

1 January

## **Br FRANCIS EIKMANS**

27 February 1872- 1 January 1934

Born in the Hague, Francis Eikmans was 'lent' to the Zambezi Mission by the Dutch province and spent 21 years at Empandeni, arriving in 1900 after a delay of some months to wait for the end of the Boer war which blocked the railway to Bulawayo from the south. A carpenter by trade, he put up the roofs on the many buildings at the new mission including the school (picture) and convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame.



In the archives there are many pictures of Fr Biehler and his activities but no mention of Br Eikmans though he probably appears in some of the photos which have no names attached.

The Zimbabwe Mission Record says, 'Besides some skill in carpentry, Br Eikmans acquired a little in a

good many things. He was also a bit of a character which went a long way to atone for a certain lack of mastery discernible in his varied accomplishments. He knew enough of music to pass among the Natives as a skilled player on the zither or the banjo. He could keep them amused, too, by his talk and was especially a favourite with children. ... He was always humble and contented, a good community man and, in his way a helpful benefactor to the poor.'

In 1921 he returned to the Netherlands and was in Maastricht, Rotterdam, Rome, Nijmegen, Amsterdam and finally again in Maastricht where he died of pneumonia in 1934.