

Dunedin War Memorial Competition

Won by W. H. Gummer, A.R.I.B.A.

(Of Prouse & Gummer, Wellington and Auckland).

The Mayor of Dunedin (Mr. J. S. Douglas) presided over a meeting of the War Memorial Committee at the Town Hall on July 4th, for the special purpose of receiving the award of the assessor (Mr. Edmund R. Wilson, Licentiate R.I.B.A., F.N.Z.I.A., architect, of Invercargill), who was appointed to adjudicate on the War Memorial designs. Sixty-three designs were received, some from as far afield as Australia and Tasmania, and a copy of Mr. Wilson's award is subjoined. The winning prize of £200 is by Messrs. Prouse and Gummer, architects, of Auckland, and the second prize winner of £50 is Mr. Reginald Oliphant, of Heretaunga Street, Hastings. The assessor also honourably mentions the designs sent in by Mr. J. F. Munnings, Wellington, Messrs. W. Gray Young and William M. Page, of Wellington, and Mr. H. A. Westerholm, of Napier. The Committee decided to recommend the City Council to pay the prize money as awarded by the assessor, and instructed the Designs Committee to make arrangements for displaying the whole of the designs in some building where they may be readily seen by the general public.

MR. WILSON'S REPORT.

I beg to report having examined and carefully studied the designs submitted in competition for the above, and to advise as under :—

Clause 9 of "The Conditions of Competition" contain the gist of your requirements, when it stipulates that :—

- (1) The amount to be expended is £10,000;
- (2) It is desired the monument shall be of great artistic merit;
- (3) It should be erected of first-class materials of known lasting quality;
- (4) It is desired that it fittingly symbolise the deeds;
- (5) And commemorate the deaths of our soldiers fallen in the Great War.

Few of the designs submitted realise the essential Condition No. 2, "of great artistic merit." A large proportion are quite impossible and worthless, and many more extremely mediocre. Some are obviously almost direct copies of well-known monuments or of designs recently illustrated in our journals as having been submitted in competitions elsewhere. There is a marvellous collection of cenotaphs, obelisks, pillars, arches, and shrines; some stark and naked, others painfully overdressed and pretentious. Most fail to realise Condition No. 4 of symbolising the deeds of our sol-

diers, while some of the more artistic suggest abject despair, such as we might expect to find in a Pagan burying place, or as a memorial of a vanquished people, rather than the commemoration of the glorious triumph of a Christian people through tremendous sacrifices over the forces of might and evil. In this respect it is singular that only one design clearly introduces the symbol of sacrifice and of our faith, and that design is the one I place first.

Design No. 59 best fulfils the letter and the spirit of your requirements and instructions to competitors. This author's scheme will produce a strikingly beautiful and original monument, most suitable for the site, and which would be an embellishment to any city. The sculptural reliefs are an inherent part of the design: they are appropriately suggestive, and will speak plainly and eloquently to all beholders of the great sacrifices and of the mighty deeds that made its erection possible. The author gives an excellent description of his work and of the sentiments he desires to express, which may well be recorded as under :—

THE DESIGN.

"An endeavour has been made to provide a memorial which by its composition, silhouette and symbol, by its permanence of construction, by its fitness for site and purpose commemorates the "Spirit of Sacrifice" in respect of the Great War.

"The octagonal form has been adopted because of the irregular nature of the site and the fact that a true face is thus presented to almost every possible viewpoint and line of approach, whereas a rectangular form must have a sharp corner to some lines of approach, with the result that its sides will appear to slide away from the spectator.

"Furthermore, like the circle, the octagonal form contains the element of circulation. This element of circulation is required by the island-like nature of the site and its surrounding streets, and is of added value in the base of the column in leading folk viewing the sculptural panels readily and naturally from one panel to the next, whereas a square form would mitigate this sense of relation, and the physical movement from one side to another would be conscious and not instinctive.

"Height is considered an essential in the monument, because with height it is readily seen from distant and vistaed points of view. In this matter of height the scale of the existing and possible future buildings surrounding the site have been borne in mind.