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THE WAR MEMORIAL DESIGNS.

Most people at the present time are interested in one or other of the designs submitted for the proposed memorial on Rocky Hill. Probably a dozen sketches will be in the hands of the secretary before the time expires, and most of them reflect much credit upon the citizens responsible. Two things now govern the decision, the opinions of the subscribers or the public meeting, whichever is the course adopted, and the consent of the board controlling the erection of memorials. As a memorial should be a piece of fine and pure architecture and the situation and environment have much to do with the suitability of the design chosen, it would appear that before the public take in hand the final selection they should be guided in some way by expert advice, obtained from men dissociated from any of the contemplated designs. Such advice should only be tendered after a close inspection of the site and the country surrounding it. To make a mistake which might easily be avoided; or to do something which would make the memorial an object of criticism rather than frank admiration, would be tragic.

When therefore it is necessary to meet the question of selection, fairly accurate estimates should be available of the respective costs of the designs submitted, in addition to advice of a technical character. There is no reason to believe that the majority of the committee would make any better selection than the majority of the people who may be present at a public meeting to vote on the question. The matter is one not easily settled, and most people, even now, are in quite a haze as to which design they like best. It would therefore seem desirable to have a report on the whole of the designs submitted from a technical expert from outside. Then, whoever may make the ultimate decision, can be guided to some extent by the knowledge of a man skilled in a subject, of which the majority of any public meeting are sure to be ignorant to a greater or lesser degree.

There is something quite astonishing in the estimates of the costs of the suggested memorials, several of them based on expert opinion. It seems quite ridiculous that a very fine house can be built for £2000 and that a simple column should cost that amount and over. Again, some of the world's best sculptors complete intricate and massive groups of figures for sums little more than we propose for a simple design framed with concrete and merely faced with prepared stone. There can be no possible comparison of the respective work of the sculptor and the mason, yet on present indications it would appear that straight-out masonry is more expensive than world-famous sculpture. It should be remembered that there is unlimited material for reinforced concrete on the hill and to obtain the massive structure required should not be the expensive matter which is at present indicated.

In view of such conditions, it would seem imperative that the committee and the subscribers should take steps to secure themselves against impositions contrary either to the ethics of art or business. Goulburn, after this long time, wants the finest memorial possible to obtain. The general outline of the ideas have been put forward, but it may be possible to combine or amend them somewhat, also some entirely new ideas might appeal more. There is not one of the men interested in the various designs but would abandon his plan for anything outstandingly better and possible of achievement. We do not advocate delay, but certainly suggest caution, and that will not hamper the acquisition of further funds, which will be required no matter whose design is endorsed.