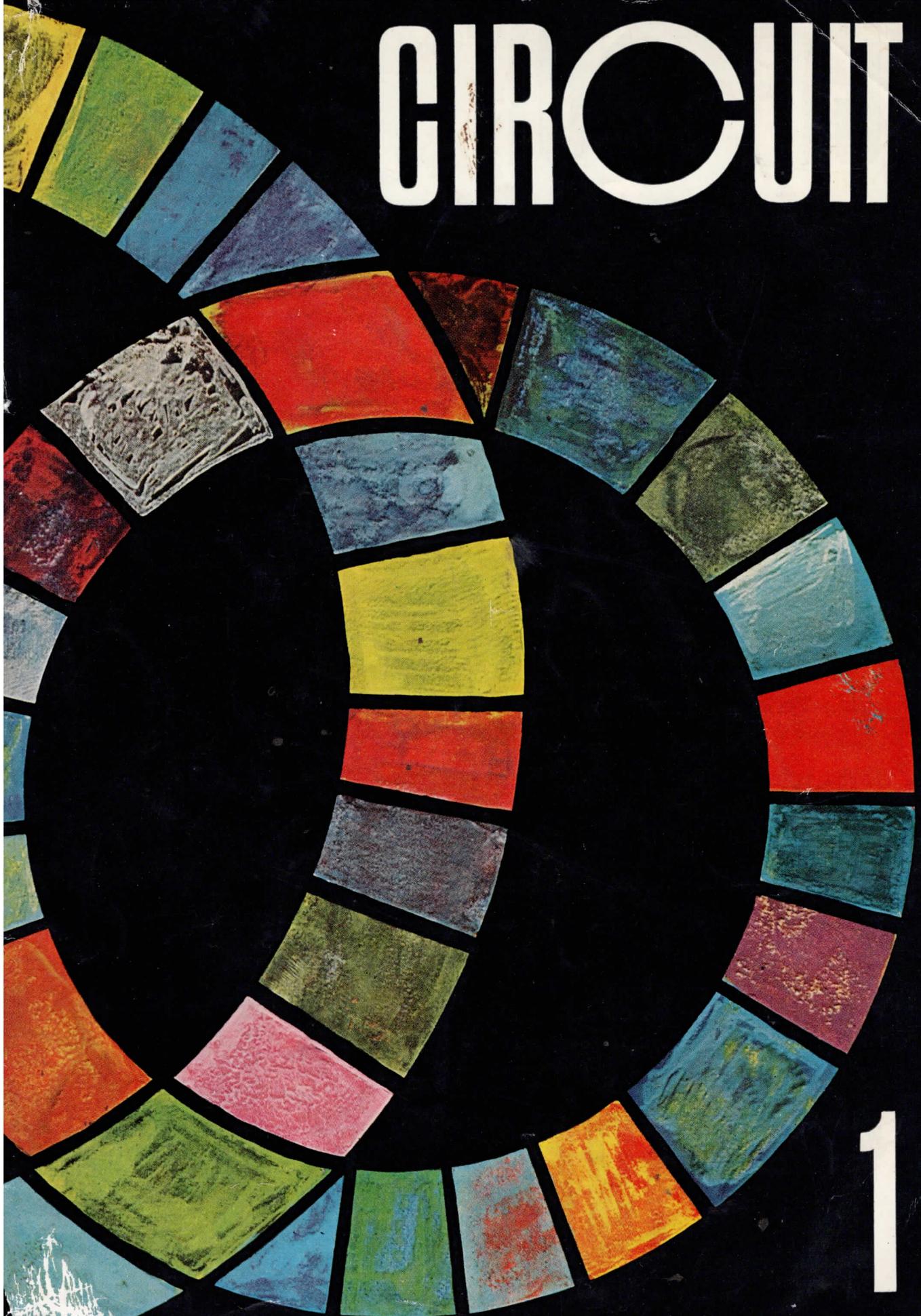


CIRCUIT



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In the private office of Gerard Dusseldorp, managing director of Civil and Civic Contractors Pty. Limited, and of the Lend Lease Corporation Limited, and – for the past few years – one of the managing directors of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N.V., Utrecht, the clock is put back for a moment twelve years to 1950.

The imposing Lend Lease House, which is not the least of the towering buildings that make Sydney look like a small New York, did not exist at that time.

Nor did Civil and Civic Contractors or the Lend Lease Corporation, which have their offices in this striking monumental building. Then – more than twelve years ago – nobody could possibly have had the faintest idea that in the sixties a young Dutchman would have put his stamp upon the picture presented by the cities of Sydney and Melbourne.

At the time, an Australian mission was travelling all over the world to interest people in the further development of the fifth continent, the growth of which was impeded by an acute shortage of capital, labour, materials, tools and implements . . . in short, of all that was necessary to bring Australia rapidly to the fore. 'Package deals' were called for – companies which were fully equipped, with their own capital, their own people and their own implements and materials and



prepared to participate in the development of a country at the other side of the world and almost unknown to them.

In the Netherlands people were much too busy with their own rehabilitation work to pay much heed to what the mission had 'for sale'. Two firms took some notice of the Australians: Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N.V. at Utrecht and the Koninklijke Nederlandse Maatschappij voor Havenwerken.

A decision was made: Let us send somebody to see what truth there is in the stories of these Australians. In Utrecht, the choice fell upon a young university graduate in engineering, who had been working there since the end of the war. First he spent three months in the Estimates Department, then nine months as second-in-command and then as head of the Building Department. He knew something of big projects, for hadn't Bredero's Bouwbedrijf built 2,000 houses a year in the years 1947 to 1950? Thus, in October 1950, the thirty-one year old Gerard Joseph Dusseldorp was sent to Australia for three months, with Naeff of the Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Havenwerken, to see how matters stood. The two scouts were stormed with offers of projects involving millions, each more attractive than the last . .

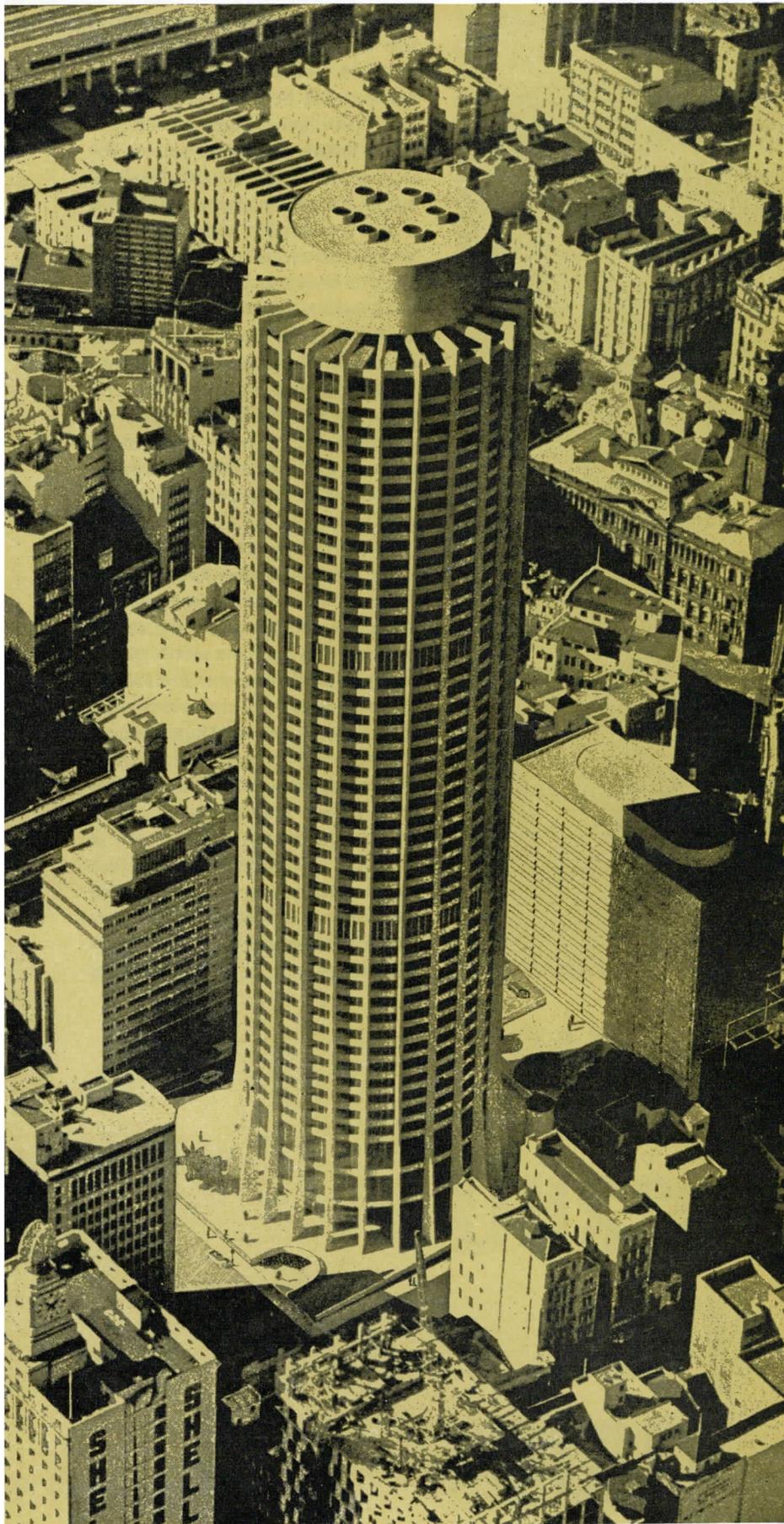
the Dusseldorp story

A Dutchman makes Sydney the New York of Australia.

Mr. Big Business . . . that is how one of the biggest daily newspapers published in Sydney, a city of two million people in Australia, recently referred to the forty-three year old Dutchman Gerard Dusseldorp. This former citizen of Utrecht, who was sent out to Australia in 1950 just 'to have a look round', has in the space of a few years, by his daring and enterprise, enriched Canberra, Melbourne and – in particular – Sydney with bold modern buildings, which have gained the admiration of the whole of Australia. It is true that Civil and Civic Contractors Pty. Limited – a subsidiary of 'his' firm, Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N. V., Utrecht – carried out the work on those projects, but the man behind this business, inspiring and directing it with all the force of his personality, was Gerard Dusseldorp, who has thereby ensured that the Netherlands also has a word to say in the sphere of town planning in Australia. But he did more: he created the Lend Lease Corporation, a public company which enabled Australians to participate in bringing about the vast projects he wished to carry out. His initiative met with such great success that since that time the Australians have begun to speak of 'the Dusseldorp story'. The editor of the Dutch Australian Weekly, Alfred Schuurman, has related to us this tale of Dutch daring and enterprise, which shows what Dutchmen can mean to the world.

provided one could supply the capital, the labour and also the materials. They decided to concentrate on a specific, not too big project. The choice fell upon a housing project of half a million Australian pounds, for the Snowy Mountains Authority which had only recently been created. This is the organization which is charged with the construction of large hydro-electric works in the Snowy Mountains, which were destined in the course of years to supply enormous regions of the States of New South Wales and Victoria with electricity and water for irrigation purposes. An agent was left behind in Australia for contacts, and the two scouts returned to Holland to report on the progress they had made.

In Utrecht the relatively modest order for 200 wooden houses in the Snowy Mountains was regarded as attractive. This project could at the same time be used as a sort of observation post for bigger projects. If we're going to do it let's do it at once, they said in Utrecht. Thus, towards the end of February 1951, Gerard Dusseldorp was informed that he was to leave in a fortnight's time, with his wife Joanna, their children and 35 men of the technical nucleus. Two months later a start could be made with the execution of the contract, with the assistance of parts of 'pre-fab' houses brought with them from



the Netherlands, Britain, Belgium and Finland.

Thus Civil and Civic Pty. Ltd. came into being as a subsidiary of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N.V., under the leadership of the ex-Director of the Department of Reconstruction, Laurens Roos, and the young Gerard Dusseldorp as 'construction manager'.

In the first few months, the 'head office' was established in the bedroom of a rented house in Mosman, a suburb of Sydney. The initial capital was . . . A£ 10,000.

Work went on in this way for two years in the Snowy Mountains and in the federal capital Canberra, where all sorts of projects were taken in hand: bridges, houses, flats . . . Later on, a job was undertaken which was to take years to accomplish, viz. the transfer of the headquarters of the Defence Department from Melbourne to Canberra.

In 1953 Laurens Roos was entrusted with the work of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf in Dutch New Guinea and the thirty-three years old Gerard Dusseldorp became Managing Director of Civil and Civic. Young Dusseldorp had liked the work in the Snowy Mountains, but had for a long time had his eye on the rapidly growing metropolis, Sydney.

The nucleus of 35 men that he had brought with him had long since been increased by the addition of

locally engaged labour to form a labour brigade of hundreds of men; thus in 1953 a start was made with the first project in Sydney: a factory building for a big oil company. Dusseldorp, however, wanted more than working on contract, and was inclined to favour development projects.

53 acres of a piece of hilly wilderness, with a splendid view of the curiously-shaped Sydney Harbour, was purchased, and developed to form the subdued Harbour Height Estate in Middle Cove. Roads and drainage were constructed, and the land subsequently sold, at a good profit, as building sites. Dusseldorp's eye then fell upon a piece of land which was situated in an excellent strategic position on the city side of the harbour, close to the approach road of the famous Harbour Bridge. The plan for Australia's highest building was taken in hand, the services of a concrete expert in the Netherlands were secured, the land was bought and an office building nearly 260 feet high, with a floor area of more than 8,400 square yards and underground parking space for 400 cars began to take shape. Australians showed a great deal of interest in this undertaking. Civil and Civic were approached by various parties, and thus Dusseldorp's first big work in Sydney – it may well be regarded as the work which was to be decisive for the future of the

young subsidiary of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf – was Caltex House.

Caltex House was the first of a long series of C. & C. buildings which were beginning to make a drastic change in Sydney's skyline. Large modern C. & C. blocks of flats rose up around the harbour – in Darling Point, Elizabeth Bay and Kirribilli. They were no mass products, each one of them had a character of its own, inspired by its situation and surroundings.

A large medical centre in North Sydney, the widely-discussed opera house, which will soon appear to be sailing into the bay like a strange viking ship, a convent school in Kirribilli, skyscrapers in the old city centre, taking the place of old sandstone buildings . . . The head office of the Consolidated Zinc Corporation, now Australia's highest building, situated in the heart of Melbourne, on the high side of Collins Street, was completed in April 1962. But also the capitals of South Australia and Queensland – Adelaide and Brisbane – as well as Canberra and other cities, are acquiring the stamp of C. & C.; or have already acquired it.

All very well, says Gerard Dusseldorp but it's not just all we have in mind. These are and remain only incidental development projects.

What I am aiming at – and when

Gerard Dusseldorp aims at something he strikes it too – is development projects for whole regions, so-called 'area development'.

A building may put its stamp upon its environment, but that is not sufficient. A harmonious development of the city will never be attained in that way. And therefore we must switch over from this incidental development to development plans for whole city blocks or even for whole districts.

Gerard Dusseldorp has had this idea in mind for years and the public has already made the acquaintance of these plans for the future at exhibitions.

The Blues Point Tower project, which was completed in June 1962, and for which 85 old houses had to be pulled down, is a step in that direction. The completion of this project has entirely changed the appearance of a small peninsula in Sydney Harbour, in the shadow of the great bridge. The tower flat building on Blues Point, with its 27 storeys, is surrounded by an area forming part of a national park, in which Belleview House, a splendid sandstone edifice dating from 1873, is very suitably situated. When the sledge-hammers of the demolishers began to do their work, and voices were raised to save this historic house, Gerard Dusseldorp said: You can have Belleview House –

I shall take it down carefully, stone by stone, and erect it again in the spot where it will look its best.

That is Dusseldorp's idea of area development. Not just arbitrary pulling down of the buildings and putting concrete and glass cubes in their place, but, while retaining what is good, creating a better district, with improved living conditions.

For example, that is how he regards the Rocks development project: a plan to convert one of the oldest districts of Sydney from a gloomy slum into a residential quarter with sun, light and green for all. The 'high density' plan for the McMahon's Point peninsula, the centre for doctors and lawyers on Macquarie Street and the project in the heart of the city for which a whole block of shops and offices is being pulled down to make room for an enormous building in which hundreds of offices and businesses will find suitable accommodation... these are only a few of the more or less advanced plans by means of which Dusseldorp intends to place his own – and thus also the C. & C.'s – mark upon this city of nearly two million inhabitants. The last-mentioned plan in particular, which was sanctioned in June 1962, has won the admiration of many Australians. As Sydney's Australia Square plan, with its mighty but elegant skyscrapers, it has already made history!

And then to think that twelve years ago the first 35 men arrived from the Netherlands to erect 200 wooden houses in the Snowy Mountains! Half of this first group are still members of the Civil and Civic Contractors army of 1,700 men, which includes 120 engineers and architects and 100 members of the technical staff, an army which – together with the 2,500 men belonging to the smaller companies working for C. & C. – is actively engaged on all these revolutionary projects. The first little group consisted of Dutchmen; there are now sixteen nationalities working on the Civil and Civic Contractors projects. Nationality is immaterial. If a man is willing to work and knows his job, a place can be found for him with C. & C.

We can see them passing in review, all those workers from sixteen different countries, if we look through the monthly organ of Civil and Civic Contractors Pty. Ltd.: 'The Link'. We read a short article in it about Toni Presuti from Central Italy, who has been working for C. & C. since 1954; the Canberra column is looked after by Alex Zagorskis; Dutch, Greek, Polish, German and East European names meet the eye, and 'The Link' helps to establish closer contact and relates what 'their' company – the organization that Gerard Dusseldorp built up – has in hand and what it has blue-printed. The small capital of A£ 10,000 with which a start was made twelve years ago, has now of course become quite a capital. It is not possible to state a figure, for Civil and Civic Contractors Pty. Limited is now entirely a subsidiary of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N.V. and as such a private company, the shares of which are not listed. But whatever proportion the capital of Civil and Civic Contractors has assumed in the course of time, it is of course not sufficient for Dusseldorp's step from pure contract work to development projects.

Thus, in 1957, Gerard Dusseldorp conceived the idea of asking the Australian public to furnish the necessary funds for the financing of the building work of Civil and Civic Contractors. A course organized by Harvard University in Hawaii helped to crystallize this idea, so that in the early part of 1958 the Australian public was invited to participate in Lend Lease Corporation Limited. Civil and Civic itself took 40 per cent of the first emission of shares to the value of A£ 100,000, and took similar action in the case of the later issues.

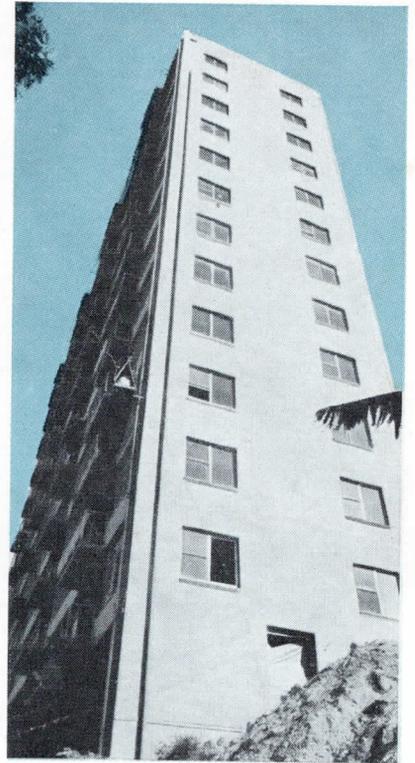
Of the nominal capital, which has been increased to A£5,000,000, an amount of A£ 3,000,000 is fully paid. Moreover, the fact that the 5/- shares of Lend Lease Corporation are continually quoted at a high figure is sufficient proof of the high expectations which the Australian public entertains with regard to this company. Lend Lease has been an in-

strument in the taking over of other companies; a lift concern, a big shopping centre in the suburb of Top Ryde, a brokers' firm which attends to the purchase and sale of land and buildings, etc., etc.

The total assets of Lend Lease now amount to some A£ 4,500,000, and that is only the beginning... as well as the projects which Civil and Civic Contractors have in hand. Not bad for a graduate of an Engineering School who studied hydraulics and who left his little house in Maarsen on the Vecht twelve years ago to go and have a look at what could be done in Australia. 'Not bad going!', as they would say there. The fact that this opinion was shared in Utrecht is borne out by the appointment of Gerard Dusseldorp as a Managing Director of Bredero's Bouwbedrijf N.V., side by side with the Managing Directors J. de Vries and G. Marckman. Mr. Big Business indeed!

When one meets Gerard Dusseldorp, however, he does not make the impression at all of a 'Mr. Big Business'. Quiet, friendly, easy to approach for anyone who has anything to ask or anything to tell. A man who knows no roundabout ways, but who, scorning disguise, marches straight towards his objective and who succeeds in getting to the root of any and every problem.

When the legal position of 'home units' in flat building – so called stratified titles – seemed unsatisfactory to him, he drafted a law himself and presented it to the Government for examination. When a City Council proved to be untrustworthy, he calmly took up the cudgels against it. And at the next city council elections, practically a new council was returned. The higher one aspires, the more problems one has to overcome. Problems – big problems – are therefore among the day-to-day worries of this still young man, of this still young Dutchman who offers the best qualities of his people to a country of development and rapid growth: boldness, perseverance, confidence and the devotion of all his powers to the work which he has begun.



*Dusseldorp dominates the picture today
in several leading Australian cities*