of representatives of architects, quantity surveyors, and builders, had reached agreement on a new form of contract based on the 'Overseas Conditions of Contract(1931) as amended to conform to local

conditions'.[114] Copies of this new form became available in October but many of the local architects objected to the new White Form contract document and insisted on using the old Blue Form. In December 1933 the CIA wrote a letter of complaint to the MBA saying that they had had serious doubts about the form from the beginning and stating that it had merely been accepted for a trial period of twelve months, which period had now elapsed. The majority of their members were not in favour of it as they felt it limited the options open to their clients. Their letter was referred to the Federation who, naturally enough, pointed out that the attitude of the local Institute was a 'repudiation of its own Central Council.'[115] All in all it would seem that the CIA were blessed with a number of difficult members at that time, men who rigidly adhered to an heirarchical structure for the industry with the architect at the top followed at a distinctly lower level by the other professions and with the builder coming up somewhere much in the rear. At the 1934 Congress EJ Forster in his report on the activities of the Cape Town MBA said, 'The difficulty the Association is experiencing with the Architects is that the Cape Institute does not appear to have any jurisdiction over its members.' and this truly seems to have been the root cause as it was apparently only in Cape Town that problems with the new contract form were being experienced.

The National Federation wrote to the MBA's in March 1934 asking for suggested amendments to the contract form that could go before the meeting of the Joint Contract Committee at its meeting in April so that the form could perhaps be made more acceptable.[116] But resistance from the CIA continued until the MBA wrote to the Federation requesting local autonomy to decide when and when not to insist on the use of the new contract form.

The Federation did not like the suggestion and advised the MBA to stand firm, at least until after Congress when the matter could be fully discussed and a procedure formulated, they even offered to send HC Roberts, the Organising Director, down for discussions should that be felt advisable.[117] The MBA took this letter before the local JPC on the 11 September 1934 and after protracted debate a resolution was accepted that seemed surprising after the long resistance since the CIA adopted a recommendation that all its members accept the White Form until such time as 'the new Form of Contract now under consideration...' by the National Council is agreed upon.

With all the antagonism that is obvious in the foregoing it is strange to find the MBA taking up the cudgels on behalf of the CIA when they complained that some of the Association's members were infringing on the territory of the architect by preparing their own plans. Even Mr Forster, prominent member of the Committee as he was, was accused, incorrectly it would seem.[118] McCarthy Flegg were another firm that used a non-qualified architect for the compilation of plans for some of their own developments since, they explained, they had tried using members of the CIA but could never get the drawings on time![119] It has always seemed strange to me that those men who cry the loudest against the abolition of anything that might tend to restrict the competitive tendering system among builders cry even louder when they find their own field of work being put into the open market! But the industry still had a reasonable public image even if it was at loggerheads with the professions at times. One reason is probably to be found in the involvement of the industry with the public issues of the day, housing for the poor being a case in point.

The £150 House

As has been seen in the discussion of the labour unrest that beset the industry during this period one of the major problem areas in the country was what was colloquially known as 'the poor white question'. Although the problem had first been specifically identified in 1890 and was investigated by the Transvaal Indigency Commission in 1906 it was in 1927 that the Carnegie Commission was established, funded by the famous New York Corporation, to carry out an in-depth study. Although much of the report, finally released in 1932, centred on the 'bywoner' in the rural areas a good deal of attention was focused on the urban population who were existing at subsistence level and living in the most pitiful of dwellings. As early as June of 1925 Archdeacon Lavis had approached Mr Adams asking him to attend a meeting of the Housing Committee, which he did. On that occasion offered the assistance of the MBA, and at a subsequent meeting of the Committee the Secretary was requested to write to Archdeacon Lavis requesting 'Plans and Drawings of the Benning Scheme'. What this scheme comprised and whether there was any action forthcoming is not recorded but in 1927 things began to happen. Prompted, no doubt, by public sentiment the MBA gave the matter their earnest consideration particularly after one member, Mr A Hunter, stated at a general meeting in 1927 that 'he could produce a gentleman who was prepared to place £10,000 at 4% for the purpose of Building Houses for the poor'.[120] This gentleman was one Mr McQuilton and the Executive Committee met him in July and together they inspected Plans and Specifications and made a visit to an unspecified site.[121]

Shortly after this meeting with Mr McQuilton the whole scheme became public knowledge, much to the MBA's disgust as they had hoped to have made more definite progress before announcing their intentions. Negotiations had taken place with the City Council and a scheme was

proposed: that a series of houses be built consisting of two rooms and a kitchenette at an estimated cost of £150 each, for which it was proposed to charge a rent of £1 per month. The cottages were to be brick built with a roof of Malthoid shingles and contained no internal doors (included at an extra cost of 50/-) or bathrooms (bathing facilities should be provided by the City Council).[122] A Housing Committee was elected and a resolution passed in which the members agreed to erect an Exhibition House at some central situation, in fact on the Grand Parade. The whole arrangement was called the Cape Peninsula Building and Allied Trades Association Housing Scheme. The exhibition cottage was constructed just within the £150 limit.

By the time the general meeting was held in August the President, JR Hedden, could report that the 'Exhibition £150 House has now been completed and is open for Inspection by Members of this Association, after which it will be thrown open to the General Public'. Although this scheme had been the brainchild of the Association, the Citizens Housing League 'have now stepped in and it is proposed to form a Utility Coy.'[123] The house had 'come in for its share of criticism'. According to The South African Builder (October 1927) it was called a pigsty by some and much of the adverse comment came from the architectural profession. Nevertheless it had served to stimulate interest and a contract had been signed by 1928 for the erection of a number of the units on 'the Devil's Peak site'.[124] In 1937 the Crawford Housing Scheme was opened by Lady Clarendon when 26 houses 'elaborate versions of the £150 house' were handed over by the Citizen's Housing League Utility Company. A small presentation ceremony was held in 1929 for Mr Hedden, who had been very much the leading light in the erection of the house, and Mr Adams stated that 9,000 houses were needed, although not all would be of the same type, and that '10 acres of

land had been secured on the Koeberg Road and 135 acres on Wynberg Flats'.[125] What happened to Mr McQuilton the record does not state. The Association continued its support for the Citizen's Housing League investing £50 in the Company (at 3% interest) in 1931; 'most of the Housing work done by this Company and the Municipality is modelled on the Parade Cottage which was conceived by our Member, Mr JR Hedden, and built at the expense of the Association.'[126] In truth the words recorded at the Annual General Meeting on the 2 April 1930 had come true:- 'Mr Hedden's name would go down to prosperity (sic) on account of his creation of the Parade Cottage which had done more for Cape Town than members quite realised.'

JR Hedden, who was a close friend of Mr Adams and who had so much in common with him in his espousal of the cause of the poorer people of Cape Town and in his high integrity, died in January 1937 whilst serving as President of the MBA. The report tabled at the Annual General Meeting in February of that year said 'In the passing of Mr JR Hedden, your late President, not only the Association but the whole building industry has sustained a loss that will indeed be very difficult to fill'[127] Fittingly the Martin Adams Hall in Brooklyn stands in the Good Hope Village, as it was originally called, where so many of Mr Hedden's cottages still stand.

Apprenticeship

The question of training youth for future positions among the artisan force had been a concern of the MBA since its formation. In 1918 a resolution of Congress emphasised the 'necessity of pressing forward the teaching of Technical Education together with a proper form of indenture for apprentices'.[128] A Cape Peninsula Juvenile Advisory Board was formed, seemingly in 1919, and the MBA were requested to nominate two

delegates.[129] A national conference of employers and employees was held in Pretoria for the purposes of reviewing a Draft Act prepared by the Government and representatives of the National Federation were present on that occasion. The local Committee were well aware of the 'urgent necessity of training the youth of South Africa in the various branches of the building trades' and passed a resolution in support of the work of the Juvenile Advisory Board and laying particular stress on the responsibility that rested on the employer.[130]

The Apprenticeship Act was passed by Parliament in 1922 and came into operation on the 1 January 1923 but it seems there were numerous details that still had to be worked out, certainly the Industry felt that it was deficient in a number of important respects, notably in not containing any provision that made it compulsory for employers to train apprentices.[131] The Act made provision for local Committees composed of an equal number of employers and employees with a neutral chairman who were to settle such details as the scale of wages for the five year period.[132] The local committee was formed early but progress appears to have been somewhat slow, the nature of its compostition would seem to have favoured deadlock rather than progress. There also appears to have been some lack of enthusiasm, certainly from the side of the MBA representatives, for a letter from the Apprenticeship Committee dated 8 September 1925 pointed out that of the fifteen meetings that had been held that year one member had attended two meetings and the other only one! Needless to say they were replaced. Details such as what happened if an apprentice was ill, whether they had to be paid over holiday periods, etc occupied the minds of the committee members and it soon became obvious that each of the local Committees was coming up with its own answers without there being any

uniformity. Thus the National Industrial Council wrote to all the Associations in September 1925 suggesting the formation of a National Apprenticeship Committee for the Building Industry and eliciting support for the idea.[132] On receiving a favourable reply the Federation put the proposal to the Local Apprenticeship Committees and the Department of Labour, the idea being that this national body would act in an advisory capacity and coordinate the various details to secure uniformity in training, designation, etc.

In 1928 a general Conference of Apprenticeship Committees was held in Johannesburg, the first such gathering since the Act came into force. Matters such as wages, designations, attendance at classes, and fees were discussed by representatives of each of the regions. The notable exceptions at this meeting were Witwatersrand and Pretoria, who for some reason were not represented. One highly unpopular resolution that came out of the conference was the concept of allowing 'time off' to the apprentices for attendance at classes this being opposed by the Federation but since the conference presumably included all industries it was eventually passed.[133] The Department of Labour followed this up and rationalised the situation by the issue of a directive specifying the number of hours per week that were required and that 50% of the time should be 'time off'.[134] 1929 was a difficult year with regard to apprentices for there was a good deal of unrest in Johannesburg and Pretoria among the 'lads themselves' about the quality of the education they were receiving. In Pretoria about a hundred were threatened with prosecution if they did not attend classes whilst in Johannesburg one hundred and twenty were taken before the Chief Magistrate for the same offence. The Federation approached the Secretary for Education, Dr Gie, about the matter asking him to receive a deputation

from among their members to discuss it but little progress seems to have been made for in 1930 they were still complaining about the need to improve the Syllabus for Technical Classes.[135]

The Act was altered in some details by the promulgation of the Apprenticeship Amendment Act, 1930 but this did not in any way seek to specify a standard for teaching. It merely tightened up on procedural matters. Disatisfaction continued and by 1933 the Federation were again in contact with the Minister of Labour pressing for a nationwide 'Congress of Building Apprenticeship Committees'. The Department did not agree that this would satisfactorily solve anything and suggested that a Bill be drawn up incorporating any proposed amendments to the revised act and that this be circulated for comment and possible action.[136] In May 1933 Mr F Bakker of the local MBA interviewed Colonel Cresswell with regard to the financial burden placed upon employers with apprentices during periods of recession and he was favourably heard but as this was just before the Government resigned there was no further action and Mr Bakker agreed to try and interview the new Minister of Labour, A P J Fourie.[137] Perhaps due to the poor reputation technical training had acquired at that time but certainly influenced by the economic depression the number of apprentices being indentured dropped off severely over this period and became a matter of concern for the MBA. In fact the Federation were pushing for reforms to the act in two basic respects - firstly that there should be some relief for employers with apprentices on their staff during periods of depression (which was the point Mr Bakker made with Colonel Cresswell), and secondly that since the two contracting parties to an indenture were the employer and the apprentice (or his guardian) they could not see the justification for the Unions being equally represented on the Committee.[138] Finally on

the 25 September 1936 new provisions under the Act were brought into force that answered some of the problems of the employers. These new regulations were minuted at a meeting of the Association in November in a report-back session after the Congress and under them employers were able to adjust the wages of apprentices during periods of unemployment, although this had to be monitored by the Inspector of Apprenticeship.[139]

The Federation at its Congress in 1936 approved a proposal that encouragement be given to apprentices to continue their studies beyond the minimum in order 'that they may fit themselves for future advancement from the ranks of journeyman to the higher branches of the trade.' Here we see the first moves toward further education that today encompasses foreman's courses, supervisor's courses etc. As an additional incentive the Federation offered prizes for the best students in the artisan courses then in operation. Mr Hemer, then Principal of the Technical College wrote to the local MBA on the 31 July 1937, forwarding the names of the two best apprentices for the preceding year. One, Hans Caccia, was a joiner whilst the other, Michael Callanan, interestingly enough was a Leaded Light Maker! Mr Hemer also complained that there were very few 'outstanding and brilliant apprentices at the present time'. The Prizegiving took place at the General Meeting in December 1937 when both Mr Hemer and Mr Birslup Miller, Head of the College Building Department, addressed the assembled members and apprentices.[140] It is evident that some of the twenty one apprentices who received certificates of merit on that occasion had fulfilled the promise that was in them and had made good use of their training for, if you read through the lists, the names of a number of well known builders appear there.

The National Federation

A major re-organization of the national body took place during this period. Up to now the work of the Federation had been carried on by a General Secretary in association with the Executive Committee the members of which were appointed at the annual congress by an election held among the delegates from the various MBA's. Each year just prior to congress the minutes record the decisions taken by the local Association as to the issues they wished to have discussed at the congress and at the same time their choices for the members of the executive for the forthcoming year were made. The Executive Committee consisted of the office bearers who, at the start of this period, were the President, two Vice-Presidents (one Senior and one Junior) and an Honorary Treasurer. At the start of this period R Tweedale Hogg was the General Secretary but he left in 1921 to involve himself in the commercial world. JW McMaster took over to be succeeded in 1922 by JW Easterbrook who was followed in the same year by JT Moore. Mr Moore remained with the Federation until 1927 when KG Fleming was appointed and it was he who was still in office when the re-organisation took place.

The Executive Committee, acting on a resolution taken at the 1929 Congress at Bloemfontein, decided that the work of the Federation had grown to such proportions both in size and importance that a full-time senior official should now be appointed. On the 29 March 1930, the Committee wrote a letter addressed to each of the affiliated associations informing them of their decision to appoint Mr HC Roberts as Organising Director as from the 1 June 1930.[141] Mr Roberts was at this time the Secretary for the National Industrial Council but he was now to become the Senior Official in the Federation subject to the control of the Executive Committee. He

was to be paid £900 per annum together with his traveling expenses and a subsistence allowance. The General Secretary was to remain as supporting staff for the new Director and it was proposed to levy each of the Associations £1.1.0 per member per annum in order to finance the new post. The details of this revised arrangement were placed before the membership of the MBA at a General Meeting on the 27 May and unanimously accepted. On the resignation of KG Fleming, who took up appointment as General Manager of the Federated Employers Mutual Insurance Insurance Co, the posts of General Secretary and Organising Director were combined.

Mr Roberts was obviously a good choice and his organisational ability soon made itself felt for after the 1930 Congress at East London MJ Adams suggested to the local Committee that a letter of appreciation be sent to him for his fine efforts at the congress. In fact it seems that the East London Association was resuscitated as a result of his hard work the congress having been held in that city in the hope that it would assist the ailing Association and it seemed to have worked admirably.[142]

Another adjustment that took place within the Federation was a change made in the composition of the Executive Committee. With the headquarters of the Federation firmly entrenched in Johannesburg from where it administered a number of affiliated associations that stretched from the Cape Peninsula up to Southern Rhodesia. But it was decided that a greater spread of representation was needed. The suggestion was that the number of Vice Presidents be increased from two to four with one being appointed to represent each of the four main areas under the jurisdiction of the Federation. The four divisions decided upon were 1)Cape Peninsula, 2)Natal, 3)Transvaal and Orange Free State, and 4)Southern Rhodesia and the proviso

was also made that the member elected to represent the Transvaal and Free State would also occupy the position of Honorary Treasurer. This served to keep the committee down to manageable proportions whilst ensuring that the important post of Financial Officer would be filled by somebody who was within easy reach of the headquarters.[143]

Insurance

The whole question of insurance had often been discussed by the MBA at various times during its history as the Minute Books testify and since insurance plays an important role in the business of contracting various companies had made overtures to the MBA with regard to obtaining a share of the business. At the beginning of this period the General Insurance Company was being used quite extensively since it offered special rates, and all the members of the local MBA were encouraged to make use of its services.[144] However the National Federation were not convinced that they were getting a fair deal out of the insurance world and in 1925 began to investigate the possibilities of a company of their own. Mr Moore, the General Secretary was to address the Cape Town Association on his arrival back from England in October, where he had presumably been on a fact-finding mission but nothing seems to have come of this proposal although the members had been circularised on the matter.[145] However Mr Moore did address a meeting of the MBA on the 17 August 1926 and details of some of the Federation's moves to obtain insurance at a reasonable rate were revealed at that meeting.

The Federation, it seems, approached the government for approval of an insurance scheme of their own but when they heard that they would be required to find £20,000 as security for the company they found that an

impossible figure to reach. They therefore entered into an agreement with the British Oak Insurance Company and favourable rates were negotiated. However, this did not last long since the minutes record that the Company cancelled their agreement due to pressure from 'other members of the ring'. The Federation then telegrammed to Lloyds in London, this may possibly have been a sequel to Mr Moore's visit to England the previous year, and they put the Federation in touch with the National Employers Mutual Insurance Company. This Company expressed a willingness to handle the Federation's business and despatched a Mr Dowlen from England to Cape Town to settle the matter, both this gentleman and a Mr Hosken were present at this special meeting. Mr Hosken was probably the local agent, partner in the broking firm of Hosken & Co perhaps. The intention was to handle the Workman's Compensation insurance first but then to move into Fire and General Insurance. Both Mr Dowlen and Mr Hosken addressed the assembled gathering 'at considerable length' and were thanked by the President for their very 'lucid addresses'.[146] Full details of the proposed scheme were published in the South African Builder in September 1926 but the response from the Cape Peninsula MBA was not enthusiastic. They adopted a resolution which was forwarded to the Federation stating that in their opinion the time was not yet opportune for such a venture and most of the local builders were very satisfied with the treatment they obtained from the General.[147] In fact the President opened negotiations with that Company again on the matter of rates and encouraged all the members to insure with them if they did not already do so.[148] One motivation for this was that the General not only gave the members competitive rates but also passed some 15% of the value of premiums for all business transacted on to the MBA and this generated on the average some £125 per annum.

This did not seem to deter the Federation for a scheme under their auspices was started at about this time and a couple of years later the local MBA were again approached with regard to their joining but decided to reaffirm their previously stated position.[149] Of course the MBA were quick to state that there was no reason why individual members should not join in the Federation's scheme if they so desired. In 1928 the local Committee consulted Messrs Syfret, Godlonton, & Louw with regard to the establishment of a 'Master Builders Indemnity Corporation Ltd.'a 'Company formed to deal with Suretyship' which company would fall under the Insurance Act of 1923. This would have required an investment of £5 000 in Government Stock as security and an additional £5 000 for working capital and the committee decided to pursue the matter further but nothing more appears until 1931.[150] In that year a meeting was held to consider the formation of a 'Master Builders Trust Co Ltd' and a considerable amount of discussion ensued, during which Mr Adams lamented the fact that some thirty years before a 'Limited Liability Company formed by the Master Builders (the SA Manufacturing Co) had ceased to exist.'[151] At the close of this meeting a sub-committee was appointed to further the investigation. Things remained in this way for a number of years until in 1937 the Federated Employer's Mutual Insurance Co was born and thus, at last, the Federation's own enterprise came into being. Keith Fleming became the General Manager and in an address to the local MBA at the start of the new venture he made specific complimentary remarks about HO Young, prominent Cape Town member and then President of the National Federation stating that without his drive the enterprise would not have got underway. The first policy was issued to JJ Kirkness on 22 April 1937 by the Chairman, A Barrow. Mr HG Barrow incidentally was an Inspector for the company and travelled the country enlisting support. The South British Insurance Company acted as local agents for the Federated.[152]

Trade Journals

At the start of the period under review JT Brown had been replaced by Mr Tweedale Hogg as General Secretary of the Federation but the journal founded by Brown, The South African Master Builders Federation Journal, was still in publication. An extension of ten years had been granted to Brown for sole copyright at the 1911 Congress so that the journal continued as official organ. This was despite the fact that, from 1917 onwards each issue contained a disclaimer pointing out that JT Brown was no longer Editor nor did he have anything whatsoever to do with the publication of the magazine. In Cape Town the Committee received a request that a reporter be allowed to attend each of the meetings so that reports of the proceedings could be published but permission for this was refused. It was pointed out that, if he were suitably remunerated, the Secretary could act in that capacity.[153]

On the expiry of the copyright agreement in 1921 a suggestion was put to Congress that a new journal be produced but this did not meet with general approval. However a number of prominent members, among them DF Corlett and PJ Hittinger, pursued the idea. The local MBA felt that they were well served by an existing publication, The Architect, Builder, & Engineer although, as the Transvaal members were quick to point out, it had no official status.[154] This journal was another venture by CF Stanier, who had been responsible for the South African Clay Worker and Builder and it seems to have established itself as unofficial organ for the local MBA. When it became obvious that a new journal was going to be launched and that it would no doubt become the official organ of the Federation the Cape first felt that it would be no threat 'to our own journal'. Later however they changed their minds and put out a call for amalgamation of the new

journal with the existing and EJ Nason was particularly prominent in attempting to bring this about.[155] By April 1923 however it became clear that there would be no chance of an amalgamation and the MBA reluctantly agreed to be responsible for issuing free copies of the SA Builder to its members.[156]

The South African Builder started off in 1923 as a private venture, the result of cooperation between DF Corlett, PJ Hittinger (the Editor) and Joe Moore (the Business Manager). It was officially recognised from the start, even though Conress had rebuffed its proposers in 1921 and it gradually assumed more and more the role of official organ for the Federation. In 1925, for example, it began to publish the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings and circulation of typewritten copies of the minutes ceased.[157] Right from the begining though it was seen as something special, rather than just another commercial venture into publishing a builder's journal and its first editorial stated:-

> "This, first issue of The South African Builder, marks an epoch in the history of the building industry of South Africa. It is the first publication within the Union of a periodical owned and produced by builders in the interests of their industry. The want of a medium in which to record the needs and requirements of the industry has long been felt by those employers who take a prominent part in the welfare of all engaged in the industry."[158]

In due course the Federation began to appreciate the value of having the journal more directly under their control and in April 1932 this was accomplished so that year at the Congress held in Johannesburg it was announced:-

> "It is with considerable pleasure that your executive finds itself in a position to report that the S A Builder, after having been controlled most successfully for eight years by a private company, is now the property of the Federation."[159]

The details of this takeover, that came about after 'The Officers of the Federation interviewed the principal shareholders by whom they were favourably received...', were put before the local MBA who agreed 'to take up twenty Debentures at £25 each to bear interest at 8%.'[160] No wonder the principal shareholders were so magnanimous to the officers of the Federation for it must have been a lucrative business venture for them. In 1936 the journal finally became a fully controlled subsidiary of the Federation itself and had by then proved itself a great success.[161]

Section 8.

Section 8. Notes.

1. MM 28 Jun 1937
2. MM 22 Jul 1937
3. MM 3 Apr 1929
4. MM 9 Dec 1936
5. MM 5 Sep 1928
6. MM 14 Jan 1929
7. MM 28 Jan 1920
8. MM 21 Jan 1920
9. MM 25 Feb 1920
10. MM 3 Mar 1920
11. MM 3 Jun 1920
12. MM 30 Jun 1920
13. MM 14 Jul 1920
14. MM 18 Aug 1920
15. MM 13 Oct 1920
16. MM 10 Nov 1920
17. MM 6 Jun 1921
18. MM 27 Jul 1921
19. MM 14 Sep 1921
20. MM 26 Oct 1921
21. MM 26 Oct 1921
22. MM 12 Dec 1921
23. MM 8 Mar 1922
24. MM 21 Mar 1922
25. MM 1 Jun 1922
26. MM 29 Nov 1922
27. MM 25 Apr 1923
28. MM 10 Jul 1923
29. Letter from MBA to CFLU dated 11 July 1923.
30. MM 16 Apr 1924
31. MM 29 Apr 1924
32. MM 28 Aug 1924
33. MM 28 Aug 1924
34. MM 16 Jul 1924
35. MM 11 Aug 1924
36. MM 14 Aug 1824
37. Letter from Colonel Cresswell to MBA dated 12th August 1924.
38. Letter from R J Verster to MBA dated 19th August 1924.
39. The Cape Times Monday 8th September, 1924.
40. MM 8 Sep 1924
41. MM 9 Sep 1924
42. MM 23 Sep 1924
43. MM 3 Feb 1925
44. MM 1 Apr 1925
45. Letter CPB&AT Association to all members dated 5 June 1925.
46. Letter CFLU to CPB&AT Association dated 18th June 1925.

Section 8.

47. MM 22 Dec 1925

48. Letter from Local Committee to NIC dated 9 June 1926.

49. Minutes of 9th Building Trades Conciliation Board 25th September 1924.

50. MM 23 Mar 1926

51. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1930

52. MM 14 Oct 1931

53. MM 13 Apr 1932

54. Letter H C Roberts to I Walker dated 26 July 1932

55. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1932

56. Letter K G Fleming to MBA dated 19th August 1933

57. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1934

58. MM 27 Jun 1934

59. MM 3 Apr 1935

60. MM 19 Jun 1935

61. MM 19 Jun 1935

62. MM 14 Apr 1937

63. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1937

64. Letter BE Alliance to National Federation dated 19th January 1925

65. Letter MBA to BE Alliance dated 20 February 1925

66. Letter BE Alliance to MBA dated 27 April 1925

67. Letter BE Alliance to MBA dated 31 August 1925

68. Letter P J Hittinger to MBA dated 21 October 1925

69. MM 4 Nov 1925

70. MM 22 Dec 1925

71. MM 16 Feb 1926

72. MM 3 Mar 1920

73. S A Master Builders Federation Journal, March 1920 p22

74. MM 16 Feb 1921

75. MM 25 Mar 1921

76. MM 2 Oct 1923

77. MM 6 Nov 1923

78. MM 25 Jan 1924

79. MM 29 Oct 1924

80. A B Reid was Mayor of Cape Town for 1927 & 1928

81. S A Builder March 1941.

Section 8.

82. MM 28 Jan 1920
83. MM 29 Apr 1924
84. MM 3 Feb 1925
85. MM 29 Oct 1925
86. MM 22 Jun 1926
87. MM 20 Jul 1926
88. MM 18 Oct 1926
89. MM 20 Dec 1926
90. MM 10 Aug 1926
91. Letter from Perry & Brownlee to MBA dated 10th March 1927
92. MM 11 May 1927
93. MM 12 Oct 1927
94. MM 16 Nov 1927
95. MM 7 Dec 1927
96. MM 27 Sep 1928
97. MM 5 Dec 1928
98. MM 13 Nov 1929
99. MM 15 Jan 1930
100 MM 14 Mar 1929
101 Letter from CIA to MBA dated 28 January 1930
102 MM 20 Mar 1930
103 MM 7 May 1930
104 Letter from MBA to Forsyth & Parker dated 28 April 1930
105 MM 10 Nov 1930
106 Letter MBA to CIA dated 6 March 1931
107 Letter CIA to MBA dated 13 March 1931
108 MM 18 Mar 1931
109 MM 1 Apr 1931
110 MM 8 Jun 1931
111 MM 19 Dec 1934
112 MM 6 Feb 1935
113 MM 19 Mar 1935
114 Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1932
115 MM 22 Jan 1934
116 MM 15 Mar 1934
117 MM 6 Sep 1934
118 MM 6 Feb, 29 Apr 1935
119 MM 1 Sep 1937
120 MM 8 Jun 1927
121 MM 13 Jul 1927
122 MM 13 Jul 1927
123 MM 31 Aug 1927
124 MM 8 Aug 1928
125 MM 28 Aug 1929
126 Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1931

Section 8.

127 Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1936

128 MM 25 Aug 1918 129 MM 24 Sep 1919

130 MM 3 Mar 1920

131 S A Builder October 1954, p63.

132 MM 4 Nov 1925

133 S A Builder October 1954, p65.

134 MM 20 Nov 1929

135 S A Builder October 1954, p65

136 ibid. p65. 137 MM 22 May 1933

138 S A Builder October 1954, p65

139 MM 17 Nov 1936 140 MM 9 Dec 1937

141 MM 8 Apr 1930 142 MM 26 Jan 1931

143 MM 28 Mar 1934 144 MM 17 Dec 1920

145 MM 14 Oct 1925 146 MM 17 Aug 1926

147 MM 9 Nov 1926 148 MM 3 Dec 1926

149 MM 28 Aug 1929 150 MM 17 Sep 1928

151 MM 16 Feb 1931

152 Annual Report, Year ending 31 December 1937

153 MM 10 Sep 1919 154 MM 28 Nov 1922

155 MM 7 Feb 1923 156 MM 18 Apr 1923

157 MM 3 Feb 1925

158 The South African Builder, January 1923 p9

159 The South African Builder, October 1954 p31

160 MM 1 Apr 1932 161 MM 17 Nov 1936

SECTION 9. YEARS OF WAR, 1938 TO 1945.

Introduction

This period stands out as unusual in the history of the Industry, for not only were the effects of the second world conflict going to be felt with more immediacy than seems to have been the case with the First World War but the members could hardly have foreseen the amount of government control that would be exercised over the industry: nor could they have imagined the high-handed attempt at the imposition of a form of Socialism that would come from a member of the bureaucracy. Economically the times were difficult: at the beginning of this period trade was in a depressed state whilst at the end significant pressure was being felt by the smaller contractors and many of the subcontractors such that their very existence was in doubt. In addition there was trouble with the Unions, at the start due to the lack of work and during the war due to the lack of skilled manpower. Altogether this was a turbulent time.

The Association's Office and the Secretary

The Association finally moved from the office in Parker's Building at the end of March 1938 and transferred to new premises in Marine Chambers, No.4 Lower Burg Street. This building was apparently owned by the Sailor's Home, since a letter from that institution setting out the terms of the lease was discussed at a meeting on March.[1] At the same meeting a letter from the Wool Exchange was tabled that set out their terms for the use of the Wool Auction Room for General Meetings held by the MBA, since more space would be needed than was available in Marine Chambers. After redecoration and some minor alterations, which work was done by Mr Dembitzer's firm free of charge, the offices proved to be 'more suitable

for the Association's purpose' and, in addition, they were not plagued by 'the incessant noise caused by the traffic in Strand Street [2] (this in 1938!). These offices were to serve the Association for many years.

It seems the members of the Association saw this move as a short term arrangement since steps were already being taken to acquire a building of their own. At the start of 1939 a special Fund for this purpose was proposed[3] and in March Mr Passet, Chairman of the subcommittee dealing with this matter, put forward definite proposals, including a sketch plan which indicated that the proposed building would include lettable office space and an Exhibition Hall. It was estimated that it would cost in the region of £4,000, excluding the site, and as land in Cape Town was expensive it was proposed that a suitable stand in Salt River be found. Mr Passet did his homework very thoroughly and estimated the monthly repayment as £43 whilst the rent of the newly acquired offices stood at £8 per month so that 'it is for the General Committee to decide whether the enhanced prestige and other advantages which would flow from having its own building would justify the Association in incurring the additional expenditure.'[4] Before further progress could be made the war intervened.

Shortly after the move had been completed a problem arose with regard to Mr Thompson, the Secretary who was then being retained on a part-time basis as previously explained, since it appears that he had now been given the opportunity of permanent full-time employment elsewhere. An urgent meeting of the Committee was called for the 13 April 1938 to discuss the matter and the committee there unanimously agreed to offer Mr Thompson full-time employment. The resolution read that he was 'to be retained as Secretary fulltime at £40 per month' which amount remained unchanged until

the year 1941 when Mr Thompson reverted to acting as part-time Secretary. This was necessitated by a drop in revenue accruing to the Association due to the falling membership, a trend that had already become apparant in 1940.[5] By the followng year income was in fact barely sufficient to cover expenditure and 'the Secretary agreed to go on part time with a decrease of £15 per month'. At the Annual General Meeting for that year, appreciation was expressed for his voluntary action and he was voted an honorarium of £50.[6] Things remained at a low ebb until 1944 when once again the MBA could afford a full-time Secretary, the salary paid being the same as he was receiving prior to the cut back. In fact at a meeting in February 1944 Mr Thompson stated that 'he was not seeking an increase and preferred his salary to remain as it is at present'.[7] He was however voted a further honorarium of £50.

Mr Thompson's assistant cum typist at this time was Miss Johnson and, with the increase in membership, the Association found it neccesary to acquire both a duplicator and an addressograph machine. When Miss Johnson, who is recalled by the wife of one of the Committee members as 'that strange young lady'[8], left the services of the Association is not specifically recorded but she was replaced by the remarkable Marion Garthwaite. It was in all probability in 1943 and Miss Garthwaite remained with the MBA until the 31 December 1977, in fact for the rest of her working life. She made the affairs of the Association her complete concern and threw herself wholeheartedly into all aspects of its work. Her long period of tenure and the interest she showed in the wellbeing of the members ensures that she is remembered with affection even today.

One fact would be worth recording regarding Mr Thompson, since the building industry has acquired a somewhat heartless image. During his working life Mr Thompson who finally retired in the middle of 65, had steadfastly refused to involve himself in any form of pension scheme or retirement provision but had instead apparently put a good deal of his money into one of the most respected building firms of the day. When this firm failed he lost a good deal of money, so much so that on his death the MBA felt it their duty to pay his widow a not insubstantial pension. This pension, now considerably increased in value to cope with inflation, is still being paid on a monthly basis to this day, August 1983.[9]

Changes to the Constitution

A number of changes were made to the rules of the MBA at this time. For example, 1937 saw the membership of the General Committee increased to twenty-four; and in 1938 the regulations were re-worded to enable the sub-contractors to have more than one representative per trade, always provided that the total number did not exceed the limit of twenty-four.[10] Now that the subcontractors had been so completely absorbed into the structure of the MBA a various attempts were made to get them to pay the full subscription but these were thwarted each time.[11] In order to foster better relations between the contracting members and the subcontractors a special meeting of subcontractors was held at which they were requested to make suggestions as to how cooperation with the builder members could be improved. The meeting was held on the 13 July 1938 and a list of nine points was put forward, including such perennial requests as prompt payment of certified monies, early settlement of final accounts, and greater support for the subcontracting members. It was earnestly hoped that attention to these suggestions would 'be conducive to greater harmony

in the Association'.[12] The situation with regard to the Electrical Contractors remained uneasy and as the war dragged to an end, five special meetings were held in October and November 1944 with a sub-committee being specifically appointed to seek ways by which the Electrical Section could gain what they felt to be fair representation. Finally the resolution adopted by the sub-committee at its meeting on the 20 November was accepted by the MBA General Committee whereby it was agreed that an Electrical Section member would be appointed to each of the MBA Working Committees and that closer liaison between the various sections would be encouraged.

During 1943 the area of jurisdiction of the local MBA was extended to include Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Wellington, Paarl, and Malmesbury. This move was a governmental one basically aimed at extending the sphere of influence of both the Wage Agreement and the local Industrial Council.[13]

Another development that really only got fully underway at this time was the introduction of the local Practice Committee, established during 1937, in part to 'investigate applications from new Members and to deal with all practical matters of lesser importance.'[14] It started out with four members but this was later increased to five and one of their assigned duties involved the investigation of alleged infringements of the rules by members. The minute books that remain make interesting reading for they show plainly how readily some members transgressed the rules which they had agreed to observe, if they felt it to be to their personal advantage. The Committee members began to find the task onerous and frustrating as they had no real 'bite' and they soon asked that the General Committee grant them greater powers. As their memorandum stated '...the Committee is satisfied that the infringements (in the vast majority of

cases) were deliberate and in open defiance of the rules' After much discussion the Practice Committee were permitted to 'be armed with authority to request delinquents...to pay a fine not exceeding £10 as a penalty...'[15] From the records it is apparant that this was a very busy committee, exceeding in volume all other aspects of the Association's work.

One recommendation from the Practice Committee that brought about a change in the Constitution was the incorporation of 'Monumentalists'. Five such firms approached the MBA requesting membership in December 1944 when it was agreed that suitable adjustments to the rules of the Association be made provided that the Department of Labour were in agreement. This agreement was finally obtained and a circular dated 27 March 1944 states:

> "That the scope of the Association be, and is hereby enlarged so as to include the Trade of Monumental Masonry..."

The Period Just Prior to the War

The restlessness that was apparant in the labour force continued up to the outbreak of the war, and in fact beyond. Times were stringent with the country gripped by depression and no immediate sign of any improvement, in fact it seemed to be expected that the bad times would last 'for some little while to come', to quote HC Roberts.[16] In the Transvaal the men were demanding a 40 hour week, a minimum wage of 4/- per hour, and a paid holiday and although their hand was being strengthened by the obvious leanings of the Government toward some form of Socialism, the employers steadfastly refused to consider such radical demands. The Unemployment Benefit Act had been promulgated by the beginning of 1938 but it had not yet affected the Building Industry for although it made

provision for the establishment of a Fund contributed to by both employer and artisan from which an unemployed man could draw specified benefits the Fund had as yet not been set up. In fact it seemed as if the 'Governement realized that considerable difficulty will be experienced in applying the Act and its application has, in consequence been left in abeyance'[17] The Cape Peninsula MBA made a request of the National Federation that even if such a Fund should be established that they be left out until such time as the new measure had proved to be a success.[18] But by mid 1940 Mr Dembitzer could report that the government were now insisting 'on the establishment of a "fund" for the building industry and it was useless to resist any longer'.[19] Thus by the end of the year the Fund was set up with an office in Boston House serving the local committee who had been appointed to administer it. Now there was an additional proposal, the introduction of a Public Health Insurance Bill which was 'entirely a new measure and provides for hospital and medical attendances, sick pay and holiday benefits for employees who are incapacitated by reason of sickness.'[20] As Mr Roberts put it 'the tendency today is for the Government to look after the employee from the cradle to the grave.'

On the local scene similar problems with the labour force were being experienced to those in the Transvaal and the Government was also playing a role here. A new Wage Agreement had been agreed to by the local Industrial Council and was due to come into effect on the 28 June 1937, to run for a period of two years. The Minister of Labour, however, refused to ratify the Agreement, even though it had been approved by the channel established by law for this purpose. He finally agreed to allow it to be promulgated but only for a period of one year on the grounds that the Agreement made no provision for unskilled labour. As it turned out though

it ran for the full period of two years since on its expiration it was continued by mutual arrangement for the additional year. By the end of 1938 though the men were clamouring for an increase in pay, particularly as it seemed that the Witwatersrand MBA were preparing to raise wages - they 'desired to increase wages by 1d per hour, provided that 2d per hour were deducted...for the purpose of a paid holiday.'[21] The Cape employers had not changed their attitude towards such a holiday being almost unanimously against the introduction of any paid scheme but, when it finally came to the re-negotiation of a new agreement they had to revise their views for after 'considerable time had been spent' the MBA members of the local Industrial Council were forced to concede that 'a sum equal to 2d per hour worked must be deducted from the weekly wage of every skilled employee and paid to the Industrial Council to finance a holiday fund.'[22] Another aspect of the new agreement that gave rise to considerable discussion was the provision that 'not more than 40% of unskilled employees in anyone's employ may be natives.' Many members felt this percentage to be too low but others felt as did MJ Adams who expressed himself 'pleased as he felt it the duty of the building industry to look after the interests of the coloured man in preference to those of the natives as the former were permanently resident at the Cape.'[23]

Although the local Industrial Council was functioning well all efforts to provide some unity contrywide by the establishment of a National Industrial Council met with little success and the executive of the Federation decided that the next best thing would be an organisation within the ranks of the employers that would unify the voice of the various regions in their negotiations. To this end an Employers' National Wage Board was establised consisting basically of officers of the Federation

together with one representative from each of the affiliated Associations, JN Bird being the first of the local delegates.[24] The first meeting of this body took place in Johannesburg in May 1939 and it was immediately renamed the Employers' National Wage Council as some confusion arose in distinguishing the new body from the National Wage Board. The purpose of the Council, then, was to coordinate negotiations with the labour unions on wages and other related matters and it was agreed at that first meeting that no change would be made to existing rates of pay or conditions of employment without prior agreement from the new body.

Reading through the record of the dealings of the MBA during the months leading up to the Second World War one does seem to discern an apprehensive attitude. Although the organization continued to function much as it had in previous years but one senses a certain lack of decisiveness that could have been brought about by dismay due to the significant events then taking place on the world scene. Perhaps this is the result of hindsight but when one considers such dramatic occurences as the German invasion of Austria, the vicious Spanish Civil War, and the somewhat pathetic figure of Neville Chamberlain on his return from Munich and realise that these were the events that then featured on the front pages of the newspapers then the fact that uncertainty with regard to the future reflected itself in the daily running of all of men's affairs is not really to be wondered at.

War Measures Affect the Industry

Once war became a reality in September of 1939 all of South Africa knew that stringent times would come upon the nation and that the Buildng Industry would be no exception. At this stage in the development of the

country only the first steps toward some form of self-sufficiency had been taken and there was still extensive dependence on the 'Home Country'. Obviously with the outbreak of hostilities the vital sea link would be affected and the land thrown far more upon its own resources than was normal. The government, being more concerned with the general welfare of the country than with the well being of specific industries or individual members, could be expected to exercise some form of overall control. On the other hand this would have to be balanced by a concern to preserve a semblance of normality during the period of the conflict and the need to ensure the survival of the infrastructure that would be essential to any post-war recovery. So government control over the industry could be expected but the form that it finally took and the extent to which the bureaucracy interfered in the workings of the industry must have surprised even the most radical members of the MBA. Two main areas of concern affecting the building industry were identified by the authorities: firstly the expected shortage of essential building materials that were normally imported from overseas and secondly the need to utilise the limited available manpower to the best advantage. As the war continued progressively more and more restrictive measures were introduced in order to try and bring these problem areas under control.

The Association was not slow in responding to the new conditions posed by the outbreak of war and took immediate steps to protect the interests of the members to the extent possible. One major problem would naturally be the difficulty of tendering on the normally accepted basis under wartime conditions. At a Committee Meeting held on the 60 September JN Bird, then President, commented on this problem and reported that a discussion had already been held with the architects at which it was agreed that it would be reasonable for MBA members to attach to their tenders a clause modifying the normal tender conditions. The clause read:

"The annexed tender is based on ordinary cost of labour and materials at the date thereof, and it is a condition precedent to its acceptance that the total amount thereof shall ultimately be increased or decreased respectively by the full amount bona fide additionally expended or saved by the tenderer as a result of labour and materials for the contract necessarily costing him more, or being obtainable at less, than their normal cost at the time of tendering."[25]

The suggestion that this clause be attached by members to all tenders submitted by them was adopted since it would place all of them on the same footing. Shortly thereafter a telegram was received from the Federation suggesting a different approach to the problem involving qualification of only those imported materials for which firm prices were unobtainable at the time of tender and the setting of a period of three days for the acceptance of tenders.[26] The local Committee decided to abide by their former decision and adopt the clause previously proposed but a copy of the Federation's proposal was circulated to all members. Later however, in the interests of countrywide uniformity the Federation's suggestion was adopted and adhesive slips containing the following qualification were made available to all members free of charge:

"The annexed tender is:-

(a) to be regarded as being withdrawn if it is not accepted within three days from the time specified for its opening, and,

(b) conditional upon no liability attaching to the tenderer if delivery of materials is rendered impossible or delayed by reason of the War or of any act of Government."[27]

A 'composite meeting' of representatives of the Architects, Quantity Surveyors and Builders was held on the afternoon of Thurday 21 September on the suggestion of Mr Labdon, the Quantity Surveyor and partner of AT Babbs, and the whole matter of the possible effects of the war on building activity was discussed. One outcome of this meeting was that the Institute of Architects undertook to circulate all its members informing them of the procedure that had been agreed upon.[28] However as has been seen to be the case in earlier events chronicled in this document, uniformity was not that easily obtainable and both Architects and Builders ignored the recommendations as they individually saw fit. The Federation was calling for a general adherence to its proposals in circular letters sent out in November and December of 1939 and even held a special meeting in connection therewith.[29] Yet as late as January 1944 the matter was still not resolved for at a meeting Mr H Bakker, then President of the MBA, reported that although agreement had been reached with representatives of the Institute of Architects individual members had now raised objections and the whole matter was once again in a state of flux. Subsequently there was 'considerable discussion and further negotiation' and the Institute of Architects then came up with a proposal that the MBA representatives were given the authority to accept.[30] Whether an agreement on this basis was actually reached is not recorded.

The situation with regard to public expenditure was more organised and the PWD, the City Council, and the SAR soon included clauses in their respective conditions of contract that took the unusual circumstances into account. The Chief Quantity Surveyor of the City Council submitted a memorandum to the City Engineer on the 16 September 1939 entitled 'The difficulties likely to be encountered in the near future when calling for

Tenders for Building Contracts, and a suggested method whereby these difficulties may be overcome to a large extent'. A copy still exists and the suggestions it contained were highly satisfactory to the MBA so that, after some modifications had been incorporated, they were adopted.[31]

The affairs of the Association were affected on a domestic level as well, since not a few of the members volunteered for active service once the new Smuts government came out openly on the side of the Allies. One immediate reaction by the local MBA was the suggestion that the Congress due to take place shortly after the declaration of war should be postponed but this was rejected by the Federation and the Congress was held as scheduled in Port Elizabeth.[32] The only concession made was the omission of most of the social activities which had by then become a prominent part of the annual congress, the emphasis this time being on business matters and preparation for the war period.[33] By mid 1940, with many members now involved in the Services, the General Committee was empowered by the membersip of the MBA to 'do all things necessary for the proper conduct of all such affairs of the Association as call for attention during the intervals between General Meetings.'[34]

On a practical level a number of steps were taken to offer direct help to members on Active Service or their dependants. A War Fund was started with the aim of collecting 1,000 guineas and by June 1940 some £875 had been gathered.[35] By the following month the figure of £900 had been reached and that amount was then donated to the 'Mayor's Fund' (specifically to be utilised for Object 3, whatever that might have been) but this fund was itself later closed down in order that all attention should be directed to the Governor General's Fund. The MBA then decided to

concentrate their fund raising activities in assisting the dependants of local members who were in the armed forces rather than just contributing to a general fund for all servicemen. On the suggestion of the Federation a War Dependant's Fund was established to which both employers and employees were asked to contribute.[36] The suggestion, included in the Federation's letter of the 13 June 1940, was that each artisan should give 5% of his weekly wage whilst employers would subcribe 1½% of the total weekly wages paid out. After a meeting with the local representatives of the Unions their proposal that each employer contribute one shilling for every artisan in his employ and that each artisan thus employed give two shillings per week was adopted. These contributions were seen as being voluntary at first but later it was intended that they be written into the new Wage Agreement. A Committee was established, offices and staff were provided and by July 1942 some £12 000 had been collected with approximately £7 000 of that having been paid out as benefits to dependants. Toward the end of 1943 similar Funds that had been established in Pretoria and Johannesburg had been forced to close down due to the decreasing revenue being insufficient to meet the needs of the dependants and it had been found necessary to get the Governor General's Fund to assume the responsibility. However in Cape Town the fund was functioning satisfactorily but eventually consideration was given to following the example of the up-country associations since the Government contributed on a pound for pound basis to the Governor General's Fund and this effectively doubled any contribution made. At various times too support was given to sundry other fund-raising efforts such as the 'Speed the Planes Fund', the 'Gifts and Comforts Fund', the 'War Distress Relief Fund', the 'Air Force Drive' and 'Navy Week', so that it can truly be said that the local MBA tried to play its part in the war effort.

Government Control over the Industry

Toward the end of 1941 the Government issued a series of proclamations for 'the purpose of placing the Industry under Government Control'[37] so that in the minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 1941 it could be recorded that 'the Building Industry is now a Government Controlled Industry'. To meet the problems of scarce labour and unobtainable materials two officials were appointed, a Controller of Industrial Manpower (IL Walker) and a Controller of Building Materials (JCH Holdgate) and a series of proclamations appeared that delineated the scope of their jurisdiction. At the same time it established hours of work for the industry. Among the more important features were:

a) that no building exceeding £2 000 in value could be erected without official permission.

b) that no employee could work more than 60 hours per week without permission but neither could any skilled man work less than 51½ hours per week on war work; in the case of electricians this minimum was 54 hours.

c) that all time worked in excess of the time presently specified in the Wage Agreement (44 hours) was to be paid for at time-and-a-half rate.[38]

Government policy toward the Buildng Industry at this time further dictated that defence work should take precedence whilst other essential non-defence work, such as hospitals, would proceed but would be built to the minimum acceptable standard of finish. The effect of this on the industry was twofold: firstly, it favoured the larger building contractor, hitting the smaller firms and sub-contractors particularly hard, and secondly, it concentrated much of the available work along the coastal

regions, since these would prove the first line of defence in the event of an attack. The restrictions were soon further tightened up by the requirement that any building work that exceeded £100 in value had to be reported officially to Mr Walker's office whilst if it exceeded £250 in value an official certificate had to be obtained prior to the commencement of work. Electricians were in short supply and by the end of 1941 electrical firms were notified that they would probably soon be required to release more of their skilled men to the government for essential war work. These restrictive measures were not well received by the MBA although it was appreciated that control was needed under the circumstances. However there was a fear, soon to be realised, that bureaucracy was laying too heavy a hand on the industry's activities. In addition to the two Controllers the then Minister of Public Works, CF Clarkson, was appointed Controller of Building and Utility Services[40] whilst there was also a Director General of War Supplies as well as a Director of Price Control all of whom had a role to play.[41]

Complaints about this system began to pour in from members who felt they were being overly restricted or even discriminated against with much of the disatisfaction revolving around the method of allocating whatever work was available among the various contractors. The smaller firms were particularly hard hit and numerous complaints were lodged with the MBA. Mr I Walker as Controller of Industrial Manpower, had an advisory committee that included two members from the ranks of the MBA amongst its number (JN Bird and H Bakker served for most of the war period) and they endeavoured to obtain a fair share of the available work for as many members as possible. At the East London Congress, in 1942, the consensus of opinion was that the restrictions placed upon the industry 'were

uneccessarily severe'[42] and whilst some sections of the cumbersome system of controls worked reasonably well there were other areas, and the 'Control of Materials Committee' was singled out here for special attention, that fell far short of the ideal. The MBA had also established their own committee, the Fortifications Liaison Committee, and there certainly was a need for some specific body to sort its way through the maze of controls that grew up since, apart from the officials already enumerated, there were the 'Authorities Committee', the 'Defence Works Technical Committee', the 'Directorate of Works', the 'Directorate of Fortifications and Coastal Works', the 'Fortifications Buying Department' as well as the 'Quartermaster General' with all of whom the MBA had dealings over this period. This MBA committee eventually gained official recognition for FC Sturrock, Minister of Railways and Harbours, notified the MBA that 'no definite decision will be taken with regard to any Fortifications contract without consulting the Committee who will have the right to nominate contractors for the various contracts.'[43]

There still remained cause for complaint however, mainly from builders who felt they were being overlooked. TJ Donnelly lodged just such a complaint stating that he had been told that the MBA representatives were specifically not recommending him. [44] Another cause for anxiety was the fact that a number of Government Departments, even those that had little relationship with the building industry, were handling work that could have been contracted out, as an example the Department of Irrigation apparently themselves undertook the construction of a £150 000 military camp at Pietermaritzberg.[45]

The majority of work done for the Government was done on the basis of Cost-Plus Contracts but as the period progressed the Director of Price Control began to agitate for a reduction in the percentages being added (from 10% to 7½%) or for the negotiation of an entirely new system of tendering.[46] A Cost-Plus Commission was appointed by the government to look into the matter and both the Federation and the MBA were asked to give evidence before them.[47] The Commission finally proposed that for future government work builders should be asked to tender in competition on either a percentage or a fixed-fee basis but this was not acceptable to the Federation or the affiliated MBA's.[48] Their viewpoint was put to the government but Senator Clarkson 'appealed to them to reconsider' and the outcome was that representatives of the Federation under the leadership of Mr Barrow, met with the Authorities Committee in Cape Town under the chairmanship of Mr Sturrock and an alternative arrangement was devised. This entailed the formation of yet another committee, the Technical Committee, whose duty it was to determine in advance what fixed fee would be applied to any specific contract and to decide on the contractor who should be approached to handle the job and their recommendations would then go to the Union Tender and Supplies Board for ratification. This system seems to have been put into immediate effect since two months later it could be reported that the 'cost-plus system had now disappeared for good and the government were resorting to obtaining competitive tenders, wherever this was possible'[49]. However, for cases where this was not feasible the newly defined procedures were to be adopted.

This was by no means the end of the matter though for by the end of 1943 the President of the local MBA, H Bakker, stated that this matter was once again in the 'melting pot' and a telegram had been received

inviting the MBA to 'send a representative to a meeting to be held by the Government in Pretoria on the 29 November for the purpose of further considering the question'.[50] The meeting was attended by representatives of all the Committees and Directorates involved with the industry as well as the Federation, the outcome being that a statement was issued instructing that where conventional tendering for Defence contracts was considered to be out of the question then the cost-plus a fixed-fee system was to be adopted.[51]

Problems with the Trade Unions

In the years up to the outbreak of the war relations between the employers and the Unions were strained but a new Wage Agreement for the Cape had been agreed and brought into effect in September 1939 with the Holiday Fund finally entrenched.[52] However within the year the Unions had approached the Association 'with the object of getting the employers to make some concession to meet the rise in the cost of living.'[53] The proposal was that the basic wage should remain stabilised at the current level but that a cost-of-living clause be incorporated which would fluctuate at the rate of 3/- per week for each change of 25 points around a base index of 1 015. This suggestion was approved in principle by the MBA Committee although the lack of any provision for unskilled workmen was seen as a major drawback. Nevertheless, the National Federation took a stronger stand on the matter expressing the opinion that all, including the employees, 'should be prepared to make sacrifices in the war'. It also pointed out that the main beneficiaries from the proposed increase would be the large number of aliens who were in the trade, very few of whom were volunteering for active service.[54] The reaction of the men to this decision was an immediate demand for an increase of 4d per hour for

artisans and 3d per hour for the unskilled workmen together with an additional demand that provision for a fully paid holiday be incorporated into the Agreement. This claim was summararily rejected by the employers and during the period of negotiation the current agreement was extended by the Industrial Council.[55] The extension ran until November but as the deadlock continued it was again extended, this time until March 1941.[56] A special meeting was called by the Federation in Johannesburg and representatives of most of the allied MBA's attended, the outcome however was indecisive and the deadlock continued.[57]

The new year (1941) began with negotiations continuing with offer, rejection, and counter offer and after numerous meetings of the Industrial Council an agreement was concluded as an interim measure that granted an increase in the cost of living allowance of 1d per hour for artisans and ½d per hour for labourers.[58] Shortly thereafter the Government proclaimed a general cost-of-living allowance for all persons earning under 74/- per week but since the Industry already had such an allowance written into their Wage Agreement employers were exempted from paying this.[59] The new Agreement was valid until May 1942 but problems could be foreseen since the new Factories Act, that had just come into force, made allowance for a paid holiday and almost one third of the members of the MBA fell under the jurisdiction of the new Act so that an anomalous postition developed where part of the workforce were entitled to a paid holiday by law whilst the rest were not.[60]

Negotiations continued in an effort to reconcile the two parties' views but to no avail so that by June, since there was no sign of an end to the deadlock, the Government stepped in and appointed an Arbitrator in the

person of Mr IL Walker. In his ruling the arbitrator granted substantial increases to the men, increases that the MBA felt to be excessive even though they fell short of the demands being made by the Unions. This removal of authority from the Industrial Council and the vesting of it in an arbitrator was done under the emergency War Measures Act aimed at obviating industrial unrest that would undermine the concerted war effort but it had the effect of negating the effectiveness of the negotiating body and encouraging further unrest. By the end of 1943 the Unions were flexing their muscles and getting more and more vociferous in their demands, in fact they were now asking for conditions of employment that were completely contrary to the traditions of the industry, for example they wanted all employees to be placed on a monthly wage basis.[61] Such excessive wage demands merely served to antagonise the employers but an event that occurred in the Transvaal helped to bring about a more conciliatory atmosphere for after deadlock had been reached on a wage issue that affected both the Transvaal and Natal Mr Walker was again appointed arbitrator on the 29 December 1942 and from this arbitration came the infamous Walker Award. Whilst this was in the process of being framed however, the arbitrator granted an increase in the cost of living allowance from 3d to 7d per hour. This so shocked the local MBA that they immediately set about trying to establish some more reasonable figure with the local Unions by reopening negotiations. It was finally agreed that both the basic rate and the cost of living allowance be increased by 1d and this agreement was ratified by the men with the exception of the Carpenter's Union. Thus, by the time the Walker Award was finally published the local agreement was fixed for all trades, except for the carpenters who were anticipating big things from the arbitration in the Transvaal that would give them a basis for further negotiation. They were not to be disappointed!

The Walker Award

It might be as well at this juncture to sketch in something of Mr Walker's background since he was to play a not inconsiderable role in the history of the Industry during this period. Born in 1883 in Uitenhage he had entered the world of printing as an apprentice, leaving it for the period of the South African War when he 'took the Queen's Shilling and served with the Imperial Light Horse'.[62] Back in printing he became very active in Union affairs and was deeply involved with the 1913 strike, in fact being imprisoned for his work as editor of the 'Strike Herald'. He then became full time Secretary of the South African Typographical Union and played no small role in the maintenance of peace in the Trade. The 1922 strike found him once again actively involved as he was a member of the Strike League Defence Committee. In 1924 the Pact Government came to power and Ivan Walker joined the government as Chief Inspector of Labour on the specific request of Colonel Cresswell. In 1921 he became Under Secretary of Labour and on the retirement of Mr C Cousins, in 1932, he stepped into the post of Secretary of Labour. He seems to have been a born organiser and a natural leader with a strong personality and he was without doubt a glutton for work for when appointed Controller of Industrial Manpower he retained his previous post with all its attendant duties. In his new position he had extremely wide powers; he could freeze wages, control production, transfer labour and, in fact, do anything he felt necessary for the more effective utilisation of the country's resources of men and materials. He was responsible to the Minister of Defence and to a Cabinet Committee and, in the first instance, was expected to consult with a Labour Control Board that consisted of representatives of both employer and employee. On assuming his duties he actually spoke to the nation over the radio announcing that, to the extent possible, the existing industrial

laws would continue to operate throughout the duration of the war. This was an interesting statement to make in the light of his subsequent actions.

It would be good to recall that Mr Walker was appointed by the Government to act as Arbitrator in this instance in a wage dispute between the employers and the unions in the specific areas of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria, and Durban. He was obviously a good choice, having been used in that capacity on previous occasions and being, as he was, Secretary for Labour and Controller of Industrial Manpower. Of course with his background a leaning in favour of the unions could surely have been anticipated and his rulings on the wage increases granted from his initial appointment in June 1942 bear this out. The whole procedure of the Government stepping in to appoint an arbitrator whenever there were serious problems at the Industrial Council was in fact counter productive for it was acting in a manner contrary to the aims of that body, which were to settle differences by negotiation rather than by appeal to a superior authority. The procedure was invariably invoked by the employees whenever their demands were not met in full and with the knowledge of Mr Walker's background they could be sure of a sypathetic ear from the arbitrator. The Federation's view that the Compulsory Arbitration Regulations and the Industrial Councils were mutually destructive was borne out by the events dring the period 1942 to 1944.

After considerable deliberation Mr Walker handed down his ruling on the 29 February 1944 and it was immediately dubbed 'astounding' and 'a dictatorship award'. An editorial published at the time stated:

> "This award, whatever the merits of certain portions of it, has amazed not only those in the Industry, but the country generally, because he has seen fit to go right outside his terms of reference and to lay down far-reaching provisions affecting the economic basis of the whole Industry. In the opinion of many, he has usurped the function of Parliament itself, and it is little wonder that criticism against his proposals has been forthcoming from all sections of the community."[63]

A brief look at the many unusual features of the award will show why there was such an outspoken reaction.

The Award was issued in terms of Regulation 2 of the Annexure to War Measure No 9 of 1942 by IL Walker as Arbitrator duly appointed by the Minister of Labour, WB Madeley. It was to come into operation on the 20 March 1944 and was intended to remain in force for two years. Among the items which were brought to the arbitrator for his attention were such requests from the unions as a reduction in the hours of work as included in the Wage Agreement (from 44 to 40 hours), a guaranteed weekly wage, an increase both in the basic wage and the cost of living allowance, a uniform flat rate of pay applicable to all artisans, and a paid annual holiday. In the build up to his actual award Mr Walker drew attention to the high cost of building which was largely attributed by the employers to the high cost of labour but this, in his opinion, was not the major contributory factor. He expressed the opinion 'that the method by which the building industry operates today does not conduce to efficiency or economy. He specifically singled out the following as important factors which helped to contribute to inefficiency: the existing pattern of a five and a half day working week, the lack of a guaranteed minimum wage and the traditional system, then operating, of giving one hour notice. He also catagorically stated

As the Editor of the South African Builder said 'Socialization through the Department of Labour instead of through Parliament is surely a startling innovation'[64] and without doubt this Departmental edict went far beyond the exigencies demanded by the war situation then prevailing. Although the terms of the award apeared fantastic, even revolutionary, since War Measure No 9 had been invoked they now had the force of law and could only be upset by intervention by government or by due process of law. Of course it could only be brought into operation in those areas where the dispute had occurred but the Trade Unions in at least two other areas immediately requested the appointment of an arbitrator for their own areas of jurisdiction. This was in spite of the fact that the award was not popular with the men themselves who, although they heartily endorsed the limitations of profit clauses, were not happy with the contributions they were now called upon to make into the Stabilisation Fund, and without a corresponding increase in wages too! In addition the working week was now to be shortened so that their actual earnings would be further cut.

The Federation called a special Executive meeeting for the 13 March 1944 and subsequently sent a deputation to Cape Town to attend upon the Prime Minister. In all this they seem to have been so concerned with their own problems that they slighted the local MBA by not consulting them in any way nor attending a special meeting of the Committee convened expressly for the purpose. The Committee of the local MBA 'unanimously resolved to place on record its strongest disapproval of the way this Association has been slighted...' However the deputation accomplished little for General Smuts felt that 'he could not interfere with the Arbitrator's Award'[65] There was a report, however, that stated that he had expressed willingness to consider the repeal of the War Measure under which

the award had been promulgated, should that prove advisable. Mr Walker then had a report published that stated that 'on the highest authority' the Award would stand. On hearing that the Federation was to recommend withdrawal of all MBA representatives from the Industrial Council, which was now seen to be a farcical institution that could be over-ruled at will by a public servant, Mr Walker, according to one report, immediately 'commandeered the staff of the Industrial Council for the Building Industry.' According to the same report he also 'ordered the staff to make themselves available to the Divisional Inspector of Labour, commandeered all money received in respect of the sale of holiday fund stamps' and 'ordered the chairman to refrain from using the services of the staff except with the permission of the Divisional Inspector.'[66] All this whilst numerous 'South Africans were overseas fighting for democracy', to quote one irate builder. Representatives of the Federation met with Mr Walker who appealed to them to co-operate in the full application of the Award on the grounds that even if it were challenged and perhaps set aside, something else would have to be found to replace it and this might be worse for the Industry. Mr FB Blomkamp, the Cape Peninsula MBA's representative at that meeting, reported that the committee's arguments to Mr Walker 'did not make much impression on him. He seemed to be more concerned with the appointment of members to administer the Award.'[67] Finally in order to determine who was the 'highest authority' in the land the Federation sought protection from the Supreme Court.

On the 16 May an order was sought declaring the Walker Award void and invalid in the Supreme Court, Pretoria, before a full bench consisting of Mr Justice Barry (the Judge-President), Mr Justice Millin, and Mr Justice Malan. The applicants were Thomas Clark & Son, Building

Contractors, whose Managing Director JBD Clark was then Chairman of the Industrial Council for the Building Industry (Wits and Pretoria). Cited as first respondent was the Minister of Justice with the Minister of Labour as second respondent. The petition claimed that the award was invalid and 'bad in law' on the grounds that the arbitrator had gone beyond his terms of reference and exceeded his authority in such areas as the creation of a Stabilisation Fund and in seeking to apply profit limitation. Other provisions were spoken of as being 'arbitrary and capricious' as well as 'vague and uncertain', in fact the whole award was 'inoperative an unenforceable'. At that stage argument was heard by the Court and judgement then reserved.

The 6 June 1944 was a significant date in the progress of the war since it marked the beginning of the end for the Third Reich but in Pretoria it was the day on which the Supreme Court handed down its ruling in two separate judgements, a combined statement issued by the Judge-President and Mr Justice AC Malan and an independent statement by Mr Justice P Millin. The first investigated at some length the 'first and main criticism of the award', that it went outside the terms of reference and. Although Mr Neser, Counsel for the Respondent, had maintained that such an action was permissible under the War Measures Act the conclusion reached by Mr Justice Barry stated, 'I cannot read so wide a legislative power into the Regulation.' Thus the concluding statement of his ruling read:-

> "The Court will declare the award invalid and not binding on the applicant. The second respondent to pay the costs."

In his separate judgement Mr Justice Millin pursued a similar line of thought. To him the claim made by Mr Neser that the powers granted to the arbitrator had thus been extended was 'a startling intention'. In fact, he continued, 'it would be difficult to think of anything more likely to forment (sic) labour disputes than to give to a so-called arbitrator this power of legislation...' One other aspect of the award to which the Judge gave attention was the inordinately large role played by the Secretary of Labour in the Award; 'it will be noticed how great a part is played by the Secretary of Labour in the Award...We were informed that the Arbitrator happens at the present time to be the Secretary for Labour; no doubt he saw no difficulty about undertaking this commanding position in the Building Industry...but he may not always be the Secretary for Labour and his power to delegate these functions or duties to that official can be justified only if he has a power of legislation. This power he does not possess and, in my opinion, it follows that all those provisions about the Secretary of Labour are bad.' He concluded his judgement by saying, 'I concur in the order passed by the Judge President.'

Thus ended an interesting incident in the history of the industry which, although it had only directly affected the Transvaal and Durban regions, had repercussions elsewhere. The Carpenters at the Cape, for instance, had 'refused to accept terms offered to them and were pressing for the appointment of a mediator'.[68] The Federation had obviously made a wise move in so speedily contesting an item of legislation that was so thoroughly out of keeping with the spirit of industrial cooperation and one that so blatantly overstepped its terms of reference. What was disturbing though, was that although the government had been given every opportunity to intervene it was not prepared to accept the challenge to its authority

by a public servant and it was left to the Supreme Court to uphold the legislative powers of the government. However, although the Award had now been set aside, as Mr Walker had pointed out the original dispute remained unresolved.

After the Walker Award

The Cape MBA had already come to a settlement with the majority of the local unions so that once the Walker Award had been declared invalid the current Wage Agreement simply remained in force. The Carpenters however were not included in the Agreement as they had been holding out in anticipation of a better deal, expecting to get the terms of the Walker Award extended into the local area. A deadlock in their negotiations with the employers was reached by the 19 July 1944 and Mr Walker was nominated by the Industrial Council to act as Mediator in the dispute. However by September he had stood down for reasons not revealed,[69] and AT Babbs was appointed in his stead.[70] The eventual outcome was that the 'Woodworkers had been awarded exactly the same conditions as other artisans in the Industry. They had therefore achieved nothing by remaining out of the Agreement'.[71] So the dispute was finally settled early in the new year with the mediator's award being incorporated into the agreement whilst negotiations over the wages to be paid to unskilled and semi-skilled labourers were continuing.[72] A supplement covering these catagories of workmen was published in April and this marked a new departure in the terms of the wage agreement.[73]

On the 4 October 1945 the Cape Building Industry Joint Executive Committee to the Building Industrial Council wrote a letter to the MBA

setting out new demands from the Unions in respect of the next Wage Agreement. These included a 40 hour five day week, the inclusion of the cost-of-living allowance in the basic rate and a three week paid holiday.[74] The Association drafted a set of counter proposals which were, true to form, rejected out of hand and since a strike seemed the only solution to the deadlock a special sub-committee was established to negotiate an acceptable compromise.[75] From these discussions came the proposal for an agreement extending over a period of three years during which adjustments would be made according to a set pattern so that the hours of work would reduce to 40 per week whilst the basic rate would climb from 3/4d to 3/6d over the period.[76] This seemed to be reasonably satisfactory to all parties, except the carpenters who were once again proving recalcitrant so that negotiations with this body were continuing as 1945 ended.

By the 1944 Congress the Federation were pushing for the complete lifting of all forms of government control [77] but this was not acceptable to the government for the basic problems of the non-availability of labour and the shortage of essential materials remained. In fact, government control over the building industry in one form or another was to remain in force for quite some time. Materials such as cement, steel and timber continued to be in short supply and were only released to the building contractor under a permit system.

With regard to labour one of the Associations top priorities was to obtain the early demobilisation of skilled manpower but since other industries were facing similar problems the government was not overly sympathetic. The Association already had representatives on the

Demobilisation Committee but progress, notably with regard to white artisans, was slow. The picture as far as coloured ex-servicemen were concerned was somewhat different and, with quite a number unemployed, the Divisional Inspector of Labour arranged for some of them to be put through a special course to make them suitable for employment as building labourers.[78] Experience with these men left the Association disenchanted, Mr Passet, for example, reported that he had employed a total of forty-five such men, had been forced to fire two, but had only six left in his employ. His feelings were that since these men 'received almost as much pay in the Dispersal Camp as they did when working for a builder they did not mind a slight loss as long as they were not called upon to do a day's work.'[79] Captain Orkin an official, probably from the Department of Labour, concerned with the matter addressed the MBA at the end of 1944 on the problems these men were having adapting to civilian life again and asked the members 'to bear with their shortcomings until they had settled down as this was necessary to prevent them degenerating into absolutely useless citizens.'[80]

Later Colonel Cochrane of the Department of Demobilization, met with officers of the Association to discuss the whole question of the re-employment of volunteers in the industry. A questionnaire was to be circulated by the Government to all employers in an attempt to quantify the need for skilled labour and members were encouraged to participate fully. The MBA assured Colonel Cochrane of their full support and stressed that if the 'Government carried out plans which had been foreshadowed, the Building Industry should be able to absorb a large number of returned soldiers.'[81]

Once the end of the global conflict was in sight the flow of defence work, naturally, began to dry up so that by April 1945 Mr H Bakker reported to the Committee that 'Defence work has about come to an end' and 'no new contracts would be allotted'.[82] As a consequence the Fortifications Liaison Committee now ceased to exist although they had been kept busy right up to then, even visiting Johannesburg to interview the Quartermaster General.[83] However, the emphasis of their work had moved to attempting to accelerate the settlement of contractors' claims and final accounts. There was still a small amount of new work involved with the demobilization process and in the conversion to peaceful purposes of military establishments, a local example being the camp at Pollsmoor which became a sanatorium.

Attention now focused on post-war reconstruction and the vital role that the industry would have to play in the re-establishment of normal living conditions. At the 1944 Congress a great deal of time was devoted to this matter and the feeling came out very strongly that the first step toward assisting the industry to meet this challenge would be the removal of all forms of government control. Another topic that received attention was that of housing and the incoming Executive were charged with the responsibility to 'consider as a practical issue the requirements of the African and Coloured population' as well as that of the returning soldiers.[84] Housing in fact became a major post-war concern and the government appointed a National Housing and Planning Commission in the first part of 1945. Things started off well with 'considerable progress' being reported by July.[85] The intention was to let out to tender groups of houses under government sponsorship with the builder being remunerated on the basis of 'basic cost' plus 6% profit. Tenders would be adjudicated on

the basic cost submitted, which was to include direct costs, production on-costs, and administrative overheads. At that early stage there was also a proposal to register all suitable artisans and to guarantee them work for ten years![86] Draft regulations were published under the Housing (Emergency) Act of 1945. The MBA appointed a sub-committee to liaise with the government ,members of which committee took a trip to Johannesburg to consult with the Federation on the adoption of a uniform approach.[87] Later a representative attended a meeting, also held in Johannesburg, of the National Housing Technical Advisory Committee. On the government sponsored committee all sectors of the industry were represented in an effort to promote cooperative effort toward this countrywide problem.[88] Interestingly enough at that meeting it became apparent that there was another employers association in existence in the Transvaal since it was reported that the 'Johannesburg Small Builders' Association' had made approaches to the Commission and the Federation made it clear that they would not cooperate with the government if this body was also to be represented.

The initial proposal was to build some 6 000 units in the first six months, of which 900 were allotted to Cape Town. They were to be let out in contracts of ten units and the houses designs used were supposed to be suitable for purchase by persons earning between £25 and £40 per month. However, as with most things requiring the cooperation of a number of groups with disparate interests, delays were inevitable and by the end of the period little had been accomplished. Materials and labour were in short supply and the actual administration of the scheme left much to be desired athough contracts for 128 houses had been let by the end of 1945 but construction progress was greatly impeded by shortages of materials, particularly timber.[89] It might be noted that the local Architects put

together a scheme of their own, even to the extent of preparing drawings, but the response from the builders was regrettably poor so that they endeavoured to bring it into operation without assistance from the MBA.[90]

Another problem occupying the minds of the MBA was that of the future intake into the Industry through the apprenticeship system and the 1944 Congress gave this matter some attention in having Mr Gallagher give a lengthy address on the subject, which was later published in the South African Builder but it was even then apparent that an active policy of recruitment, training, and education would have to be pursued.[91] A national policy was suggested by the Federation and in mid 1945 a proposal to raise wages for apprentices and unify them countrywide was put forward. The local Committee felt the proposed wages to be too low as they were 'not likely to attract the best type of boy to the Industry and would probably result in a shortage of Apprentices'[92]

Thus, although the period closed with a spirit of optimism pervading the industry as it looked forward to a busy period of activity ahead the confident mood was tempered by the knowledge of a number of major problem areas that were confronting them.

Section 9.

Section 9 - Notes

1. MM 8 Mar 1938

2. Annual Report Year Ending 31 Dec 1938

3. MM 25 Jan 1939

4. MM 7 Mar 1939

5. MM 19 Feb 1941

6. MM 25 Feb 1942

7. MM 23 Feb 1944

8. Telephone conversation with Mrs F Buckland, July 1983.

9. Conversation with Mr L Sisson, Director Cape Peninsula MBA, July 1983.

10. MM 4 Feb 1938

11. MM 22 June 1938

12. MM 20 Jul 1938

13. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1943

14. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1937

15. MM 14 Dec 1938

16. MM 6 Apr 1938

17. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1938

18. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1939

19. MM 15 May 1940

20. MM 6 Apr 1938

21. MM 14 Dec 1938

22. MM 21 Jun 1939

23. MM 5 Jul 1939

24. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1938

25. MM 6 Sep 1939

26. MM 15 Sep 1939

27. MM 25 Sep 1939

28. MM 10 Oct 1939

29. MM 5 Dec 1939

30. MM 26 Jan 1944

31. MM 20 Sep 1939

32. MM 16 Sep 1939

33. MM 20 Sep 1939

34. MM 26 Jun 1940

35. MM 26 Jun 1940

36. MM 17 Jul 1940

37. MM 3 Sep 1941

38. MM 3 Sep 1941

39. MM 8 Oct 1941

Section 9.

40. South African Builder, September 1942 page 7.

41. MM 6 Jun 1942

42. MM 11 Nov 1942

43. MM 14 Dec 1943

44. MM 19 May 1943

45. South African Builder, October 1942 page 7.

46. MM 8 Jun 1942

47. MM 11 Nov 1942

48. MM 10 Mar 1943

49. MM 19 May 1943

50. MM 24 Nov 1943

51. MM 14 Dec 1943

52. MM 20 Sep 1939

53. MM 26 Jun 1940y

54. MM 17 Jul 1940

55. MM 18 Sep 1940

56. MM 11 Dec 1940

57. MM 8 Jan 1941

58. MM 9 Apr 1941

59. MM 6 Aug 1941

60. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1941.

61. Annual Report, Year Ending 31 December 1943.

62. South African Builder, November 1945 page 17.

63. South African Builder, March 1944 page 9.

64. South African Builder, March 1944 page 7.

65. MM 22 Mar 1944

66. South African Builder, April 1944 page 31.

67. F B Blomkamp's report to the MBA dated 15 May 1944.

68. MM 17 May 1944

69. MM 13 Sep 1944

70. MM 10 Oct 1944

70. MM 10 Oct 1944

71. MM 15 Nov 1944

72. MM 23 Jan 1945

73. MM 13 Apr 1945

74. MM 9 Oct 1945

75. MM 12 Dec 1945

76. MM 30 Jan 1946

77. MM 15 Nov 1944

78. MM 16 Aug 1944

79. MM 15 Nov 1944

80. MM 13 Dec 1944

81. MM 13 Apr 1945

82. MM 13 Apr 1945

83. MM 16 Aug 1944

84. Report of 1944 BIFSA Congress

Section 9.

85. MM 30 Jul 1945

86. MM 30 Jul 1945

87. MM 2 May 1945

88. This meeting was held in Johannesburg on the 20th June 1945.

89. MM 2 Jul 1945

90. MM 14 Nov 1945

91. MM 15 Aug 1945

92. MM 12 Dec 1945

93. Report of 1944 BIFSA Congress

94. MM 2 Jul 1945

SECTION 10 - THE POST WAR PERIOD, 1946 TO 1950.

Introduction

In this period, the last to be considered in this document, it is manifest that the organisation has moved ahead a lot since the early days, having both grown in numbers and importance and also reached a high level of maturity. Over the years it has become firmly established as a fundamental part of the building industry with a distinct identity and a clear idea of its role in representing the employers in the industry. Never again would the organisation face such lean times that its very existence would be threatened for now it had gained momentum and, even though the usual fluctuating cycles would have an effect on membership and finances, there would never be any doubt about its continued survival. In addition, of course, the nature of the business environment had changed over the years and as a consequence a strong body to uphold the rights of the employers had come to be an absolute necessity such that even smaller builders and subcontractors no longer looked upon membership of the MBA as restrictive or an expensive luxury. In addition most of the major issues needing its attention had by now put in an appearance and the Association could in future look back on years of fruitful experience as an aid in meeting the challenges yet to come.

Since the business environment within which it functioned was not to remain static the organisation would, over the years, have to adjust to suit and the inclusion of subcontractors on the membership roll gave an indication of its response to changes in the nature of the industry. During this period the number of headings under which firms on the membership roll were classified grew as the increase of specialization made

its impact felt on the building industry. For the first time a civil engineering contractor (Clifford Harris) joined the MBA and a new catagory was brought into being.[1] There was a proliferation of sub-divisions for a wide variety of sub-contractors offering any number of specialist services. Something that serves to highlight the changes then taking place in the composition of the membership and the change in the ratio of sub-contractors to builders was that during this period it was finally agreed that all members should pay equal membership fees.[2]

Another factor that fostered the growth of the MBA was the interpretation then prevalent with regard to the terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, and in particular the revision of 1937. The Act made allowance for any organisation that could prove that it represented a substantial number of employers in any industry, or section of an industry, to be registered as an official employers' organisation by the Minister of Labour which would then entitle it to speak on behalf of its members and negotiate with the Trade Unions representing the employees in that industry. Given the circumstances then prevailing which included the rise of the militant artisan, the aggressive nature of the Unions, and the noted socialistic inclinations of the government it obviously behooved the MBA to throw its net as wide as possible so that it could retain a position of strength within the building industry. The sudden rise of organisations such as "The Transvaal Builders' Association" and "The Johannesburg Small Builders' Association" and their subsequent incorporation into the Witwatersrand MBA proved this point,[3] as did the appearance, in the early 1950's, of "The Federated Builders' Association" in Cape Town.[4] In May of 1946 the Federation wrote a letter warning all the affiliated Associations of the dangers that this interpretation of the Act could bring and at Mr

Passet's insistence the local MBA set up a sub-committee to re-think the basis for eligibility for membership.[5] It was even suggested that the MBA should look to expanding its sphere of influence to all firms that were active within the building industry in its broadest sense so that, for example, manufacturers supplying the industry would also be included. This would have required modifications to the Act, for as it stood, the only manufacturers who fell under the umbrella of the Association were those whose main income was derived from contracting or sub-contracting. This was obviously a provision made so that concerns with large joinery or precast concrete divisions could be included.[6]

In the Associations offices, though, very little changed except the furniture which, strange to say, was replaced twice during these five years: in the first instance due to dilapidation [7]and in the second case, it would seem due to a poor choice.[8] This was rather sad, since some £206.6.9 had been spent on the refurnishing.[9] Not only did the location of the offices remain unchanged but the secretarial staff stayed with the MBA right to the end of this period with both Mr Thompson and Miss Garthwaite continuing on in their positions until well after the year 1950, where I draw this document to a close. One interesting item that appears in the minutes of 1950 that reflects the nervousness of the times was that Mr Thompson suggested that "as the typewriter is now very old, it might be advisable, in view of the possibility of war, to purchase a new typewriter without delay"![10]

Thus the emphasis, as we look into this period, will be upon the unique problems faced by the MBA as a direct consequence of the end of the Second World War and which problems had, by and large, sorted themselves

out by 1950 so that apart from evolutionary changes the Association would retain its character unaltered down to today. But back in 1946 the major problem areas were demobilisation, the critical housing shortage, special training arrangements, immigration, building control, and the now all too familiar problem of inflation.

Demobilisation and Job Placement.

Demobilisation was a lengthy process and in spite of Discharged Soldiers' Demobilization Committees being established in all the major centres it still took some time for those members of industry who had volunteered for the armed forces to return to active participation in civilian life. However it is interesting to note the number of new firms that applied for membership of the MBA whose principals were ex-soldiers, either embarking on a new career on the basis of their discharge money or resuming activity now that hostilities had ceased. A number of such firms are still prominent members of the Association.

Obviously one of the major problems that had to be faced by the government was that of finding employment for the ex-soldiers so that they could once again play a useful role in society. The traditional method of training through apprenticeship was obviously not suitable for these men, most of whom were well beyond the normal age for apprentices and many of whom had dependants already. Thus a new system was devised through an agency known as the Central Organisation for Technical Training, generally referred to as C.O.T.T., which fell under the jurisdiction of a Joint Advisory Board set up by the government and consisting of a chairman and equal numbers of representatives from the employer and employee organisations in industry in general.[11]

The idea was that each candidate, who had been suitably screened, would be put through a period of intensive training in both practical and theoretical subjects after which he would undergo a test and. If successful, he would then be moved to a dispersal camp to await placement with a suitable employer. For the building trades the general period of training was sixteen weeks, though in the case of electricians this was extended to twenty weeks. After one year in employment (C.O.T.T. found the trainee a position and established the rates of pay) the trainee could apply to the Joint Board to be allowed to sit a trade test and if he successfully passed it he would then be classified as an artisan, if not he could re-apply after a lapse of another six months. Alternatively after three years of continual employment with an approved employer he 'would be deemed to be an artisan' and entitled to the full rate of pay. The scheme as originally promulgated was actually incredibly ambitious for, as mentioned previously, it was intended that the government should guarantee such trainees employment for ten years. The cut-off date was being given as the 31 March 1956, and further more should they be unemployed for any period during that ten years they would be paid 80% of their normal remuneration, less any monies that might be due to them under the Unemployment Benefit Act. It was once they had attained artisan status that their names would be written into a Register of Artisans and, provided they were members of their appropriate Union and in good standing, the benefits laid down in the scheme would come to them. The intention was to train some 5,000 artisans for the building trades and for that purpose training schools were set up around the country, the local one apparently being in Ottery, though one reference speaks of it as the Westlake C.O.T.T. School which seems more likely since there is an adult training school situated there to this day.

However the reality fell somewhat short of expectations and at the 1946 Congress, held in Salisbury in October, disatisfaction was expressed on a number of counts and the Secretary for Labour, again Mr Ivan Walker had to answer some pointed questions. At that time only some 1,100 men were in training whilst another 100 were in dispersal camps and already the provision for the registration of artisans and the proposed ten year agreement had run into insuperable difficulties and had been abandoned.[12] Apart from these organisational problems both the employers and the trainees themselves were unhappy. Employers were finding that they could not use their trainees to the fullest extent because many of the local authorities were wary of the standard of workmanship that such a man could be expected to produce and insisted that each of them work under the supervision of a qualified artisan, particularly was this so in the case of electricians. Naturally this hampered the whole enterprise since it meant that in effect they were relegated to the role of an apprentice. Locally the scheme was functioning reasonably well. The report for 1946 mentioned that some 200 trainees were then in employment with another 100 awaiting placement, although at that same Congress AN Thompson, the Western Cape MBA's Secretary, told the delegates that many of the trainees themselves were unhappy as they felt the government had not lived up to its promises. What exactly happened to the scheme in the end is not recorded in the minutes but by the end of 1947 there is no mention of it at the Annual Congress, neither does the local Chairman report on it to the AGM early in 1948 nor yet in subsequent years.[13]

Apprenticeship

Meanwhile the traditional apprenticeship system was still in operation and was now being regulated under the new Apprenticeship Act of

1944, which came into force in March of 1945. In terms of the new Act a National Apprenticship Board was established to control apprenticeship over the whole spectrum of industry and it was given wide powers, being answerable only to the Minister of Labour. The original committee included JW Capstick, Vice President for Natal on the executive of BIFSA, so that the building industry were well represented but when he resigned his position in 1946 there was no direct participation on the Board. This was a major source of disatisfaction to the Industry as a whole which was only partially alleviated by the appointment of JC Bitcon as an alternate member.[14]

In the first notice issued by the NAB that directly affected the building industry it was suggested that a uniform rate of pay be applied to all apprentices in the industry within certain specified areas. This suggestion met with opposition from the industry not only because the scale of payment was considerably higher than they had put forward (the Federation had proposed a range of from 20s to 75s per week whereas the Board's scale began at 28s and rose to 87s per week). In addition, they felt that the smaller centres would be severely disadvantaged by having to pay their apprentices the same rates as the larger centres. In fact the rates of pay for artisans were not uniform so it seemed illogical to insist on uniformity among apprentices. However since the industry was not represented directly on the Board it seemed inevitable that the Government's rate would be legally enforced. Mr Bitcon, though, was able to wield some influence and in 1947 when the scale was introduced he had been 'instrumental in influencing a discrimination in favour of the smaller centres'.[15]

However there was still widespread disatisfaction at the whole system of apprentice training and this reached a head when the Minister proposed, in Government Notice No 184 of 1949, to withdraw the existing trade designations and replace them with a revised list. The Federation felt that not only did the new list not adequately represent the industry since there were other trade designations that were in reality required, but also that the whole matter should await the result of a full investigation into the question of apprenticeship training. There was in fact already such an investigation in progress, known as the Commission on Technical and Vocational Education, the De Villiers Commission, and its report was finally published during the course of 1949. Acting on a resolution adopted at the 1948 Congress the Federation immediately examined the report in detail, in consultation with the Employers' National Apprenticeship Committee on which the local Association was represented. The outcome was that in general the terms of the Report was acceptable to the industry and only minor adjustments were suggested to the Government. The Cape Town Association put forward one recommendation that was fully supported by the Federation:

> "That the Government be requested to appoint competent Apprenticeship Inspectors, whose duties shall be to investigate the facilities afforded for the training of apprentices and to report to the Apprenticeship Committees"[16]

The Minister of Labour appointed a committee to look into the report and to make recommendations as to its implementation, which committee immediately set about its task by collecting information and views through the widespread circulation of a questionnaire. However actual results were only to be seen in the revised designation of trades and other recommendations that were put into practice in 1951, beyond the scope of this period.

Immigration

Despite the number of men returning from the war now being absorbed back into the economic life of the country there was a tremendous shortage of skilled labour throughout industry. The apprenticeship system and the C.O.T.T. scheme were not able to keep pace with the demand and to many people the obvious answer was immigration; with Europe still suffering under the aftermath of the conflict and tension between the Allies and Russia reaching a peak in the famous Berlin airlift the colonies began to look very attractive to many younger couples hoping for a quiet future for themselves and their children. An Immigration Council for South Africa was established and the government of the day took active steps to encourage skilled personnel from England to emigrate to South Africa.[17] As a result of the work of this Council and of organisations such as the 1820 Settlers Association a steady stream of immigrants began to reach this country so that by the beginning of 1948 some 3,000 had arrived, mainly from the United Kingdom.[18]

The building industry took an active interest in the recruitment of suitably skilled men overseas firstly by the production of a brochure designed to introduce prospective immigrants to the nature of the local industry and secondly by taking the decision to send a representative of their own over to the UK to care for their interests. Mr Harrison of the Wits MBA was selected with the commision to investigate the situation in England and to positively encourage building artisans to move to South Africa, although he was also charged with the responsibility of setting up suitable screening proceedures in an attempt to ensure that only satisfactory candidates with appropriate qualifications would be assisted.

Hopes were high in 1948 and at the meeting of the local MBA on the 9 June it was stated that some 2,000 immigrant artisans could be expected in the country within the near future and on the strength of this news the Committee decided to send a donation of 100 guineas to the 1820 Settlers Association. However the same year saw a change to a new government and with it a completely different outlook on mass immigration from the UK. Dr Donges, the new Minister of the Interior, was not long in setting out his government's policy which included the establishment of strict screening procedures for all prospective new settlers and as a result the rate of immigration slowed down. In his report to the 1948 Congress Mr Harrison was hard put to explain his apparant lack of success, Cape Town for example had received very few skilled immigrants and those that had arrived had come from the efforts of the 1820 Settlers Association. Many members were critical of the Federation's representative but in the end Congress passed a vote of confidence in Mr Harrison and thanked him for his efforts under difficult circumstances. The new government's policy toward immigration seems to have thus effectively closed that avenue of recruitment for the building industry and most industries were to continue to suffer a shortage of skilled manpower down to the end of the period.

Housing

Housing became a pressing problem during the closing years of the war, as discussed in the last section, and with demobilization and the influx of immigrants things reached a state of crisis. It was in February 1944 that the Social and Economic Planning Council issued its report on the housing problem and by June of that year the Housing Amendment Act was passed under which a National Housing and Planning Commission was established,[19] as was briefly discussed in the previous section. Paul

Sauer, Minister of Social Welfare, promised 20,000 houses within a very short period of time. However things did not move as fast as anticipated so that it was some fifteen months later, on the 3 September 1945, that HG Lawrence, then Minister of Welfare and Demobilization, 'turned the first sod' at Wychwood, near Germiston on the first house of the first township under this ambitious scheme. In the spirit of the times this date was called the 'D-Day' of Housing and was constantly referred back to by the press of the day as things did not develop as expected. By the end of the year only some 1,861 homes had been completed and none had been occupied,[20] Major W Brinton, Chairman of the National Housing Commission, made the statement that the programme still had the full backing of the government and would by no means be allowed to slow down. To assist ex-servicemen it was also announced that 90% loans were to be made available to them but difficulties persisted. Early in 1946 three of the NHPC's technical officers resigned as they felt their contribution to the work of the Commission was being ignored and at the Comet Township in Boksburg a group of 'ex-volunteers' seized a number of the partially completed houses as a protest over the lack of progress.[21] The local MBA were also up in arms and seriously considered withdrawing their support from the local Technical Committee on the grounds that their advice too was continually being ignored.[22]

Apart from the official government plan there were other proposals put forward one of which was started at the instigation of the Cape Institute of Architects. They devised a scheme whereby model plans were produced and members of the local MBA were contracted to construct these homes for a total profit of £50 for units up to £2,000 in value and £75 above that. The cost of the house was established at the start and the

architect's charges were also to be limited.[23] Little seems to have come from this scheme and there was an apparent lack of enthusiasm on the part of the local builders.[24]

By the middle of 1946 the NHPC felt it necessary to hold a press conference to put the facts before the public when, among other things, it was pointed out that in the twenty one months since its formation some 14,375 units had been built or were under construction. However many were not satisfied and the feeling prevailed that the conference had been 'a whitewash' and a year after the much vaunted 'D-Day' little progress in real terms had been made although a lot of talking had been done. At the Annual General Meeting of the United Building Society in 1946 the Chairman, DF Corlett, had the following to say,

> "The Commission, although armed with all the requisite powers, does not appear to have made much headway in the provision of houses in the numbers required. As a consequence the shortage of economic houses is as acute today as it was a year ago. The designs of the National Houses have met with adverse criticism and the cost of the houses appear to be beyond the means of the people for whom they were built."[25]

Locally progress was as slow as anywhere in the country although Mr McCarthy was congratulated since his company, McCarthy Contractors, landed two of the contracts let out in 1946.[26] But public disatisfaction was growing and the government published a White Paper entitled 'The Truth about the Housing Problem' in 1947 in which it was stated that in the sixteen months since the start of actual work the Commission had completed 727 units, had 900 under construction and had accepted tenders for a

further 323 houses. Since this makes a total of only 1,950 altogether the appelation 'a whitewash' applied to the earlier press conference would appear to be more than justified. An interesting statistic quoted in the paper gave the total skilled labour force of the building industry at that time as 24,543 with 21,853 artisans and 2,690 apprentices.[27]

By the middle of 1947 the local MBA felt compelled to dispatch Messrs Warr and Blomkamp to Johannesburg to 'Shearar of National Housing' to explain to him the poor state of affairs in Cape Town both in the letting of contracts and in their subsequent administration, even down to delay in the settlement of final accounts.[28] One aspect of the government scheme that becomes apparent from the minutes of the report back on this meeting was the fact that builders who tendered for construction of these schemes had to limit their profit to 6% and produce proof that this in fact was their return before the final account could be passed for settlement.[29]

In 1948 DF Corlett once again expressed himself on the problems of housing when he stated,

> "The steady increase in the cost of living, coupled with the decrease in spending power, had resulted in the small man being "squeezed" to an extent when home ownership has become almost beyond his means. This position has been aggravated by the steady increase in property prices."[30]

History appears to be repeating itself these days, but back then a Joint Loan Scheme was floated by the NHPC and the Association of Building Societies in an attempt to ease the financial position which was brought into operation in January 1948.[31] But housing continued to be an emotional

issue and later that year Major JC Collings, Director of Housing, resigned as a consequence of changes brought about in the composition of the NHPC by Dr Stals, a member of the new government.[32]

The situation worsened; the 90% loan scheme failed and the NHPC lost the confidence of the Building Societies. HW Johns, Chairman of the Disharged Soldiers' Demobilization Committee expressed the feelings of many when he said 'The present situation cannot continue without giving rise to serious misgivings'[33] The situation, though,not only continued but actually deteriorated. There were an estimated 20,000 people wanting homes on the Rand alone and at the current rate of progress the target set by the NHPC would only be attained by 1951 and then only if no allowance was made for the increasing backlog. But the financial situation worsened and the government cut down the allocation of funds to the housing sector such that by the last quarter of 1949 the housing programmes of the various public authorities had virtually dried up due to lack of funds.[34] Thus things continued to the end of this period alhough by the close of 1950 expressions of confidence in an imminent revival were appearing in the press and with materials becoming more readily available it was hoped some progress would be made toward alleviating the shortage of homes.[35]

Wages and Labour

A feeling of stability prevailed on the wages scene in Cape Town as a result of the Wage Agreement which was concluded toward the end of 1945 and which finally came into operation on the 24 June 1946.[36] It was to run for a period of three years with progressive increases in wages and a corresponding reduction in working hours for the statuary week though once again at the start of the Agreement the Carpenters were not included

but after further negotiations a settlement was reached.[37] This period of quietness in the Cape was in marked contrast to what was happening in the Transvaal where a wage dispute led to a strike in 1947, with even the Unions in the Cape collecting money on the sites for the men up North.[38]

For the balance of the period little happened apart from the expected adjustments to the wages each year, since the agreement was linked to the Cost-of-Living index. As the three year period drew to a close negotiations between the men and the employers were re-opened and through the agency of the Industrial Council a further agreement was reached which came into effect on the 24 June 1949 on the expiry of the earlier one. This new agreement contained provision for substantial increases in wages plus provision for a Retirement Benefit Scheme in return for which the men had promised substantially greater output.[39] Many of the members of the Association were sceptical over this latter assurance, in the words of one commentator there was 'unprecedented confidence placed in the men and their leaders.'

As has been seen in earlier sections of this document the concept of a National Industrial Council had proved to be unsuitable under the then prevailing conditions and it had ceased to exist, its functions being taken over by various regional Councils but now a number of moves were made in an attempt to resuscitate this national body. At the start of 1946 the Department of Labour requested that local Industrial Councils submit to being de-registered so that the way would be open for the formation of a new National Council. A meeting was convened in Johannesburg for the 27 May for the purpose of discussing the concept. The members of the local MBA were not in favour of the idea and once again Messrs Warr and Blomkamp

were nominated as representatives and despatched to Johannesburg.[40] The more militant type of artisan who was then prominent on the scene and the difficulties of the post-war period certainly stretched the Industrial Conciliation Act to its limits and many felt that the local Industrial Council as then constituted could not survive.[41] Little came of the meeting in Johannesburg but eventually at the beginning of 1949 a Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Legislation started work with the brief to investigate the position and recommend changes to the government and this was basically the situation prevailing as the period ended.

Building Control

Although the most stringent of the controls introduced during the war had been relaxed the government still continued to exercise its authority over the building industry in a number of ways, giving the critical housing shortage as one reason why the measures imposed during the war should not be completely removed. This caused great disatisfaction among the building fraternity not only because it restricted the spirit of free enterprise but also because it offended the natural feeling of independence that has always been a hallmark of the industry. Those members of the Association who were serving on the various committees through which the control measures were exercised now requested to be paid for the time and travelling that these entailed. They felt that, although they had been prepared to offer their services free of charge during the war now that the emergency had passed some remuneration was just. The government, needless to say refused this request.[42] Efforts to effect a change in policy were renewed in 1947 and a deputation waited upon the Minister of Public Works on at least two occasions requesting that all forms of control be abolished, or at least relaxed, but the only concession

made was to agree to the convening of a special meeting to discuss the whole question.[43] The Federation in the meantime submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Building Committee requesting that at the very least controls on all buildings of an area less than 2,000 square feet be removed.[44] The meeting arranged by the Minister took place on the 13 of June with Messrs Warr and Blomkamp in attendance from Cape Town but the outcome was uncertain since the Minister failed to make his position clear.[45] Finally by March of 1948 the government released all restrictions on buildings up to an area of 2,000 square feet, as had been suggested by the Federation; for the larger projects though the controls remained in force and were to do so beyond the end of this period.[46]

Conditions for Tendering

Apart from the restraints exercised by the government through building control the industry was being severely hampered by other phenomena that were to become commonplace in the years to come, chief of which was the universal bugbear of inflation. The war years and the shortage of skilled manpower had shown clearly that the cost of labour was obviously not going to be as stable as it had been in the past, although some members did feel that with the introduction of the new three year Wage Agreement some stability could be expected. At the end of 1946 LA Steens, a prominent local builder, made the positive suggestion that the payment to the builder of increased cost in labour be written into the contract form.[47] Some builders baulked at the thought but that it was not a far-fetched idea was proved when the following year the PWD agreed to hold itself responsible for all wage increases on its contracts.[48] By the end of 1947 the local MBA instructed all its members to attach a qualification clause with respect to increase in labour costs to their tenders, this met with

the usual opposition from the local Architects, this time supported by the Quantity Surveyors, who maintained that such a qualification actually changed the conditions of tender set out in the current White Form of Contract.[49] It took until January 1949 before such a qualification could be fully implemented in the Cape.[50]

Conclusion

Thus the early post-war period drew to a close with the MBA deeply involved in the problems of the day but moving ahead confidently. In sympathy with the changing nature of the industry itself the composition of the Association was itself changing with more and more of the smaller contractors and sub-contractors beginning to make their presence felt by active participation in the affairs of the Association. Indicative of these changes during this time were the formation of both The Master Masons' and Quarry Owners' Association (1948) and the Electrical Contractors' Association (1949) both of which bodies were allied to the MBA but dealing specifically with the problems of their individual memberships. Their establishment came as the culmination of the desire for ever more representation for minority interests that had become so noticeable during the previous period.[51] A further development, too, was the formation of a separate MBA in the Boland, which body was registered in the middle of 1949. To accomodate these changes it was suggested that the constitution of the MBA be revised and as the period ends discussions are underway as to how best to modify the regulations to accomodate the greatly increased role of the sub-contractors and meet future developments.[52]

The Federation too was re-examining itself with a view to more accurately defining its role in the industry of the future. It saw its

main purpose as being, 'to enable the associations to combine and act jointly in all questions of vital and national needs'.[53] A new era in the history of this national body as in fact opening up for at the end of 1950 HC Roberts resigned as the chief executive and GdeC Malherbe took over. Piet, as he was universally known, was to guide the Federation with a quiet but sure hand for the best part of the next thirty years.

Thus with the Master Builders' and Allied Trades Associations well established in the various regions and functioning satisfactorily and the National Federation entering a new phase this history is aptly concluded.

Section 10.

Section 10 - Notes

1. MM 27 Mar 1946
2. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1946.
3. South African Builder, January 1950 page 9.
4. MM 19 Mar 1952
5. MM 15 May 1946
6. South African Builder, March 1948 page 9.
7. MM 24 Apr 1946
8. MM 18 Jan 1950
9. MM 15 Oct 1947
10. MM 28 Jul 1950
11. South African Builder, January 1946 page 9.
12. South African Builder, November 1946 page 21
13. Annual Report, Year ending 31 Dec 1946.
14. South African Builder, October 1954 page 67.
15. South African Builder, October 1954 page 67.
16. Report from Annual Congress 1949.
17. South African Builder, July 1947 page 9.
18. South African Builder, January 1948 page 31.
19. South African Builder, March 1946 page 13.
20. South African Builder, May 1946 page 11.
21. South African Builder, May 1946 page 11.
22. MM 6 Nov 1946
23. South African Builder, January 1946 page 41.
24. MM 20 Jan 1946
25. South African Builder, September 1946 page 11.
26. MM 17 Sep 1946
27. South African Builder, September 1947 page 11.
28. MM 23 Jun 1947
29. MM 6 Aug 1947
30. South African Builder, September 1948 page 11.
31. South African Builder, April 1948 page 13.

Section 10.

32. South African Builder, October 1948 page 13.

33. South African Builder, January 1949 page 13.

34. South African Builder, August 1949 page 57.

35. South African Builder, October 1950 page 11.

36. MM 30 Jan 1946 37. MM 15 May 1946

38. MM 17 Sep 1947

39. South African Builder, June 1949 page 63.

40. MM 15 May 1946

41. South African Builder, May 1947 page 9.

42. MM 16 Nov 1946 43. MM 4 Jun 1947

44. South African Builder, June 1947 page 25.

45. MM 17 Sep 1947

46. South African Builder, March 1948 page 11.

47. MM 18 Dec 1946 48. MM 23 Jun 1947

49. MM 19 Feb 1948 50. MM 18 Jan 1949

51. MM 18 May 1949 52. MM 14 Jun 1950

53. South African Builder, August 1945 page 11.

SECTION 11. CONCLUSION

When I started researching this document it was my intention to not only chronicle the history of the early days of the local Master Builders' Association but also to try to identify the reasons why it developed as it did. Even at that stage it seemed apparant that there were two basic factors that would undoubtedly have had an effect on the growth of the organised industry. Firstly, since the MBA is merely one of a number of organizations active in the building industry in its broadest sense it was obvious that it could not be looked at in isolation; its position in relation to these other bodies would have to be examined. Secondly, because of the chronological sequence of events which brought this country under British influence in 1806, there was no doubt that any system that might be developed in South Africa would follow very closely the pattern already established in Great Britain. For these reasons I found it neccesary to look briefly at the development of the building industry in England.

Two occurrences can be seen to have had a major influence on the building industry as well as on the whole structure of society in England. Of primary significance in the evolution of modern civilization was the Industrial Revolution that brought about nothing less than a complete rearrangement of the social order; a move from the pastoral to the industrial, a change that would thrust this small island into the forefront of the nations of the world and extend its influence around the globe. The rise in industry and the consequent mass movement of the population to the towns and cities brought new demands on the then existing building industry, for now industrial and commercial buildings would be required,

and in ever increasing numbers as the years progressed. In addition, the need for housing on a scale never before envisioned would stretch the industry to its limit and dictate a more organised approach.

The Reform Act of 1832 was also destined to have an effect on the British population far beyond what had been intended when it was introduced. It served to foster the rise of a middle class and thus encouraged a change in the heirachical pattern of society, composed as it was formerly of the three estates, the knights, the church, and the yeomanry. There still remained three basic subdivisions but now they consisted of the nobility, the middle class, and what was euphemistically called 'the lower orders'. The barriers that served to differentiate these various divisions became more tenuous and a persons genealogy began to play a less influential role in determining his station in life. It now became possible for individuals in the lowest strata to move upward through hard work and opportunity into the second level and for successful members of the middle class to conceive of being elevated to the peerage and then tolerated, if not accepted, by the nobility. Financial success, however, was seen as a poor substitute for good breeding. The growth of this middle class also provided the building industry with a new catagory of client and one that would come to assume as much importance over the years as the various branches of the Public Service.

As a natural consequence of the rise of this industrial society came the fragmentation of the building industry into a number of parts and which eventually led to what has proved to be the unfortunate separation of design and construction. Along with the increase in volume of building work came a move toward more intricate projects designed to meet the needs

of more complex industries. No man could now hope to have a grasp of the whole spectrum and the building industry, in common with all others, gradually polarised. At first the division was simply between designers on the one hand and constructors on the other but from this came the three general areas of the building industry today, the design professionals, including architects and engineers, the control experts, of which the foremost member is the quantity surveyor, and the building team, comprising contractors, subcontractors and suppliers.

That the main thrust for this move toward separation came from the newly organised profession of architecture is not really surprising. Due, in part, to its close links with art and wih those aspects of civilization that were seen as refined and cultured, architecture was a socially acceptable pastime and practitioners of this noble pursuit could be drawn from the highest social levels. On the other hand, the great demand for buildings, in particular housing, and the relative ease with which individuals could enter the field of building and property development, attracted large numbers of persons whose sole aim was personal enrichment. Shady business practices abounded and the hordes of fly-by-night contractors imbued the industry with an image it is still fighting to discard. It was only natural that the architects should see themselves threatened and fight to retain their select standing as well as showing publicly that they were divorcing themselves from the more seamy side of building. It must also be stated that the subdivision of the building industry is not in itself a bad thing, there would have to be some way of spreading the workload and responsibility, and as long as each member was striving to fulfill his obligations with integrity, as professional men, then the system functioned well. It has only been the rise of the modern

ethic of 'self interest above all else' that has highlighted the serious flaws inherent in a system where one person designs something for another to construct, for in an uncomfortably large number of cases neither party seems able to, or worse still willing to, grasp the viewpoint of the other.

Thus it was to be expected that once the building industry in South Africa grew to the stage where some form of organisation was essential it would mirror the pattern established in Great Britain. If the industry had been able to develop along lines dictated by local circumstances it might have followed a different course, as did the industry in the United States where political developments forced a separation from the mother country and thereafter, no doubt, public sentiment assisted by discounting the value of anything English. The discovery of mineral wealth in South Africa also played a part, not only by providing the finance essential for growth but also by ensuring that British interest in this troublesome colony did no wane. It also provided the lure for a steady stream of immigrants who brought with them not only their individual skills and a spirit of adventure but also an appreciation of the structure of the industry they had left behind that was for them 'the right way of doing things'. It is interesting to speculate as to whether in fact there would have been a separate profession of quantity surveying in this country were it not for men such as Cecil John Rhodes who imported his own, for to him such a man was essential to the success of the schemes he had in mind.

Once the industry was established along the lines of that in England it would continue to follow the lead set by the parent body, for there were still very close ties between the colony and 'home', although

there would be modifications made to suit local circumstances. Two forces that over the years have exerted considerable influence on the industry and thus on the MBA, have been the fluctuating economic climate and the rise of the subcontractor. The first one was responsible for the early demise of the initial attempt at organisation, The Association of Masters in the Building Trade, and later brought the new association close to extinction. The membership of the MBA fluctuated in sympathy with the state of the general economy and its effectiveness as a body obviously suffered as a consequence. During the lean years just prior to the Great War even executive meetings were unable to muster a quorum so that, although still extant, the ability of the body to function was obvioulsy seriously impaired. One area of my research that might repay further study involved trying to determine some way of monitoring the response of the Association to the climate prevailing in the business world at the time. By identifying the six basic objectives of the Association and catagorising the items dealt with in each of the meetings held I was able to draw a graph showing those items that were occupying the attention of the body at any specific time. I then attempted to match this to a curve indicating the prevailing level of economic activity in the Colony and obtained some interesting results which would seem to point to a correlation between them. Whether this reearch is worth pursuing, whether it is of any intrinsic value, could only be determined by further study and I decided it was beyond the scope of this document. For interest I have included a brief section of this work under Appendix C.

The rise in the number of subcontractor members of the Association is simply a reflection of the change that has come over the whole industry and, in effect, is a further development of the move toward specialization

that brought about the subdivision of the industry and from which all the organizations associated with it were spawned. It continues to be encouraged by the complexity of modern life, in itself one of the ever-widening ripples that began when the Industrial Revolution disturbed the relative tranquility of a pastoral society. If the analogy is a true one then it can be anticipated that the trend will continue, more and more specialist firms practising in ever more restricted fields of expertise. Certainly this tendency has made itself manifest in other areas of life and in recent years, when the economic climate has permitted, there has been a proliferation of subcontracting firms in the industry offering skills in very narrow areas of work.

The future of the industry could well lie in that direction such that South Africa will be able to boast an even smaller handful of large concerns able to tackle the multi-million rand projects of commerce and industry than it does today. Beyond that the industry would consist largely of small firms handling minor works, individual houses and the like, along with a large variety of subcontracting firms. One would then see an even greater disparity than that already apparant in the industry which at present has over 72% of firms with less than ten employees whilst fewer than 3% employ more than 200 persons, (somewhat comparable figures from the United Kingdom indicate that almost 77% of building firms employ less than seven persons whilst only a fraction of one percent have more than six hundred employees). Another factor that will favour this trend is the high cost of money which requires a contractor to not only have substantial financial backing if he is to compete for the major projects but which also puts a premium on strict managerial policies within the organisation. It may be that the present explosion in computer technology

and its application to construction will bring the neccesary control skills within the reach of the smaller concerns and enable them to continue to compete with the large firms in certain sectors of the market place.

The building industry is beginning to command more respect among the general public, even though the disasters attendant upon having dealings with a builder still form a favourite topic of conversation at cocktail parties. The growing stature of the university courses in Building Management is no doubt a contributing factor in bringing about an improved image for the industry but more could no doubt be done to enhance this. One aspect that has not been exploited to the full is the contribution that the industry has made over the years to the history of civilization. The past has little value in the eyes of most members of the fraternity and yet it is respect for the past that forms the foundation for culture. The trend today is to look back at the past almost with reverence and most of the established disciplines take a pride in the milestones and achievements of their forebears. It is high time the building industry encouraged just such a feeling amongst its own members. Beyond this, too, there should really be a core of knowledge regarding building, established on the work of past generations of builders, that should be treasured as an inheritance for all wishing to enter the field at whatever level. Only then can building as such be elevated above the level of skills training to that of a fully fledged professional discipline. As an industry it deserves nothing less, it certainly has the foundation on which to build, one that was constructed stone by laborious stone by men whose stature is in no way inferior to those of other walks of life, a heritage of which to be proud. Perhaps this thesis will make some small contribution in that direction.

THE END.

Peter Butt

30th January 1984.

Appendix A

APPENDIX A

Membership list and basic rules of
'The Association of Masters in the Building Trade.'

Membership List:

BALL T
CAW R
DIXON A
FISH F +
FOULDS J *
HORN I
JACK R G *
KITCH W +
LINDER A
MACKIE P + *
McLACHLAN R *
McFARLANE D *
MILLAR C
MILLS S B *
MORRIS R H *
PROCTOR J
RIDDLE T
SAWKINS A W
SKIPTON R
WHYTE S
WILSON A
WITHINSHAW G
WYLLIE J
BRADFORD G *
CHRIST J
DONNAN H *
FORBES P
GREEN R
HUMPHRIES A
JENKINSON J *
LEE W
LOCK C
MAXWELL J *
McLACHLAN W +
McMEEKEN A
MILLS R
MITCHELL R + *
MURRAY F
REID A B *
ROBERTSON J + *
SCOTT J *
SMART G +
WILKINSON W
WINGATE G +
WOLTERS W

\+ Original members.
* Members whose names appear in the 1906 MBA List.

The Original Ten Rules

1) The Association is to be known as the 'Association of Masters in the Building Trade' and its object is to guard the interests of the trade generally, promote cooperation with the authorities, architects, and owners of property.

2) Anyone recognised as a master in any of the several branches of the building trade is eligible to become a member, provided he was nominated by a member and duly elected at a meeting at which a minimum of five members were present.

3) The Chairman and two members, who are to be elected annually, would form the Committee of Management.

4) General meetings are to be held monthly on the second Wednesday of each month.

5) Meetings are to be held in the Board Room of the S A Fire Assurance Company of Cape Town Ltd., 54 St Georges Street.

Appendix A

6) The annual subscription will be £1.1.0.

7) The maximum rate of wages to be paid will be fixed. All work over 51 hours will be considered overtime. The agreed rates (laid down in a separate schedule) will not apply to men engaged before the 29th February 1892.

8) Disputes that arise can be put to the Association who will then form a committee who will investigate and then give an opinion.

9) No member is to agree to enter any contract requiring personal security. Architect's quantities are to be guaranteed and will be paid for in the first certificate.

10) This contained a procedure by which the rules can be changed to suit revised circumstances.

The rates of pay prevailing at the time were as follows, weekly figures apply to a 51 hour working week:

Carpenters and Joiners	1s 1½d per hour
Bricklayers & Plasterers	1s 1½d per hour
Plumbers	£3.0.0 per week
Painters	1s 0d per hour
Labourers	18s 0d per week

Overtime rates were calculated at time-and-a-half up to midnight and double time after midnight and on Sundays.

THE MASTER BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION (CAPE TOWN AND DISTRICT) later THE MASTER BUILDERS' AND ALLIED TRADES' ASSOCIATION (Cape Peninsula)

List of Office Bearers from 1901 to 1950.

YEAR/ AGM Date:	1901 (April 1)	1902 (March 26)	1903 (March30)	1904 (March28)	1905 (March 27)	1906 (March 2)	1907 (Oct 17)	1908 (Oct 2)
PRESIDENT:	J Jenkinson	A B Reid	J Maxwell	J Maxwell	J Z Drake	J Z Drake	J Z Drake	J Z Drake
VICE PRESIDENT:	- - -	- - -	- - -	J Z Drake	J Cran	J Rayner	S A Eddy	A Plint
TREASURER:	H Donnan	A B Reid	J Z Drake	J E Dike	A B Reid	A B Reid	J Maxwell	J Maxwell
COMMITTEE:	J Z Drake A Hopkins P Mackie A B Reid C Rutherford	H Donnan J Z Drake A Hopkins T Howard J Maxwell	H Donnan J Rayner A B Reid C Rutherford	J Cran J E Dike J Muil J Rayner C Rutherford	G Hankinson T Howard J Maxwell C Rutherford F B Smith	J Cran T Davie J E Dike S A Eddy A Gray T Howard G Kinnes J Maxwell C Rutherford F B Smith H E Tennant	J Cran T Davie J E Dike H Evans T Howard R Jack R H Morris A Plint J Rayner F B Smith	J Cran J R Foulds W Harper R Jack W J Parrack J Rayner F B Smith R Sutherland J Woolacott
SECRETARY:	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	W J Coleman	A Bagnall/ D Boyd/ C H Greenway

YEAR/ AGM Date	1909 (Oct 11)	1910 (Oct 14)	1911 (Jan 17,1912)	1912 (Oct 16)	1913 (Oct 27)	1914 (Nov 3)	1915 (Nov 17)	1916 (Oct 11)
PRESIDENT:	J Z Drake	G H Eddy	G H Eddy	G H Eddy	W H Tidswell	W H Tidswell	J Z Drake	J Z Drake
VICE PRESIDENT:	A Plint	J Maxwell	J Cran	J Cran	J Z Drake	J Z Drake	G Bradford	A Plint
TREASURER:	A Sutherland	W Harper	W Harper	W Harper	W Harper	A Plint	A Plint	J McNeill
COMMITTEE:	J Cran G H Eddy S A Eddy J R Foulds W Harper J Maxwell P Plows F B Smith J Woolacott	F Bosen J Cowley J Cran J Z Drake A Hunter A Plint W H Tidswell	J Cowley J Z Drake W Harper A Hunter J Maxwell A Plint	J Cowley J Z Drake J Hewitt A Hunter James J Maxwell A Plint	J Cowley J Cran T J Donnelly G H Eddy J Hewitt A Hunter J McNeill A Plint A B Reid	Babb J Cowley T J Donnelly G H Eddy Gadsby J Hewitt J McNeill A B Reid	G Allin J Cowley G H Eddy J Hewitt James J McNeill Pender A B Reid F B Smith W H Tidswell	G Allin J Bothwell G Bradford J Cowley G H Eddy J Hewitt Musterton McCann E J Nason Pender
SECRETARY	C H Greenway	C H Greenway	C H Greenway	C H Greenway	C H Greenway	C H Greenway	G N Bronchead A C Crichton	A C Crichton

YEAR/AGM Date:	1917 (Oct 29)	1918 (No AGM)	1919 (Jan 8)	1920 (Jan 21)	1921 (Jan 27)	1922 (Jan 18)	1923 (Feb 7)	1924 (Feb 6)
PRESIDENT:	A Plint	(Committee (Remained	A Plint -	A Plint	E J Nason	E J Nason	E J Nason	F Bakker
VICE PRESIDENT:	M J Adams	(Unchanged (Over This	E J Nason	E J Nason	J R Hodden	J R Hodden	F Bakker	A Briggs
TREASURER:	Masterton	(Period.	A Briggs	A Briggs	A Briggs	A Briggs	A Briggs	H Weir
COMMITTEE:	G Allin Brimble J Z Drake G H Eddy J R Hedden James McCann E J Nason Pender A B Reid F B Smith		Dell J E Dike J Z Drake G H Eddy J R Hedden J Hewitt James Pender A B Reid	J E Dike G H Eddy J R Hedden J Hewitt A Hunter Pender A B Reid F B Smith W H Tidswell	M J Adams Boyd J E Dike G H Eddy C R Hayward C McCarthy A B Reid Trevelyan H Weir	M J Adams J N Bird J E Dike G H Eddy W McKillop Pender A B Reid G Scott H E Tennant H Weir	M J Adams J N Bird G H Eddy J R Hedden W McKillop J Nichol A B Reid H E Tennant H Weir G G Withinshaw	M J Adams R H Buchanan G H Eddy J R Hodden A Hunter W McKillop E J Nason J Nichol A B Reid H E Tennant G G Withinshaw
SECRETARY:	A C Crichton	A C Crichton	A C Crichton	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett

YEAR/AGM Date:	1925 (Feb 19)	1926 (Feb 25)	1927 (Feb 8)	1928 (Mar 28)	1929 (Apr 3)	1930 (Apr 2)	1931 (Feb 25)	1932 (Feb 24)
PRESIDENT:	F Bakker	F Bakker	J R Hedden	J R Hedden	J R Hedden	J N Bird	M J Adams	M J Adams
VICE PRESIDENT:	A Briggs	A Briggs	D Cag	D Cag	J N Bird	M J Adams	E J Forster	E J Forster
TREASURER:	H Weir	E J Nason	E J Nason	E J Nason	E J Nason	E J Forster	H E Tennant	H E Tennant
COMMITTEE:	M J Adams J N Bird G H Eddy J R Hedden A Hunter R Leigh W C Pinder A B Reid G Scott H E Tennant	M J Adams J N Bird J Catto C R Hayward J R Hedden A Hunter G R Laughton S Moffat W C Pinder G Scott L C R Steed H E Tennant	M J Adams F Bakker J N Bird A Carr J Catto J Eddie G R Laughton S Moffat W C Pinder L C R Steed R Stubbs H E Tennant	M J Adams F Bakker A Carr J Catto J Eddie F W Lardner S Moffat W C Pinder H H Scowen R Stubbs H E Tennant H O Young	M J Adams F Bakker J Catto (PL) R B Crittall (BM) J Forster R Hunter F W Lardner W C Pinder (PB) A Pinner H H Scowen (EL) H E Tennant (PT) H Weir H O Young (BM)	F Bakker H Bakker R B Crittall (BM) J R Hedden E J Hingle (PL) R Hunter W C Pinder (PB) A Pinner H E Tennant (PT) H Weir F Wezenbeek (FS) H O Young (BM)	F Bakker H Bakker J N Bird (EL) R B Crittall (BM) J R Hedden E J Hingle (PL) J Korte W C Pinder (PB) A Pinner G Robson (PT) F Wezenbeek (FS) H O Young (BM)	F Bakker H Bakker R B Crittall (BM) A S Cruickshank E J Hingle (PL) J Korte J McKillop (MS) W C Pinder (PB) A Pinner C J Smith G Robson (PT) H O Young (BM)
SECRETARY:	W H Bennett	W H Bennet	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett

YEAR/AGM Date:	1933 (Feb 15)	1934 (Feb 14)	1935 (Feb 27)	1936 (Feb 19)	1937 (Feb 24)	1938 (Feb 23)	1939 (Feb 22)	1940 (Feb 14)
PRESIDENT:	M J Adams	E J Forster	J R Hedden	J R Hedden	H O Young	J N Bird	J N Bird	C Bakker
VICE PRESIDENTS 1:	E J Forster	J R Hedden	H O Young	H O Young	J N Bird	C Bakker	C Bakker	B B Bruce
2:	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	C Bakker	A H Miller	H M Dembitzer	H M Dembitzer
TREASURER:	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant
COMMITTEE:	C A Abbot	F Bakker	C A Abbot	H Bakker	H Bakker	H Bakker	H Bakker	G Allin
	B K Anderson	H Bakker	H Bakker	J N Bird (EL)	R L Bridgman	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	H Bakker
	F Bakker	J N Bird (EL)	J N Bird (EL)	R B Crittall (BM)	H Brinkman	R L Bridgman	R L Bridgman	J Boyd (SF)
	H Bakker	W Harper	R B Crittall (BM)	G A Granelli	J H Bruce	H Brinkman	B B Bruce (PT)	R L Bridgman
	R B Crittall (BM)	E J Hingle (PL)	O A Hawkins	O A Hawkins	C U Church	B B Bruce (PT)	F W Buckland	R A Briggs (SF)
	E J Hingle (PL)	J Korte	E J Hingle (PL)	E J Hingle (PL)	E J Forster	F W Buckland	B Chapman (OT)	F W Buckland
	J Korte	W McKillop (MN)	J Korte	J Korte	G A Granelli	C U Church	T J Donnelly	B Chapman (OT)
	W McKillop (MN)	D Murray	W McKillop (PB)	W McKillop (MN)	A B Harper	H M Dembitzer (OT)	E J Forster	T J Donnelly
	W C Pinder (PB)	W C Pinder (PB)	W C Pinder (PB)	W C Pinder (PB)	O A Hawkins	E J Forster	W H Geach	E J Forster
	G Robson (PT)	G Robson (PT)	G Robson (PT)	G Robson (PT)	C Hedden	W H Geach	C Hedden	C Hedden
	C J Smith	C J Smith	F Slater	F Slater	E J Hingle (PL)	C Hedden	E J Hingle (PL)	E J Hingle (PL)
	H O Young (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	J R Watson	J R Watson	J G Hyland (EL)	E J Hingle (PL)	W J Hutcheson (EL)	J G Hyland (EL)
		H O Young (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	J Korte	W J Hutcheson (EL)	J Korte	J Korte
					N McFarlane (MN)	H G Kinsman	A H Miller	N McFarlane (MN)
					D R McIntyre	J Korte	N McFarlane (MN)	J Passet
					A H Miller	N McFarlane (MN)	H Morton (GL)	W C Pinder (PB)
					J Passet	D R McIntyre	J Passet	H R Skinner
					W C Pinder (PB)	H Morton (GL)	W C Pinder (PB)	J Stuart
					G Robson (PT)	J Passet	R V Ritchie	G H Walton (PB)
					F Slater	W C Pinder (PB)	J Stuart	A C Warr
					J Stuart	F Slater	A C Warr	H A Wilkins (BM)
					R Stubbs (RS)	J Stuart	H A Wilkins (BM)	A A Wintour (OT)
					H A Wilkins(BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	A A Wintour (OT)	P J Woods (EL)
					A Wintour (CT)	A A Wintour (OT)	P J Woods (EL)	H O Young (BM)
SECRETARY:	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett	W H Bennett A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson

YEAR/AGM Date:	1941 (Feb 19)	1942 (Feb 25)	1943 (Feb24)	1944 (Feb23)	1945 (Feb 22)	1946 (Feb 20)	1947 (Mar 6)	1948 (Mar 3)
PRESIDENT:	H M Dambitzer	H M Dambitzer	H Bakker	H Bakker	F B Blomkamp	F B Blomkamp	A C Warr	A C Warr
VICE PRESIDENT 1:	B B Bruce	B B Bruce	R L Bridgman	W H Geach	B Chapman	A C Warr	H A Cundill	B Chapman
2:	H Bakker	H Bakker	W H Geach	A C Warr	A C Warr	H A Cundill	E Stuart	A J McCarthy
TREASURER:	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	H E Tennant	F B Blomkamp	H A Cundill	E Stuart	B Chapman	G Joyce
COMMITTEE:	G Allin	G Allin	G Allin	G Allin	G Allin	R Archer	C Bakker	C Bakker
	R L Bridgman	R L Bridgman	F B Blomkamp	C Bakker	C Bakker	C Bakker	H Bakker	H Bakker
	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	J N Bird (OT)	J N Bird (OT)	J N Bird (OT)	J N Bird (OT)	J N Bird (OT)
	F W Buckland	B Chapman (OT)	R W Y Brice	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	J Boyd (SF)	R W Y Brice
	B Chapman (OT)	J Cohen	B B Bruce (PT)	R W Y Brice	R W Y Brice	R W Y Brice	R W Y Brice	B Bruce (PT)
	T J Donnelly	T J Donnelly	J Bruce	R L Bridgman	R L Bridgman	R L Bridgman	R L Bridgman	F Buckland
	E J Forster	E J Forster	B Chapman (OT)	J Bruce	B B Bruce (PT)	B Bruce (PT)	B Bruce (PT)	J A Clift
	C Hedden	C Hedden	J Cohen	B Chapman (OT)	H M Dambitzer	B Chapman (OT)	F Buckland	C E Grundlingh
	E J Hingle (PL)	E J Hingle (PL)	J G Hyland (EL)	J Cohen	W H Geach	A S Findlay (BM)	J A Clift (MN)	W J Hutcheson (EL)
	J G Hyland (EL)	J G Hyland (EL)	J Korte	J A Granelli	J A Granelli	W H Geach	A S Findlay (BM)	M Hyland (EL)
	N Kennedy	N Kennedy	N McFarlane (MN)	C E Grundlingh	C E Grundlingh	J A Granelli	J A Granelli	J R McFarlane (MN)
	J Korte	J Korte	A H Miller	J G Hyland (EL)	C Hedden	C E Grundlingh	C E Grundlingh	M Michaels (CL)
	N McFarlane (MN)	N McFarlane (MN)	W H Nubel (CL)	E W Jenkins (MN)	E W Jenkin (MN)	C Hedden	C Hedden	A H Miller
	W H Nubel (CL)	A H Miller	T Pattullo (PL)	N McFarlane (MN)	A J McCarthy	W J Hutcheson (EL)	W J Hutcheson (EL)	T Pattullo (PL)
	J Passet	W H Nubel (CL)	W C Pinder (PB)	A H Miller	D McGregor	E W Jenkin (MN)	M Hyland (EL)	A Saporsky (BM)
	T Pattullo (PL)	T Pattullo (PL)	L A Steens	W H Nubel (CL)	A H Miller	B Joffe	G Joyce	J A Schep
	W C Pinder (PB)	W C Pinder (PB)	J Schut (PB)	T Pattullo (PL)	W H Nubel	A J McCarthy	A J McCarthy	L A Steens
	J Stuart	J Stuart	E Stuart (EL)	C F Smit	C F Smit	A H Miller	J R McFarlane (MN)	E Stuart (EL)
	L A Steens	L A Steens	J Stuart	L A Steens	L A Steens	W H Nubel (CL)	M Michaels (CL)	G B Walton (PB)
	A C Warr	A C Warr	A C Warr	E Stuart (EL)	E Stuart (EL)	T Pattullo (PL)	A H Miller	
	H A Wilkins (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	J Stuart	J Traill-Wood	J Schut (PB)	W H Nubel (CL)	
	A A Wintour (OT)	A A Wintour (OT)	A A Wintour (OT)	G B Walton (PB)	R Van Veen (PL)	C F Smit	T Pattullo (PL)	
	P J Woods (EL)	P J Woods (EL)	H O Young (BM)	H A Wilkins (BM)	G B Walton (PB)	L A Steens	L A Steens	
	H O Young (BM)	H O Young (BM)		A A Wintour (OT)	A A Wintour (OT)	J W Todd	G B Walton	
SECRETARY:	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson	A N Thompson

YEAR/AGM Date:	1949 (Feb 16)	1950 (Feb 21)
PRESIDENT:	C Bakker	T Pattullo
VICE PRESIDENT 1:	T Pattullo	F Buckland
2:	F Buckland	R W Y Brice
TREASURER:	G Joyce	G Joyce
COMMITTEE:	H Bakker	C Bakker
	W Berry	W Berry
	J N Bird (OT)	J N Bird (OT)
	F B Blomkamp	F B Blomkamp
	R W Y Brice	B Bruce (PT)
	F Briggs	J A Clift
	B Bruce (PT)	J Cohen
	B Chapman	D Collins
	J A Clift (MN)	C E Goudlingh
	D Collins	M Hyland (EL)
	M Hyland (EL)	B Joffe
	B Joffe	A Meyer
	A J McCarthy	M Michaels (GL)
	M Michaels (GL)	A H Miller
	A H Miller	A Sagorsky (BM)
	A Sagorsky (BM)	J Schep
	J Schep	J Schut (PB)
	J Schut (PB)	H R Skinner (BM)
	H R Skinner (BM)	L A Steens
	L A Steens	E Stuart (EL)
	E Stuart (EL)	J W Todd
	J W Todd	G B Walton (PB)
	G B Walton	A C Warr
SECRETARY:	A N Thompson	A N Thompson

NOTE: From the year 1929 onwards individual members of the Committee were appointed to represent the interests of specific sub-trades. This is indicated by the letters in parentheses after the name. They represent the following trades:-

- BM Builders Merchants
- CT Cement Suppliers
- EL Electrical Contractors
- FS Flooring Specialists
- GL Glaziers
- MN Masons
- OT Other Trades
- PB Plumbers
- PL Plasterers
- PT Painters
- RS Reinforcing Steel Suppliers
- SF Shopfitters

Appendix C

APPENDIX C

Investigation into the response of the MBA to the Economic Climate

Whilst researching into the original Minute Books of the local Master Builders' Association it occurred to me that since the organization operates in the business world it might be interesting to see how the matters being dealt with at any one time reflect the then prevailing state of the business world. It also seemed feasible that the nature of the Association's business would change over the years, notably during the first formative period. Logically in the early years the members would be far more concerned wth establishing themselves as a body of some stature in the business world than they would be once they were fully recognised. In this way the pattern of the items dealt with by the Committee would change over the years as well as in response to the economy of the country.

I therefore set out to catagorise each of the recorded meetings in terms of the basic aspects of the stated 'raison d'etre' of the Association. From the first association formed through to the present Building Industries Federation the basic aims and objectives show a marked correlation, as one would expect. The Association of Masters in the Building Trade had ten basic rules (see Appendix A p279), the 1906 'Articles of Association' of the Cape Town Master Builders' and Contractors' Association lists eight points under the heading 'Objects of the Association, and the 'Building and Allied Industries Official Handbook' (25th edition 1981) has five objectives listed under the heading 'Principal Aims and Objectives'. For the purpose of this investigation I listed six basic aims as fundamental to the organization and these are set out in detail in Section 6 of this document, briefly they are:-

1) To guard the interests of the employers

2) To preserve good relations within the trade, i.e. with subcontractors and merchants etc.

3) To represent the employers with the authorities and professions.

4) To represent the employers in dealing with the Labour Unions.

5) To protect the interests of their individual members.

6) To handle general business, including social events.

Every item discussed at each meeting of the Committee or General Membership was then fitted into one or other of the above catagories. These were accumulated and totalled on a yearly basis in order to give some idea of the amount of time spent by the Association in fulfilling its duties under each of the basic objectives. Having done that I then subdivided the six objectives into two general fields Nos 1, 5, & 6 being grouped together as dealing with business that was within the MBA's sphere of influence itself, that is time spent handling matters directly to do with the Association itself or its

Appendix C

members. The other three objectives, Nos 2, 3, & 4 were then amalgamated as representing time spent by the Association in dealing with affairs involving persons or firms outside its own membership.

It seemed likely that in the early years of the organisation a good deal of time would be spent on the second general class, that is in dealing wth outsiders since the formative years would require a good deal of public relations work in order for the Association to establish itself in the business community. This assumption was borne out by the graphical representation of my investigation and the first four years show a marked tendency in that direction. Then it seemed logical that as the economic affairs of the colony fell away and the years of depression arrived more and more time would be spent in caring for internal matters, assisting members and ensuring the continued existence of the MBA itself. This too is indicated in the early part of the graph.

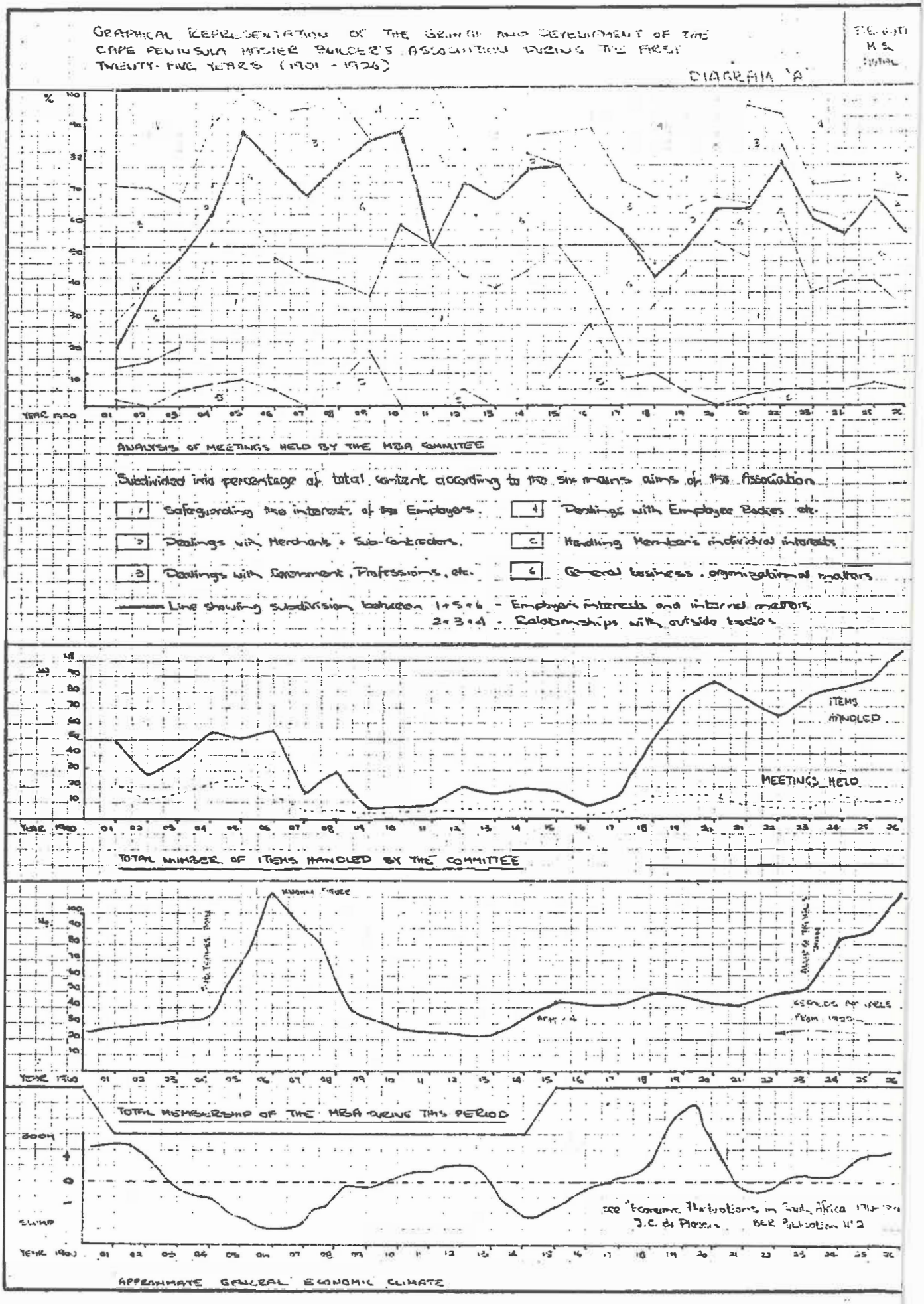
However I decided that the scope of this document was already too large to allow me to incorporate these findings within its pages, apart from the fact that a good deal more time would be needed to check the initial impression. This would particularly be the case since a rapid survey of the years up to 1936 showed almost the reverse correlation as time progressed. Obviously a lot of extra investigation would be required if the work produced was to be accurate and to be of any use. Whether it would serve to emphasise the kind of economic indicator graph that is produced by the BER on business mood and could then be used as providing additional indication of the future trend of the business cycle could only be determined after long and careful study. Perhaps, in the long term it would merely help to reinforce the ideas of Elsworth Huntington set out in his book 'Mainsprings of Civilization' where he relates mankinds general history to long period cycles in the weather and other phenomena. However that will have to be left to another time.

The following two diagrams give some idea of the type of graph I was producing at that time. Diagram A shows the analysis of the meetings with the bold line representing the dividing line between the two general catagories mentioned. Below that are shown diagrams giving an indication of the total number of meetings held and items covered, as this could well affect the accuracy of the findings during those years when few meetings were held. The overall membership of the MBA is plotted, although a large section of that graph is supposition based on few actual recorded figures. Finally a general trend curve of the economic climate is given, this too being very conceptual and based on expressions regarding the economy recorded in magazines and newspapers together with the reference work cited.

Diagram B is an attempt to link more directly the economic graph with the 'average' line that plots the fluctuations of the items handled in the meetings as subdivided into the two main sections. Again one sees an early relationship between the two curves that then seems to go 'out of phase' but then not enough work was done to be able to make any statements either one way or the other and the two diagrams are included for interest's sake only.

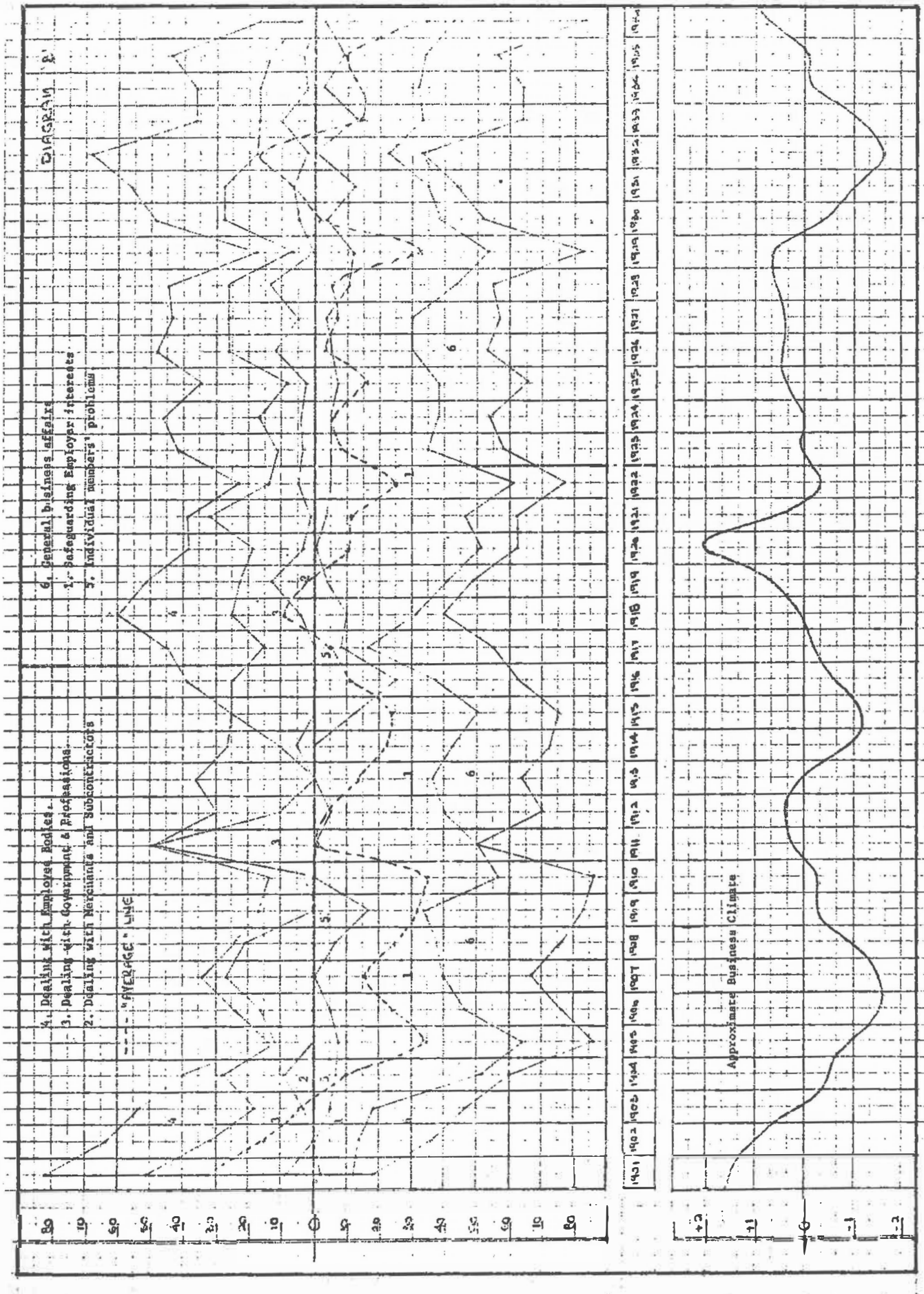
Appendix C

Diagram A



Appendix C

Diagram B



Bibliography

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS.

BARNARD,Lady Anne, "South Africa a Century Ago."
Cape Town. Maskew Miller. 1953.
223pp. illus.

BARTHOLOMEW, Alfred. "Specifications for Practical Architecture, preceded by an essay on the decline of excellence in the Structure and in the Science of Modern English Buildings: with the proposal of remedies for those defects."
London. John Williams Library of Fine Art. 1840.
Unnumbered pages, 54 chapters, 4705 clauses, appendices, index, illustrations.

BEARD,G W. "The Work of Robert Adam."
New York. Arco. 1978.
224pp. illus. map.

BOWLEY, Marion. "The British Building Industry: Four studies in response and resistance to change."
London. Cambridge University Press. 1966.
488pp. tables. index.

BOWYER, Jack. "History of Building."
London. Crosby Lockwood Staples. 1973.
272pp. index. illus.

BRIGGS, A S A. "The nineteenth century; the contradictions of progress."
London. Thames and Hudson. 1970.
360pp. illus. maps. biblio.

BRIGG S,Martin Shaw. "The Architect in History."
Oxford. The Clarendon Press. 1927.
400pp. index. illus.

BRIGG S,Martin Shaw. "A Short History of the Building Crafts"
Oxford. The Clarendon Press. 1925.
296pp. illus.

BUTLER, C McArthur. "The Society of Architects."
London. W S Cowell Ltd. 1925.
94pp. index. illus. appdcs.

COETZEE, J A Grey. "Industrial Relations in South Africa: An event structure of labour."
Cape Town. Juta & Company Ltd. 1976.
238pp. index. illus. biblio.

COWAN, H J. "The Master Builders, a history of structural and environmental design from ancient Egypt to the nineteenth century"
New York. John Wiley. 1977.
299pp. illus. plans.

Bibliography

CUMMING-GEORGE, L. "Architecture in South Africa, Volume 1 1933."
Cape Town. The Speciality Press. 1933.
216pp. plates. plans. index.

CUMMING-GEORGE, L. "Architecture in South Africa, Volume 2 1934."
Cape Town. The Speciality Press. 1934.
131pp. plates. plans. index.

DAVEY, Norman. "A History of Building Materials."
London. Phoenix House. 1961.
260pp. index. illus. appdx.

DE KIEWET, C W. "A History of South Africa. Social and Economic."
Oxford. Oxford University Press. 1941.
292pp. index. maps. appdx.

DE PUYFONTAINE, Huguette Roy. "Louis Michel Thibault 1750 -1815, His official life at the Cape of Good Hope."
Cape Town. Tafelberg. 1972.
144pp. 22 plates. maps. biblio.

DERRY,T K & WILLIAMS,T I. "A Short History of Technology, from the earliest times to AD 1900."
Oxford. Oxford University Press. 1960.
782pp. illus. maps.

DOLAN, Denis F. "The British Construction Industry, an Introduction."
London. The Macmillan Press. 1979.
106pp. index. biblio.

EDWARDS,R & RAMSAY,L G. "The Early Victorian Period." - Volume 6 of The Connoisseur period guides to the housing, decoration, furnishings, and chattels of the classic periods.
London. Connoisseur. 1956.
6 volumes. illus. plates.

EVANS, Joan. "The Flowering of the Middle Ages."
London. Thames and Hudson. 1966.
360pp. plates. maps. plans.

FAIRBRIDGE, Dorothea. "A History of South Africa."
Oxford. Oxford University Press. 1918.
319pp. illus. maps.

FEHR, W. "The Old Town House, its place in the history of Cape Town."
Cape Town. The Board & The Council. 1955.
52pp. illus. plates.

FISH, W F. "The Autobiography of a Counter Jumper."
London. Lutterworths. 1929.
301pp. illus. plates.

GODEE-MOLSBERGEN,F. "South African History told in Pictures."
Amsterdam. Van Looy. 1913.
140pp. illus.

Bibliography

GREEN, Lawrence G. "Grow Lovely, Growing Old, the story of Cape Town's three centuries."
Cape Town. Timmins. 1951.
271pp. plates.

HARVEY,J H. "The Master Builders, architecture in the Middle Ages"
London. Thames & Hudson. 1971.
144pp. illus. maps. plans. biblio.

HATTERSLEY, Alan F. "An Illustrated Social History of South Africa."
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1969.
261pp. index. illus. notes and references to each chapter.

HATTERSLEY, Alan F. "A Victorian Lady at the Cape 1849-51."
Cape Town. Maskew Miller. 1951.
111pp. plates.

HOBHOUSE, Hermione. "Thomas Cubitt, Master Builder."
London. Macmillan London Ltd. 1971.
568pp. index. illus. appdcs. notes. select biblio.

HORREL, Muriel. "South Africa's Workers. Their Organizations and the Patterns of Employment."
Johannesburg. South African Institute of Race Relations. 1969.
153pp. index. appdcs.

IMMELMAN, R F M. & QUINN, G D. "The Preservation and Restoration of HGistoric Buildings in South Africa."
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1968.
98pp. plates. index. notes.

JUSSERAND, J J. "English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages."
London. Ernest Benn. 1889.
Translated by Lucy Torbanin Smith.

KAYE, Barrington. "The Development of the Architectural Profession in Britain, A Sociological Study."
London. George Allen & Unwin. 1960.
223pp. index. appdcs. biblio.

KIDDIER, William. "The Old Trade Unions, from unprinted records of the Brushmakers. New edition made in close observance of the author's MS."
London George Allen & Unwin. 1930
245pp. index. illus.

KIRBY,R S. "Engineering in History"
New York. McGraw Hill. 1956.
530pp. illus.

LAIDLER, P W. "The Growth and Government of Cape Town."
Cape Town. Unie-Volspers. 1939.
525pp. photos. refs.

Bibliography

LANGHAM-CARTER, R R. "Old St Georges, the story of Cape Town's first cathedral"
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1976.
90pp. illus.

LEESON, R A. "Travelling Brothers, The six centuries' road from craft fellowship to trade unionism."
London. George Allen & Unwin. 1979
348pp. index. illus. appdcs. biblio. notes.

LEWCOCK, Ronald. "Early Nineteenth Century Architecture in South Africa. A study of the interaction of two cultures 1795 - 1837."
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1963.
451pp. index. illlus. references. biblio.

"Men of the Times. Old Colonists of the Cape Colony."
Johannesburg. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 1906.
645pp. index. illus.

MUSSON, A E. "British Trade Unions, 1800 - 1875."
London. The Macmillan Press Ltd. 1972.
80pp index. selected biblio.

NORRIE, Charles Mathew. "Bridging the Years, A short history of British Civil Engineering."
London. Edward Arnold Ltd. 1956.
212pp. index. illus. appdcs.

OBERHOLSTER,J J. "The Historical Monuments of South Africa"
Cape Town. Rembrandt van Rijn Foundation. 1972.
354pp. 12plates. illus. maps.

PAMA, C. "Vintage Cape Town."
Cape Town. Tafelberg. 1973.
178pp. illus. maps. plans.

PANNELL, J P M. "An Illustrated History of Civil Engineering."
London. Thames & Hudson. 1964.
376pp. illus. biblio.

PICARD, H W J. "Gentleman's Walk; the romantic story of Cape Town's oldest streets, lanes, and squares."
Cape Town. Struik. 1968.
189pp. 39 plates. illus. plans.

PICARD, H W J. "Grand Parade; the birth of greater Cape Town, 1850 - 1915."
Cape Town. Struik. 1969.
176pp. 41 plates. illus. plans.

PICTON-SEYMOUR, Desiree. "Victorian Buildings in South Africa."
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1977.
412pp. index. illus. biblio.

Bibliography

POWELL, C G. "An Economic History of the British Building Industry, 1815 - 1979."
London. The Architectural Press. 1980.
211pp. index. illus. biblio. notes.

RAVEN-HART, R. "Cape of Good Hope 1652 - 1702. The First Fifty Years of Dutch Colonization as seen by Callers."
Cape Town. A A Balkema. 1971.
2 Volumes.

ROLT, L T C. "Victorian Engineering."
Harmondsworth. Allen Lane The Penguin Press. 1970.
300pp. index. illus. select biblio.

ROSENTHAL, Eric. "300 Years of the Castle at Cape Town."
Stellenbosch. Pro Ecclesia Printing Works Ltd. 1966.
112pp. illus.

ROSENTHAL, E. "They Helped to Build Cape Town, the story of R H Morris."
Cape Town. The Firm. 1958.
37pp. illus. 80th birthday souvenir.

SANDSTROM, G E. "Man the Builder."
New York. McGraw Hill. 1970.
280pp. illus. biblio.

SHAND, P Morton. "Building - The Evolution of an Industry."
London. Token Construction Co Ltd. 1954.
85pp. illus.

STAMP, Gavin & AMERY, Colin. "Victorian Buildings of London 1837 - 1887, An Illustrated Guide."
Londn. The Architectural Press. 1980.
174pp. index. lists.

SUMMERSON, John. "The Architectural Association, 1847 - 1947."
London. Pleiades Books Limited. 1947.
53pp. index. illus.

SUMMERSON, John. "Heavenly Mansions, and other essays in architecture"
London. Crosset Press. 1949.
253pp. illus. plates. diag.

SUMMERSON, John. "The Architecture of Victorian London."
Charlottesvill. Virginia Universty Press. 1976.
111pp. illus.

SUMMERSON, John. "Georgian London."
London. Pleiades Books Limited. 1945.
315pp. index. illus. appdcs.

TAIT, B C. "Cape Cameos - the story of Cape Town in a new way."
Cape Town. Stewart. 1948.
illus. plates. maps.

Bibliography

THOMPSON, F M L. "Chartered Surveyors, the growth of a profession."
London. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1968.
400pp. index. illus. appdcs.

THE TIMES, "The City of London."
London. Times Publishing Company Ltd. 1927.
231pp. index. illus. names of contributors.

TROTTER Mrs A P. "Old Cape Colony - A Chronicle of Her Men and Houses from 1625 to 1806."
Cape Town. The Cape Times. 1898.
44pp. illus.

TUBBS, Ralph. "The Englishman Builds."
Harmondsworth. Penguin Books. 1945.
74pp. illus.

WALKER, E A. "Britain & South Africa."
london. Longmans Green. 1941.
64pp. maps.

WALKER, Ivan L. & WEINBREN, B. "2000 Casualties, A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa."
Johannesburg. South African Trade Council Union. 1961.
387pp. index. appdcs. biblio.

WARD, Peter A, "Organisation and Procedures in the Construction Industry."
Plymouth. Macdonald & Evans. 1979.
212pp. index. appdx.

WEBB, Sydney & Beatrice. "The History of Trade Unionism."
First published 1894. Revised edition, extended to 1920.
London. Longmans, Green and Co. 1920.
784pp. index. appdcs.

WRIGHT, F J. "The Evolution of Modern Industrial Organisation."
London. Macdonald & Evans. 1957.
190pp. index. biblio.

Bibliography

MAGAZINES

Among the magazines specifically printed for the Building Industry that were used as sources of information for this document were the following:-

The Master Builders Federation Journal

Published from 1904 until approximately 1923, date of cessation is not clear. This magazine would have provided invaluable information regarding the early history of the organised building industry. Unhappily there does not appear to be any complete set in existence, although various volumes and isolated copies are available in a number of libraries around the country. It is reputed that a complete set of this magazine was at one time in the possession of the Building Industries Federation and later came into the hands of the Federated Employers' Mutual Assurance Co. Ltd. but I have been unable to trace the whereabouts of this set, if it even exists. The accompanying chart (Chart 1) gives the location of those issues of the magazine that I have been able to discover.

The South African Builder

First published in 1923 under private management as the official journal of the Building Industries Federation it was taken over by BIFSA in 1932 and continues in publication down to today. There are numerous complete sets in existence.

The South African Clay Worker and Builder

Published by Stanier & Herbert in Cape Town. Volume 1 No.1 came out in October 1903. The name was changed from February 1905 to The South African Architect and Builder and when the proprietorship changed in February 1906 it became The South African Architect, Engineer and Surveyors' Journal. Publication ceased in 1907. The University of Cape Town has almost a complete set.

The Architect, Builder, and Engineer

This magazine was published from 1917 by Jas T Brown after he had severed his association with the Federation Journal. It ceased publication in 1941. A complete set is in the hands of the University of Cape Town.

Proceedings of the South African Association of Engineers and Architects

This appears to have been an annual publication (published by William Clowes & Sons, London) recording the proceedings of the Association. It was first published in 1892. In 1898 the Association changed its name to 'The South African Association of Engineers'. The University of Cape Town has copies of the first five volumes, up to the year 1899.

CHART No 1

ISSUE / VOLUME No.	No 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Aug 1904 1st issue	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3	Aug 1906 SAL	Sep 1906 SAL	.	Nov 1906 SAL	Dec 1906 SAL	Jan 1907 SAL	Feb 1907 SAL	.	Apr 1907 SAL	May 1907 SAL	Jun 1907 SAL	Jul 1907 SAL
4	Aug 1907 SAL	Oct 1907 SAL	Nov 1907 SAL	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
6	.	Sep 1909 SAL	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
7	.	.	.	.	.	.	Feb 1911 with 1911 Annual PP	.	.	.	.	.
8	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
9	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
10	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

CHART No 1

ISSUE / VOLUME No.	No 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
12	.	.	.	.	Jan/Feb 1916 JP	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
13	.	.	Jun 1917 JP	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
14	.	.	.	.	.	.	July 1918 JP	Aug 1918 JP	.	.	.	Dec 1918 SAL
15	Jan 1919 SAL PP	Feb 1919 SAL PP	Mar 1919 SAL PP	Apr 1919 SAL	May 1919 SAL PP	Jun 1919 SAL PP	Jul 1919 SAL PP	Aug 1919 SAL PP	Sep 1919 JP	Oct 1919 JP	Nov 1919 JP PP	Dec 1919 JP PP
16	Jan 1920 SAL JP PP	Feb 1920	Mar 1920 SAL JP	Apr 1920 PP	May 1920 PP	Jun 1920 PP	Jul 1920 PP	Aug 1920 PP	Sep 1920 PP	Oct 1920 PP	Nov 1920 PP	Dec 1920 PP
17	Jan 1921 PP	Feb 1921 PP	Mar 1921 PP	Apr 1921 PP	May 1921 PP	Jun 1921 PP	Jul 1921 PP	Aug 1921	Sep 1921 JP	Oct 1921 JP PP	Nov 1921 JP PP	Dec 1921 JP PP
18	Jan 1922 JP PP	Feb 1922 JP PP	Mar 1922 PP	Apr 1922 JP PP	May 1922 JP PP	Jun 1922 JP PP	Jul 1922 JP PP	Aug 1922 JP PP	Sep 1922 JP PP	Oct 1922 JP PP	Nov 1922 JP PP	Dec 1922 JP PP
19	Jan 1923 JP PP	Feb 1923 PP	Mar 1923 JP PP	Apr 1923 JP PP	May 1923 JP PP	Jun 1923 JP PP	Jul 1923 JP PP	Aug 1923 JP PP	Sep 1923 JP PP	.	.	.

KEY: JP = Johannesburg Public Library. Johannesburg.
PP = State Library. Pretoria.
SAL= South African Library. Cape Town.

NOTE: An Annual also appears to have been published on occasion and copies of the 1911 Annual and the 1913 Annual are included in the book stock at PP.