

BELGIAN CONGO STUDY CIRCLE

Bulletin No. 21

March, 1973

Once again, we are fortunate in having received an article from our good friend Mr. Celis who has recently moved from Bujumbura to Mbandaka (previously Coquilhatville). Also a further article from Mr. Heim. Such donations make the editor's life a lot easier.

There have been in 1972 the usual Spring and Autumn meetings. This Spring, we are to be rather more venturesome and will be holding the Spring meeting on 19th May near to Birmingham, which, we hope, will encourage the attendance of our Midland and Northwestern members. Mr. Nicholls has kindly invited us to hold the meeting at his house.

NEW MEMBERS

Since the last Bulletin, the following members have joined:

R.M. Kitchingman, Chesham Preparatory School, Orchard Leigh,
Chesham, Bucks.

S.S. Smith, 87 Park Road, Buxton, Derbyshire.

The Reverend P.L. Strickland, The Vicarage, Debenham, Suffolk.

COUNTERFEITS

Mr. Heim's article on the subject in Bulletin No. 20 gave much amusing food for thought and has made me define my own ideas on the 'philatelic' meanings of the various terms that are discussed.

Counterfeit. I think that we can take this as an all embracing term to cover an item that is not genuine and original in all respects and has not been tampered with in any way.

Bogus should be reserved for items that were produced other than by or for the post office and were not intended to be facsimiles of the original. Examples in the Congo are the U.S.A. overprints on the 1931 issue, purely imaginary, not valid for postage and, presumably, for some obscure propoganda purpose. Other examples are certain cancellations that bear absolutely no resemblance to those rightly used. The framed 'RUANDA' and 'URANDI' (sic) overprints were, at one time, considered bogus but recently found documents appear to have given them the cloak of authenticity as essays or prepared for use but not issued.

Fake indicates that a genuine item has been 'tampered with', generally in an effort to enhance its value. There are very many examples to be found in the Congo. Colour changelings by chemical means - the 5c blue of 1894 immediately comes to mind - are certainly fakes. A regummed stamp has been faked. A genuine stamp to which a forged overprint or cancellation - and there are plenty of both in the Congo - has been applied becomes a fake. A stamp cancelled-to-order is a fake because the fraudulent intention is to show that the stamp had been used for normal postal service. A stamp or cover that has been ironed in an endeavour to remove creases has been faked, although most collectors consider this procedure perfectly legitimate. Chemical or boiling water treatment of stamps to remove stains produces fakes although most of us consider such efforts to improve our stamps legitimate.

The more serious faking includes the adding of margins to imperforate stamps. re-perforating, the removal of perforations from imperf.-between stamps to produce imperforate pairs, repairing, the colouring or discolouring of papers,

the re-backing of stamps with watermarked paper etc., etc. The wiles of the faker are widespread and provide an endless challenge to the organisations certifying the authenticity of stamps and covers.

Forgery indicates the production of a facsimile stamp, overprint, cancellation or cover, be the facsimile ever so crude. A forged overprint or cancellation on a genuine stamp produces a faked stamp.

Turning to some of Mr. Heim's examples, Balasse No. 100ER1 is something of a problem. The Government required that the 1915 5c stamp should be surcharged, the corresponding 1910 stamp having been demonetized for some years. We are told that one sheet of the 1910 stamp somehow got into the stock of 1915 stamps to be surcharged and this is conceivable. The surcharged sheet of stamps was sold over the Post Office counter and some were used before the absence of the word "CINQ" was noticed. If the story is approximately correct, clearly the stamp is a legitimate error and genuine in all respects except that it did not conform to the requirements of the Government and, presumably, was not, strictly speaking, valid for the payment of postage. One might almost say that it was an inadvertent bogus production by the Post Office.

The second sheet - or, rather, composite sheet made up of odd blocks - comes into an entirely different category. Its surcharging by the genuine overprinting plate, even with the approval or connivance of the Post Office or of a Post Office official, was intended to profit the perpetrators of the scheme. One would imagine that money changed hands in order to get the work done. As Mr. Heim stated, these stamps have something in common with C.T.O. and they are, to my mind, fakes and, indeed, bogus, as they were not formally valid for postal use.

In the matter of cancellations, General Du Four told me, many years ago, that, as far as he had been able to ascertain, no Congo cancelling stamps were held in Brussels and all cancelling-to-order was done in the Congo Post Offices to specific orders from dealers or as requested by collectors. The existence of 'used' stamps with full gum and bearing cancellations that were actually used on mail clearly demonstrates that local cancelling-to-order was not uncommon. Cancellations of the larger offices which, because we have not seen them on travelled covers, we now consider to be forgeries, could have been officially used by the Congo postal agency in Brussels but, until we have evidence of this, we must accept the result of General Du Four's investigations.

Mr. Heim's 'outmoded or discarded cancellations used to create used copies' when applied to demonetized or invalidated stamps is provocative. If stamp and cancellation are contemporary how is anyone to know that the stamps were cancelled after both were obsolete? The only probable examples that come to mind are used copies of the 1909 issues with the 1921 Recuperation overprints. The earliest published information that I have seen on the existence of these 'errors' is in the Balasse Magazine in 1938 (issue No. 12 of December, 1938 announced the sensational discovery of the 5c/40c value), seventeen years after the overprinting of the stamps. It is fair to assume that the sheets of these stamps spent the intervening period in either the official or an official's archives before being profitably sold to the stamp trade. A recent discovery of specimens of obsolete cancellations that must have been in the Leopoldville postal archives show that the small circle Boma canceller used on the 1921 'errors' existed in the archives in about 1940.

1 FRANC OF 1915 AND 10C/1 FRANC OF 1922

The Abbe Gudenkauf has made an important discovery.

General Du Four, in his book, listed the following combinations of frame and centre plates for the 1F of 1915 (corrected by later information given in the Addendum published in La Revue Postale).

	<u>Frame</u>		<u>Centre</u>	<u>Changes</u>
a	II 1	+	A4	
b	II 2	+	A5	Frame plate retouched, centre plate re-entered
c	II 3	+	A5	Frame plate re-entered
d	II 4	+	A5	Frame plate again re-entered
e	II 5	+	A6	Frame and centre plates both again re-entered
f	III	+	A7	New frame plate, centre plate again re-entered

(originally considered to be III + B)

Only the combination II 4 + A5 was reported as receiving the 1922 10c surcharge.

The Abbe has found the 10c surcharged stamp in complete sheets in no less than three combinations of plates, II 3 + A5 and II 4 + A5 as above and also II 5 + A5, a combination which is quite new to us.

The task now is to find the 1915 stamp without the 10c surcharge in the combination II 5 + A5; it may very well not exist in complete sheets or large blocks and may have to be identified as single used stamps. This is far from easy for two good reasons: in the first place, the rather insipid colour of the frames makes study difficult and trying; in the second, the 3rd, 4th and 5th states of Frame Plate II are all very similar as are the 5th and 6th states of Centre Plate A. But it should not be an impossible task; combination II 3 + A5 in the 1915 stamp has, as far as the writer knows, been identified only as single used copies, most of the sheets having received the 'Est Africain....' overprint.

It is understood that imperforate copies of the 10c/1F - well known in Belgium but hitherto unknown to the writer - are in the combination II 5 + A5.

PERFORATIONS OF THE 1941 ALBERT MEMORIAL ISSUE

According to the Balasse catalogue, this issue was printed by offset lithography by S.A. Litho Co. Ltd. using plates prepared by McManus Bros., both companies being in Cape Town. Although we have heard of neither company previously being concerned with the printing of postage stamps, there can be no doubt that they did a very good job. As specimens of lithographed stamps they are excellent.

The perforating was undertaken by Casey and Behr, also of Cape Town, and it is clear that this was their first effort in perforating postage stamps and, we dare say, their first effort in the perforating field as it would appear that there was much experimentation in their efforts to provide a satisfactory product

Imperforate copies of all values are common enough, normally in unused condition; the only used copies the writer has seen have been very much cancelled-to-order in complete sets on cover, usually unaddressed. Moreover the unused stamps are normally sold in complete sets and it is reasonable to think that about the same

number of each value exists. In other words, the production and sale of the imperforate sheets were no accident but designed either by the Congo postal authorities or by the printers or an employee thereof. The 75c and 1,75F values overprinted 'Ruanda Urundi', also imperforate, do not appear invariably in the complete series of two values and it may be that these are not quite so offensive.

Rather more interesting are the partly perforated stamps, particularly as they do not appear in complete series and it is possible that such stamps are honest, if exceedingly careless, errors.

The writer has the following:

Imperf. Horizontally 15c (bottom three rows of perforation missing), 25c, 50c, 1,25F, 1,75F, 2,50F, 2,75F and 10F (bottom two rows of perforation missing). Also 2,75F with Ruanda Urundi overprint.

Imperf. Right Margin 15c and 1,25F.

Double Vertical Perforation 2,75F with Ruanda Urundi overprint. This is a horizontal pair and it is not known if more than one vertical row of perforation was doubled.

Grossly Misplaced Perforations 10c (both vertical and horizontal by 3mm), 15c (both by 7mm), 25c (vertical by 2mm, horizontal by 12mm), 50c (horizontal by 11mm), 2,50F (horizontal by 13mm) and 10F (vertical by 8mm).

Of the above, only the 1,25F with imperf. right margin is used and this appears to be honestly used.

The story is that imperforate and partly perforated sheets were issued to the Post Offices. This to a very limited extent may be true but, unless we have some firm evidence to the contrary, we shall remain of the opinion that the great majority of such stamps were either printers' waste, illicitly removed and sold, or disposed of by the Post Office to the stamp trade, probably at prices bearing no relation to the face value of the stamps.

Nonetheless, with collectors being what they are, such pieces are 'good property' and it will be interesting to learn if members have any additions to the above list of what exists.

THE 'FLOWERS' ISSUE

Mr. Vindevoghel has found several used Congo 'Flowers' stamps of various denominations with the face and margin partly and lightly covered with a pale blue (maybe pale green) mesh, the pattern of which appears not to be constant from stamp to stamp. The mesh pattern is not very obvious and requires looking for.

The writer has found a solitary similar copy (3F Congo) in a dealer's stock book and noted as a variety - someone else has been very observant - and priced as such!

The reason for the mesh pattern is obscure. It is thought unlikely that it was on the printing plate (or plates). It could have been acquired by the stamp after use but, because of the several copies found, this seems unlikely. A more probable explanation is that sheets of stamps in the printing works were

placed face downwards on wire mesh and, for some reason, the mesh was sometimes inked, possibly from an earlier sheet of stamps.

It is a curiosity or variety worth seeking and appears to be uncommon. Finding an unused stamp with the marking would be particularly interesting.

KATANGA INDEPENDENCE ISSUE OF 26 OCTOBER, 1960

Mr. Hoyte reports a constant variety of the overprint '11 JUILLET L'ETAT DU KATANGA' with a 'hyphen' below the space between DU and KATANGA. It is No. 52 in the sheet.

ISSUES OF NORTH EAST KATANGA ('Albertville' Issues)

1. INTRODUCTION

Albertville, now Kalemie, is situated on the west shore of Lake Tanganyika, in the north east of Katanga (now 'Shaba'). It is an important economic centre; all goods passing between Katanga and the Indian Ocean necessarily pass through Albertville.

In addition, Albertville is on the route between Katanga and Ruanda Urundi, the capital of which, Usumbura, is at the north east point of Lake Tanganyika (Usumbura is now called Bujumbura and is the capital of Burundi).

Eleven days after the proclamation of independence of the Congo (30 June, 1960), Katanga seceded. Civil war followed between Katanga and the Congo authorities in Leopoldville (Kinshasa).

The issues of North East Katanga follow, philatelically, these events. In fact, the Katanga authorities issued their own stamps from the end of 1960. In July 1961, all the Belgian Congo stamps, all Congo (independent state) stamps and Katangan stamps obtained by overprinting Belgian Congo stamps were demonetized; the only overprinted issue remaining valid for use was the 'Katanga Independence' issue obtained by overprinting the 'Congo Republic Independence' issue.

In December 1961, Katangan troops had to abandon Albertville and its environs owing to pressure from the Congo forces. The Post Office in Albertville had available only Katangan stamps and the Post Office officials at once arranged for them to be overprinted by hand.

These stamps appeared on the philatelic market around February, 1962, surrounded by an unattractive aura of mystery. However, since 1962, I have been able to obtain precise information from witnesses confirming their having purchased them in the Post Office in Albertville. In 1963, having left to work in Burundi, I was in a good position to obtain confirmatory information. This agreed perfectly with that obtained in Belgium and I had the good fortune to meet in Burundi a refugee colonist who was in Albertville at the time of the capture of North East Katanga by Congolese troops. This man handled his business by mail and, in 1971, he sold me his covers, nearly 70 commercial letters, all franked entirely or partly with Katangan stamps overprinted 'Congo'; these letters spanned from 3 January to 23 March 1962 inclusive. This averaged six letters a week sent from fifteen different sources, banks, commercial companies and individuals. These letters do not bear the complete series of stamps, demonstrating their normal non-philatelic character. About a third of the correspondence is registered; all the letters are addressed to Bujumbura and carry the arrival cancellation of that town.

The use of Katangan stamps overprinted 'CONGO' was abandoned on 24 March 1962 with the arrival of the current Congo stamps on 20 March. I have in fact two covers each franked with one Congo stamp and one overprinted Katanga stamp, dated 20 and 22 March respectively. Three months had been necessary for the delivery of Congo stamps from Kinshasa to Albertville. Katanga stamps without overprint remained in use for the whole of that period and one finds them used on mail together with the overprinted stamps.

The remaining stocks of unsold overprinted stamps and of Katanga stamps were sent to Leopoldville for destruction. They then began to be stuck onto sheets of paper to be counted and subsequently burned; but long before they had all been mounted, they 'disappeared' from the Leopoldville Post Office and re-appeared - an odd thing - on the philatelic market!

The overprinted stamps were in use in all the region around Albertville - I have seen them used in Manono. This region is more or less the size of Belgium.

I do not know if there was any official authorisation for the overprinting but the essential thing is that the stamps were effectively in use for three months. Later on, the Leopoldville authorities declared that they had not been legally in use; was this only to avoid having to admit that it took three months to send the valid stamps?

2. THE STAMPS OVERPRINTED 'CONGO'

- a) The series 'Independance de l'Etat du Katanga'.
Five values are now known: 0,20, 0,50, 1, 2 and 6,50F but I cannot say that other values do not exist. The 0.20 and 2F are quite rare and the 0,50 and 6,50F very rare.
- b) The series 'Arts Katangais'.
All values exist overprinted 'CONGO'. Certain values in common use such as the 3,50F (internal letter rate) are more difficult to find unused than are the others.
- c) The 'Flowers' issue of Belgian Congo overprinted 'KATANGA'.
I have met only the 0,10F of this series; the overprint is quite definitely authentic; is it a case of their having been forgotten in the bottom of a cabinet during the destruction of those stamps in July, 1961? I have myself found Ruanda Urundi stamps in Post Office stocks in Burundi after they had been demonetized.

All the overprints were made by hand.

3. NATURE OF THE CACHET USED FOR THE OVERPRINTS

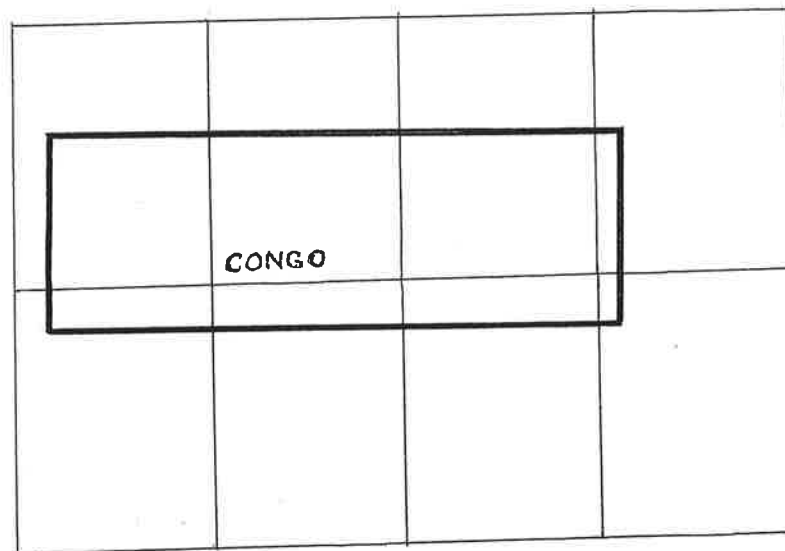
At the beginning of my study of the overprints, I had the following facts:

- a) The statement of reliable witnesses that the overprints had been applied in the Post Office of Albertville itself.
- b) The astonishing variety of overprints which reveal a rather slack control
- c) The presence of a sometimes impressive number of disfiguring lines on numerous overprinted stamps.
- d) The perfect resemblance of the overprints and one of the Censor Marks of the period.

Laborious examination of blocks of the stamps demonstrated two facts:

- a) The frames of the overprints were 77 x 25mm.
- b) The word 'CONGO' occupied a variable position relative to the frame.

The dimensions of the frame are identical to those of the Censor Mark already mentioned. Moreover, the dimensions of the frame explain the multiplicity of lines on certain stamps because it can affect eight stamps with one application. The word 'CONGO' is applied generally on the word 'KATANGA'.



I discovered in 1972 the exact nature of the cachet used, when watching, one day, an employee of the Central Post Office in Bujumbura; he was fixing letters into a copper compositor. Having asked to be able to examine the compositors, I ascertained that two of them measured exactly 77 x 25mm and a third 67 x 21.5mm. Also, the capital letters had exactly the same shape as those of the overprint 'CONGO'. The two sizes of compositor allow respectively four and three lines of text.

There results:

- a) The overprinting was done in the Central Post Office in Albertville.
- b) The overprints were made using a copper compositor dating from the colonial period.
- c) The large size of the compositor explains the multiplicity of frame lines on the stamps.
- d) The weight of the compositor explains the pronounced indentation of the overprints.
- e) The word 'CONGO' must have been dismantled and re-assembled several times which explains the variation on the overprints and the changes in the position of the word relative to the frame of the compositor. It is probable that, while waiting for the stamps from Leopoldville, the employees were content to overprint the stamps in small quantities as required to replenish counter stocks.

f) The same or an identical compositor served for the censor marking.

4. THE TYPES OF OVERPRINT

The conclusions that I have reached are not necessarily complete; they are the result of a detailed examination of a considerable number of covers and have, as their sole merit, coherency.

I have identified six different types of overprint on the basis of two criteria; the length of the word 'CONGO' and the detail of the letters and the position of the word relative to the frame of the compositor.

However, the inking and the impression sometimes mask the characteristics of the overprint and not all stamps show sufficient frame lines. The thick Albertville cancellation does not help in the case of used stamps.

Type 1

I have found this type on cover from 3 January, 1962. The word 'CONGO' is about 13.7mm long, the ink often greyish. Frequently, a small piece of the diagonal stroke of the N is missing; the foot of the N often appears heavily corrugated. The overprint exists in violet.

The positions of the frame lines relative to the word 'CONGO' are: left vertical line 25mm from the C; right line 38mm from the second O; top line 8.5mm above the top of 'CONGO'; bottom line 14mm below the bottom of the word.

Type 2

I have found this type on cover from 21 January, 1962. The word 'CONGO' is about 13.7mm long. The ink is generally very black. The overprint is often clearly oblique.

The positions of the frame lines are: 25mm to the left of the C; 38mm to the right of the second O; 13.5mm above 'CONGO'; 9mm below 'CONGO'.

Without traces of the frame, the two first types can be practically indistinguishable.

Type 3

I have found this type on cover from 6 February, 1962. The word 'CONGO' is 14.5mm long and is characterised by the fact that the space between the O and the N (nearly 1.5mm) is greater than between other adjacent letters. This cachet suffered spectacular deterioration during use; the C is found cut in two and the same variety is found also with the first O cut at mid-height on the left side; or with these two cuts and an oblique crack cutting the bases of the N and G. I have seen several examples of the overprint with a large black dot in the middle of the C.

The positions of the frame lines are: 22mm to the left of the C; presumably 40mm to the right of the second O; 13.5mm above 'CONGO'; 9mm below 'CONGO'.

Type 4

I have found this type on cover from 19 February. The word 'CONGO' is 13.7mm long.

I have not been able to ascertain if there were two states of the overprint or if there were two sub-types. In view of the fact that the dates of use are very near, no real conclusion is possible. The first O is cut on the left at mid-height and the second O is sometimes cut in the same manner and badly deformed. I have noted also that a piece of the right vertical stroke of the N is missing. The ink is often thick but clearly grey.

This type of overprint shows little trace of the frame lines and I have been unable to fix the positions of the vertical lines; the top line is 9.5mm above 'CONGO', the bottom line about 14mm under 'CONGO'.

Type 5

I have found this type on cover from 12 March and on cancelled-to-order stamps from 7 March. The word 'CONGO' is about 15.5mm long, the ink greyish and frame lines are generally numerous. The letter N is reversed and is rather lower than the other letters. The left half of the G is missing.

The top frame line is 14mm above the word 'CONGO', the bottom 9mm below 'CONGO'; the positions of the vertical lines have not been determined.

Type 6

I have not seen this type on cover or on used stamps. The right vertical stroke of the N is thin and cut short having the shape of a comma. The word 'CONGO' is about 14.3mm long. There are many frame lines on the examples seen.

The positions of the frame lines relative to the word 'CONGO' are: left vertical line 38mm to the left of the C; right line 23mm to the right of the second O; top line 8.5mm above 'CONGO' and bottom 15mm under 'CONGO'.

Note: Types 4 and 5 are abundant amongst the stocks recovered in Leopoldville. Type 4 has sometimes been stamped on to stamps already stuck to documents.

The 'CENSURE' Cachet

The word 'CENSURE' does not vary and I have found it on letters spread out between 3 January and 16 February 1962. On 20 February, there was a new Censor mark, in rubber in large characters of 5mm and 8mm. Was there a compositor reserved for this sole use? Let us remember that there were two of this format in the Central Post Office in Bujumbura.

The positions of the frame lines relative to the word 'CONGO' are: left vertical line 14.5mm to the left of the C; right line 41.5mm to the right of the second E; top line 8.5mm above 'CENSURE' and bottom line 14.5mm under 'CENSURE'.

5. ERRORS OF OVERPRINT

The overprinting being by hand, several errors were made but they are not numerous. There are three types:-

- i) Inverted.
- ii) Double (one is often badly done, 'a cheval' on two stamps or blurred and it is probable that the clerk wished to remedy the imperfection).
- iii) With and without overprint se-tenant (in one case, the stamp without overprint being on the edge of the sheet and badly torn).

List of the errors met:

Double overprint: Katanga Art: 0,10F, 0,20F, 0,50F, 2F, 5F, 6F and 20F.

Inverted overprint: Katanga Art: 0,50F, 1,50F, 2F, 10F, 50F and 100F.

With and without overprint, se-tenant: Katanga Art, 0,50F, 6,50F, 8F and 100F.

Independence issue: 1F.

6. ESSAY OF THE OVERPRINT

I have twice found the overprint 'CONGO' in the selvedge of the sheet. This probably is confirmation of the position of the compositor. These overprints are in the selvedge adjacent to the left corner stamp of the sheet, in one case at the top of the sheet, in the other at the bottom of the sheet.

G. Celis

RWANDA - 1967 PAINTINGS

Mr. Compton reports an interesting curiosity of the 20c normally in violet, gold and black (S.G. No. 208, Yvert No. 205) in which the black colour is missing so that the stamp has no value or inscription. The stamp is unused; its origin is unknown. The stamps were printed by Enschede and one would not have expected such an error to pass their rigorous inspection.

1910 PROVISIONAL POSTCARDS

The Davo catalogue lists the error 33E.LT, the original 1909 10c + 10c reply-paid card with four lines of writing thereon (Davo No. 19), with typographed 'Congo Belge' and then with each card handstamped '5', a surcharge intended for the 10c single card and the 15c + 15c reply-paid card.

Mr Jacquemin reports another error of the same type, the original 1897 10c + 10c reply-paid card with three lines of writing thereon (Davo 16), locally hand-stamped 'Congo Belge' and then with each card handstamped '5'.

There is no knowing if these were true errors or whether they were made to oblige local collectors. The Congo postal authorities were perhaps too obliging and many of our errors and varieties of overprint were undoubtedly made at the request of collectors and, maybe, dealers.

1900 AND THE SMALL CIRCLE CANCELLATIONS

General Du Four and the Abbe Gudenkauf came to the conclusion that the 19th Century small circle cancellations had the 18 of the year as a permanent part of the cancel and not as a 'slug' to be changed at the turn of the century. Careful and detailed study of the cancellations reveals the fact that, with the single exception mentioned below, the circular date stamps used in 1900 and thereafter were different from those used previously. It follows that the 18 must have been a fixed part of the cancellation.

The exception is Albertville. The 19th Century Post Office there was transferred to M'Toa on 22 July, 1896 but the Albertville circular date stamp continued to be used in the M'Toa office (as well as the M'Toa cancellation) until the end of 1899. On 12 January 1910, the Toa office (previously M'Toa) was transferred back to Albertville. The old Albertville cancellation was still available and this had its 8 of 18 crudely altered by hacking away a portion of the lower loop to form a 9. This modified cancel was used (there was no other) certainly until 1917 and probably until 1920 when the large circle cancellation appeared.

The fixed 18 of the year resulted in several interesting inconsistencies:

Stanleville Post Office was opened on 15 July 1898 but we know of no 19th Century cancellation. There is ample evidence to show that the Stanley-Falls canceller was used at the Stanleyville Post Office until 1 January 1900.

M'Toa had its name officially changed to Toa on 1 April 1898 but the M'Toa continued to be used until the beginning of the new century when the proper Toa cancel was introduced.

Tumbu-Mani had its name changed to Tumba-Mani on 25 January 1898 but the change in the cancellation did not happen until 1900.

Lusambo had its Post Office opened on 22 July 1896 but we know of no Lusambo cancellation until 1900. It appears probable that the Sankuru cancellation was used at this office until the end of 1899.

CANCELLATIONS

As many members know, Mr. Heim and the Secretary have for years been compiling a detailed check list of the Post Office cancellations to 1960 (1961 for R-U) and a 'final' document is being prepared with the hope of getting it published. Help towards completion from other members would be very much appreciated. By inference, most of the following must have existed but have not been seen. Does anyone have copies of the cancels?

1) With posthorn at bottom and town name followed by a letter at the top:
Astrida A and B; Basoko A; Beni A; Boende E; Bolobo A; Bukava 1 J;
Coquilhatville C and E; Coquilhatville or Coquilhatville 1 H and I; Costermansville A, F and I; Elisabethville E (dated 1951 or later) and H; Elisabethville 1 A to E and G; Inkisi B; Jadotville C, G, H, I, and J; Kabalo C, Kisenyi A; Kitega A and B; Kole (Stan) A; Kolokoso A; Leopoldville 1 C, C. (letter followed by a full stop), D., F., I., J, L, L., P; Luputa E, Matadi 1 B; Mweka A; Ngozi A and B; Paulis A, B and C; Paulis 1 D and F; Port Franqui A; Shangugu A and B; Stanleyville 1 A and H; Usumbura D and E; Yatolema A; Yumbi (Bolobo) A.

2) With posthorn at bottom, town name at top and letter under town name:
Banana A; Basoko A; Boende E; Boma or Boma 1 G; Bumba C; Ikela A; Kabelo C;
Kigali A and B; Kikondja A; Kimbau A; Kisenyi A and C; Kitega A and B; Kolokoso A; Kolwezi I, J, M and N; Lusambo B and C; Matadi 1 A, B, C and D; Mweka B; Ngozi A and B; Paulis A and B; Usumbura 1 D, I, J and K; Yumbi (Bolobo) A.

3) Bilingual with town name in French at top, in Flemish at bottom and letter under French town name: Coquilhatville F; Coquilhatville or Coquilhatville 1 H; Elisabethville A, G and J; Elisabethville 1 N, P, Q, R, S, V, W and Y; Elisabethville 5 A; Elisabethville 7 A; Elisabethville 8 A; Jadotville H; Leopoldville 1 K, M, N, O and Q; Leopoldville 5 A and B; Leopoldville Kalina F and G; Luluabourg 1 L and M; Stanleyville 1 O; Stanleyville 3 A; Stanleyville 6 A; Thysville C.

4) Bilingual with posthorn at bottom and French followed by Flemish name of town at top, Flemish name followed by letter: Elisabethville 1 A, B, C, D, E, F, H, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R and S; Leopoldville Aerogare F; Leopoldville Kalina A, B, C, D and F.

5) Double circle with letter in date line: Masi Manimba F.

We would also like to know of any machine cancellations (circles about 22 to 25mm diameter, after 1950) other than: Albertville 1, Banningville; Boende, Boma 1, Bukavu 1, Bunia, Coquilhatville 1; Elisabethville 1; Goma 1; Kikwit 1; Kindu 1; Kolwezi 1; Leopoldville 1; Leopoldville Kalina; Lisala; Luluabourg 1; Matadi 1; Paulis 1; Stanleyville 1 and Usumbura.

We would also like to know of any cancellations incorporating the letters BCH or CP.

O. A. T. MARKINGS

During the latter years of World War II, a number of airmail covers from the Congo, mostly addressed to the United States, were found with the marking in red: O.A.T. Many guesses were made as to the meaning of this marking, none of which could be satisfactorily justified. Subsequent research by Dr. Gordon Ward, F.R.P.S.L. and further study by Mr. Donald D. Smyth have produced a reasonable and interesting answer. Mr. Smyth prepared an article entitled "Meaning and Purpose of AV2 and O.A. T. Markings" which was published in "The American Philatelist", September 1962, Volume 75, No. 12, from which most of the following discussion was gleaned.

While World War II was in progress and for a short period thereafter there was a dual international airmail rate in effect. A cheaper rate provided for air transmission for part of the journey and surface transportation for the remainder of the trip. In most cases this meant airmail to London, thence by steamer to the Americas. A higher rate paid for air transmission all the way to destination. Mail for which the higher rate was paid had the red O. A.T. marking stamped on the covers in London, indicating onward air transmission. A letter from the General Post Office in London (28 October 1960) stated that the O.A.T. marking was not provided for in the international postal regulations but was used by the Postal Administration to distinguish those items which required onward air transmission.

The relative scarcity of the markings suggests two possibilities. One is that there are many covers that have not turned up to be counted. The other is that covers for onward air transmission were assembled in packets and only the top or outside item was stamped.

An exception to the procedure occurred with letters originating at the British Post Office in Tangier where a smaller O.A.T. marking, usually in purple ink, was applied. This was done to aid the clerks in London in sorting the mail there. An odd usage is noted on a cover postmarked Vernon, British Columbia, Canada (26 September 1941) and back-stamped Cairo, Egypt (7 December 1941) also with Egyptian censor marking. The length of time en route suggests the probability that the letter was carried by air to some port of embarkation (probably Montreal), thence by steamer to England, thence by air to Egypt. Of course this is just a guess, since there are no postal markings to support the premise.

According to Mr. Smyth's findings, there are known 199 covers in the period 1940-1945, 38 in 1946-47, and 13 later (one as late as 1954). The total, 250, includes 17 Congo to the United States, one Congo to Canada, one Tangier to

the United States, one Belgium to Canada and the aforementioned Canada to Egypt in the writer's collection.

There are 16 different O.A.T. markings which are shown on the illustration copied from Mr. Smyth's article.

At the same time that the O.A.T. markings were being used in London, a marking AV2 was being applied in Singapore, Tokyo, Osaka, Hong Kong and San Francisco in the United States to covers originating in various Asiatic countries. Apparently this usage had no official sanction (except possibly in Singapore) but it can be stated with reasonable assurance that the purpose was the same as that of the O.A.T. markings. There is some suggestion that in some instances the marking was used as a cover-up for insufficient postage, with the connivance of postal clerks.

Mr. Smyth lists 115 known covers, including two of the writer's (Siam to U.S.A. and Palestine to England).

It was apparently the original intent to apply both the O.A.T. and AV2 markings to facing labels, but the covers listed in the foregoing include only those where the markings were applied directly to the covers.

All the writer's Congo covers originated in the year 1945 and none has any censor markings. It would be of interest if reports of other years were made available.

A. I. Heim

I



II



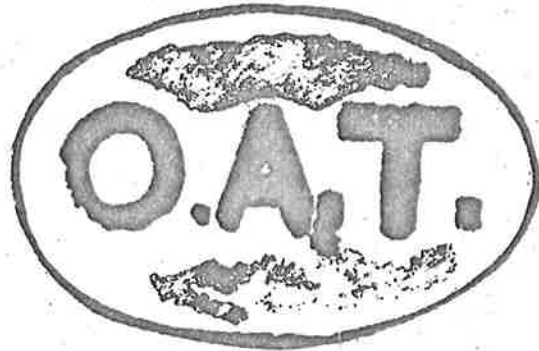
III



IV

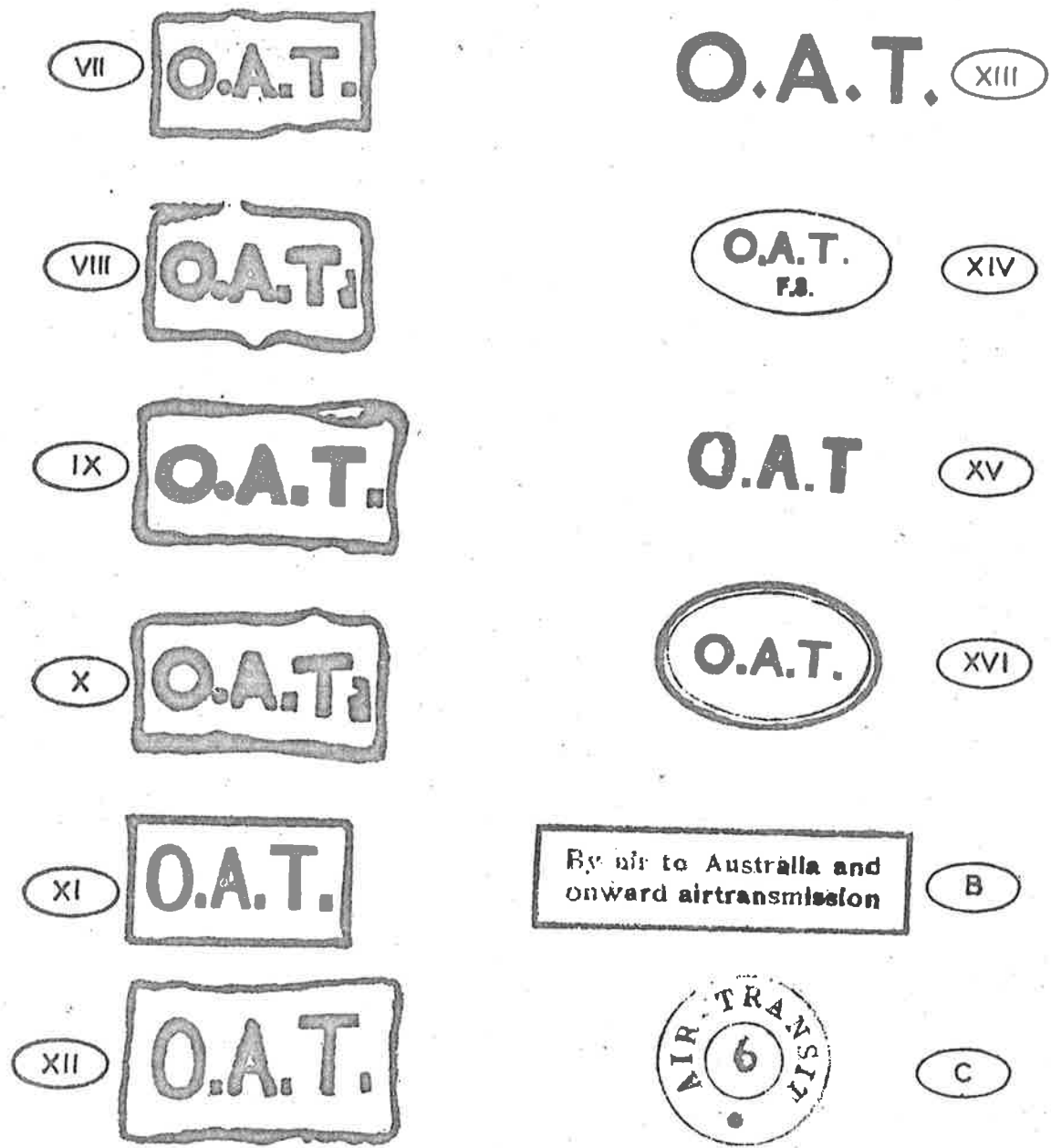


VI



V

Types of O. A. T. Markings
(All markings are true-scale reproductions)



Additional Types of O. A. T. Markings
(All markings are true-scale reproductions)

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|------|
| (1) AV2 | A.V.2 | (9) |
| (2) AV2 | A.V.2. | (10) |
| (3) A.V.2. | A.V.2 | (11) |
| (4) AV2 | A.V.2 | (12) |
| (5) A.V.2. | A.V.2 | (13) |
| (6) AV2 | A.V.2 | (14) |
| (7) A.V.2 | AV2 | (15) |
| (8) A.V.2 | INCLUDED IN AV2 | (A) |

Types of AV2 Markings
(All markings are true-scale reproductions)

REGISTRATION LABELS

The collection of registration labels is not everybody's idea of philately but it is a legitimate and collectable aspect of postal history and is, as far as the Congo is concerned, not lacking in interest.

From 1886 until, perhaps, 1915 a straight-line RECOMMANDE in sloping letters and in a parallelogram was struck on the cover to be registered and the handstamp was followed by a serial number in manuscript. It is understood that only the principal Post Offices (perceptions), at least in the early days, were able to accept registered packages. In 1909 or thereabouts the old straight-line mark began to be replaced by 'RECOMMANDE' with upright capital letters and without frame; again a serial number was added in manuscript.

At some time about 1912 the adhesive label made its debut in the Congo. The labels had serial numbers printed on them but were without the name of the Post Office and this was added by means of the Post Office straight line mark (griffe). Except for the most important principal Post Offices, the use of unappropriated registration labels has continued to the present day. With the exception of Type 9, the serial numbers are from 1 to 1000.

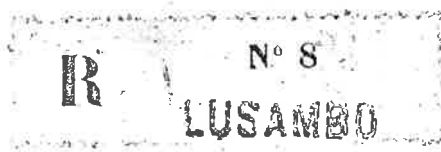
Some offices made a practice of tying the label to the cover by the use of the normal circular date stamp but others not and there appears to have been no consistency in this procedure.

Beginning, perhaps, in 1929 the most important Post Offices had the name of the office printed on the label but the smaller offices have continued to use unappropriated labels on which the local 'griffe' was applied, the 'griffe' being in various sizes and shapes. Occasionally labels are seen on cover without the 'griffe'; this must have been due to the negligence of the postal clerk; Type 9 appears to have been an exception, not having been seen with the 'griffe'.

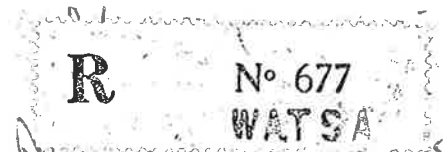
The labels appear to have been in books (Type 9 is a probable exception) perforated except at the edges of the sheets (again Type 9 is an exception) and the normal procedure with an unappropriated label was to stamp the labels with the 'griffe' while still in the book and before removal therefrom.

TYPES OF LABELS

Type 1



Type 2



Type 3

Type 1a The letter 'R' is 8mm high, the 'Congo Belge' 23mm overall length, in a frame 40 x 14mm. The label is printed in red. Seen on covers from 1915 to 1924.

Type 1b The letter 'R' is 7mm high, the 'Congo Belge' 21mm long in a frame 40 x 13½mm. The label is printed in various shades from pale red (perhaps pale orange-red) to red and the serial number is sometimes in a different shade from that of the remainder of the printing on the label. Seen on covers from 1919 to 1925.

Type 1c The letter 'R' is 8mm high without the upward curl to the leg, the 'Congo Belge' 24mm long, on a frame 41 x 13mm. Printed in pale red. Seen on only one cover, from Basoko, dated 1922.

Type 1d The letter 'R' is 8mm high the 'Congo Belge' 22mm long, in a frame 40 x 14mm. Printed in red. Seen as only a single label from Stanleyville, date unknown.

Type 1e The letter 'R' is 6½mm high without the upward curl to the leg, the 'Congo Belge' 22mm long, in a frame 39½ x 14(?)mm: Printed in lilac. Seen on only one cover, from Kinshasa, dated 1922.

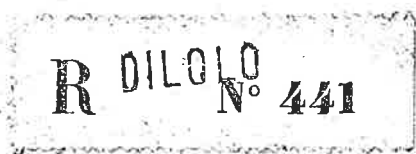
Type 1f The letter 'R' is 6½mm high, the 'Congo Belge' 23mm long, in a frame 38 x 13mm. The label is printed in various shades from pale red to red and the serial number is sometimes in a shade different from the remainder of the printing on the label. Seen on covers from 1924 to 1949.

Type 2 This type is invariably in deep red and has been seen on covers from 1927 to 1947. Appropriated labels with the name of the Post Office printed thereon in black have been seen for Elisabethville and Leopoldville 1.

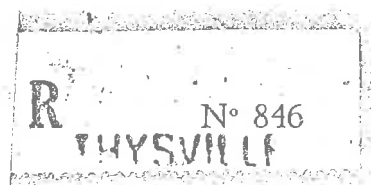
Type 3a The letter 'R' is 7mm high. The label is printed in deep red and has been seen on covers from 1930 to 1941. The appropriated label for Leopoldville 1 has the name of the office in black.

Type 3b The letter 'R' is 6½mm high. The label is printed in deep red and has been seen on covers from 1931 to 1942. The appropriated label for Leopoldville 1 has the name of the office printed in black.

Type 3c The letter 'R' is 6mm high. The label is printed in deep red and has been seen on covers from 1930 to 1944. The appropriated label for Leopoldville 1 has the name of the office in black.



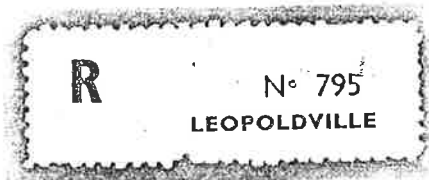
Type 4



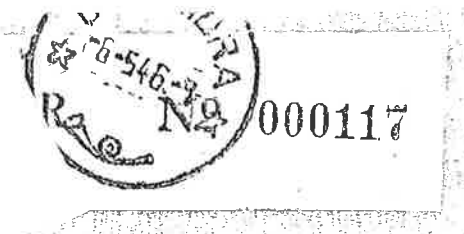
Type 5

Type 4 This may cover several sub-types as the height of the 'R' varies from 6½ to 7mm. It is invariably printed in deep red and has been seen on covers from 1930 to 1942. Appropriated labels with the name of the office printed in black have been seen for Elisabethville and Leopoldville 1.

Type 5 Printed in red and seen on covers from 1940 to 1943. An appropriated label for Elisabethville has the name of the office printed in the same red colour.



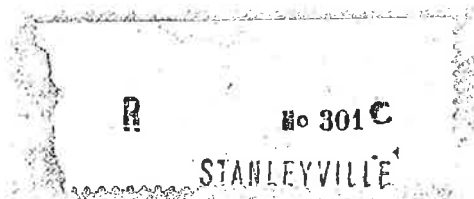
Type 6



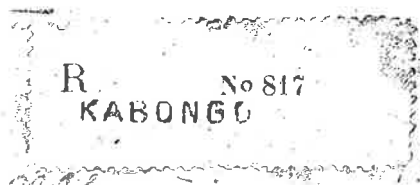
Type 7

Type 6 Printed in red, including, in the case of appropriated labels, the name of the office. Seen on covers from 1944 to 1953. Appropriated labels for Elisabethville and Leopoldville have been seen.

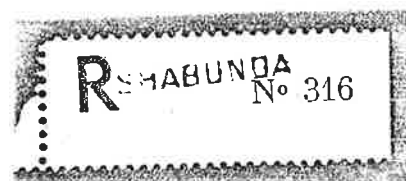
Type 7 Printed in black. Imperforate. Seen only from Usumbura during 1946.



Type 8



Type 9



Type 10

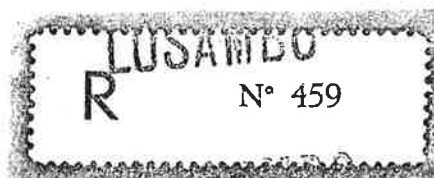
Type 8 Printed in deep red. Seen on covers from 1947 to 1954.

Type 9 Printed in deep red. Seen on covers from 1949 to 1954.

Type 10 The letter 'R' is 7mm high. The label, including the name of the office where appropriated, is printed in red. Seen on covers from 1949 to 1960 and is probably still current. Appropriated labels have been seen for Costermansville 1 (bilingual), Elisabethville, Elisabethville 1, Elisabethville 1 (bilingual), Jadotville 1, Leopoldville 1, Leopoldville 1 (bilingual) (two types, one with the first L's aligned, the other with the figures '1' aligned), Leopoldville-Kalina, Luluabourg 1, Matadi 1, Stanleyville 1 (bilingual) and Usumbura 1.



Type 11



Type 12

Type 11 Printed in red, appropriated names too. Seen on covers from 1944 to 1953. Appropriated labels seen for Albertville (bilingual), Bukavu, Coquilhatville 1 (bilingual) (two types one with figures 1 aligned, the other not aligned). Kikwit, Kindu, Leopoldville 1 (bilingual) (two types, one with first L's aligned, the other with the figures 1 aligned), Luluabourg 1 (bilingual), Stanleyville (bilingual).

Type 12 The letter 'R' is 6mm high. Seen on covers from 1951 to 1954.

Perforation

Type 1 has been seen in various perforations ranging from 10 to 14. The remaining types, with the exception of Type 7 which is imperforate, are perforated $10\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$. All are line-perforated, often very roughly, and the labels vary a great deal in size due to the lack in precision in perforation. All examples of Type 1 that have been seen are perforated all round but with the other perforated types the edges of the sheets were left imperforate. Grossly misplaced perforations are found and one instance of double perforation has been seen for Elisabethville 3.

Handstamped 'Griffes'

Several sizes of handstamps were used by some offices. Commencing about 1953 the 'griffe' of the towns with European names appeared bilingual with the French name above the Flemish.

Some towns, notably Jadotville, Kindu-Port Empain and Luluabourg, apparently at some time lost or mislaid their straight-line canceller and had to improvise with very rough handstamps, apparently making use of children's 'John Bull' printing outfits.

The Moerbeke-Bas Congo office (presumably so-called to differentiate it from the Moerbeke in Belgium) had its name changed successively to Moerbeke and Moerbeke-Kwilu. Although the circular date stamps were changed accordingly, the 'griffe' used on the registration labels remained as Moerbeke-Bas Congo.

Dibaye-Lubue had its circular date stamp inscribed 'Dibaye sur Lubue' but the word 'sur' was roughly, and not entirely, removed, presumably by means of a chisel, either before or during the very early days of its use (the office was opened on 26 January 1950; the earlier noted cancellation, dated 17 April 1950, has the 'sur' partly removed). The 'griffe' remained as Dibaye sur Lubue for some time although the 'sur' was sometimes deleted in pencil. In due course, the 'sur' was largely removed so that only part of the U (check) remained (in 1950 or 1951).

One of the Masi-Manimba 'griffes' had the town name in inverted commas.

The Kalina Post Office, while it was open, used labels with the Leopoldville-Kalina 'griffe'.

Overprinted Labels

Presumably due to shortages of unappropriated labels, those with the name of a Post Office printed thereon were sometimes used for other offices. Appropriated Leopoldville 1 labels have been seen overprinted with the 'griffes' of Bolobo, Leopoldville 2, Leopoldville 3, Leopoldville 4, Leopoldville-Marche and Usumbura.

With the change of name of Costermansville to Bukavu, the appropriated bilingual Costermansville 1 label was overprinted Bukavu 1.

An unappropriated label with Usumbura 1 'griffe' has been seen overprinted Ngagara.

Improvisation

Home-made labels consisting of pieces of presumably gummed paper bearing the handstamped 'griffe' and an R (or REC) and serial number in manuscript were used at Uvira and Yangambi, presumably during a shortage of the proper labels.

Other offices, of which Luluabourg is an example, sometimes struck the 'griffe' directly on the cover, adding the R and serial number in manuscript.

Added letters

A letter, A, B, C etc. was sometimes handstruck or written on the label, usually, but not invariably, the letter being the same as that incorporated in the circular date stamp. It is presumed that each clerk or booth in a larger Post Office was allocated a lettered date stamp and a corresponding letter handstamp for applying to the registered mail which he accepted.

General

The above does not pretend to be anything more than a very cursory examination of the registration labels on the writer's covers together with a few loose labels.

There may well be other types that have been used and, very probably, appropriated labels not listed above. The ranges of dates of use must be much wider than those noted.

The object has been to endeavour to demonstrate that even the humble registration label can provide a subject for research and one that has probably not yet been explored.

WANT LISTS

It has been suggested that we should revive the 'Want Lists' of our early Bulletins.

Mrs. Green is very desirous of acquiring any of the following:

Brussels 'Congo Belge' handstamps on 3,50F, 5F and 10F., 5c postcard with 'Urundi' overprint (Davo No. 1); 5c 'Est Africain...' picture cards, views Nos. 1, 2, 7, 11, 14, 23, 25, 29, 47, 49; cancellations - BPCVPK Nos.2 (on cover), 3 (preferably on card or cover), 6(on cover), 7(pref. on card or cover), 8(pref. on card or cover), 9(on cover), 13(pref. on card or cover), 18(pref. on card or cover), Usumbura (straight line 28mm), TABORA (straight line 45mm), Tabora (straight line 14mm), TABORA (straight line with thick line below), USSOKE with date, Mussinga (large circular), MALAGARASSI (double circle), KISUMU CONGO BELGE (double circle); Internee and Prisoner of War covers.

Mr. Jacquemin is desirous of completing his set of the 15c post cards (Davo No. 61); he requires views Nos. 104, 105, 107, and 121; alternatively, the same views of the 30c card (Davo No. 62) would be equally acceptable.

The Secretary would be glad of the opportunity to inspect any spare copies of Ruanda 'Idols' stamps also any used stamps of any issues to 1960 (1961 for Ruanda) if they have readable years in the date.

HIGGINS & GAGE - WORLD POSTAL STATIONERY CATALOG

This new catalogue of the postal stationery of the world is not as detailed in the Congo section as is the Davo catalogue but is useful for the later issues and those of the newly independent countries, not included in the Davo catalogue.

KESSLER - CATALOGUE OF AEROGRAMMES

This new catalogue includes those of the Belgian Congo, Ruanda Urundi and the independent states in some detail, including the different papers used.

PHILATELIC BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE CONGO

A classified bibliography of books and articles on the stamps and postal history of the Congo and Ruanda should be of considerable value to members of the Study Circle and, for some years, the Secretary has had this in mind.

The best bibliography available is that included in Avidon's unfinished series of articles in Philatelist Belge some years ago. This was simply a list of published articles and it would seem useful to include with each reference a short synopsis of the contents.

With this Bulletin is a list of references available to the Secretary. If members have knowledge of other philatelic articles or books on 'our' countries, will they kindly let the Secretary know without too much delay.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LITERATURE

Most regrettably, in 1972 not a single article on the Congo has been noted in the literature.

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