

# WHEN CASH WAS SHORT

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IN the early days of the Transvaal there were no banks and trade was conducted by barter until banknotes were issued in 1865; from 1858 payment had been made by 'good-fors', printed on any sort of paper or cardboard and used as small change, followed by mandates in 1860. The earliest examples were written by hand and the usual currency was sterling, for they were nothing but acknowledgements of debt issued by the state and changeable for cash when the state had money. Printed mandates were used later, with riksdollars as currency, but after 1 September 1865 mandates lost their validity.

A mandate of 30 August 1861 is in the National Cultural Historical Museum in Pretoria. It was issued for the salary of the landdrost at Schoemansdal and worth 260 riksdollars, 5 schell, 2 stuivers (about R106). Another, dated 4 April 1865, was signed by President Pretorius.

Shopkeepers and even churches issued unofficial money. 'Church money' could be bought from a church and it could also be given as offertory. Such church money and good-fors fluctuated in value.

Sterling had been introduced at the Cape in 1825, a decade or so before the Trekkers left the Cape, but they continued to use riksdollars, probably in much the same way as the older generation today continues to think in sterling.

The South African Republic had five issues of banknotes in five years, the first four printed locally and the fifth printed in London. The first issue, in 1865, was in riksdollars; the later issues were in sterling. As part of the fourth issue in 1868 there were good-fors of one shilling and of sixpence, each signed personally by the president, the treasurer, and a member of the executive committee.

The fifth issue was made in 1871, with notes of small denomination substituted for good-fors; their values ranged from ten shillings to sixpence.

A number of farms belonging to the state served as security for each issue, but the irony was that the banknotes had no value. Public servants paid in them lived in poverty and farmers burnt them, for traders would not accept them.

After the discovery of gold the position improved and the South African Republic was no longer chronically on the verge of bankruptcy.

All these banknotes ceased to circulate in 1873 when the Cape Commercial Bank opened in the Transvaal; but this bank closed in 1882.

After 1892 the Republic had its own coinage (Krugger coins) and banknotes of low values were withdrawn.

There was again a lack of cash after 1900, the Free State sharing the experience. Businesses and municipalities issued token coins, Jagersfontein, for example, issuing a water penny for use in pumps.

At the turn of the century Rhodesia resorted to printing cards to overcome the shortage of cash, with postage stamps of a definite value stuck on the back of the cards. These cards were valid for two months.



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