

EMERGENCY MONEY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Trevor Jacomb

Government notes (“Gouvernements noten”)

The political and military developments of the Anglo-Boer War and the subsequent economic depression in the Republic are well known. In the disruptive conditions caused by the turn of the tide of war, it is not surprising that the government of the Republic legally sought refuge in paper money to pay its officials and to pay for military supplies. Provision was made for the printing of 1,000,000 government notes with values of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. The notes would be redeemable on 1 June 1901.

First issue: Pretoria, 28 May 1900

The first notes were issued on 28 May 1900, a few days before the advancing Lord Roberts was expected to occupy Pretoria, which he did on 6 June 1900. On 1 July 1900, Roberts announced that the British authorities declined to recognise the validity of these notes and declared them illegal. While these notes (and the later issues) were secured by all the fixed assets of the state at 6 per cent interest a year, most never redeemed, because the Republic lost the war. The notes were embossed with the great seal of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). The notes were numbered and signed personally by the Treasurer-General, N.S. Malherbe, and the Auditor-General, J.S. Marais. The difference in the decorative motif is striking. The abbreviation “No.” (for number) was omitted on the earlier notes. The notes were printed on white paper of good quality with a green tinge printing and were known as “green backs” as the general impression of their colour was green. The later series had a blackish over-all colour. These notes became known among the public as “blue backs”, possibly owing to the historical association with the previous green backs.

The Pietersburg issues

After the British took Pretoria, the only free printing works was that of Zoutpansberg Wachter in Pietersburg. This was then declared the State Printing Works and adapted for the purpose of printing emergency bank notes. The staff comprised three persons, one of whom, J.P. Vorster, a typesetter, performed a great service to the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. In Pretoria, where he had completed his apprenticeship, he had acquired the proud reputation of being the fastest compositor – he could “comp” at sixty-five letters a minute (in those days, compositors or hand-setters packed the letters from various “cases” and “fonts” of letter types into a composing stick). Vorster proceeded to print the paper money his country needed so desperately – 116,000 notes to the value of £220,000 in denominations of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. These were later nick-named the “blue

backs”. Despatch riders carried the money to the Government in the field at Machadadorp.

The paper on which these notes had been printed varied in thickness and the quality was generally much poorer than that of the Pretoria issue. Technical production was also inferior: the notes were not embossed, since the press had been too heavy to transport. The notes were signed by the Auditor-General, A.P. Brugman and the Treasurer-General, P.R. de Villiers. There were three separate issues dated 1 February, 1 March and 1 April 1901. When the British entered the Pietersburg district in March 1901, Vorster had to flee and leave his printing press behind. It was later blown up by the British.

Te Velde (The Treasury on wheels: notes in the field.)

It was a heavy blow for the Boers when the British forces under Brigadier-General H.C.O. Plummer took Pietersburg on 8 April 1901. Vorster’s press was destroyed, and they lost their entire supply of bank notes to the British at Lydenburg. For a state requiring money to conduct a war, some of the 986 gold *veld ponde* (field pounds) of P.J. Kloppers were meagre indeed and the Boer forces were heading for a financial crisis. Money had to be found somewhere. A printing press was urgently needed. Again Kloppers’ ingenuity came to the rescue. A small hand press was discovered in Pilgrim’s Rest. It was broken and incomplete, but after being repaired by Gyzelman, formerly of the Government Printing Works in Pretoria, and one Hendricks, it was used to print some paper money. Some of the letters, as well as the ink, had to be made by the printers themselves. Kloppers etched the Republican Coat of Arms in copper and pressed it into lead to make a printing block. And so the last of the “blue backs” (this time in the field) were issued. The notes were dated 1 March, 1 April and 1 May 1902, and were in £1, £5 and £10 values. In circumstances such as these, some printer’s errors crept in.

Very limited research has actually been done on the actual notes issued and from my own experience note dealers had different explanations, ideas and opinions. Hopefully, my research will not only help me, but other collectors in the future. As and when I am able to complete my research I will publish a paper and share with all interest parties my findings.

The table below shows the details that I am currently recording for each note seen. I believe this to be fairly comprehensive and hope to be able to determine the grammage of the paper, together with an analysis of the various types of paper used in each of the three issues.

NOTE DETAILS							
Value	Number	Type/date	Issue	Watermark	Cancellation	Condition	General notes

PRINTING DETAILS			PAPER DETAILS			
Printers ink colour	Number ink colour	Signature ink colour	Paper colour & thickness	Gramage	Lined/unlined	Colour of lines

Table 1. The note details currently being recorded



## The Pretoria issue of 1900

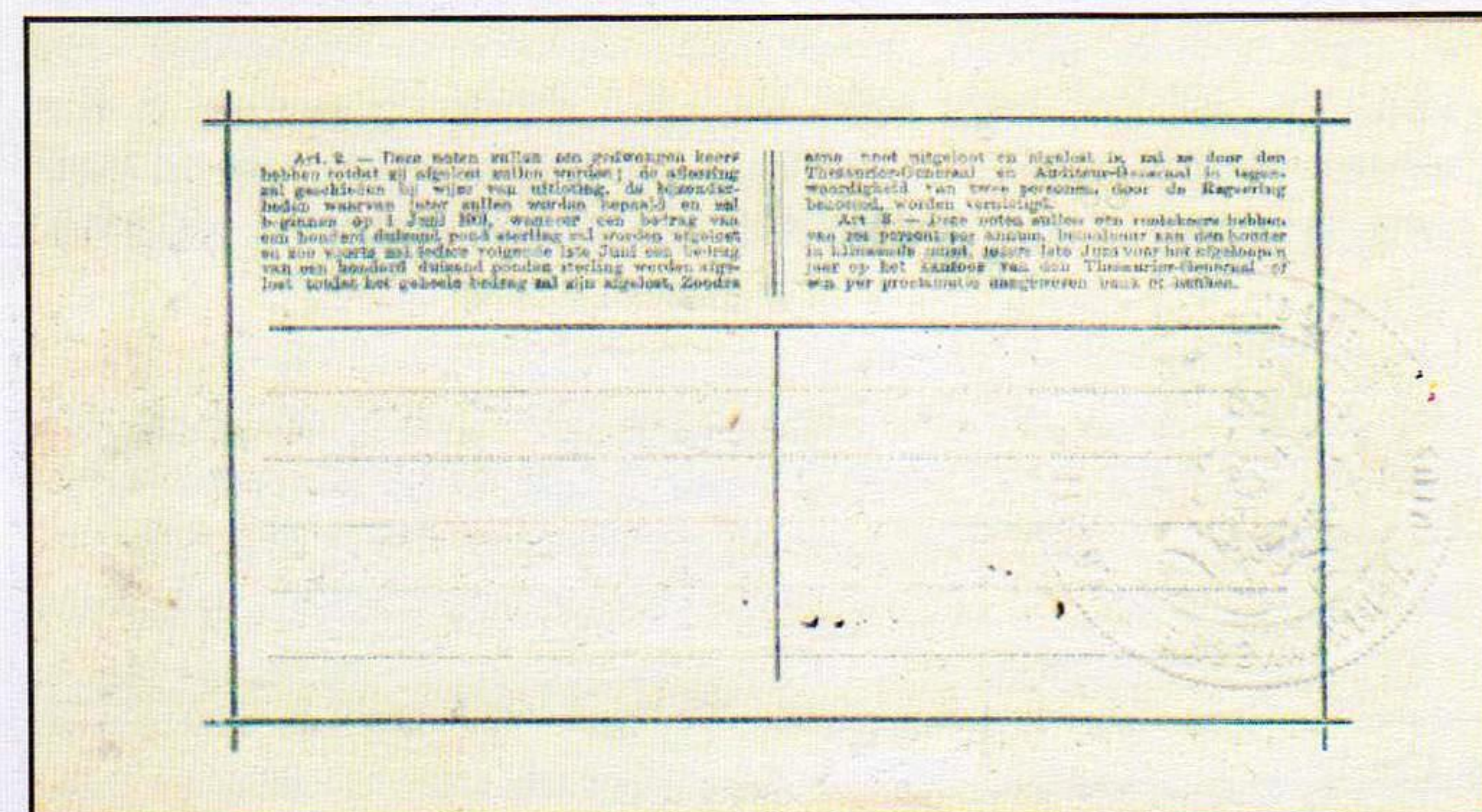
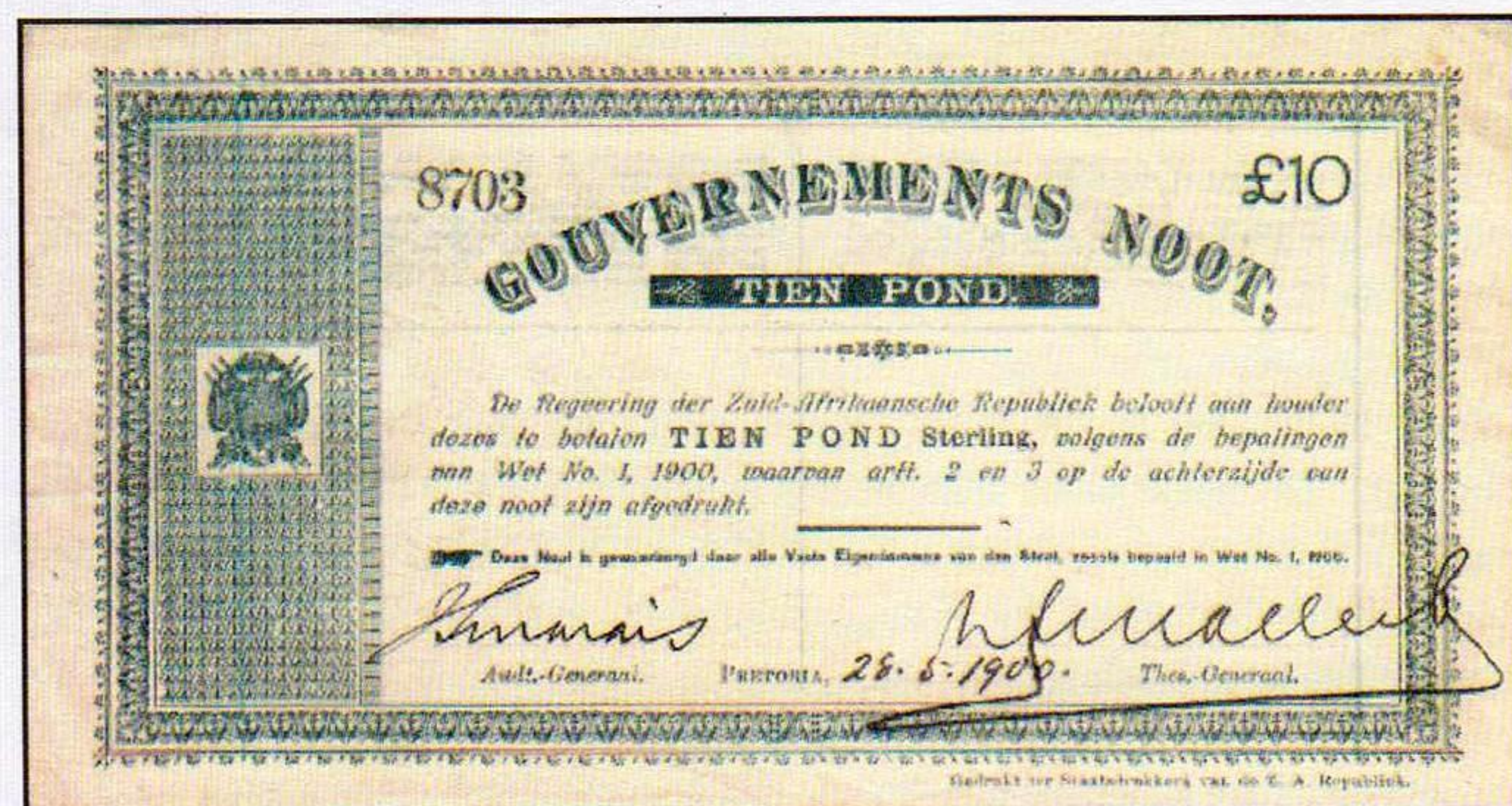
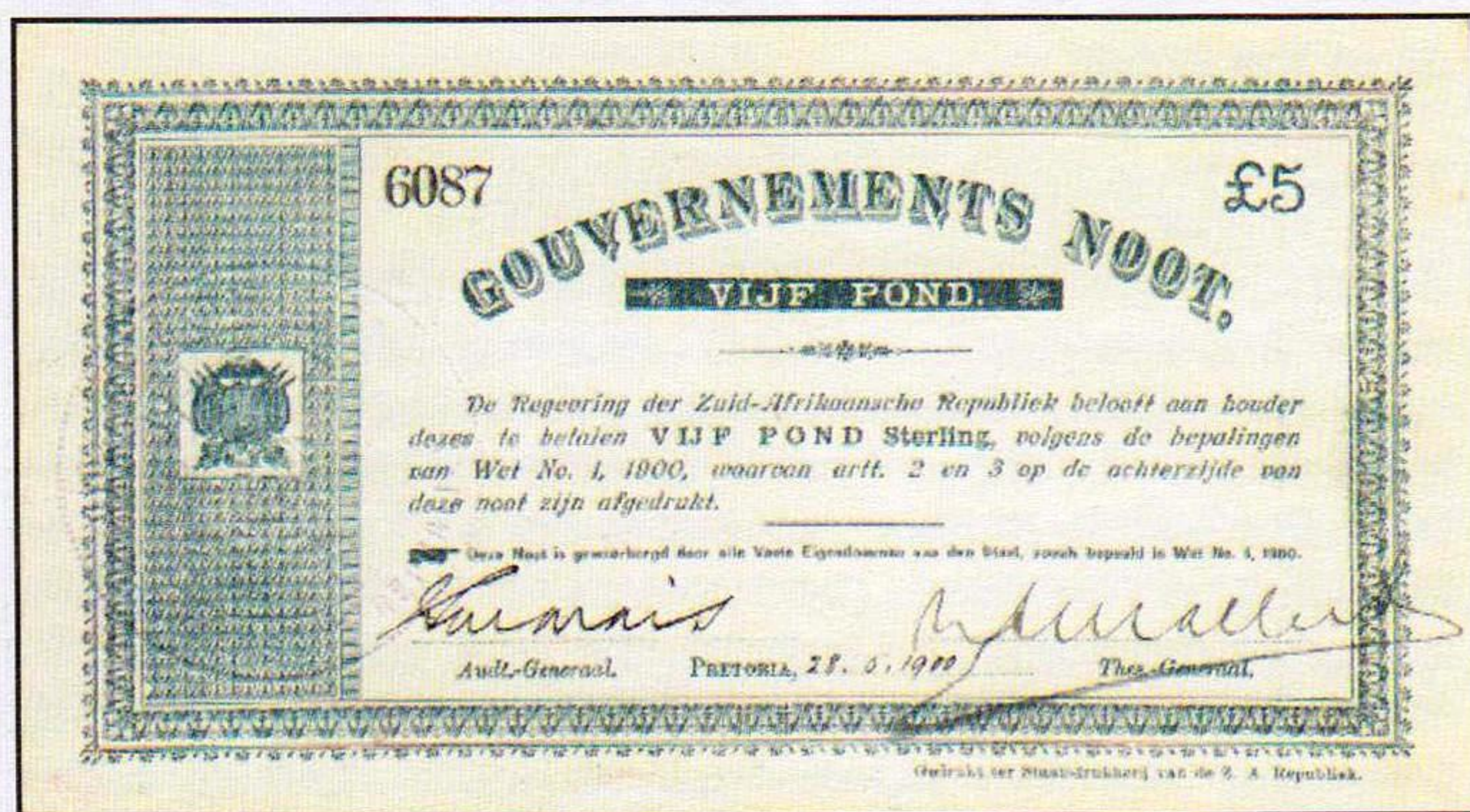
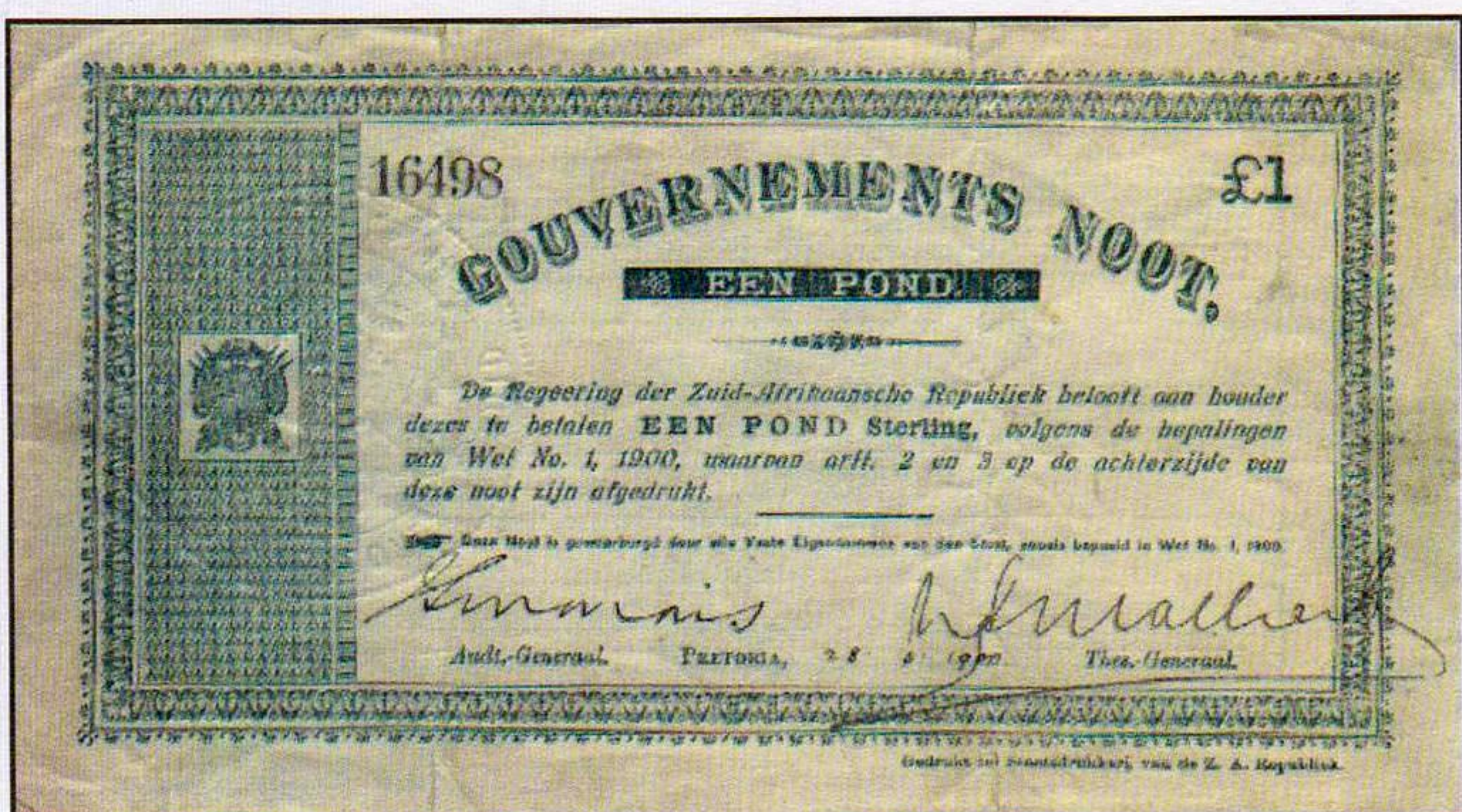


Plate 1. The first Government notes—Pretoria Issue

## Dates

The Pretoria issues were all hand dated 28 May 1900. Two formats were used as shown in Figure 1 and 2. The second variety has not yet been seen on the £1 and £10 notes.

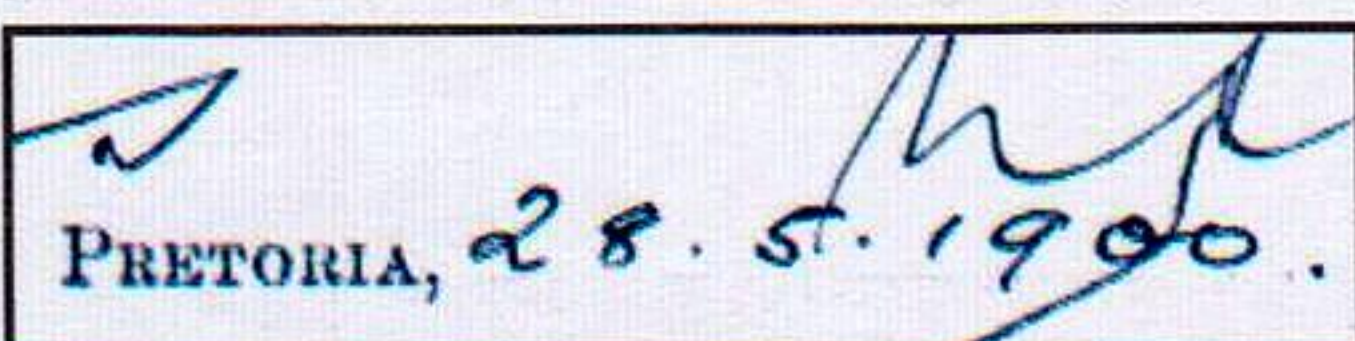


Figure 1. The common variety

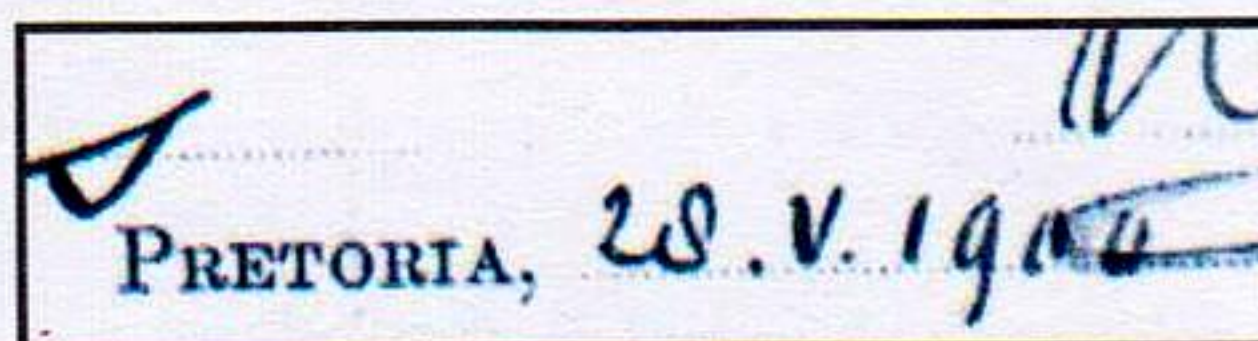
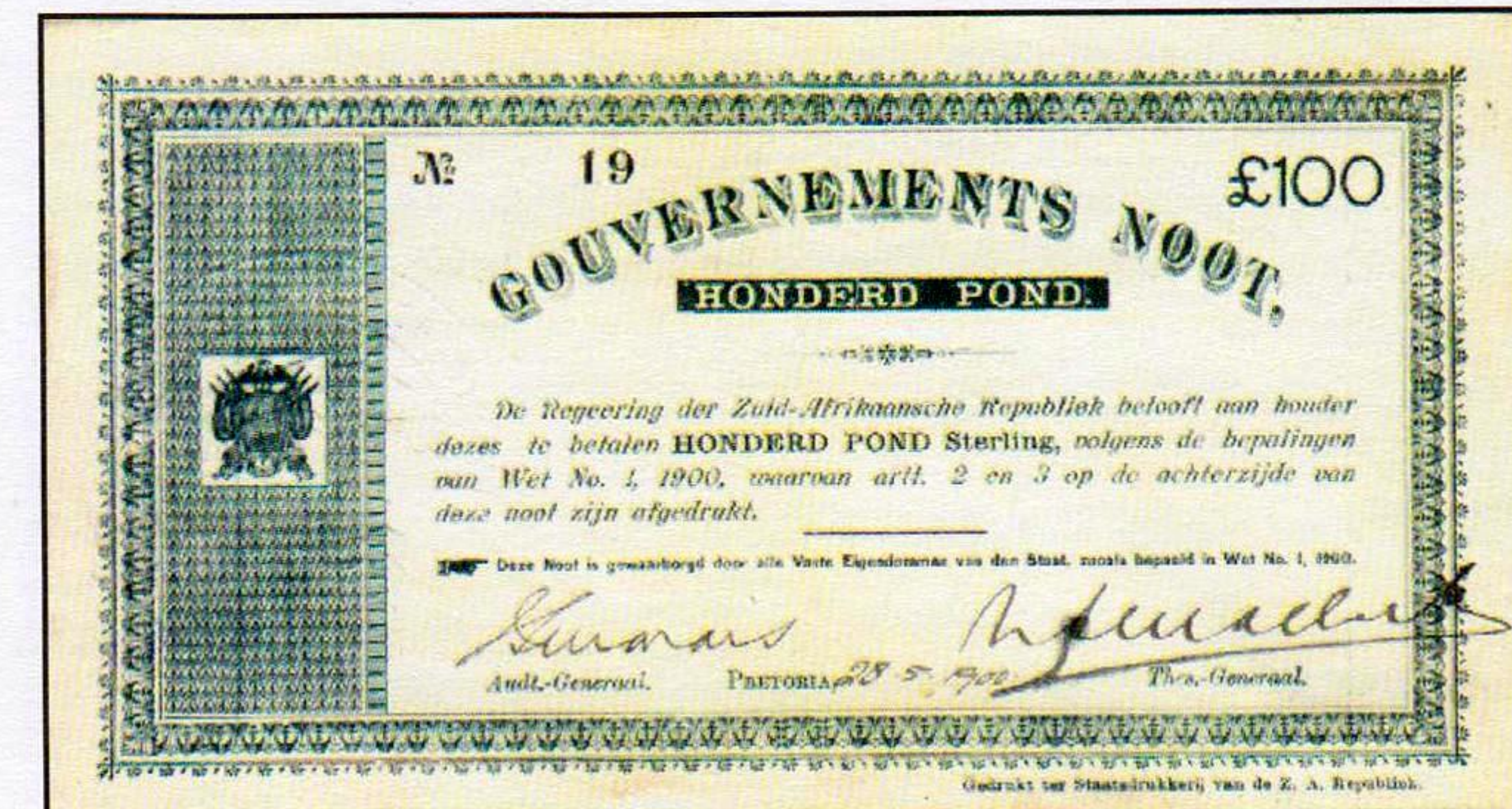
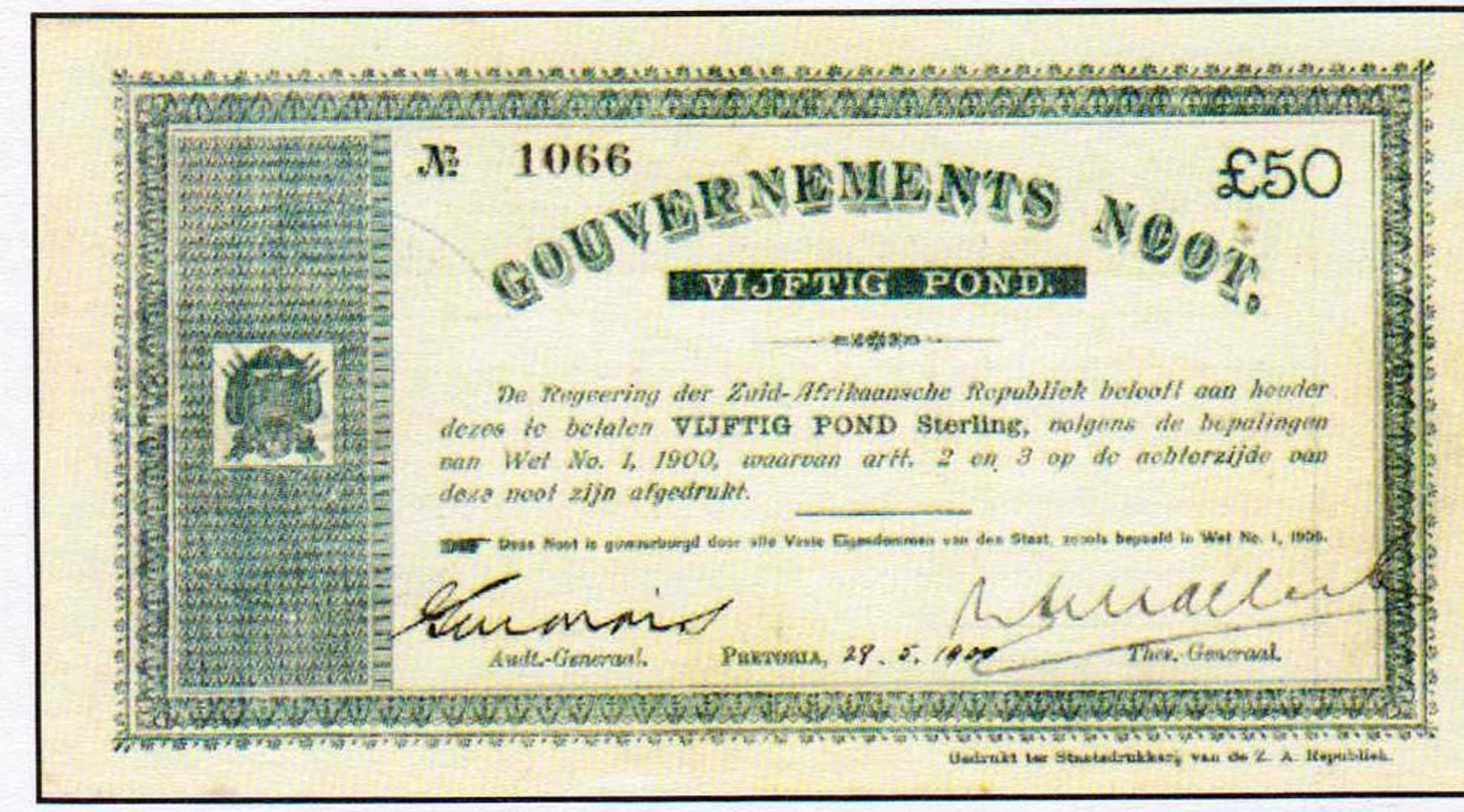
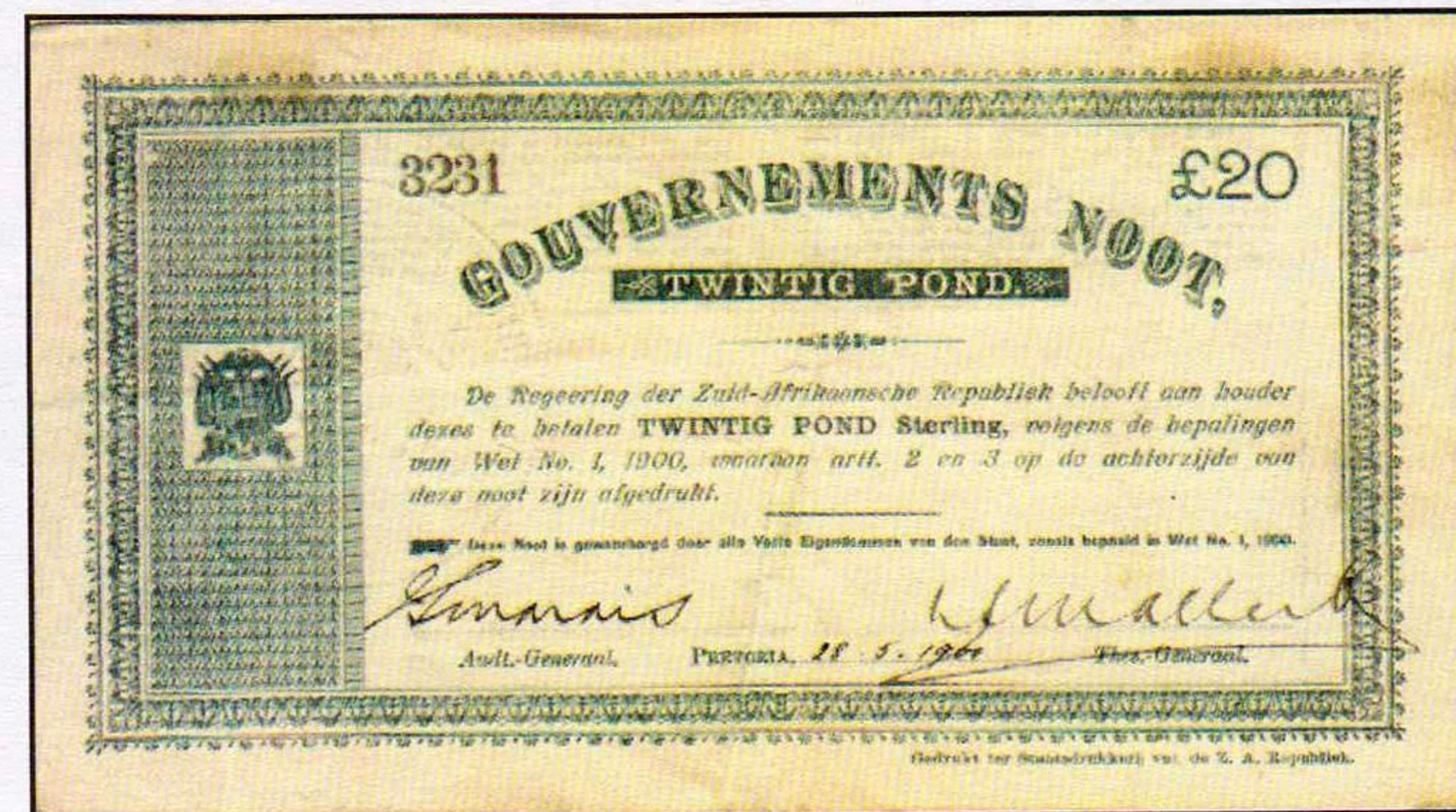


Figure 2. Variety 2

I have seen a £100 note date illustrated by: 28/5/1900 the only one encountered to date. A group of clerks, 4 or 5 in



number would have been given the task of dating a pack of notes, hence the differences in the date format. A single error date, viz. 28.3.1900 has been seen.



Figure 3. Error date—28.3.1900

## Signatures

The notes were signed by the Auditor General Mr J.S. Marais and the Treasurer-General Mr. N.S. Malherbe.

In August 2002, I was invited by John Ineson to visit him at his home in England to view and to record his notes – a memorable occasion. John is the author of the Spinks Publication "South African Boer War" - a very informative book.

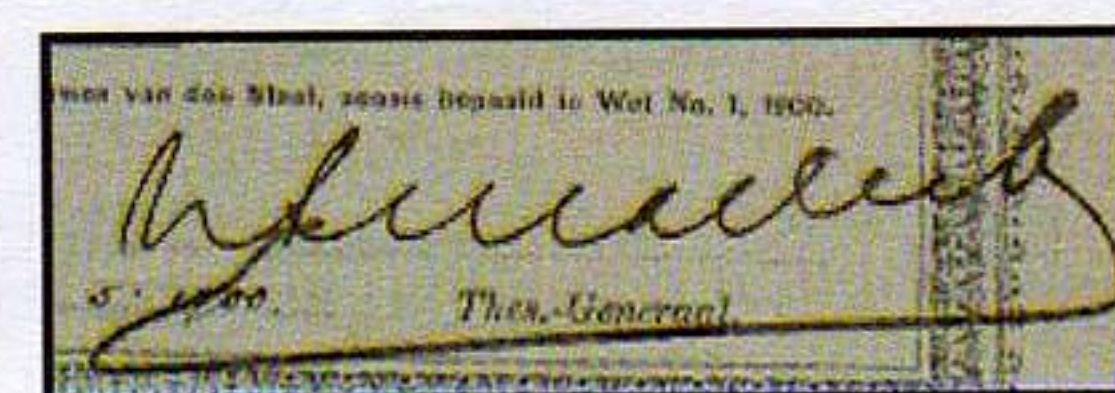
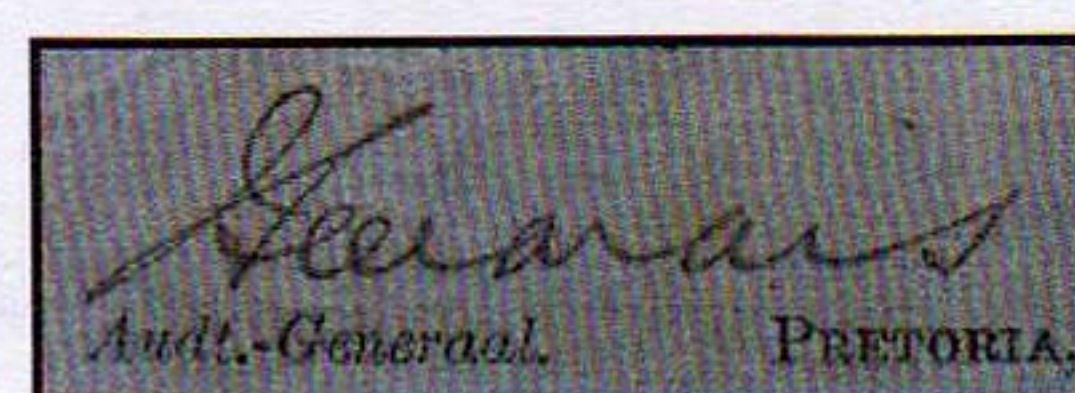


Figure 4. The signature of Auditor General (J.S. Marais) and the Treasurer General (N.S. Malherbe)



One of the notes John had for sale was a note with the illustrated signature (Figure 5), being a £5.00 spade with the number of 9007. Nine months prior to this occasion I had picked up a note from a Johannesburg dealer with the same noticeably different signature of the same series with the number of 9037.

To date, with the number of notes within this series, we could have a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 259 notes with this strange signature variation.



Figure 5. Malherbe signature variation

### Coat of Arms & Great Seal

The ZAR Coat of Arms as well as the Great Seal requires further investigation through the Pretoria archives.



Figure 6. The Coat of Arms and Great Seal

### Borders, dividers and bank note number

Three types of Pretoria issue notes exist and classified according to border type and whether the serial number is preceded by "No." The spade type decorative border situated on the left-hand side of the note has been classified as Type "A" or Type "B" depending on whether the serial number is not preceded with or preceded by "No" respectively.

Type C contains a star or sometimes referred as a diamond border on the left-hand side of the note and has a less elaborate divider than found in Types "A" and "B". Type "C" always has "No" preceding the note number.

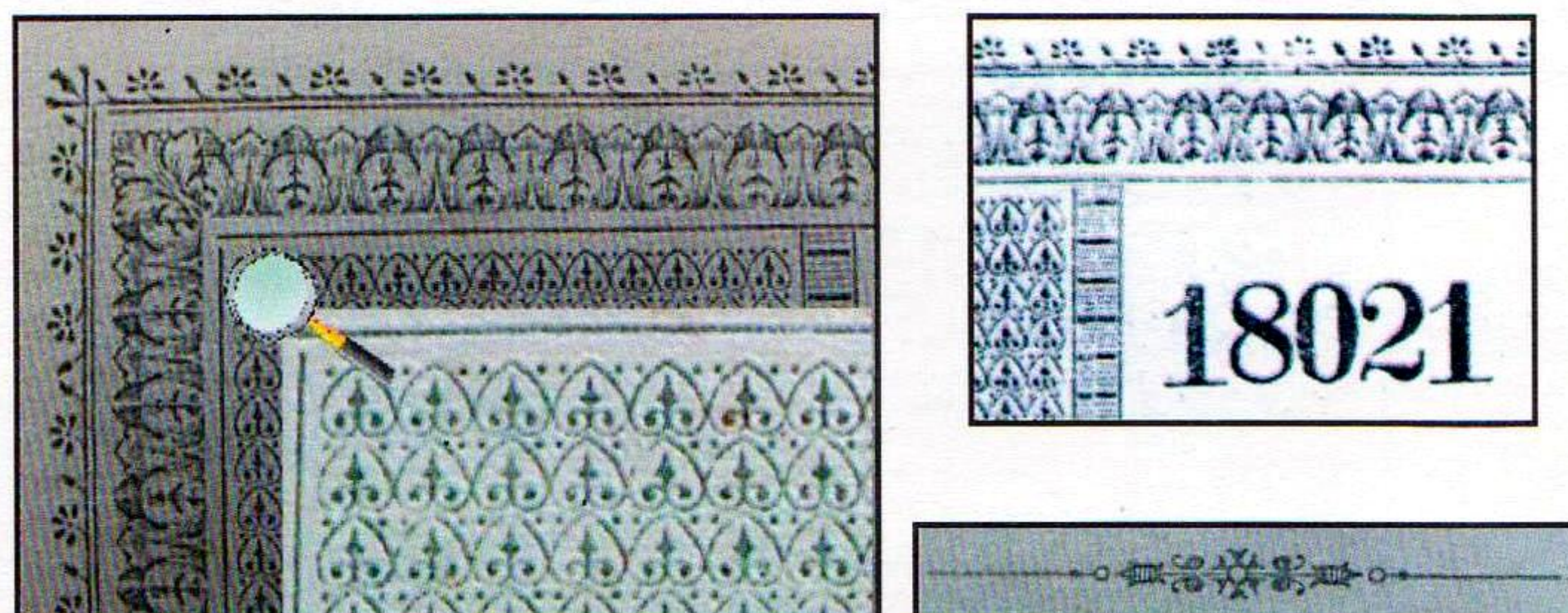


Figure 7. Pretoria note Type A—Spade border without "No."

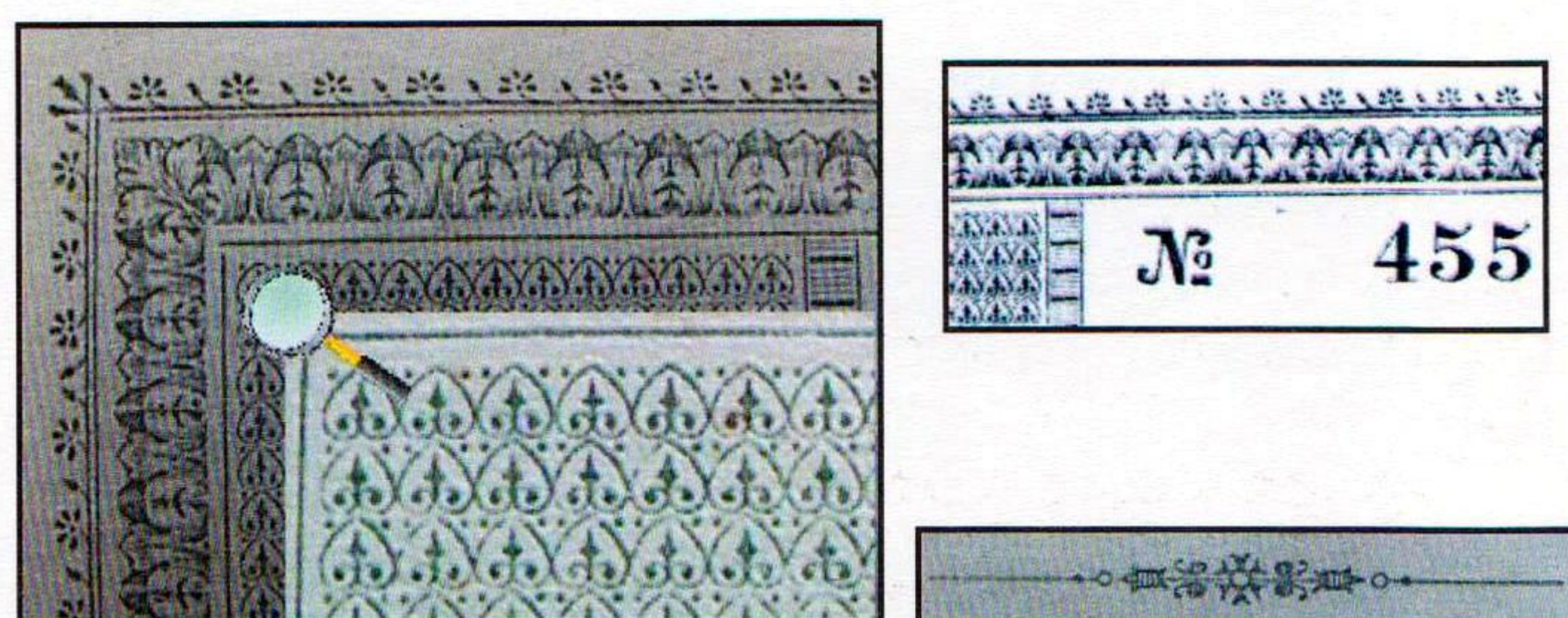


Figure 8. Pretoria note Type B—Spade border with "No."

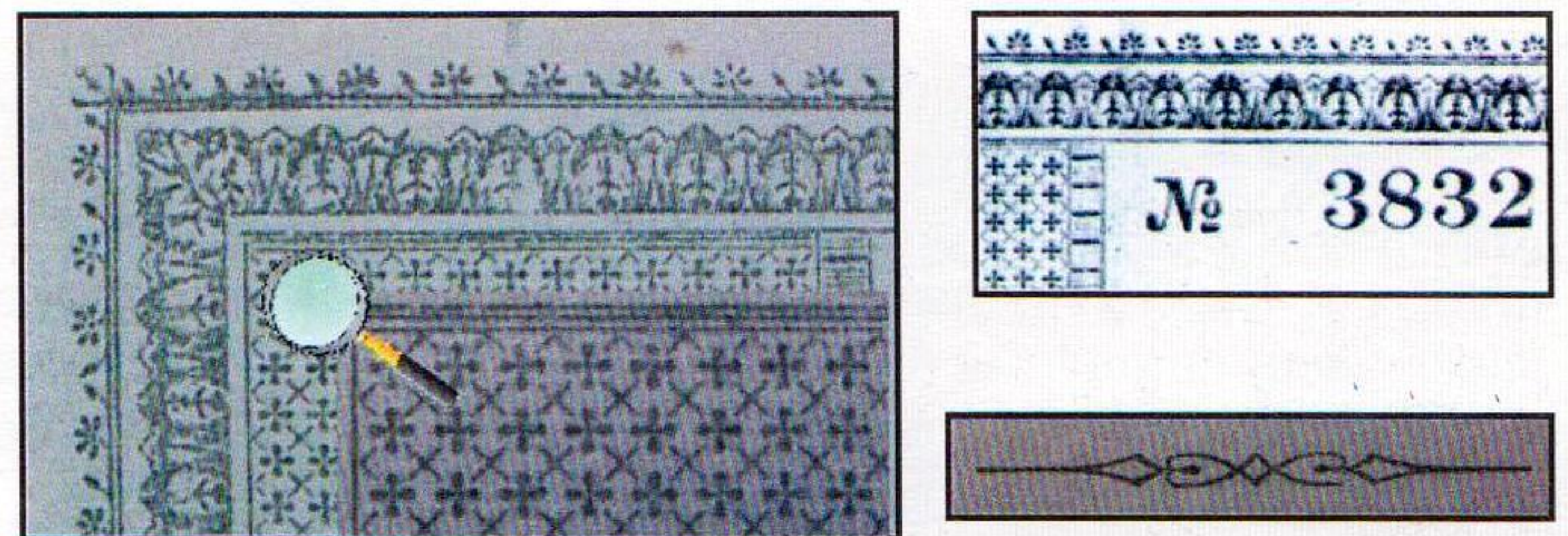


Figure 9. Pretoria note Type C—Star border and less elaborate divider

### Cancellations

To date a total of ten different types of cancellations have been identified with the redeeming dates ranging from 5 October 1904 to 31 January 1907. A lot of investigation still has to be completed within this sector.

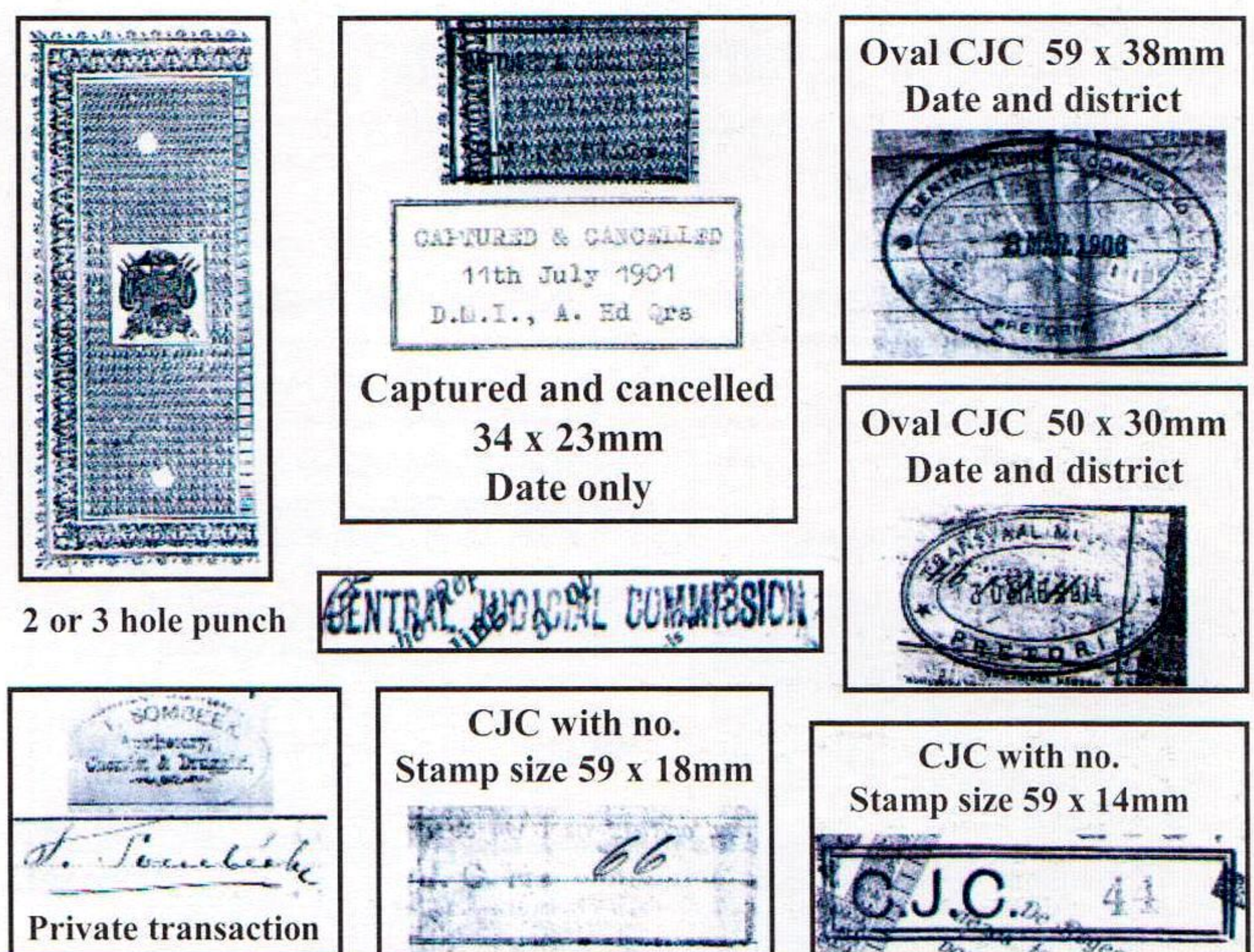


Figure 10. Cancellation stamps/holes found on the Pretoria issues

### Watermarks

To date four different types have been partly identified. Three of the watermarks are depicted below. A fourth type reads "LONDON". Watermarks are not repeated in each of the three issued types, i.e. Pretoria, Pietersburg and Te Velde. This sector will also require a lot more research.

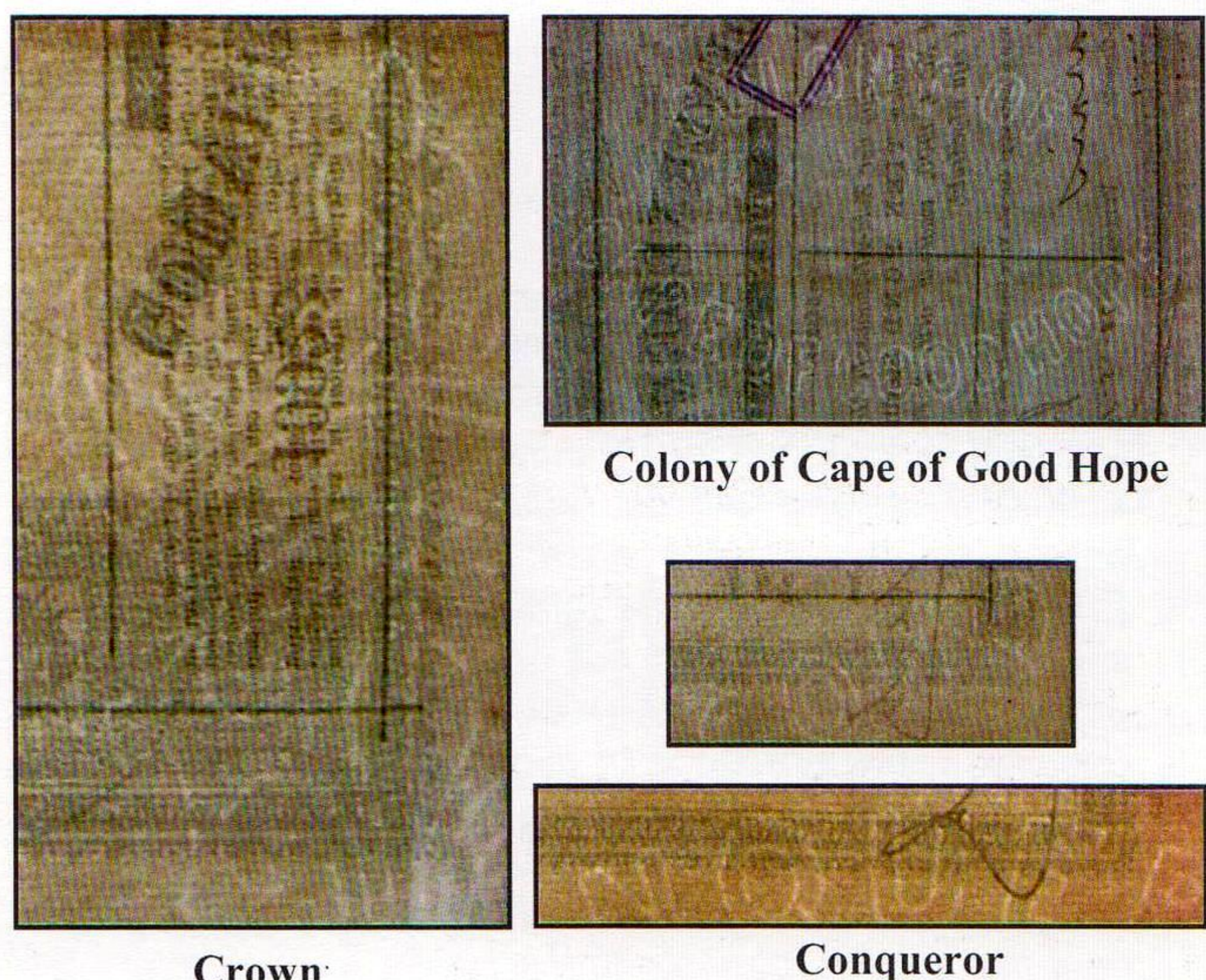


Figure 11. Three of the four types of watermarked paper



## Paper thickness

The paper thickness has been measured in each corner of the note using a micrometer measuring from 25mm to 0.01 mm, i.e. 1/100 mm, then taking the average of the four readings, being careful not to measure over the embossed Great Seal or any heavy creases in the note and pin holes etc. Paper thickness recorded ranged from 8,625µm to 24,625µm.

The paper weight is to be analysed and recorded in paper weight, i.e. measured in grams.

With the Pretoria issue there are two different colours of paper; the normal being white/cream, the other colour is grey. The latter has only been used to date for the £1, £5, £10 and £20 and within Types "A" and "B"; Type "B" being very limited.

Suggested quantities of the Pretoria Notes that were printed are shown in the table below. The total figure may vary between 49,800 to 52,700 and is yet to be proven. Value wise you, the reader, can calculate the above value of the Pretoria issue at face value.

Denomination	Estimated notes printed
£1	20,000 notes
£5	13,000 notes
£10	9,500 notes
£20	5,000 notes
£50	1,500 notes
£100	800 notes
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>49,800 notes</b>

Table 2. Total number of Pretoria issue notes

For the non-Afrikaans/Dutch reader, the English translation of the front of the note is as follows:

### Government Note, \*\*\*\*\* Pound

The Government of the South African Republic promises to pay the bearer of this note \*\*\*\*\* Pound Sterling, according to Law No. 1. 1900, of which Articles 2 and 3 are printed on the reverse of this note, This note is guaranteed by all fixed properties of the State as defined in Law No. 1.

On the reverse of the note it states:

Article 2. These notes will have a fixed rate until they are redeemed; their redemption will be conducted by means of a draw, the details of which will be made known later, and will commence on 1 June 1901, when a sum of £100,000 sterling will be redeemed, which will be repeated on the 1 June each year with an amount of £100,000 sterling until the total amount is redeemed. As soon as a note is taken out of circulation and repaid, it will be destroyed by the Treasurer General and Auditor General in the presence of two people appointed by the Government.

Article 3. These notes will bear an interest rate of six per cent per annum, payable to the holder in cash every first of June, for the previous year, at the office of the Treasurer General or at a bank appointed by proclamation.

## The Pietersburg issue of 1901

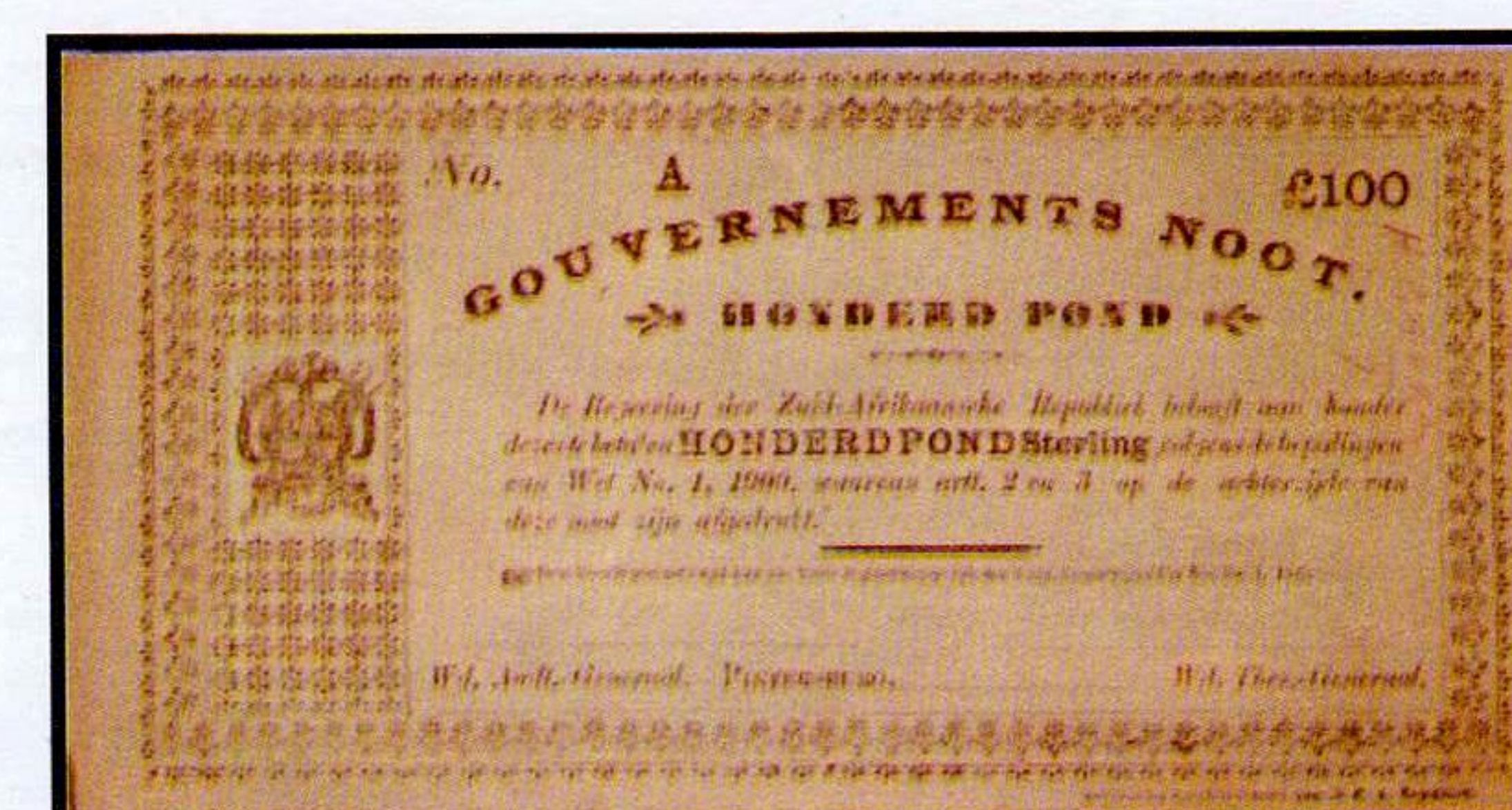
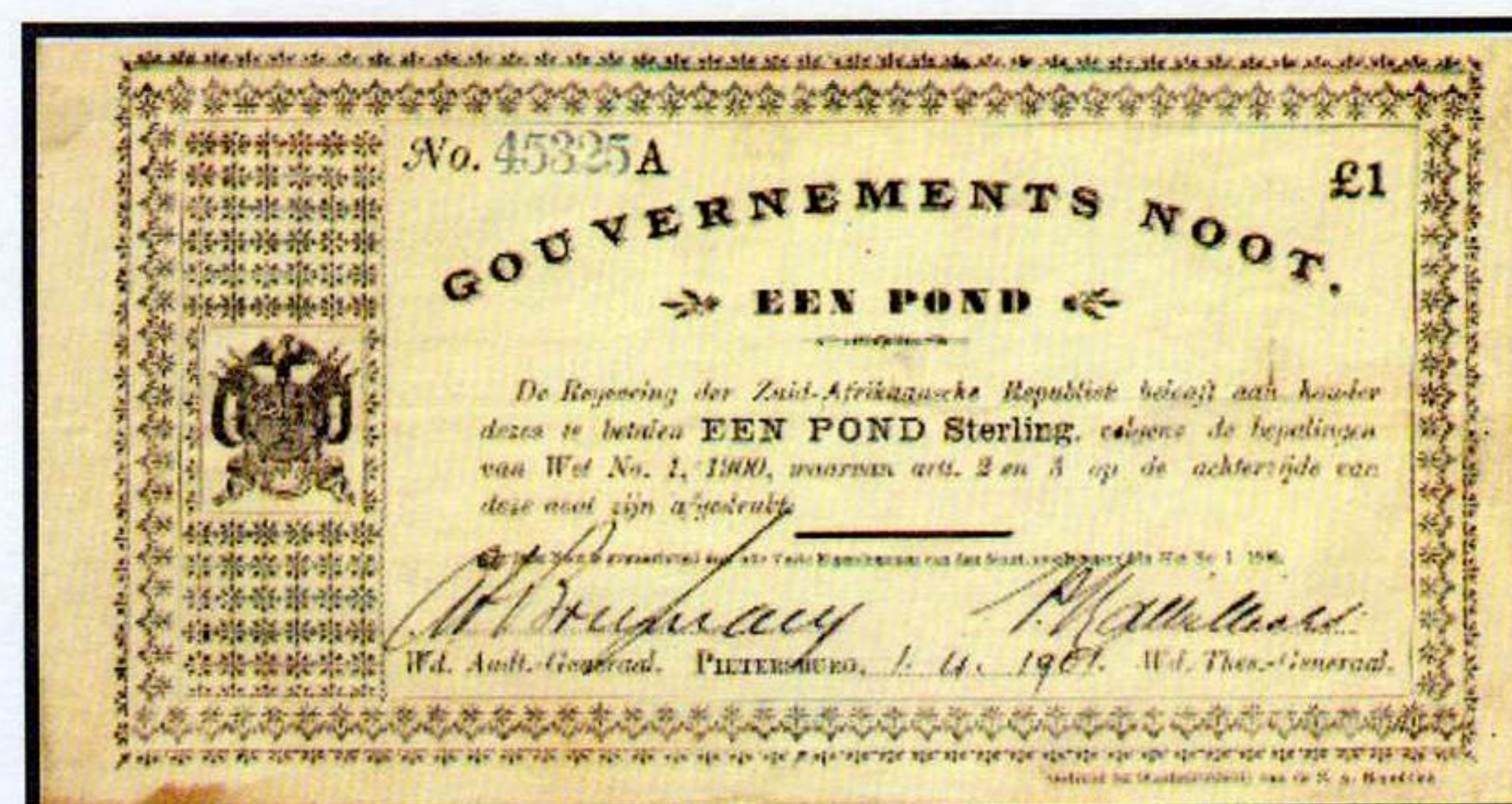


Plate 2. The Pietersburg notes



Dates

Three dates have been seen on the Pietersburg notes as indicated in Table 3.

Date	Denomination seen
1.2.1901	£1 & £5
1.3.1901	£1, £5 & £10
1.4.1901	All denominations

Table 3. Dates seen on the Pietersburg notes

It may be suggested that a single clerk was responsible for the dating of each one of the three date issues. This is totally different from the Pretoria issue. More research is required.

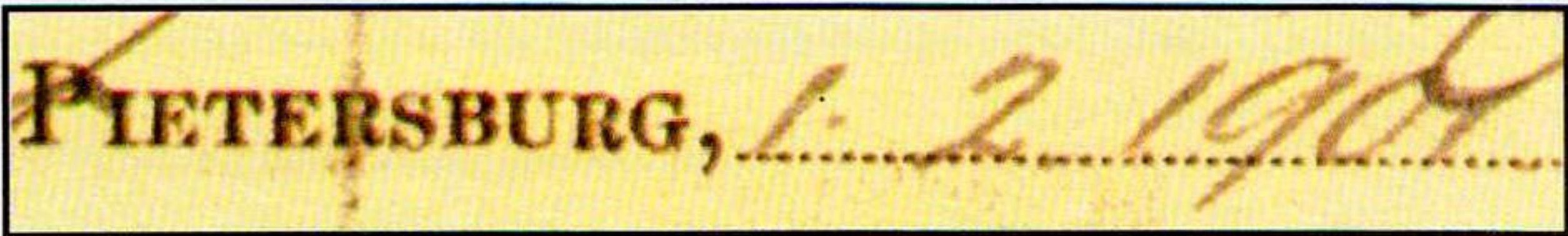


Figure 12. Example of hand written date

Signatures

The Pietersburg notes were signed by the Acting Auditor-General Mr. A.P. Brugman and the Acting Treasurer-General Mr. P.N. de Villiers.



Figure 13. Pietersburg note signatories

Coat of Arms

No Great Seal embossing appears on this issue. It has been reported in numerous publications that the press and its equipment were too heavy to transport between Pretoria and Pietersburg. Furthermore the British army was very close to Pretoria when the move took place.



Figure 14. Poorer imaged COA on the Pietersburg notes

Borders, dividers and bank note number

All the Pietersburg notes contained a star border and a simpler divider design. All the serial note numbers are prefixed with "No." in italics. No differences have been found to date, in so far as the decorative boarder on the left-hand side of the note or in the underlining of the value (divider). The serial numbers occur in two colours, viz. black and blue.

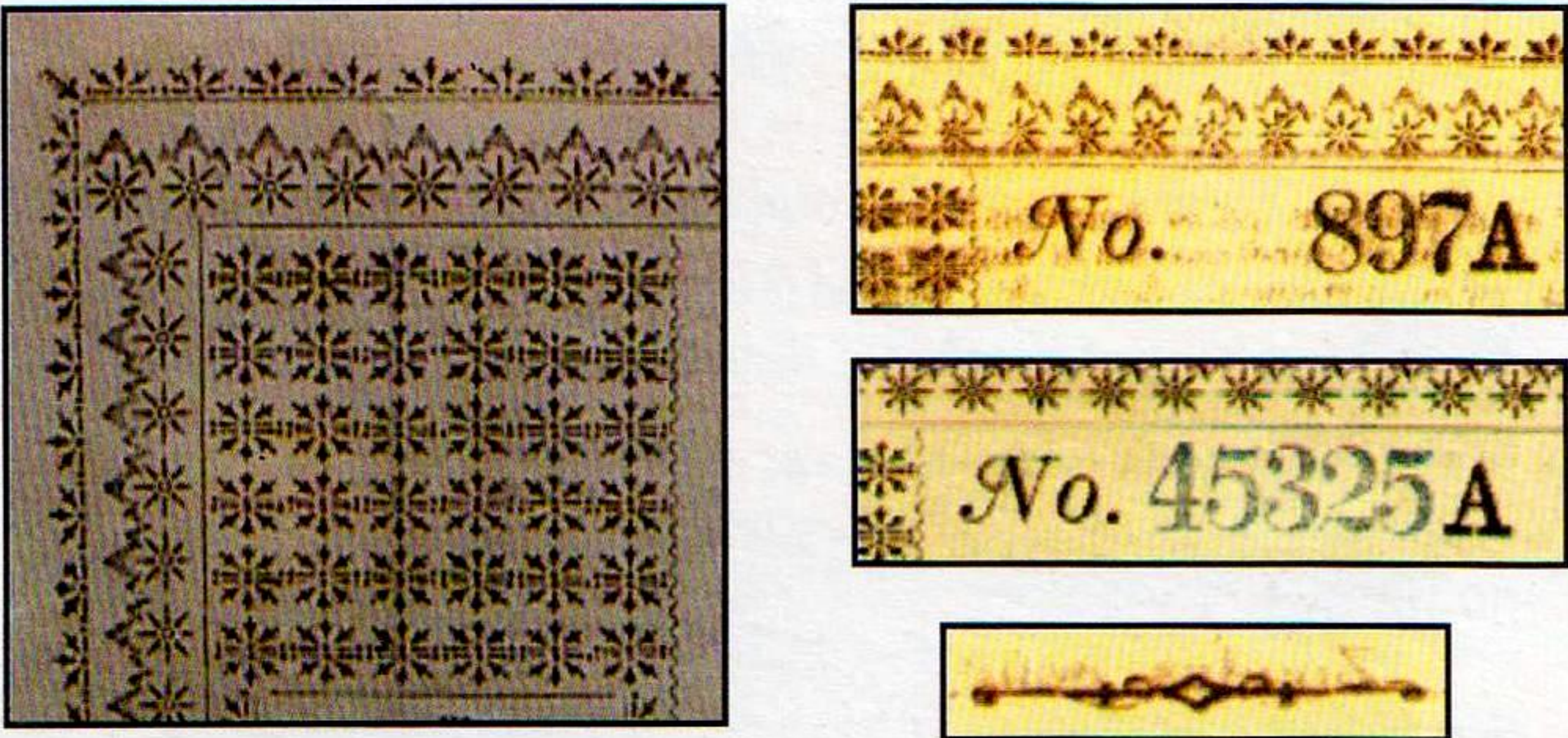


Figure 15. Border, dividers and the black and blue serial note numbers found on the Pietersburg notes.

Serial number ink

The current research to date regarding the two ink colours used for the serial number, viz. black and blue, are elucidated in the table below.

Denomination	Ink colour
£1	Blue
£5	Black and Blue
£10	Black
£20	Black
£50	Black and Blue
£100	Black

Table 4. The serial number ink colour

Cancellations

To date a total of seven different types of cancellations have recorded. Redeeming dates range from 25 August 1902 to 8 March 1906.

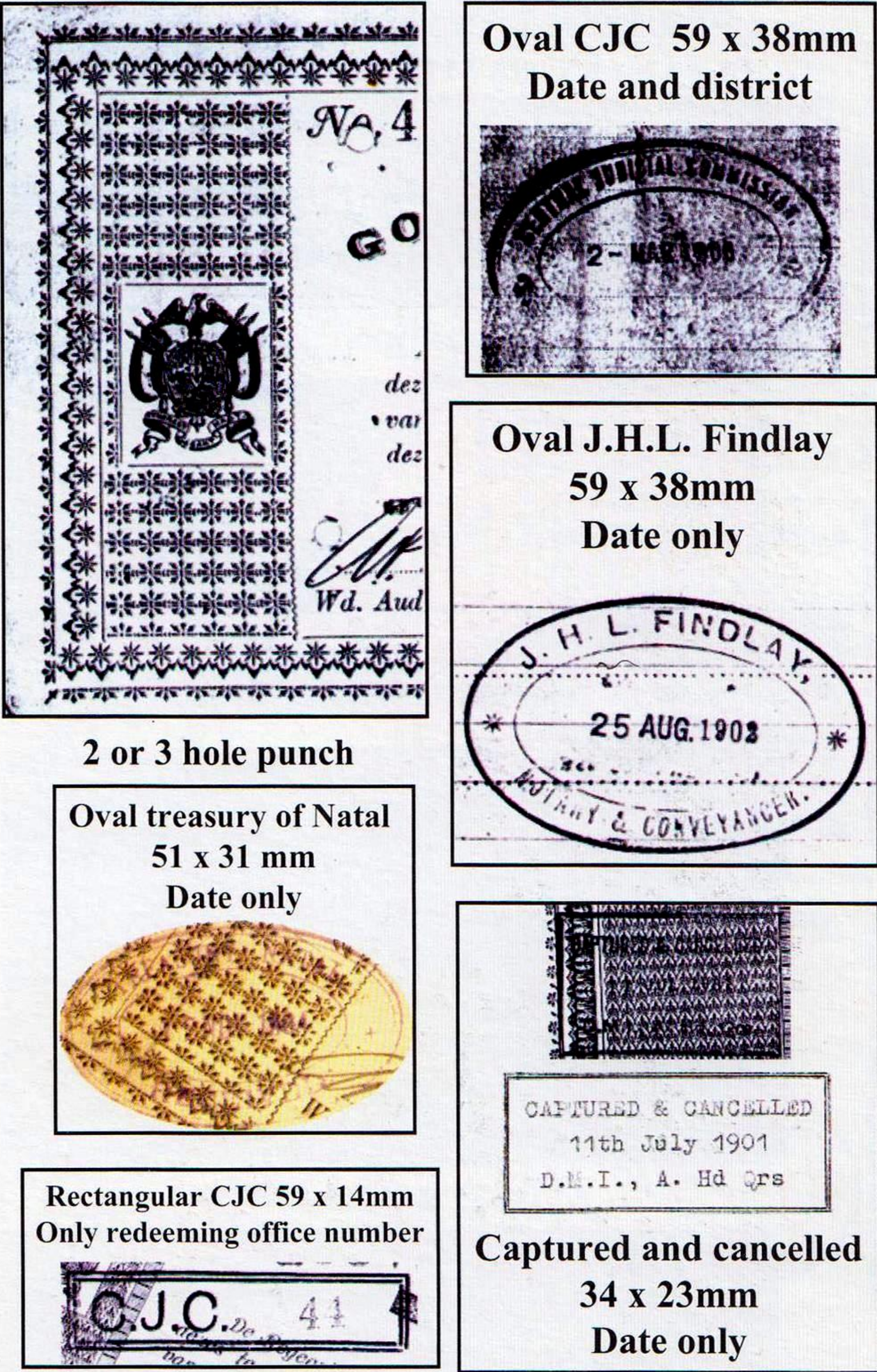
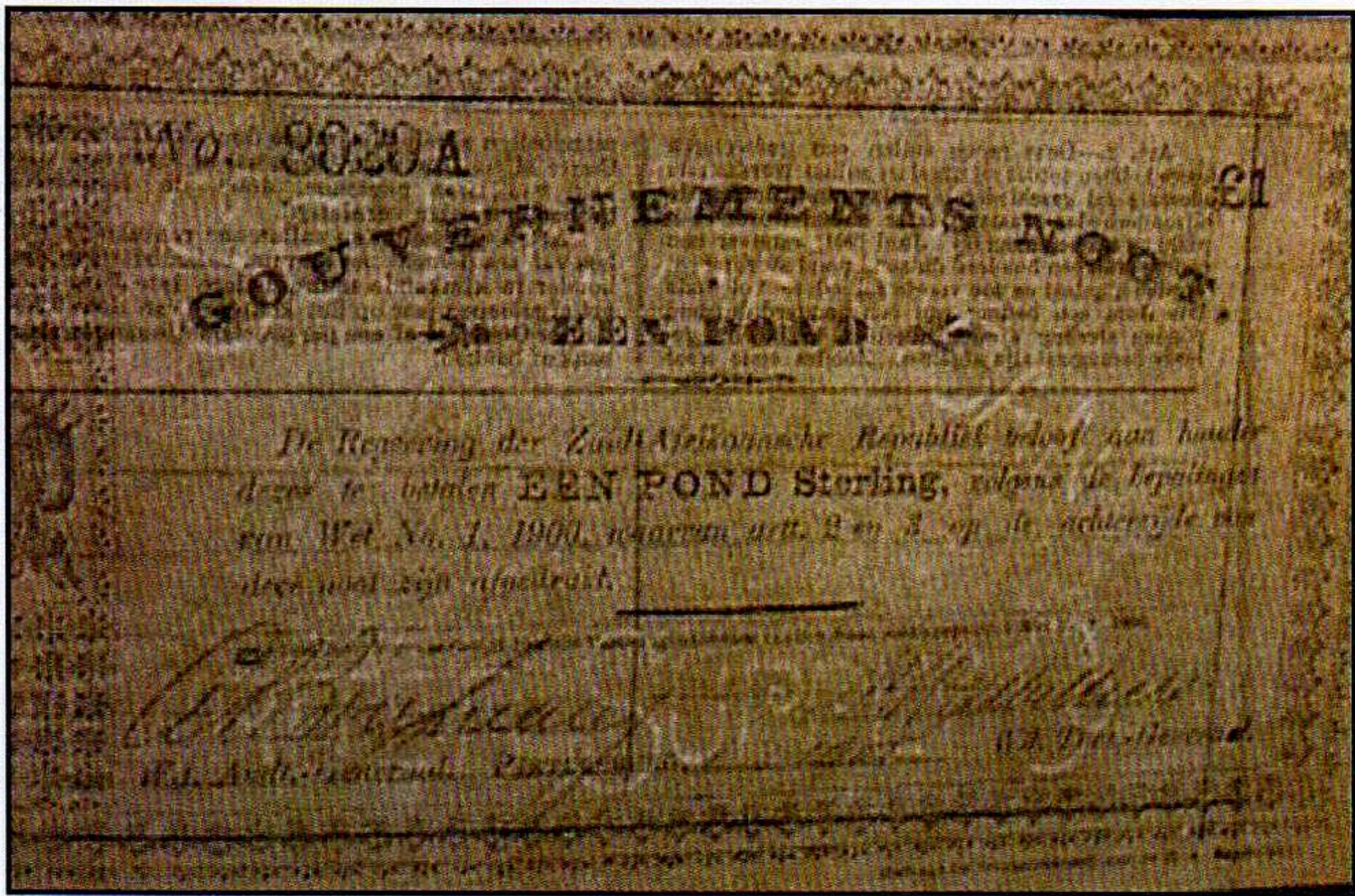


Figure 16. The different cancellation stamps/holes found on the Pietersburg note

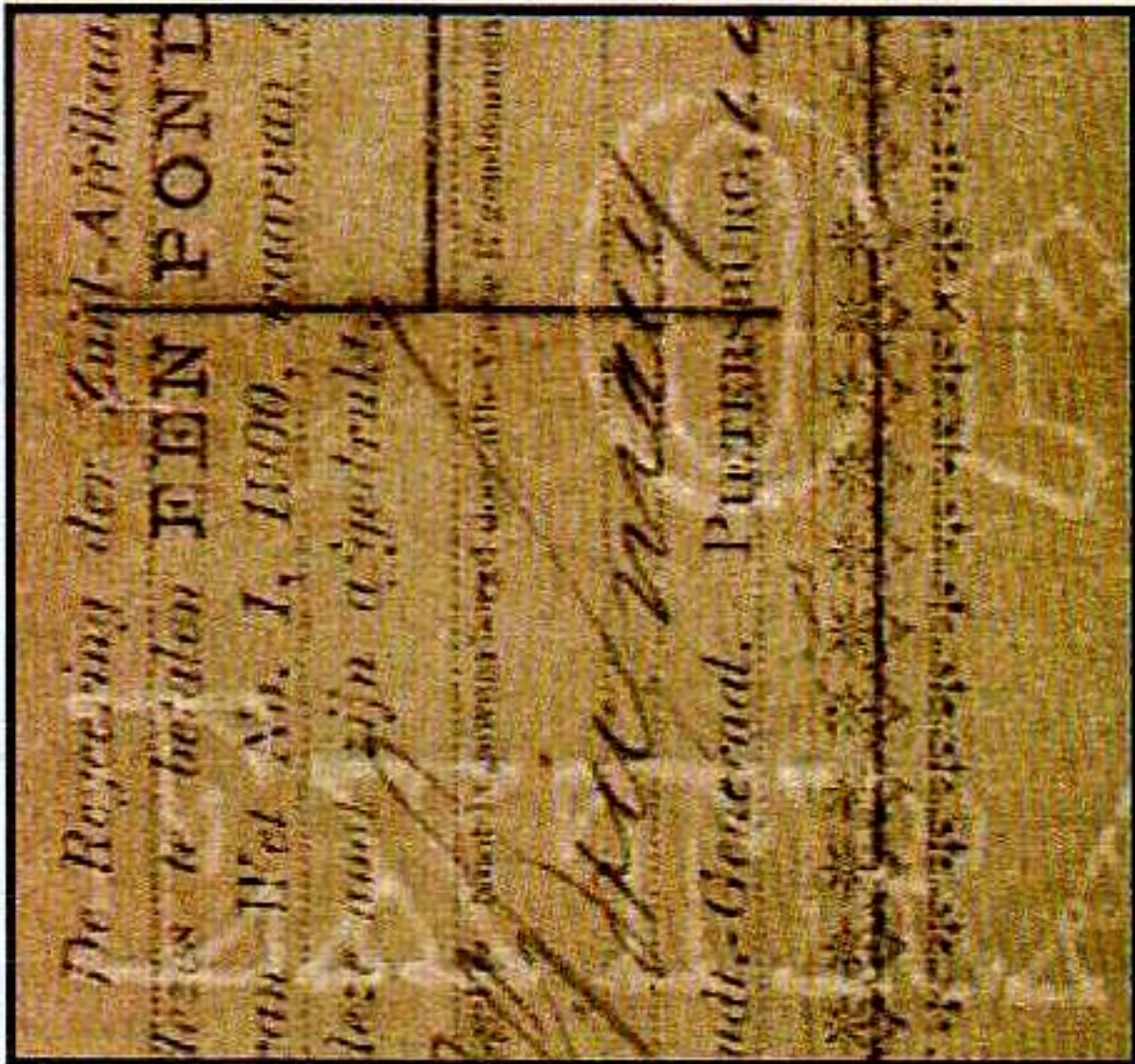
Watermarks

Research to date has revealed between 7 to 8 different types of watermarks. Time and further research is required.





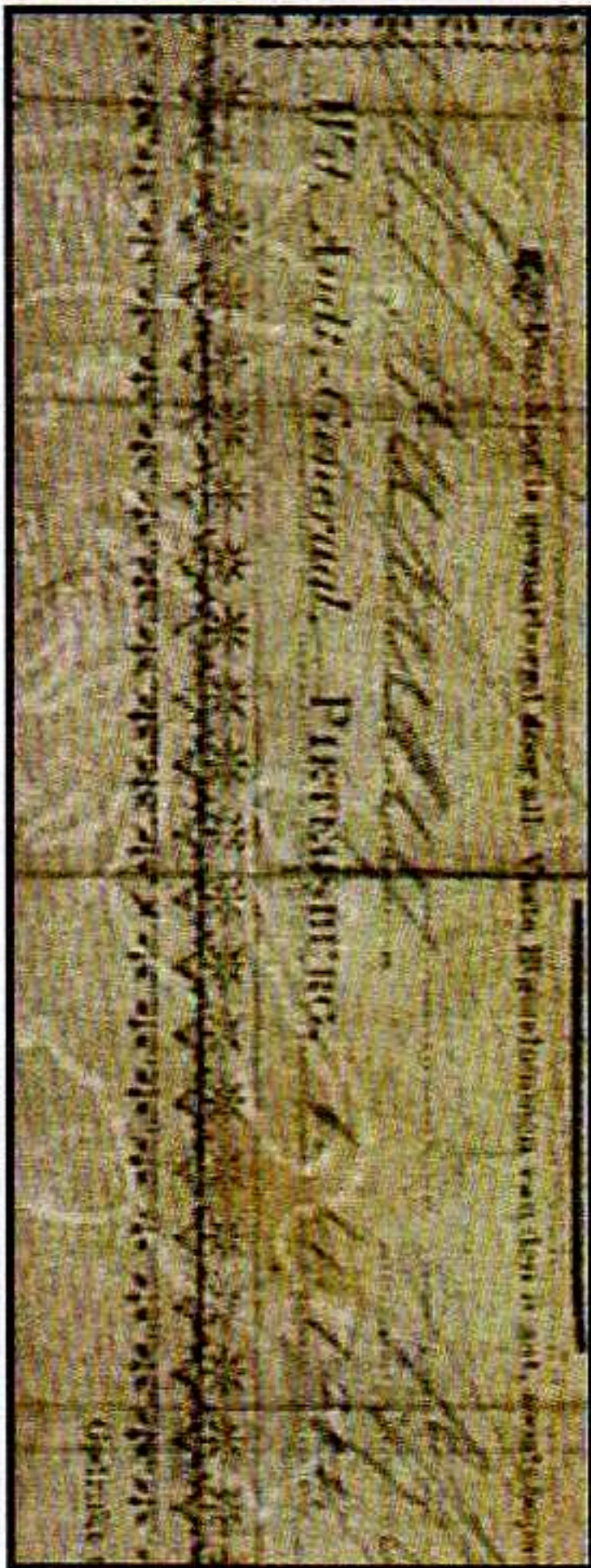
SOUTH AFRICAN TYPEWRITER SUPPLY COMPANY



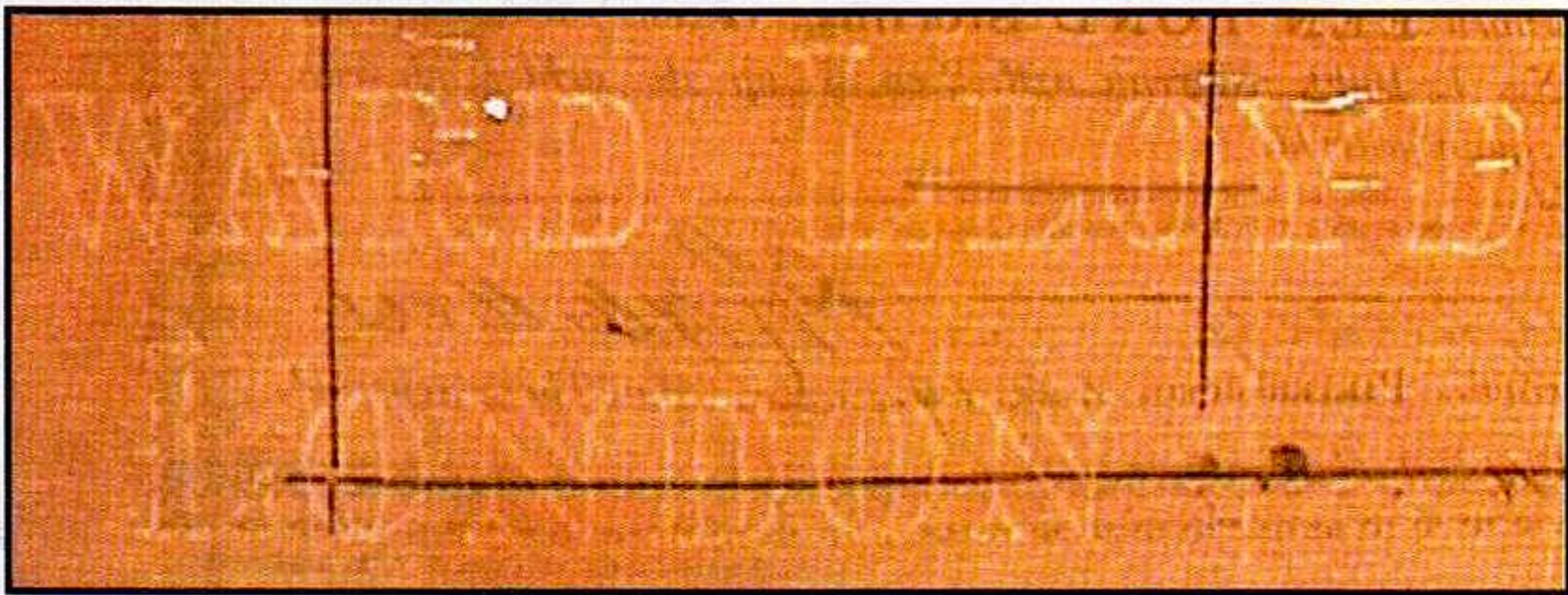
OCEANA EXTRA STRONG



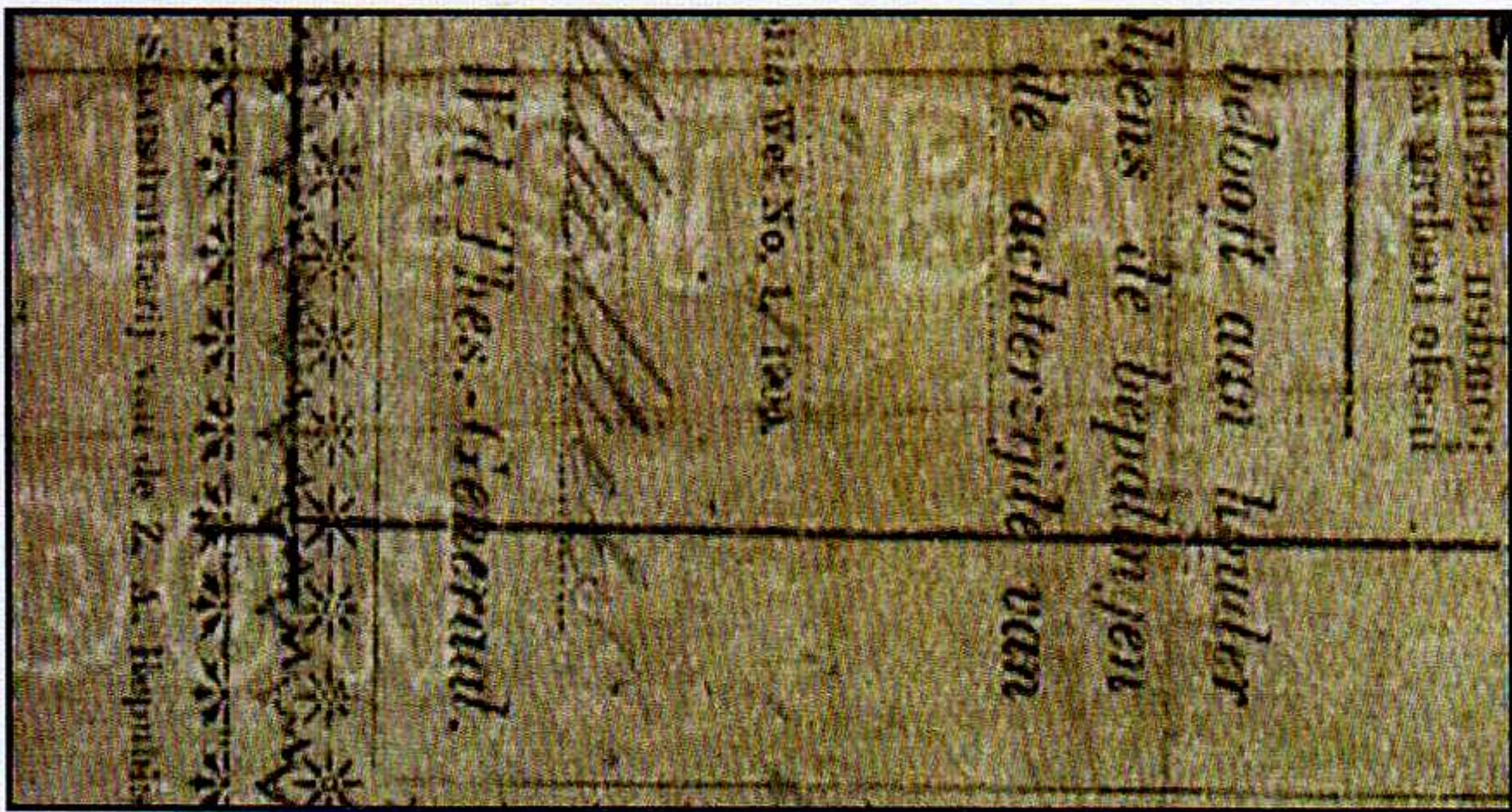
CROXLEY MA ..... LONDON



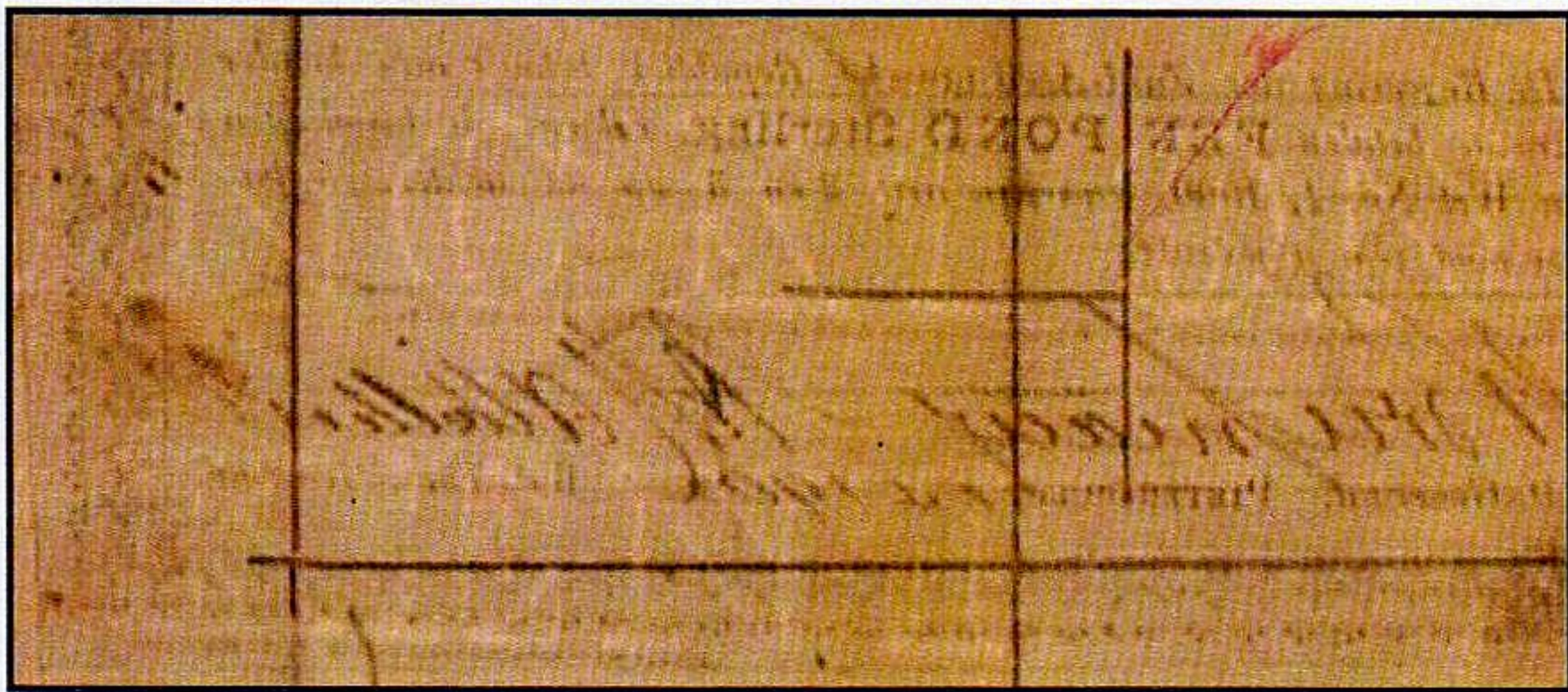
Crest



WARD LLOYD LONDON



....ANIFEST BANK LONDON



.....NCKTON KENT

Figure 17. The Pietersburg note watermarks

Paper thickness

Paper thickness measurements have been carried out in the same manner as referred to under Pretoria issues. Findings recorded range from 6,0µm to 20,0µm. Generally, the paper colour has remained white with very little variation.

It was mentioned at our meeting that the ABSA Bank Museum has a £20 dated 1 March 1901. This may be an error note. Should we locate and verify the existence of one or two more such notes this would require a revision of all current records to include the £20 dated 1.3.1901.

On display in ABSA Museum is a copy of the invoice from the printers of the Pietersburg issue indicating the total number of notes that were printed.

Previous estimates of the total number of notes printed, viz.

Denomination	Number of notes
£1	100,000 notes
£5	6,000 notes
£10	2,000 notes
£20	1,000 notes
£50	400 notes
£100	200 notes
Total:	109,600 notes

Table 5. Number of Pietersburg notes printed.

104,000 is superseded by the actual printers invoice from Messrs Burg and Jorissen for the printing of the ZAR Pietersburg issue.

The Te Velde issue of 1902

An example of the three denominations is shown in Plate 3. The circumstances in respect to the printing of these notes has already been explained and accounts for the crudeness of the notes of this issue.

Date	Denominations
1.3.1902	£5 & £10
1.4.1902	£5 & £10
1.5.1902	£1, £5 & £10

Table 6. The dates on the Te Velde notes

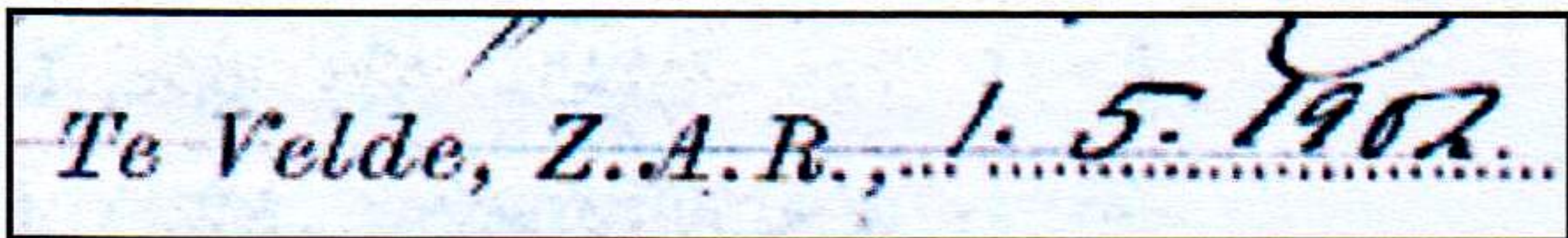


Figure 18. An example of a hand written date

Dates

From the notes seen to date it may be suggested that two or three clerks were responsible for dating and entering the numbers onto the note.

Signatures

The signatures are the same as that found on the Pietersburg issue. No significant variations have been seen to date.



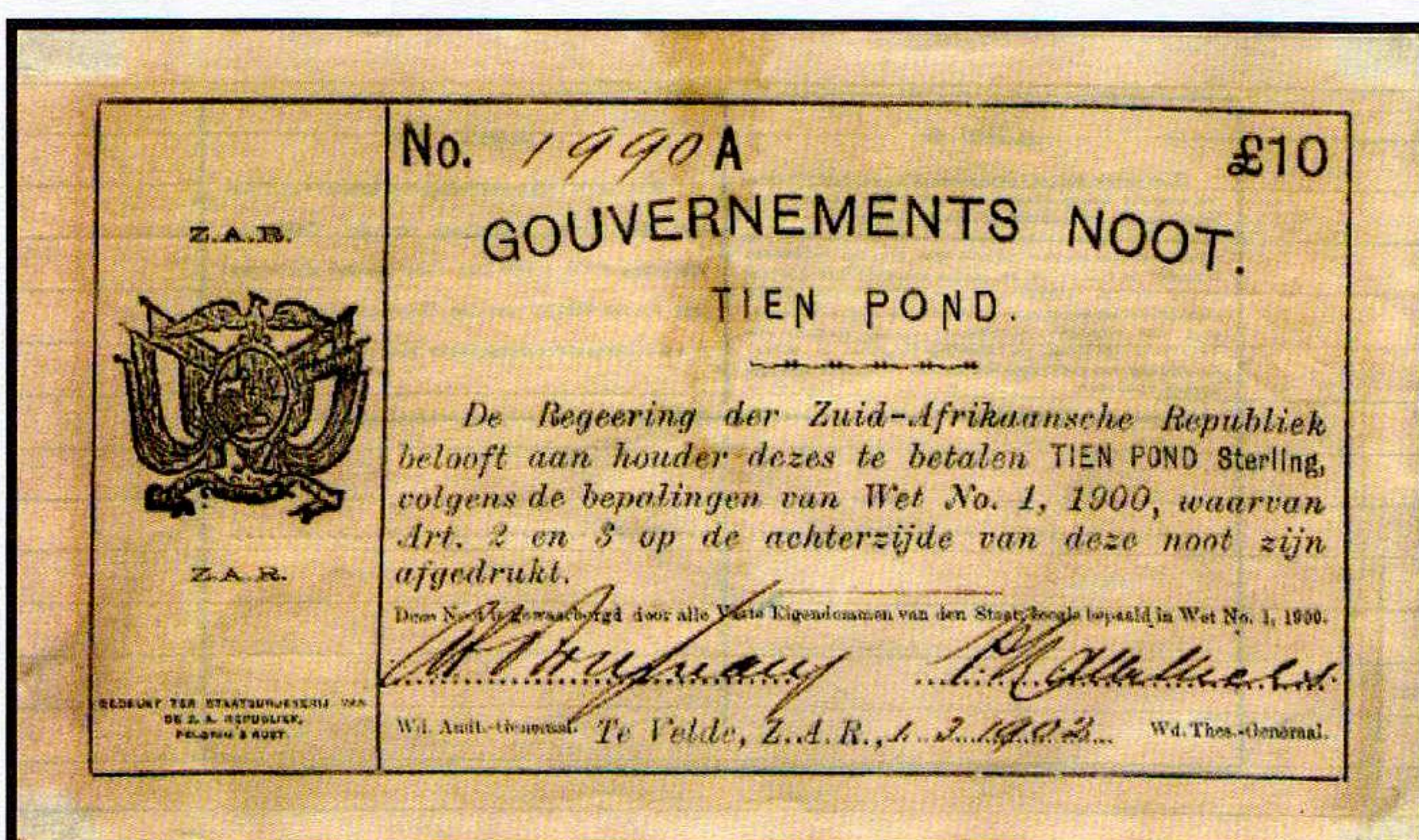
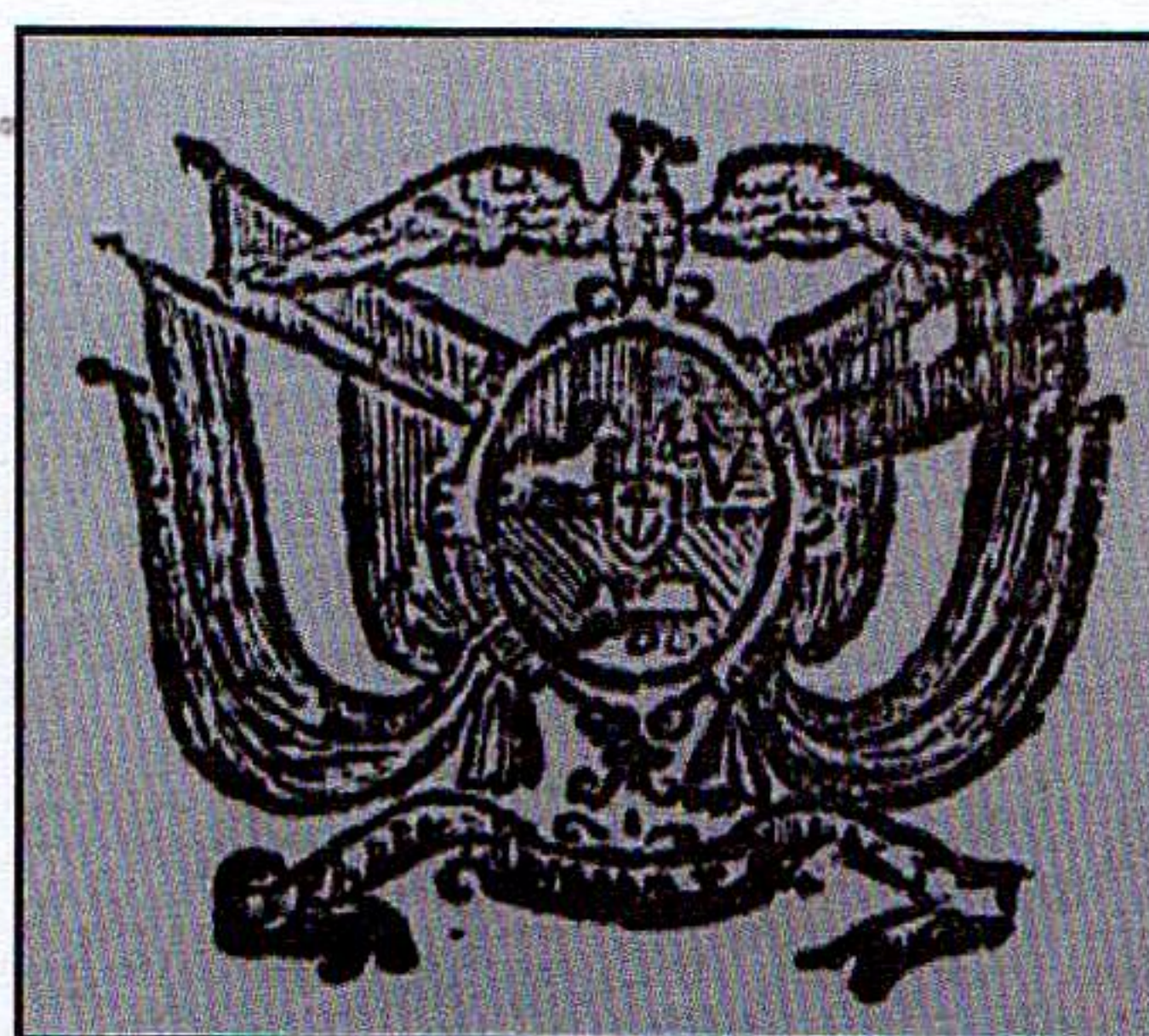


Plate 3. The Te Velde notes

### Coat of Arms

A crude reproduction of the ZAR COA given the circumstance – a damn good effort. Again no Great Seal embossing.

Figure 19. The COA used on the Te Velde Notes



### Serial numbers

The serial numbers are all written in by hand by one or two of the clerks that were responsible for the dating of each note.

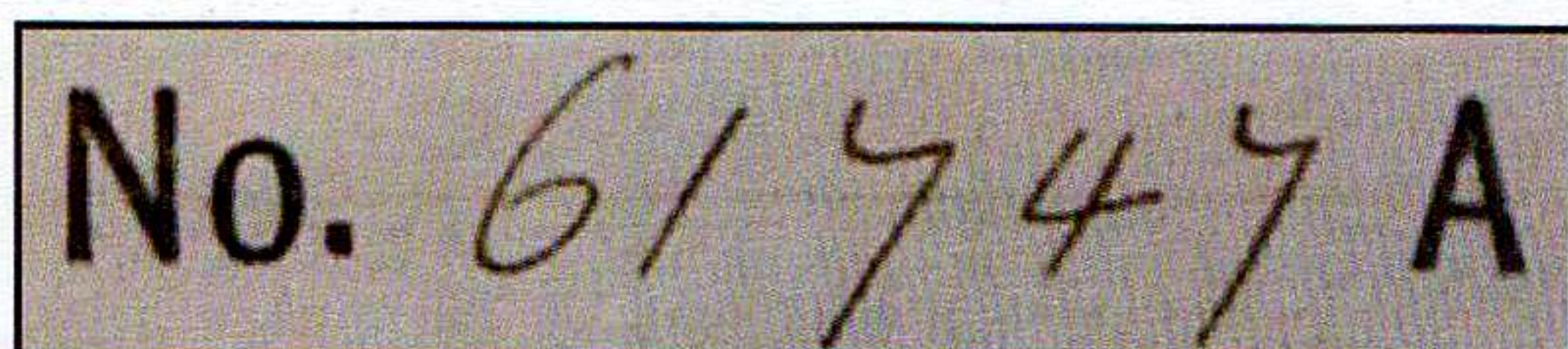


Figure 20. The hand written serial number on Te Velde notes

One can assume that the Te Velde issue started off in Pietersburg (see example below) from the point of design and type setting. These notes depicted a serial number suffix "B". According to John Ineson's book only four such notes have been recorded.

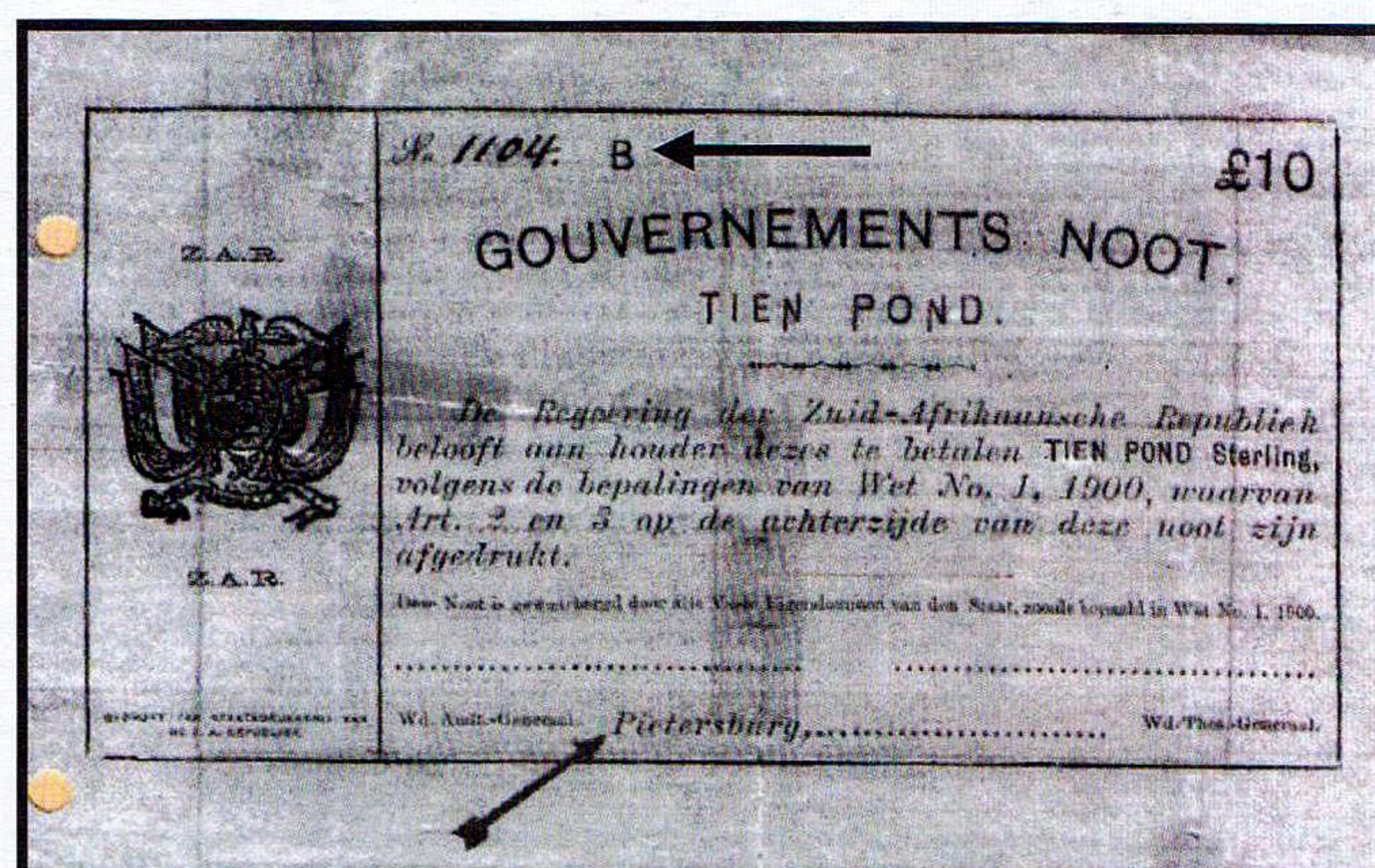


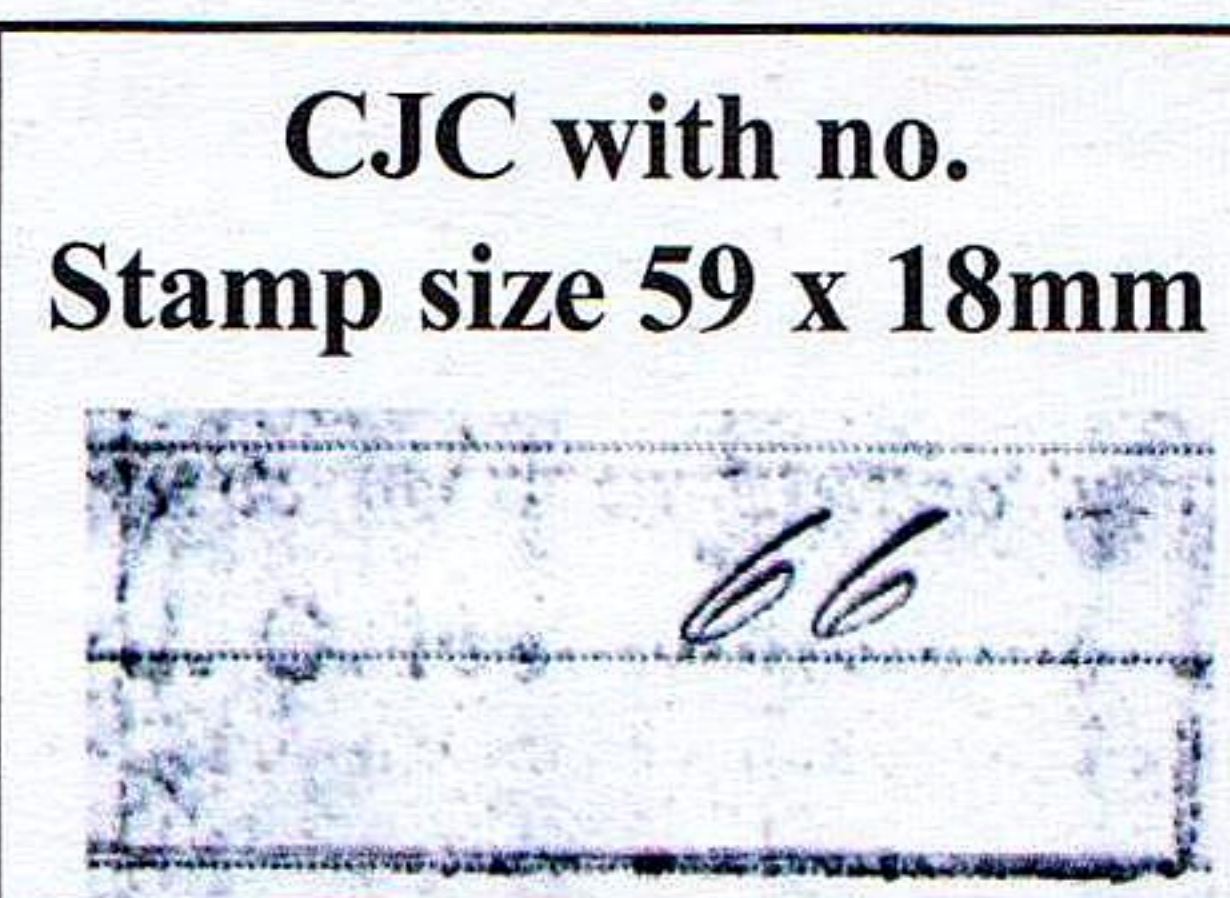
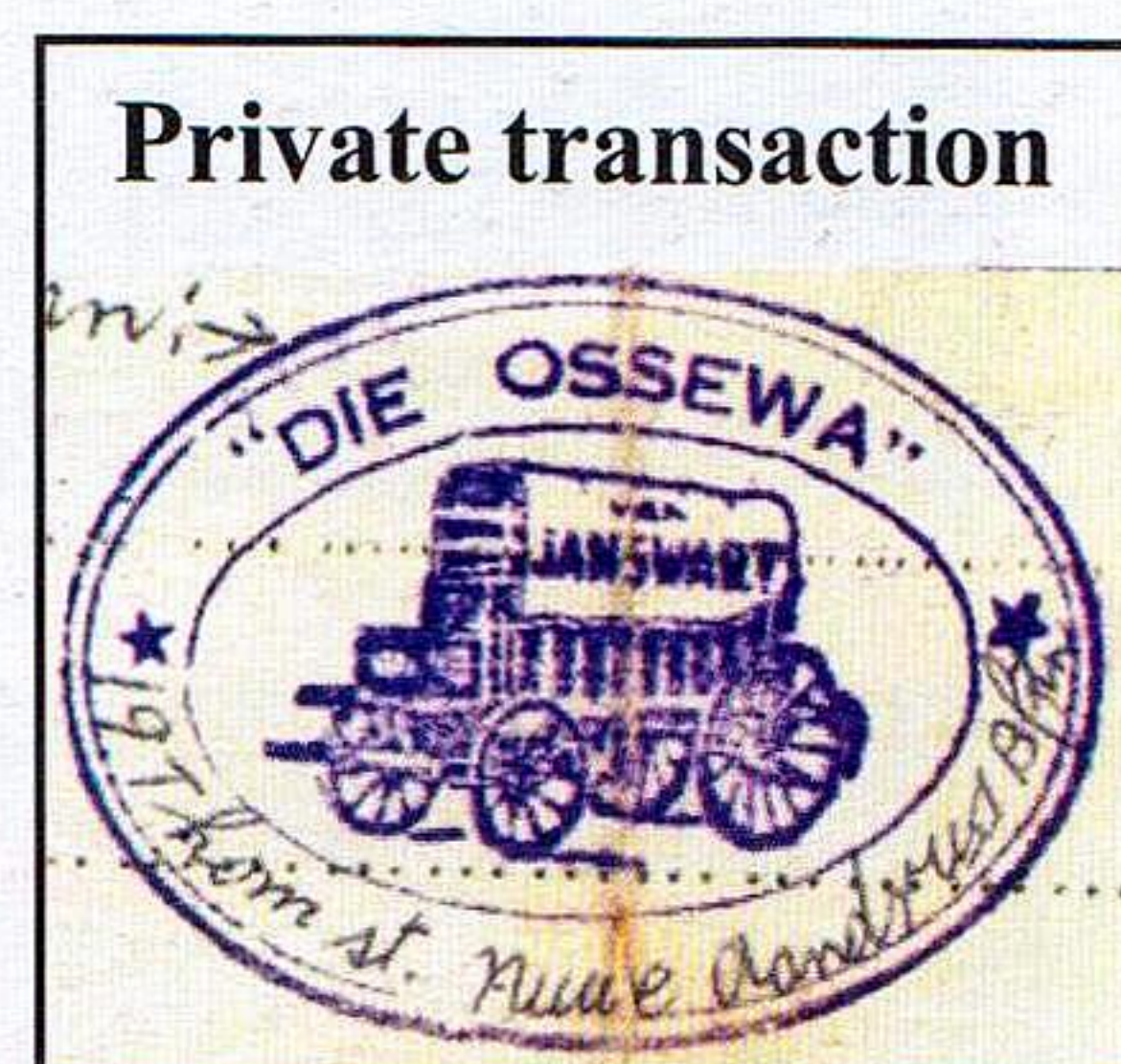
Plate 4. A Pietersburg "Te Velde" note with serial number suffix B

### Cancellations

To date a total of six different types have been identified. Redeeming dates range from 25 August 1902 to 28 March 1907.



2-3 hole cancellation punch

CJC with no.  
Stamp size 59 x 18mm

Private transaction

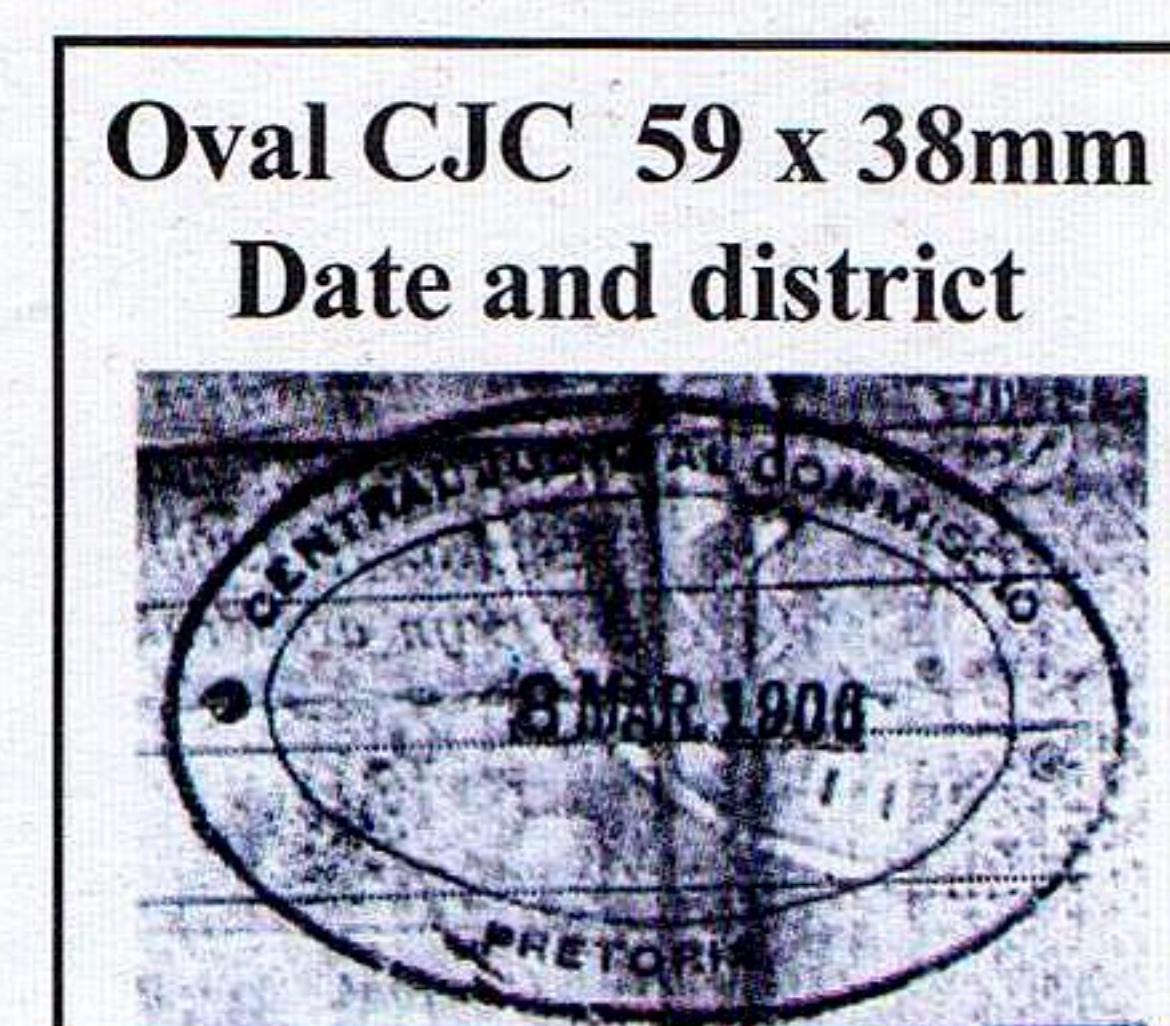
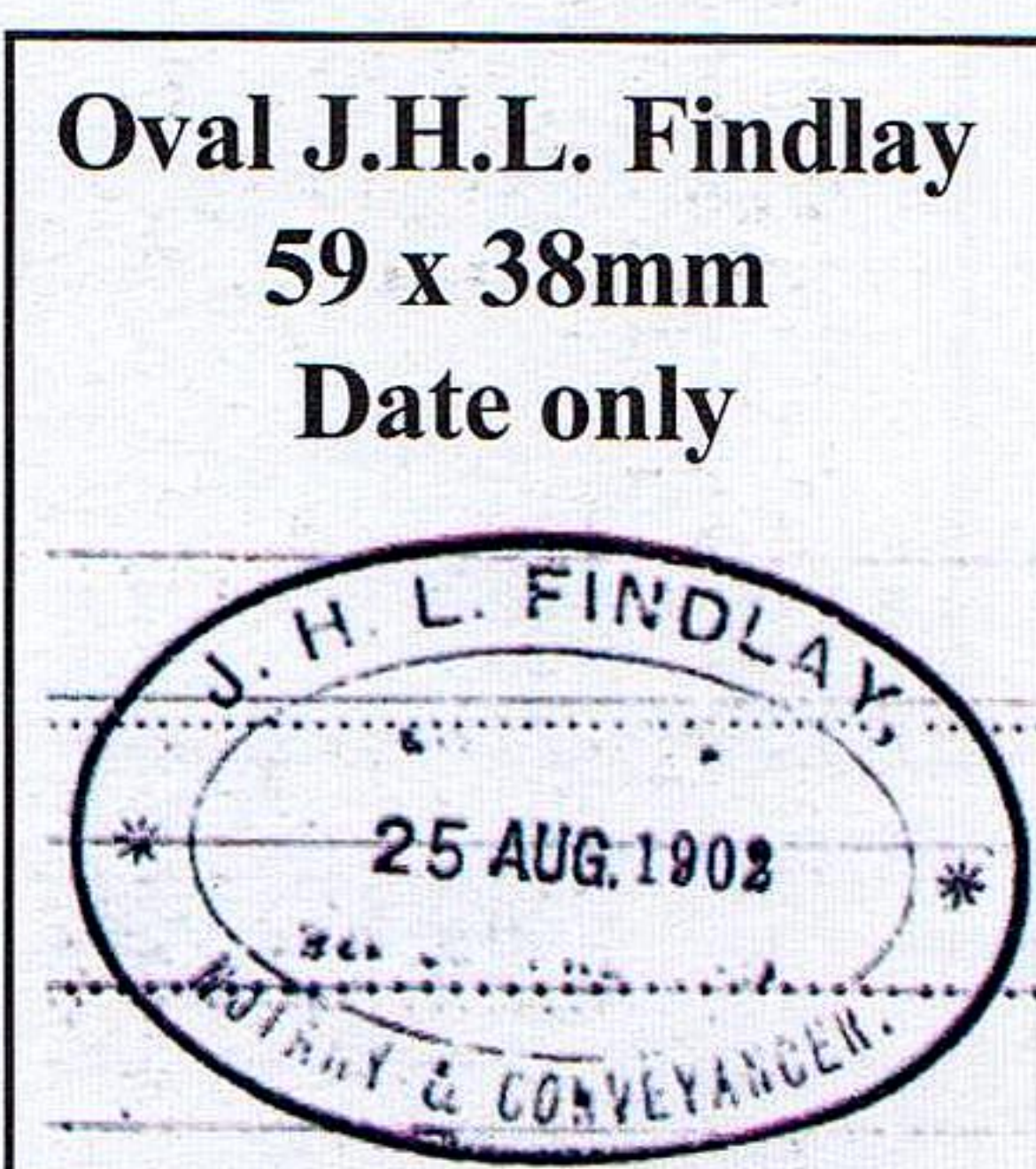
Oval CJC 59 x 38mm  
Date and districtOval J.H.L. Findlay  
59 x 38mm  
Date only

Figure 21. Cancellation stamps/holes found on the Te Velde notes

### Paper thickness

The paper thickness measured and recorded to date varies from 7,0µm to 19,0µm.

Generally the paper colour has remained white with very

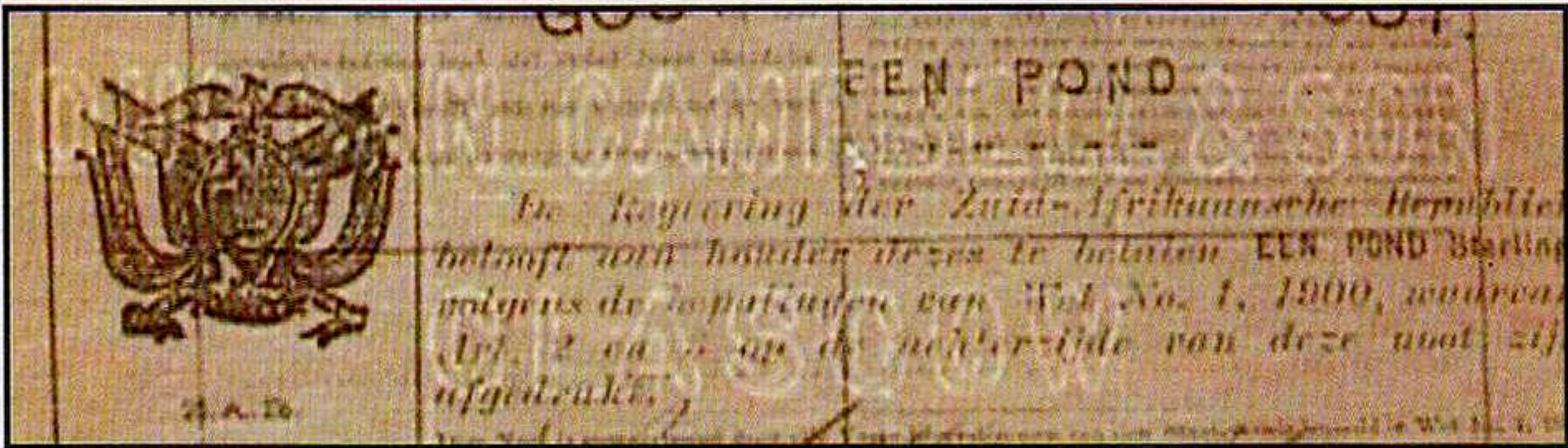


little variation.

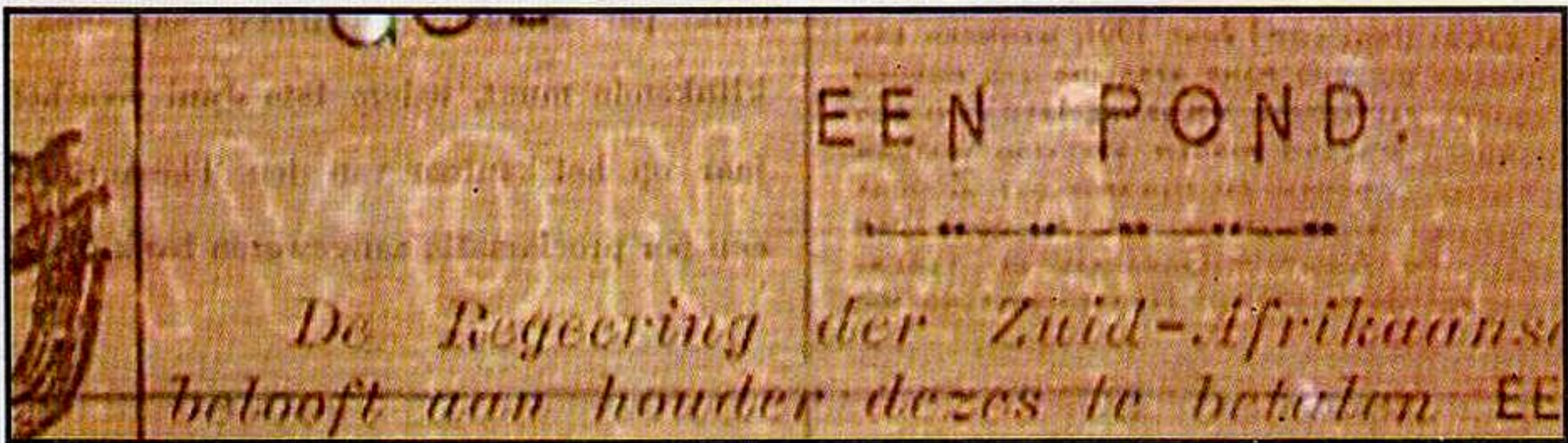
The paper, commonly regarded as being from school exercise books because of being a lined paper, may not be correct. My own opinion is executive pads, i.e. paper with watermarks such as NBZAR, Duncan Campbell, Britannia and Avondale, etc. would not have been used for school exercise books. High quality paper during war time would not be used in schools. Information in respect to the lined paper includes colour differences of the lines, viz. black, blue and grey. I have seen and recorded paper with no lines. I also have one example of lined horizontal and vertical forming squared paper.

Watermarks

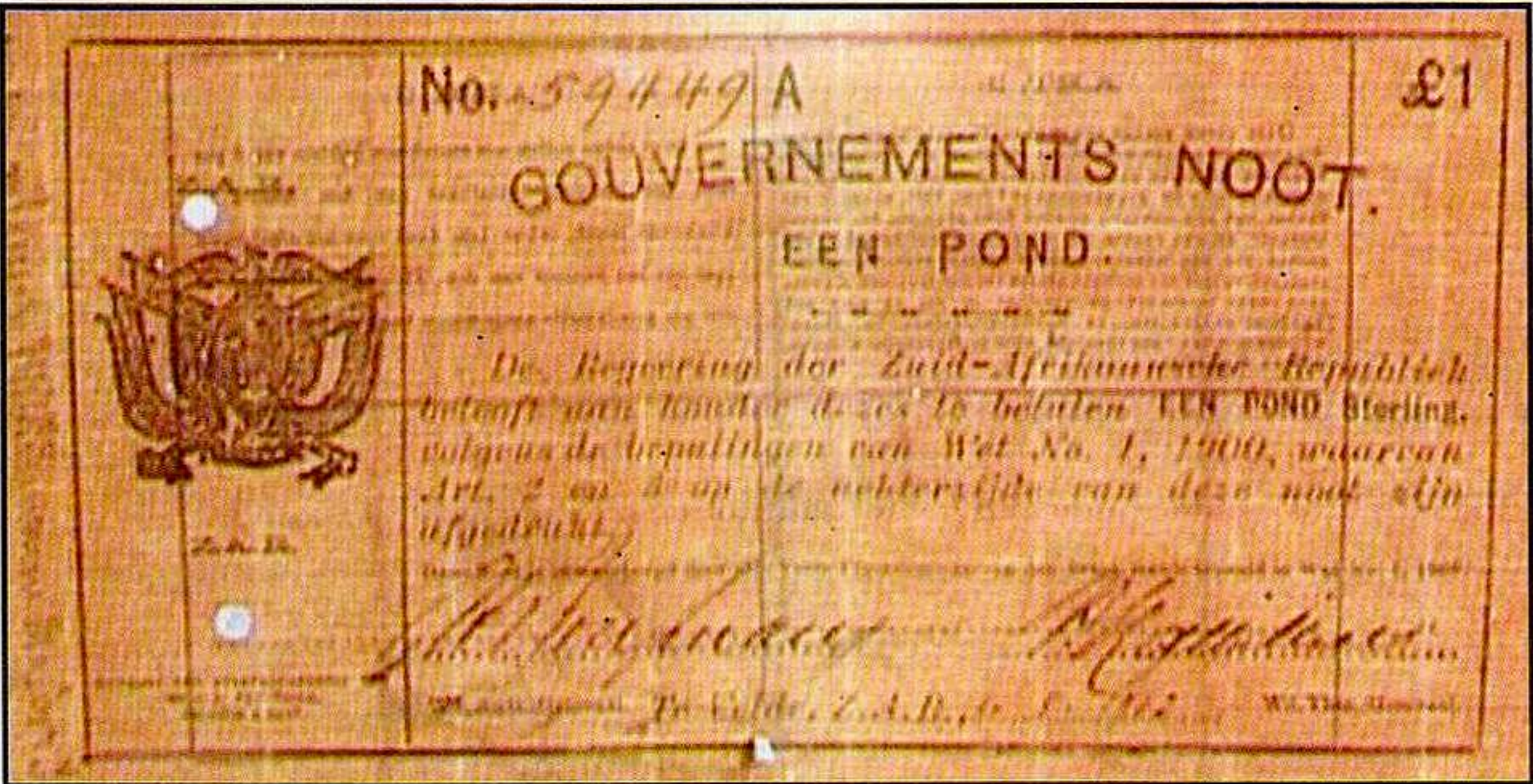
To date five different types of watermarked paper have been identified.



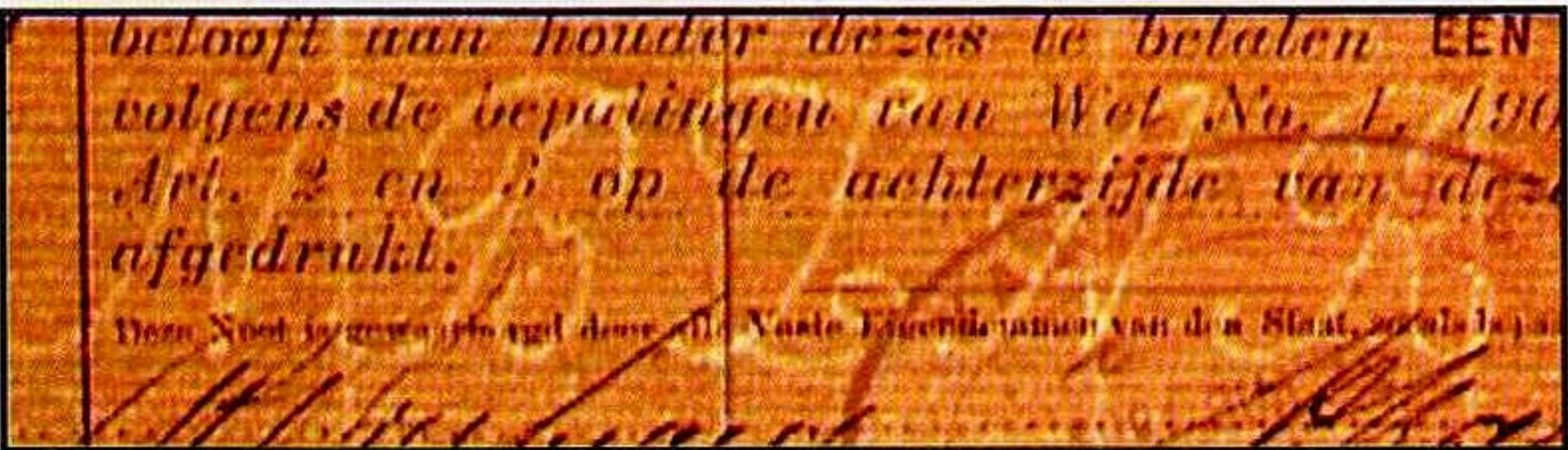
DUNCAN CAMPBELL & SON GLASGOW



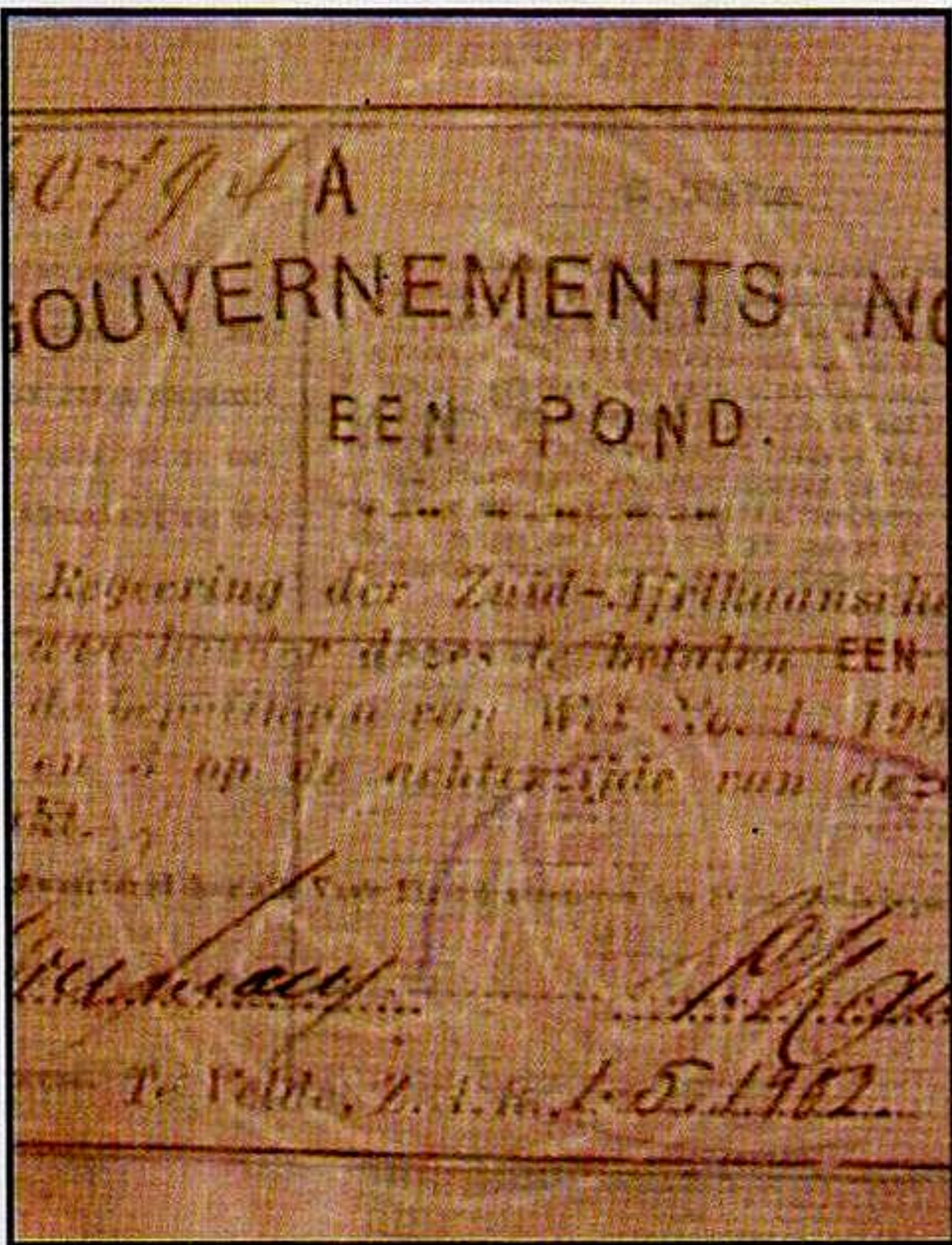
AVONDALE



Vertical lines



NBZAR



Britannia

Figure 22. The watermarked paper found in the Te Velde Issue of emergency notes

Suggested note printing quantities are shown in the table below

Denomination	Estimated number of notes
£1	4,000 notes
£5	2,000 notes
£10	1,750 notes
Total:	7,750 notes

Table 7. Estimated number of Te Velde notes

Estimates for the total number of Te Velde notes vary between 7,260 to 9,100. Time will hopefully narrow this range down.

Typesetting error

As indicated in the plate below a typesetting error has been identified. The first notes issued contained the incorrect spelling “van de Straat” rather than “van den Straat” as it should have been written. These notes were cancelled by the word “Duplicate” stamped horizontally across the note. To date this error has only been found in the Five Pound denomination.

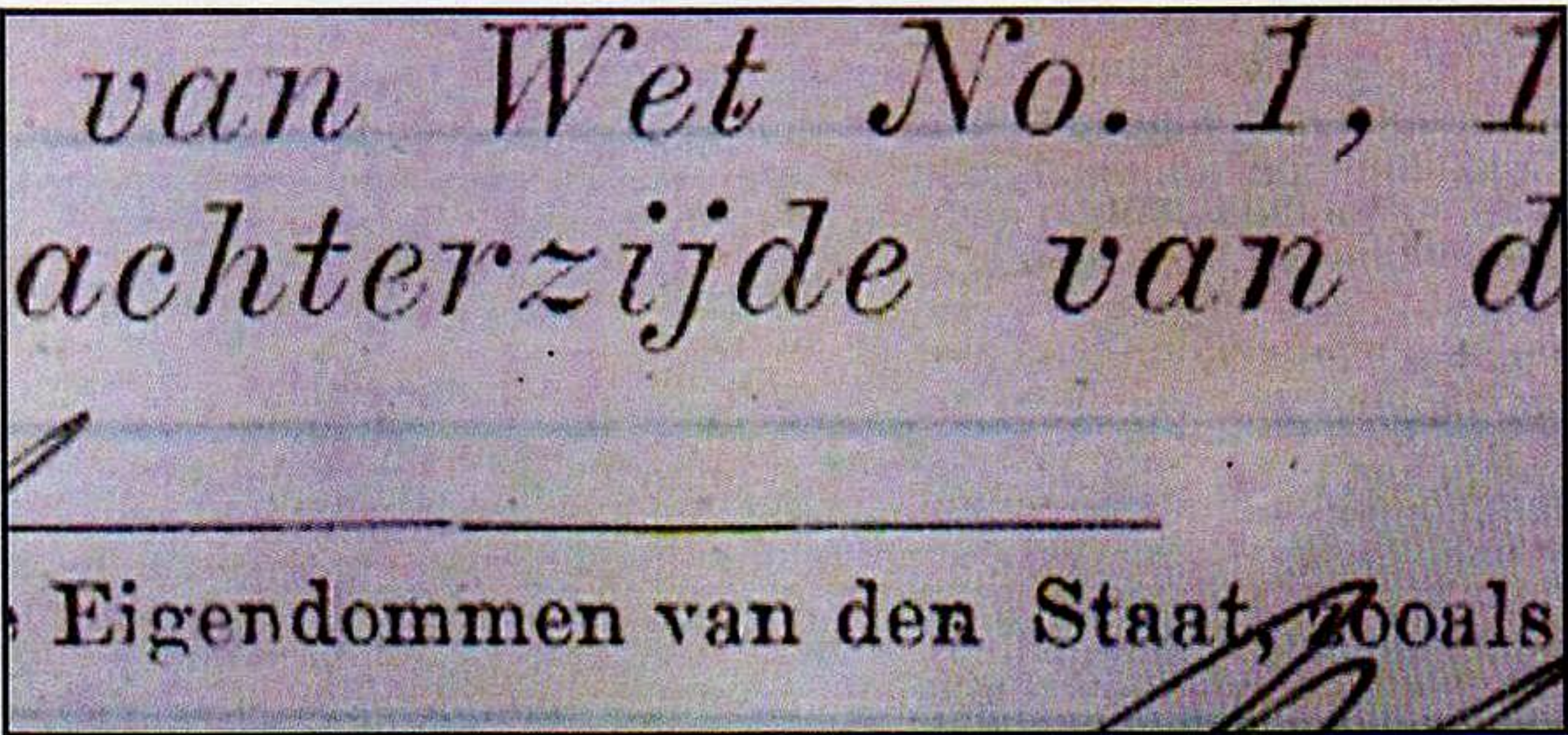
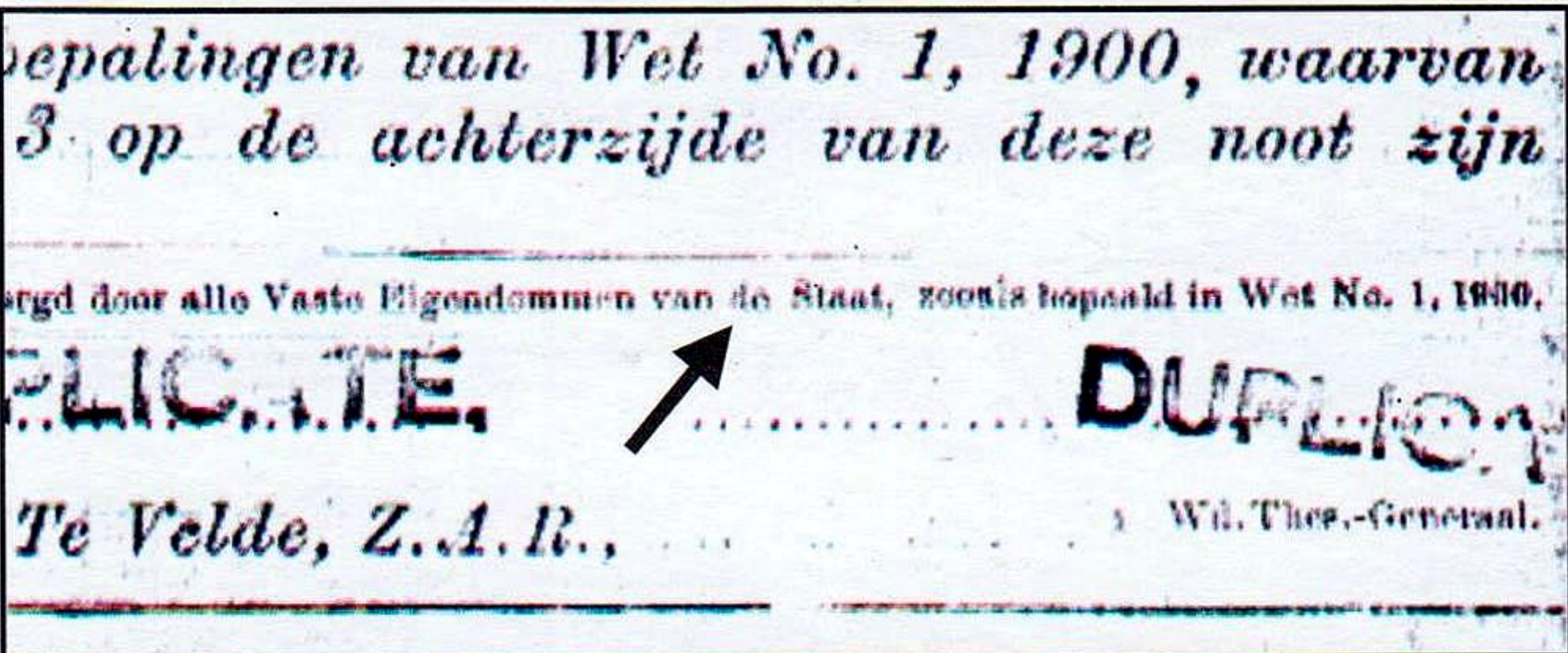


Figure 23. Example of “van den Straat” typesetting error and corrected Te Velde Note

This article is only an interim report on the notes seen and recorded to date. Many more hours and years are required to fulfil this project totally. I will be continuing with this research project as and when time permits.

If any readers can assist or anyone has any questions I would be pleased to assist where possible.

I would like to leave the readers with this question: Would you consider a redeemed note to be of more value in a collection than an unissued note?

Please send your thoughts to me ([themouse@icon.co.za](mailto:themouse@icon.co.za)) or via the Society’s review.