

The Government Notes of the South African Republic

By R. F. KENNEDY, Director, Africana Museum

THE Africana Museum collects and displays objects that have a bearing on South African history: pictures, furniture, Cape silver, kitchen utensils, postage stamps, coins, medals, bank-notes, tokens and good-fors, and all kinds of things of everyday use. Of all the different kinds of material preserved, bank-notes are among the most interesting and are the most difficult to collect. So far as the South African Republic is concerned, the Government notes are not only interesting because of the circumstances and manner in which they were issued, but also because they are examples of some of the earliest printing in the Transvaal. The progress of the country from a primitive pastoral community to a great industrial state is well illustrated by its currency notes; in the early days it produced some of the most crudely designed and poorly printed notes that it is possible to imagine, and now we have the beautiful engravings of the S.A. Reserve Bank notes. The difficulty of collection is, of course, due to the periodical withdrawal of issues and the official destruction of the notes. The object of this article is to record and illustrate the various Government notes issued by the South African Republic, a series which is complete in the Africana Museum except for the 2s. 6d. note of the 1867 issue and the £50 note of the Pietersburg issue of 1901.

First issue, 1865

In the early days of the South African Republic practically all business transactions were effected by means of barter. There was so little money in the country that the Government was compelled to meet its obligations by giving creditors orders on those in arrears with their tax payments; these orders would be met by the supply of goods to the value of the order. In 1857 a method of overcoming the difficulty of paying salaries and for the purchase of gunpowder, horses, and other Government requirements was devised. It was proposed to the Volksraad and agreed that currency notes should be printed, but instead the Government issued treasury bills, known as Mandaten. These Mandaten were issued for the payment of salaries and for Government stores. The Government itself and landdrosts issued Mandaten, but unfortunately, no record of the amount issued was kept and very soon the Government found itself unaware of the amount of the public debt. The Mandaten were not currency, nobody could be forced to accept them, except the poor public servants, who had no option. In 1865 a commission reported that the services of officials could no longer be retained if payment by Mandaten was continued. It was therefore decided to print notes that would be legal tender. By resolution of the Volksraad of 12 June, 1865, the

No. 1039

Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

5967
ON

Mandaat van Betaling.

De Landdrost van het District van die vestend word
zal op vertoon dezes uilbetalen aan den Heer D. J. Oosthuizen
te Pretoria de Somme van Ryksdaalders Hondred Vyftig
Rygsge Rds. 150 - J. zynde voor een rijkpaard
in die oorlog verloor, en by Wv. Prans. be-
slus. ddt. 4 April. 1865. toegelend.

M. W. Pretorius
President.

Gouvernements-kantoor,

Pretoria, den 11 April 1865

Toldaan, den 186

(1) Mandaat 1861 (from Transvaal Museum)

Rds. TIEN

Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

No. 1077

Dit bedrag heeft een
gedwongen koers van
18 maanden onder se-
curiteit van Gouver-
nements grond door
de Regering gegeven.

Houder dezes is Eigenaar van Tien Ryks-
daalders Raapsche waarde, onder waar-
borg van betaling door de Regering
van de Z. A. Republiek, renten
doende half pC 's maands.

Uit kracht van
Volksraads Besluit
gepasseerd den 12
Jany, 1865.

Gouvernements Kantoor, Pretoria, 3 febr 1866.
Op last van den Volksraad.

No. 1077

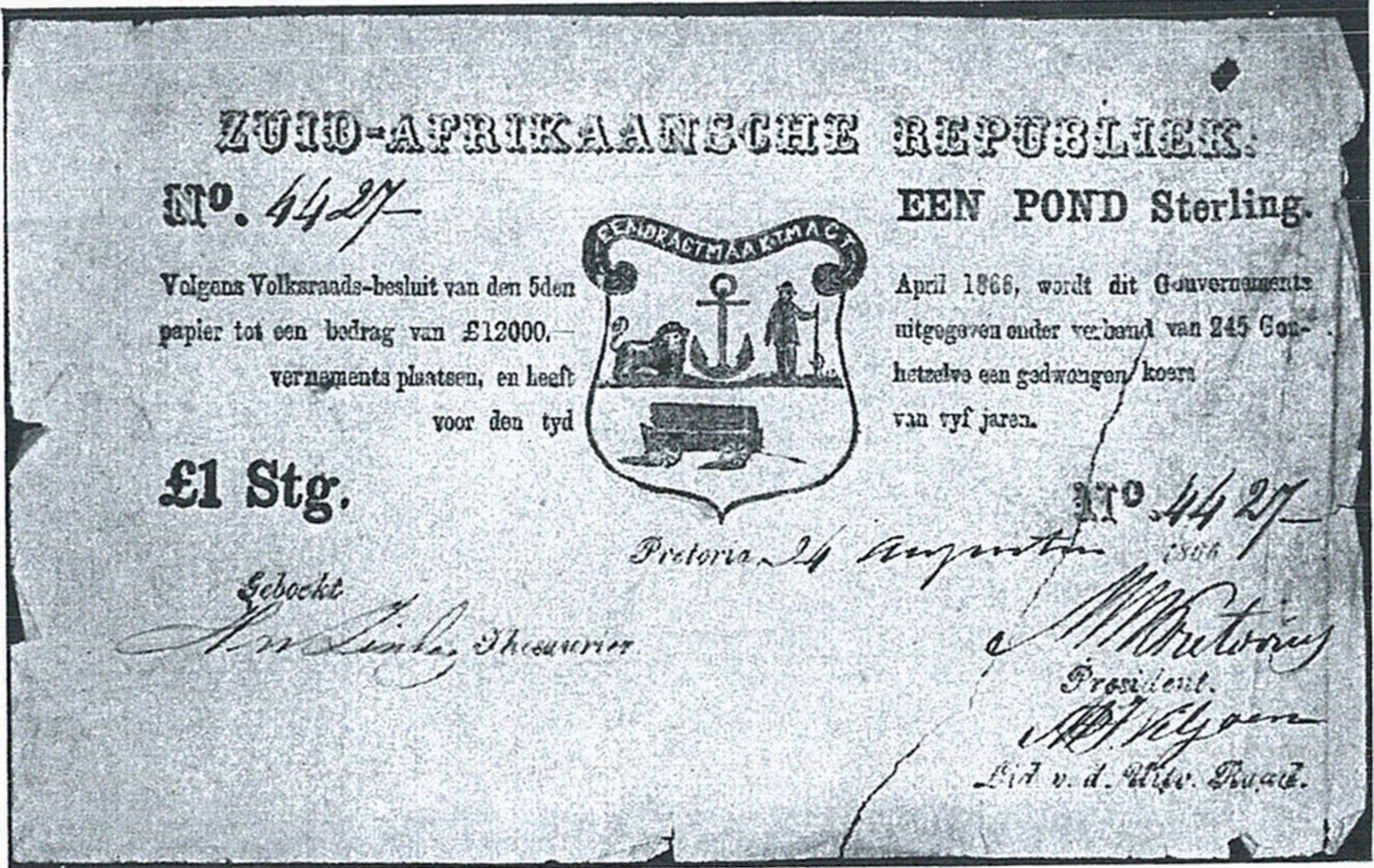
GEBOEKT den 3 febr. 1866

H. W. Linder
Thesaurier.

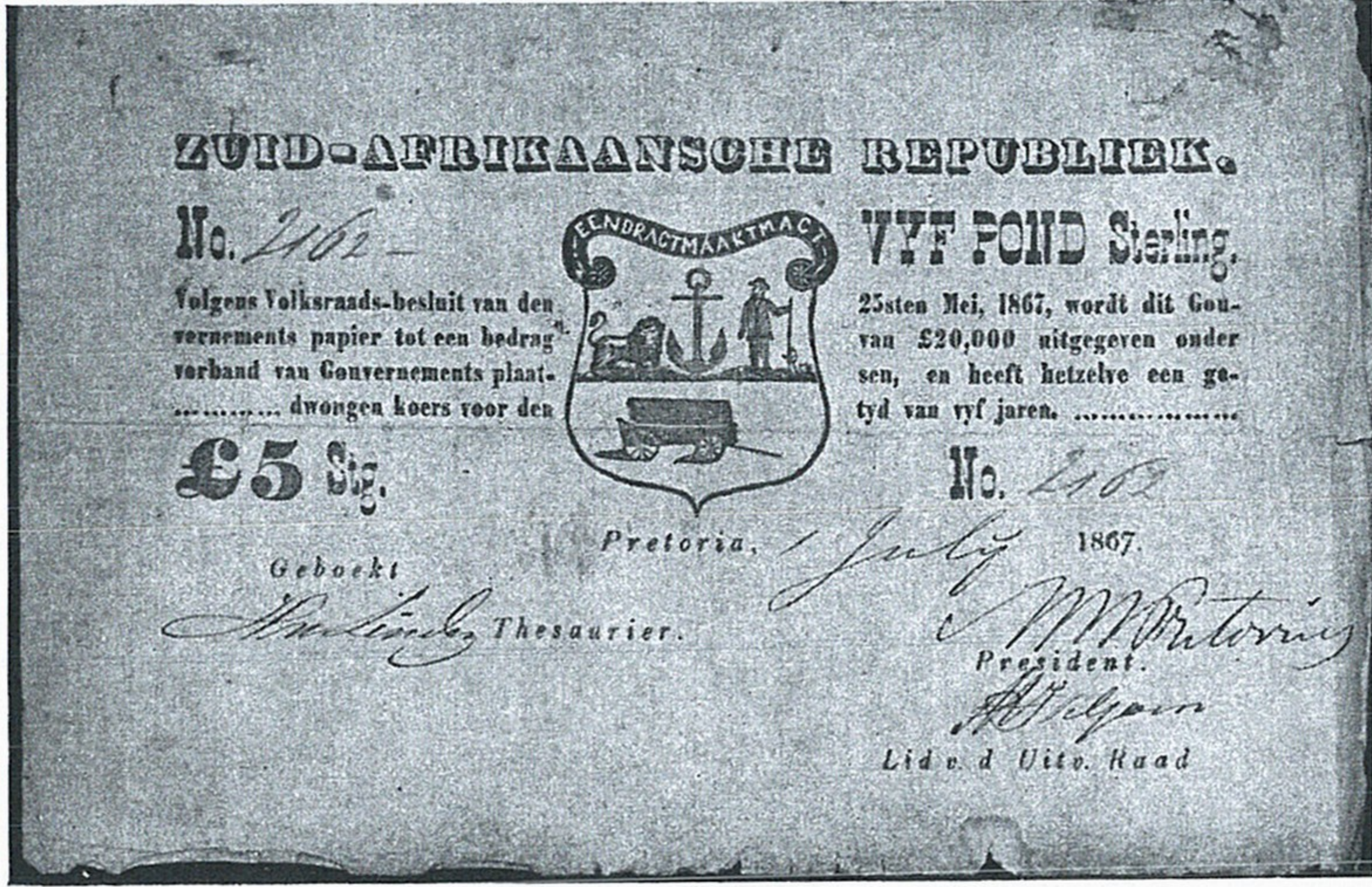
Rds. TIEN

M. W. Pretorius
President.
J. J. M. J. J.
Voorzitter van den Volksraad.

(2) First issue 1865 Rds. 5 and 10.



(3) Second issue 1866 £1, 5/-., 2/6d.



(4) Third issue 1867 £5, £1, 5/-., 2/6d.

ZUID-AFRIKAANSCH REPUBLIEK.

No. 492

Uitgegeven tot een bedrag van
staats Eigendommen, overeen-
komstig ART. 113, en
..... koers van



VYF POND Sterling.

£15,000 onder waarborg van
koninklijk Volksraads-besluit, d.d.
heeft hetzelfde een gedwongen
tien jaren.

£5 Stg.

Geboekt

C. J. S. van der Merwe
Lid der Commissie.

Pretoria, 1 April 1868.

No. 492

M. W. Pretorius
Staats President.
J. H. Viljoen
Lid v. d. Uitv. Raad.

ZUID-AFRIKAANSCH REPUBLIEK.

No. 765

Uitgegeven tot een bedrag van
staats Eigendommen, overeen-
komstig ART. 113, en
..... koers van



2s. 6d. Stg.

£15,000 onder waarborg van
koninklijk Volksraads-besluit, d.d.
heeft hetzelfde een gedwongen
tien jaren.

2s. 6d. Stg.

Geboekt.

C. J. S. van der Merwe
Lid der Commissie.

Pretoria, 16 Oct 1868.

No. 765

M. W. Pretorius
Staats President.
J. H. Viljoen
Lid v. d. Uitv. Raad.



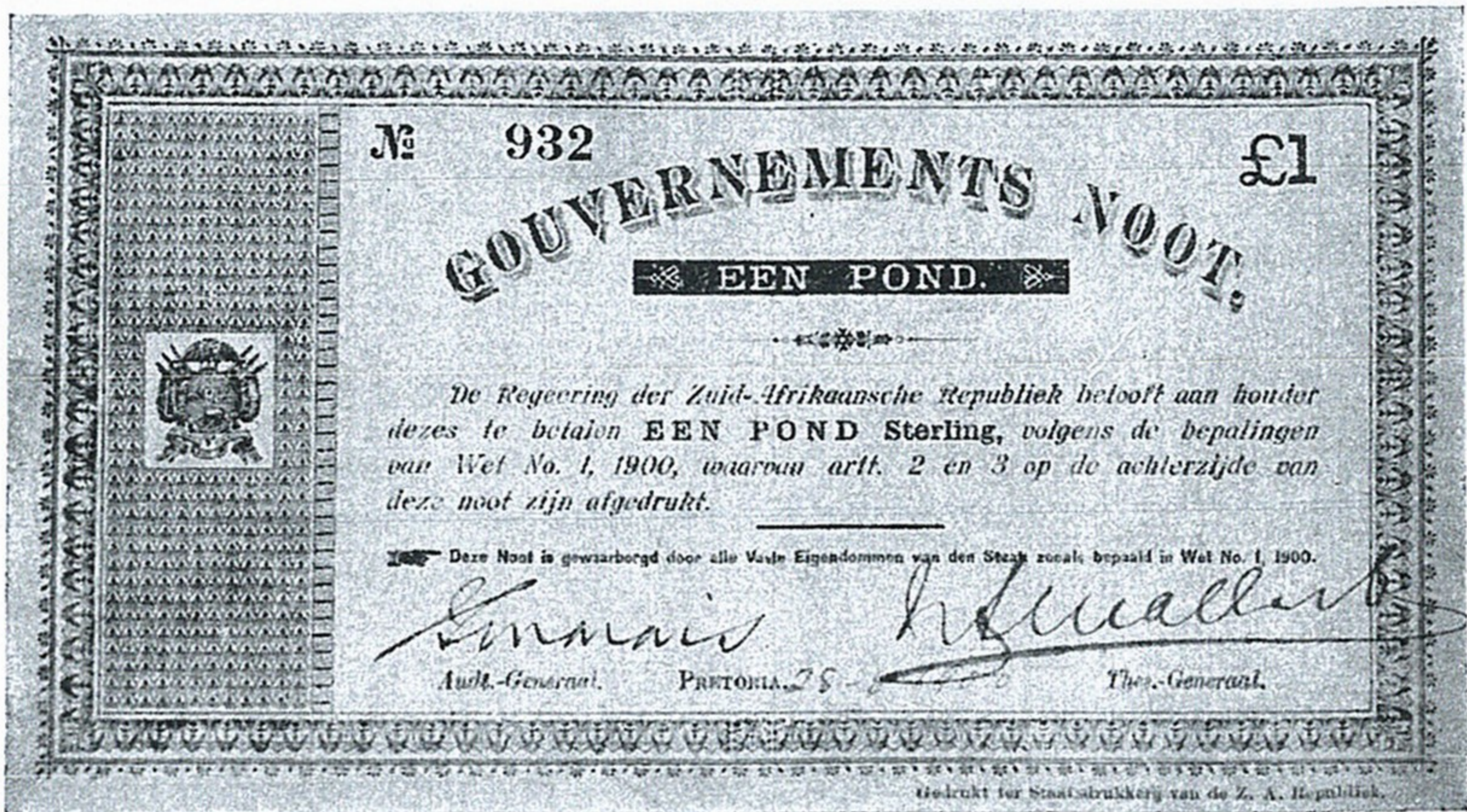
(7) Fourth issue 1868 Good-fors 1/-, 6d.



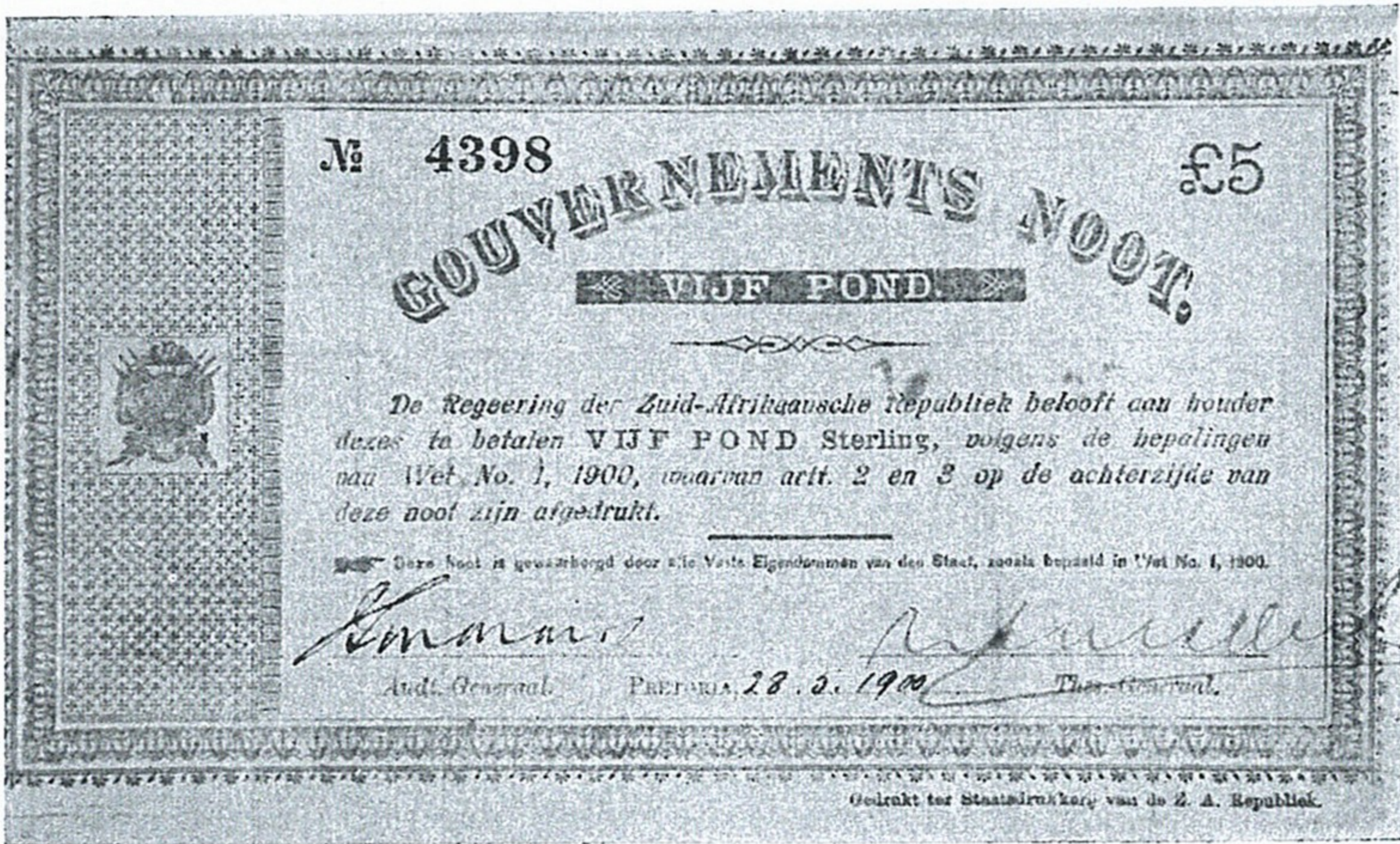
(8) Fifth issue 1871 £20, £10, £5 and £1.



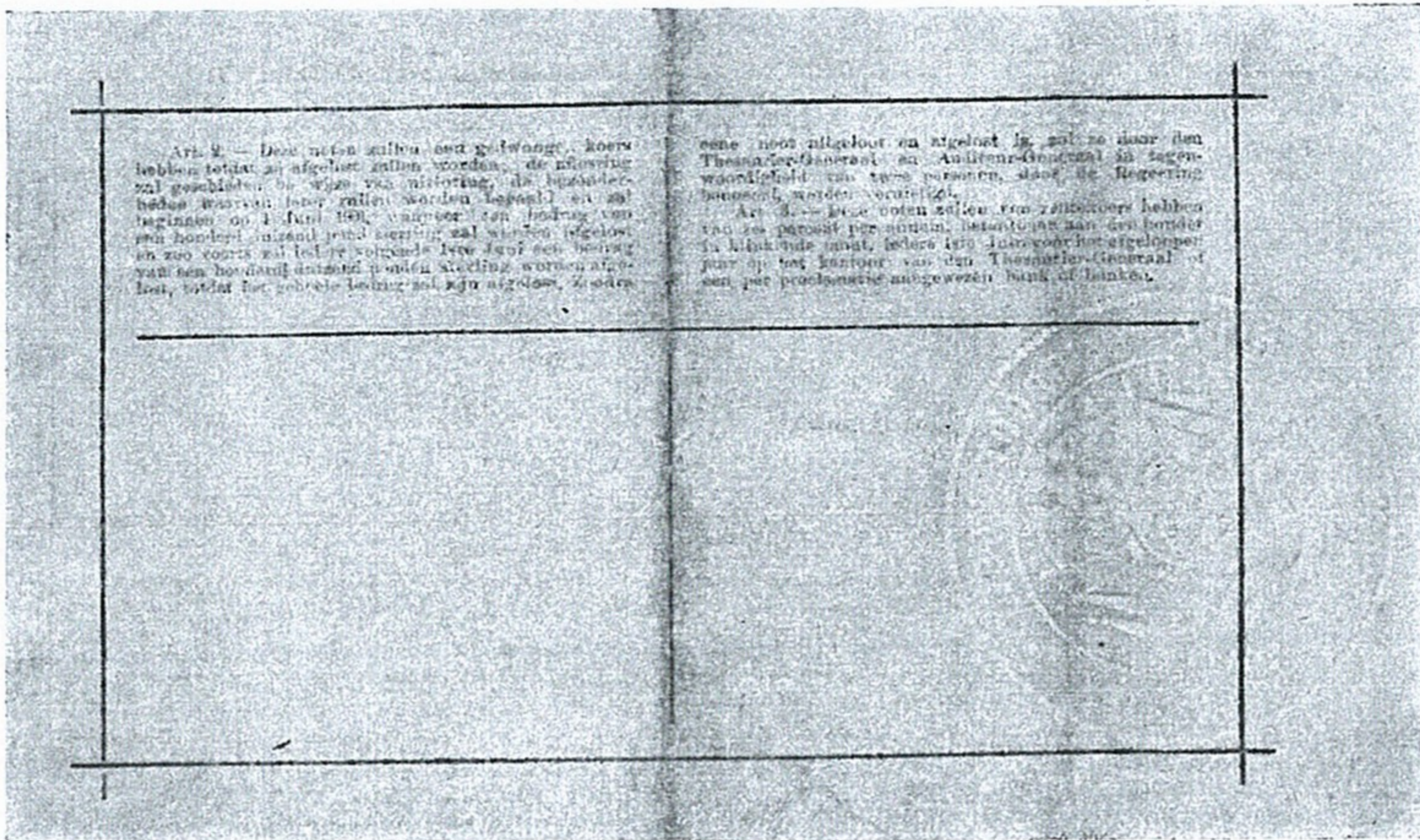
(9) Fifth issue 1871. The Little Notes 10/-, 5/-, 2/6, 1/-, 6d.



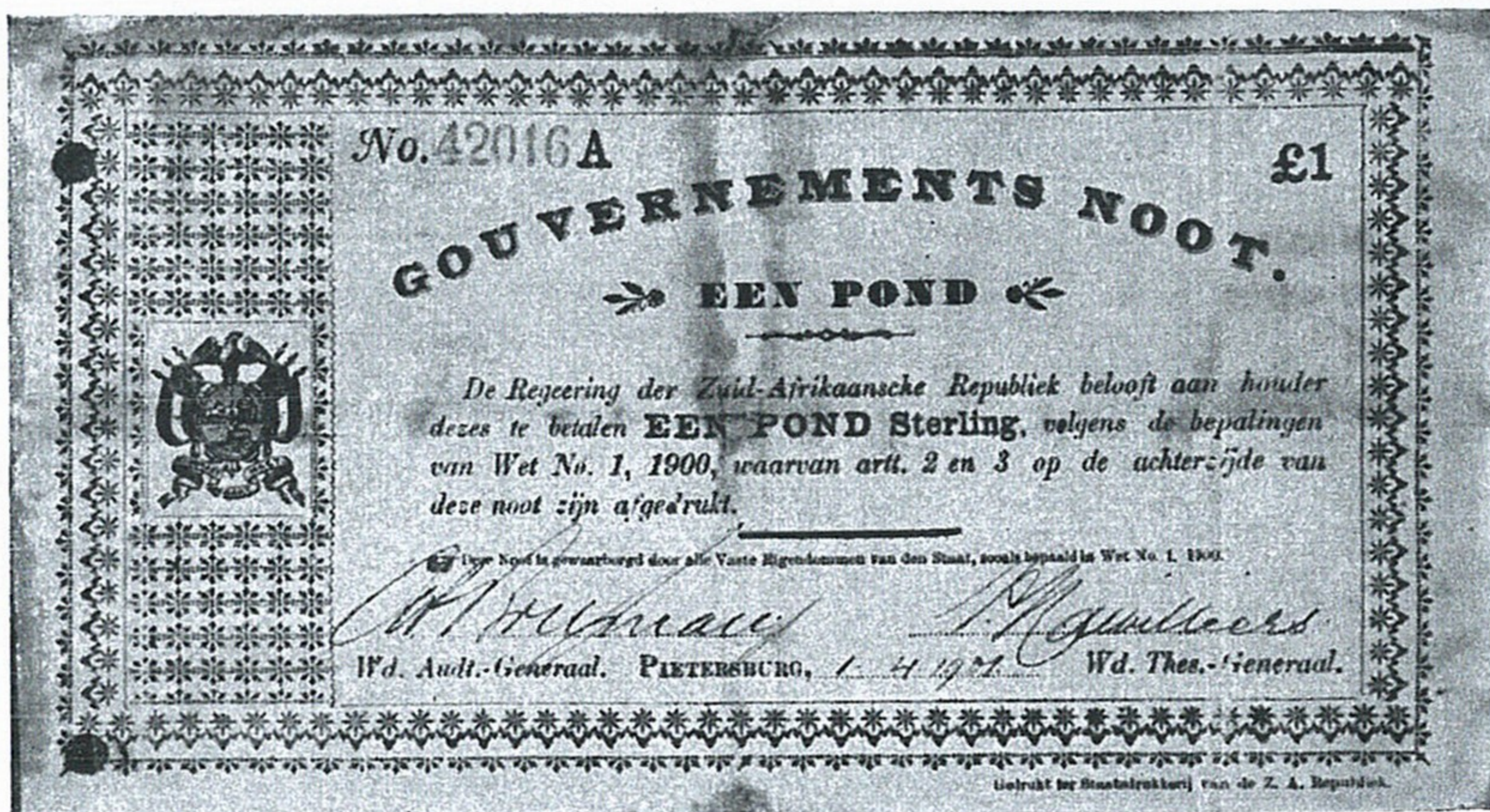
(10) Pretoria 1900. £100, £50, £20, £10, £5, £1.



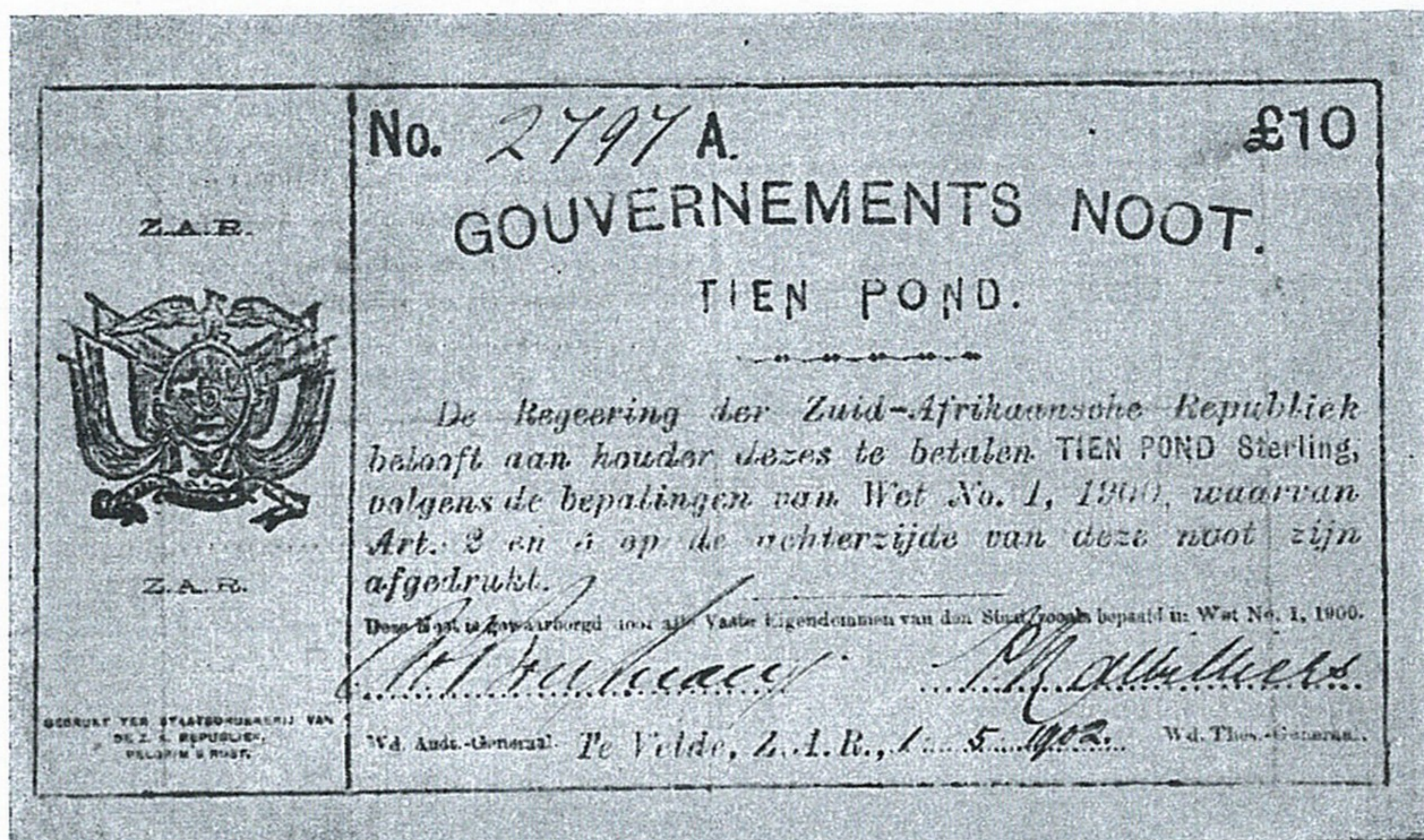
(11) Pretoria 1900. Alternative design £5 and £1 only.



(12) Pretoria 1900. Reverse.



(13) Pietersburg 1901. £100, £50, £20, £10, £5, £1.



(14) Pelgrim's Rust 1902. £10, £5, £1.



(15) Printing a Government Note at Pilgrims Rest 1902

issue of five rixdollar and ten rix-dollar notes to the value of Rds. 140,000 was authorised; the notes to be legal tender, to be secured by 105 Government farms, and to bear interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum. They were not to be redeemed until 18 months after the date of issue. These notes were intended mainly for the redemption of Mandaten, but, at the end of 18 months, there was still an amount of Rds. 140,000 of Mandaten to be redeemed. The Government therefore made a second issue of notes to redeem outstanding Mandaten and the first issue of notes. None of the first issue was to be accepted after 1st April, 1869, but they continued to be redeemed up to 1872. All those redeemed were officially burnt.

In the Africana Museum there is a Mandaat entirely handwritten on blue paper, dated 6.5.1859 and bearing the number 1534. It acknowledges the Government's debt of "Drie ponden Sterling" to J. H. Grobber for the transport to Pretoria of 500 lb. of gunpowder. It is signed by President M. W. Pretorius. The Mandaat illustrated is from the collection of the Transvaal Museum. It will be noticed that the later Mandaat is made out on a printed form, and that, while the earlier one in the Africana Museum is in pounds Sterling, the later one is in rixdollars.

The first printing in the South African Republic was done on a primitive press brought from Natal to Potchefstroom in 1857. The press was owned by the Government, and C. P. Moll, Jnr. became the Government Printer by contract. In 1863 the Government press moved to Pretoria, and it was on this press, according to Dr. F. V. Engelenburg, that the Government notes were printed. The five and ten rixdollar

notes were of the same size and printed on the same blue paper, which has as a watermark Britannia in an oval surmounted by a crown. The only difference between the Rds. 5 and Rds. 10 notes is in the denomination and the punctuation. The signatures on the Rds. 10 note illustrated are: M. W. Pretorius, President; J. P. Kleijn, Chairman of the Volksraad; and H. v. d. Linden, Treasurer.

Second issue, 1866

The first issue of notes was not a success. Their true value soon fell to less than half their value, and many people refused to take them at all, preferring to revert to barter. The Government tried to put matters right by issuing more notes. Further, it threatened to cancel the licence of any dealer refusing to accept the notes as equal to gold and silver. The new issue, authorised by resolution of the Volksraad on 5th April, 1866, was issued in Sterling instead of rixdollars and was not interest-bearing. It was intended to replace the first issue and to pay off the Mandaten still outstanding. £12,000 worth of notes was authorised, to be secured against 245 Government farms. The denominations were £1, 5s. and 2s. 6d. The £1 and 5s. notes were both printed on blue paper, and are the same in every respect except for the denomination. No copy of the 2s. 6d. note has been seen, but it is assumed that it was of the same size and wording as the other two.

The President signed and issued £13,370 worth of these notes although only £12,000 was authorised. He was accordingly accused of counterfeiting, of issuing money without authority. He threatened to resign, but the difficulty was smoothed over.

This issue is interesting because

it was the first to use Sterling denominations, and because it was the first to bear the Republic's coat of arms. Indeed, the coat of arms appeared on the notes before it was used for the *Staats Courant*; it may be that this was the first use of the Republic's arms. It is almost certain that the arms adopted by the *Volksraad* in 1857 were intended to be a wagon and an anchor on a shield with an armed farmer and a lion as supporters. Owing to ignorance of heraldry the printer placed the supporters on the shield. This must surely be one of the crudest coats of arms ever to be printed. The £1 note illustrated is signed by M. W. Pretorius, President; M. J. Viljoen, member of the Executive Committee; and H. v. d. Linden, Treasurer.

Third issue, 1867

When the *Volksraad* met in 1867 it found that the previous year's note issue had not succeeded in redeeming the country's debt; the *Mandaten* had not been redeemed and the first issue of notes had not been withdrawn. By resolution of the *Volksraad* on 26th May, 1867, a further issue of £20,000 was authorised, and a further 300 farms added to the security. The denominations were £5, £1, 5s. and 2s. 6d., and the notes resembled those of the second issue in paper, size, and coat of arms, but the wording differed. Now, for the first time, we have a £5 note. It must have been difficult to distinguish between the £5 and 5s. notes, because the only difference was the word "Shilling" for the word "Pond" and 5s. Stg." for "£5 Stg." The signing officers on the £5 note illustrated are the same as those on the preceding note.

Fourth issue, 1868

In 1868, when the £20,000 issue

of 1867 had all been spent and all the *Mandaten* still not paid off, it was decided to print still more paper money. It was estimated that the country's debt was £30,000 and that expenditure exceeded revenue by £15,000. Therefore notes were printed to the value of £45,000 and the number of farms pledged as security increased to 1,000. The issue was made up as follows:

£3,000 in £5 notes.

£30,000 in £1 notes.

£5,000 in 5s. notes.

£5,000 in 2s. 6d. notes.

£1,000 in 1s. Government Good-fors.

£1,000 in 6d. Government Good-fors.

The £30,000 intended for the liquidation of past debt included the redemption of the Rds. 5 and Rds. 10 notes. Of these notes, Rds. 24,475 or £1,835 12s. 6d. were actually destroyed during the succeeding year.

These notes, even the 1s. and 6d. good-fors, were signed by the President, a Member of the Executive Committee and one Member of the Finance Commission of three members which had been set up. Except for the denomination, the notes from £5 down to 2s. 6d. were similar in design, and of the same size except that the £5 was about a quarter of an inch wider than the others. The colour of the paper did not seem to matter: there are £1 notes on blue and on white paper; the £5 is white, the 2s. 6d. is white and the 5s. just off white. In the *Africana Museum* there is a £1 note on which the one has been scraped out and a five substituted; this was declared by the High Court to be falsified. Forgery and alteration must have been very easy with these notes crudely printed on a variety of papers.

The good-fors (1s. and 6d.) were printed on white card and measured approximately $1\frac{3}{4}$ " by $2\frac{3}{8}$ ". The £5 note, the 2s. 6d. note and the good-fors illustrated are all signed by M. W. Pretorius, President; M. J. Viljoen, Member of the Executive Committee; and C. J. Joubert, Member of the Finance Commission. These are the last of the locally printed notes.

Fifth issue, 1871

At the September, 1868 meeting of the Volksraad the President drew attention to the very serious financial position of the country and said that, while money had to be found for necessary expenditure, it could not be obtained by further note issues. At this time the Government notes were worth about one-quarter of their face value and the issue of further notes would merely reduce the value of those in circulation. The President continued to plead the urgency of the financial position of the Republic until in 1870 the Volksraad appointed a commission to report on the President's proposals for improving the currency. The Commission found that there had been no proper provision for the calling in and destruction of notes, that no bonds had been passed for the farms held as security for the notes and that the value of notes outstanding was £73,826. It was decided that all old notes should be replaced by new ones printed on proper bank-note paper, and that £5,000 a year should be set aside for the redemption of notes. Farms were to be sold and the proceeds used for the redemption of notes. Under Law No. 7 of 1871 all old notes had to be withdrawn within two years after 11 December, 1871, whereafter they would cease to be of value.

The new issue of notes was received from England in November, 1871, to an amount of £61,150. The denominations were of £20, £10, £5 and £1 notes engraved on bank-note paper and having a coat of arms of proper heraldic design. These notes were all of the same size, but the colours differed for each denomination: £20, deep blue; £10, white; £5, pink; and £1 green. The papers were in each case water-marked with the denomination; e.g. "20 TWENTIG 20". In this issue there were also "little notes" for 10s., 5s., 2s. 6d., 1s., and 6d., printed on parchment-like paper, white in colour for all denominations, and having the President's signature printed in facsimile. The large notes (£1 to £20) were all signed by the President, the Treasurer and a member of the Commission. The "little notes" were signed only by a member of the Commission, the President's signature having been printed. The larger notes bear the imprint of the engraver "William Brown & Co. Sc. 40, Old Broad St., London", below the panel on the right of the note, and below the panel on the left "F. Jeppe, Potchefstroom". It can be assumed that this means that Fred Jeppe designed the note. If so, the design was probably much improved by the engraver, for these notes are, as regards design and engraving, of a high standard for the period. It is interesting to observe that the eagle is looking to its left, heraldically incorrect but customary in the arms of the Republic.

In 1872 it was decided to raise a loan of £63,000 with the Cape Commercial Bank for the purpose of redeeming all Government notes. All notes were to be redeemed before 1 February, 1875, or they would lapse. Before the expiration of the Government notes the Cape

Commercial Bank had opened branches in the South African Republic and was issuing its own notes. The Standard Bank followed shortly afterwards and the notes of the commercial banks became the paper currency of the country.

The War Issues, 1900-1902

Law No. 1 of 1900 of the South African Republic was promulgated on 28 May, 1900, a few days before the British occupied Pretoria. This law provided for the issue of Government notes up to a total of £1,000,000, in denominations of not less than £1 and not more than £100. The notes were to be signed by the Treasurer-General and the Auditor-General and to be stamped with the great seal of the Republic and to be numbered and registered in the office of the Auditor-General. They were to carry interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, and £100,000 worth was to be redeemed every year on 1st June, beginning in 1901.

On 1 July, 1900, by Proclamation No. 8 of 1900, the British repudiated all notes issued or to be issued under the Republican Law No. 1 of 1900 and refused to honour any such notes presented for payment. From this date their only value was as evidence of war losses. This is why so many of these notes, particularly those issued in Pretoria and Pietersburg, are still to be found. Judging by the highest numbers on the notes seen, over 42,000 were issued in Pretoria and over 64,000 in Pietersburg, the latter mainly in £1 notes. None of the denominations of the Pretoria issue is rare except perhaps the £50, which is seen less often than the £100; but all denominations of the Pietersburg issue above £5 are rare.

The first notes issued under this law were dated Pretoria 28.5.1900.

They were of denominations: £100, £50, £20, £10, £5 and £1. There were two different printings of both the £1 and the £5 notes, the design of the panel and the rule under the denomination being different in each printing. All the 1900 Pretoria notes are of the same size and printed in green ink on white paper. All signed notes have the blind embossed seal of the Republic. Unsigned copies of the note do not have the seal. The Pretoria notes were signed by J. S. Marais, Auditor-General, and N. S. Malherbe, Treasurer-General, and are all dated 28.5.1900.

The wording of the Pietersburg notes is the same as on those issued in Pretoria, and they were of the same denominations: £100, £50, £20, £10, £5 and £1. The printing was crude, the ink black, and the paper white in colour but of different qualities. There is no impression of the great seal and they are signed by A. P. Brugman, Acting Auditor-General, and P. R. de Villiers, Acting Treasurer-General. The first batch to be issued in Pietersburg was dated 1.2.1901 and the remainder 1.4.1901. There were many more with the latter date than with the former. A new sequence of numbers was started for each denomination, the numbers being followed by the letter A. Mr. P. R. de Villiers gave me some interesting information about the Pietersburg and Pilgrims Rest notes in a letter dated 10.9.52. He stated that he was both Acting Auditor-General and Acting Treasurer-General, but when the second issue of notes was about to be made, Mr. A. P. Brugman was appointed Acting Auditor-General, because two signatures were necessary and the notes would have been illegal had he alone signed in both his capacities. Mr. Brugman was later connected with

the Land Bank at Pretoria. Mr. de Villiers says that the "Treasury on wheels and for the last eight months on horseback" was an important factor in enabling the war to be carried on for about two and a half years. He says that the Pretoria issue was stamped with the great seal, but those from Pietersburg and Pilgrims Rest were not stamped because the seal was too heavy to carry about.

Mr. de Villiers writes that so far as he can remember the denominations were the same for the Pretoria, Pietersburg and Pilgrims Rest issues. But only £10, £5 and £1 notes from Pilgrims Rest are known to exist. The Transvaal Museum has copies of these denominations unnumbered and unsigned and inscribed "Met complimenten Ph. C. Minnaar, Wd. Landdrost. W. J. H. Barter Krijgs Commissaris, Z.A.R. de Commissie". Had there been other denominations it is almost certain that the Commissioners at Pilgrims Rest, Minnaar and Barter, would have given a complete set to the Museum. These notes, printed in the field at the end of the war, are mostly found as complimentary copies, and few of those which appear to be regular issues can have been used as currency. Of the five £1 notes which I have examined, one is a printer's proof, two are complimentary copies, and two are properly signed and presumably issued, date 1 March, 1902. Of the three £5 notes examined, two are complimentary, and one, presumably issued, is dated 1 March, 1902. Of the five £10 notes seen, one dated 1 March, 1902 was presumably issued and the other four are complimentary copies.

The Pilgrims Rest or Te Velde notes are crudely printed on ruled paper such as is commonly used in exercise books. But the poor print-

ing is not surprising when the difficulties under which they were produced are considered. The imprint says "Gedrukt ter Staatsdrukkerij van de Z.A. Republiek, Pelgrim's Rust". The printers were a Mr. Gyzelman and a Mr. Jacobs, assisted by the resourceful schoolmaster P. J. Kloppers, who was also responsible for the production of the veldponde. The Pilgrims Rest notes bear the same signatures as those from Pietersburg, A. P. Brugman and P. R. de Villiers, and they continue the sequence of numbers started in Pietersburg. All three denominations are of the same size, design and colour.

The illustration of the printing press on which notes were printed at Pilgrims Rest is from the album *Photos of Boer Commandos*, by Alex. Marshall. The Republican Government gave permission for Mr. Marshall to remain in the Lydenburg area when war broke out, to look after the interests of the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates Limited, whose principal mines were at Pilgrims Rest. He pays tribute to the courtesy of the Republican leaders in allowing him to photograph their activities during the war. The photograph of the printing office is not very clearly captioned, but the men, reading from left to right, are probably, W. J. H. Barter, Mr. Gyzelman, P. J. Kloppers, and P. C. Minnaar.

The information in this article is taken mainly from Professor E. H. D. Arndt's *Banking and Currency Development in South Africa*, and from the Government notes in the Africana Museum, the Transvaal Museum, and the collection in the South African Reserve Bank. The notes illustrated (except the Mandaat) are all from the Africana Museum.