

Further Postal Information from Local Newspapers

by Chev. Dr. A. Bonnici KM., MD.

A century ago

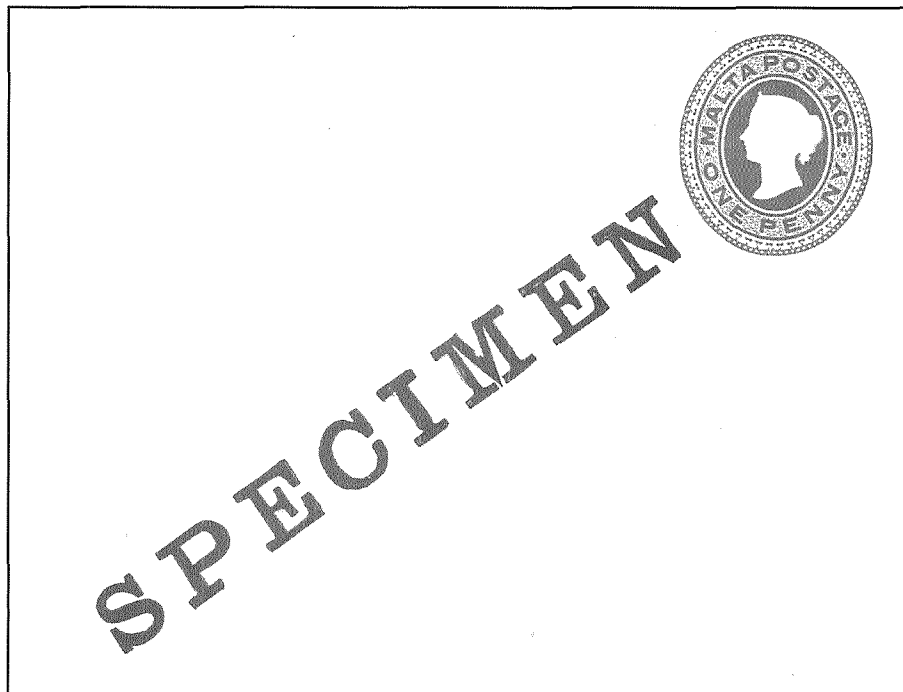
Daily Malta Chronicle

May 1, 1900

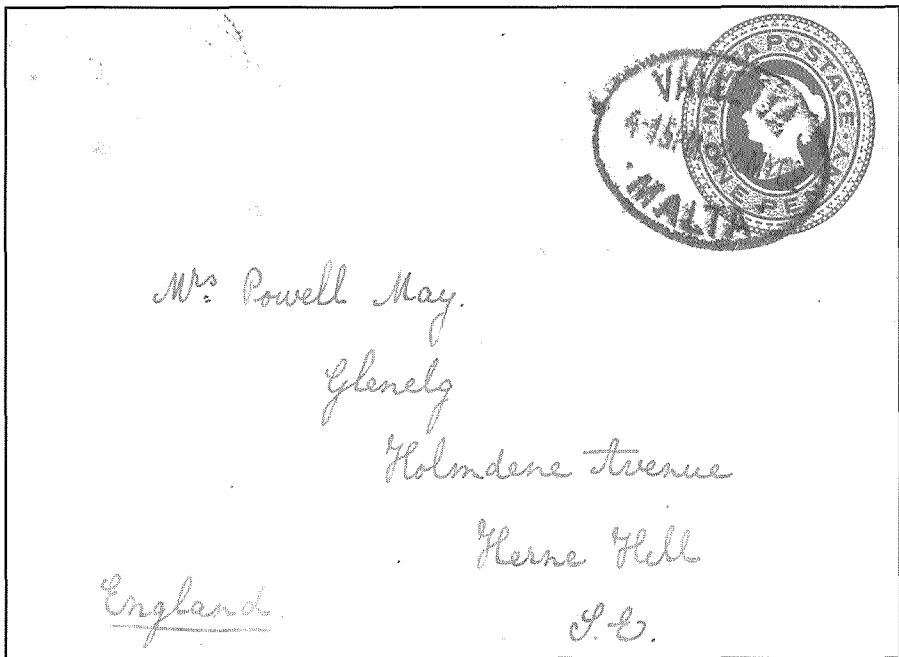
FROM THE GOVERNMENT NOTICES: POSTAGE ENVELOPES

His Excellency the Governor is hereby pleased to direct it to be notified that, on and from 1st May, 1900, postage envelopes bearing a penny embossed stamp, will be brought into use, and may be obtained at any post office in these Islands...

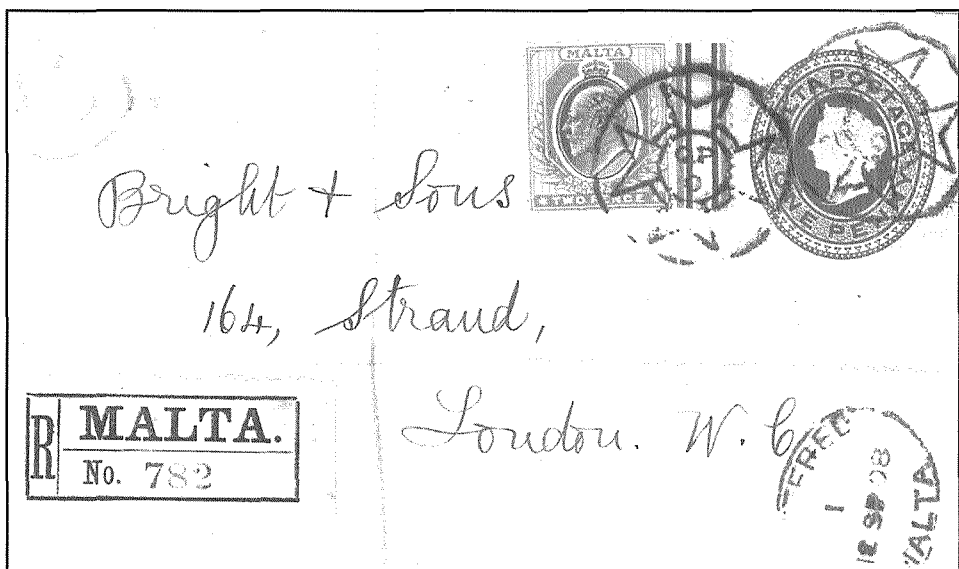
In fact the following three envelopes with different sizes were printed.



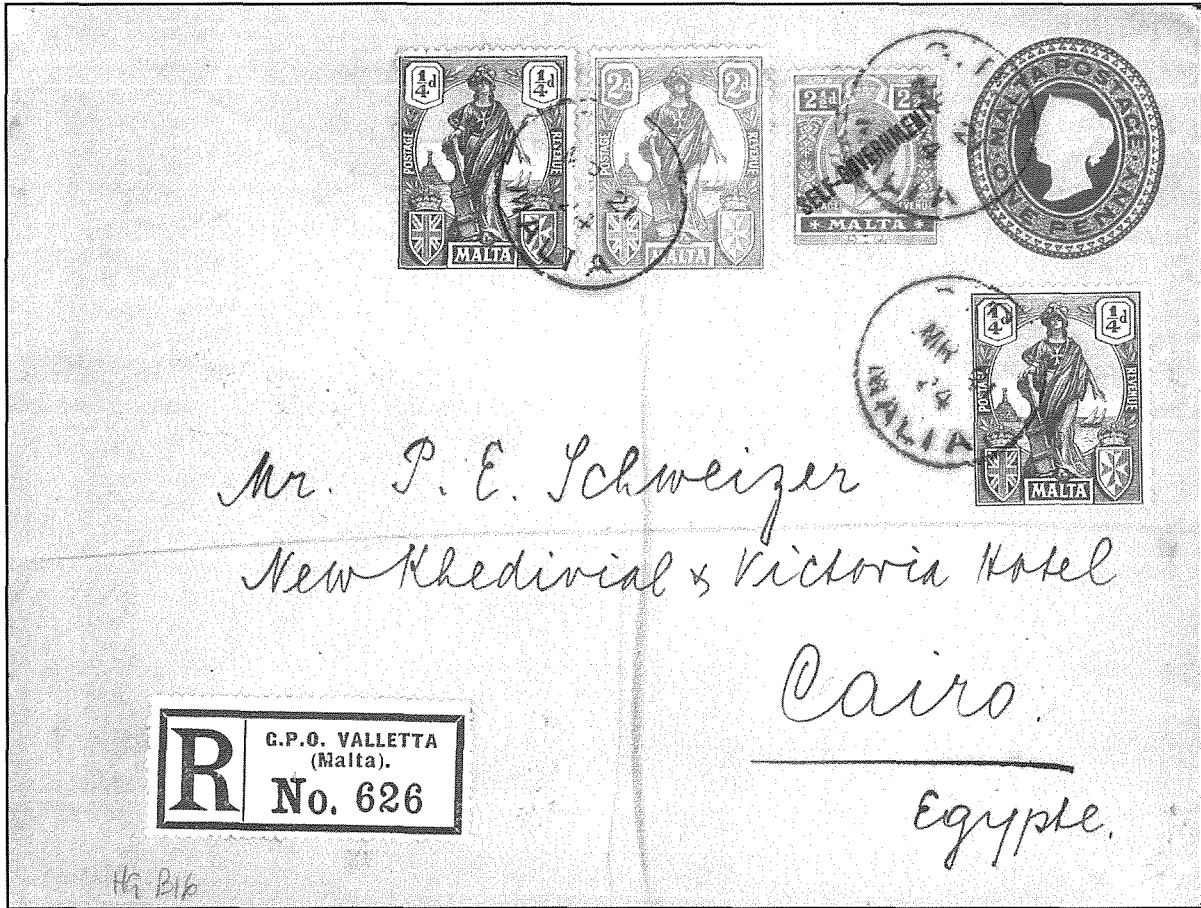
Specimen of the 12 x 9.5cms envelope



Queen Victoria Embossed Penny Red 12 x 9.5cms envelope addressed to UK.



Queen Victoria Embossed Penny Red 14 x 9cms envelope,
addressed to UK, with additional 2d registration fee.



Queen Victoria Embossed Penny Red 16 x 12.3cms envelope, addressed to Egypt, with additional upgrade of - 1/4d. x 2, 2 d & 2 1/2 self-govt.

A century ago

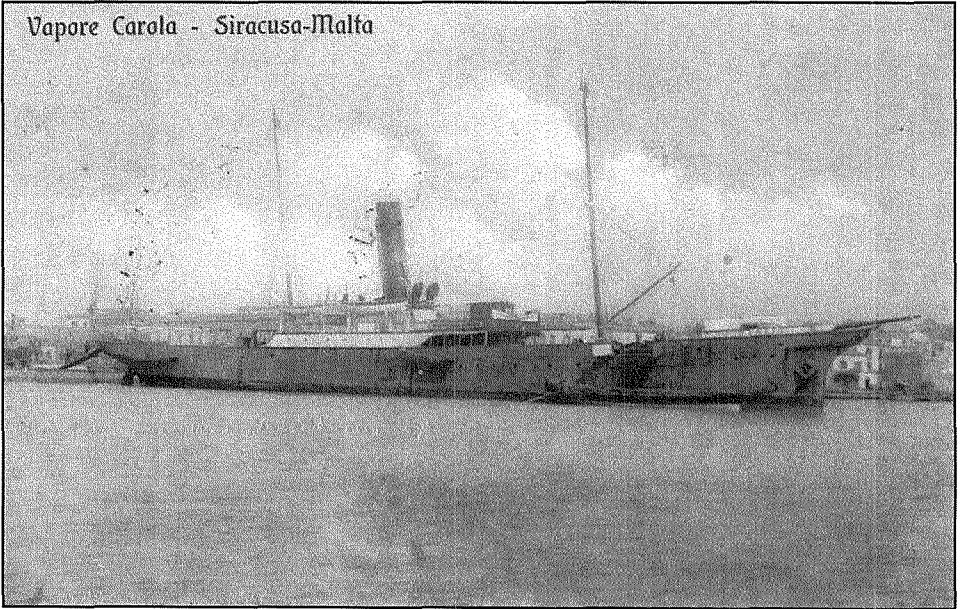
Daily Malta Chronicle

Thursday, March 10, 1904

THE MAIL

It frequently happens – too frequently it happens – that we have no continental mails. The state of the sea, the breakdown of a railway line, and other accidents are assigned as the cause. The disappointment of those who do not receive their expected despatches is in all cases the same. But half the annoyance felt by the perverse working of our mail system would be spared if one had timely warning that his letters were for one reason or another delayed on the continent, or at our nearest continental post. Ships wait in our harbour for the correspondence directed to them, postmen come from the ships in considerable number to get their letter bags, orderlies from far off Barracks, merchants, look impotently for the regular delivery of letters. All feel the disappointment of learning only at post time that there is not post. The *Carola* leaves Sicily in the early afternoon under ordinary circumstances. Out of consideration for ships in the harbour, out of regard for our many naval and military postmen, out of goodwill for us all, the Captain of the *Carola* should be got to give due notice of his inability to bring our letters and to keep us from besetting the Post Office to no purpose.

Vapore Carola - Siracusa-Malta





Malta / Sicily: SS CAROLA Handstamp in violet.



Italy / Malta: CAROLA Handstamp in violet.

A century ago

Daily Malta Chronicle

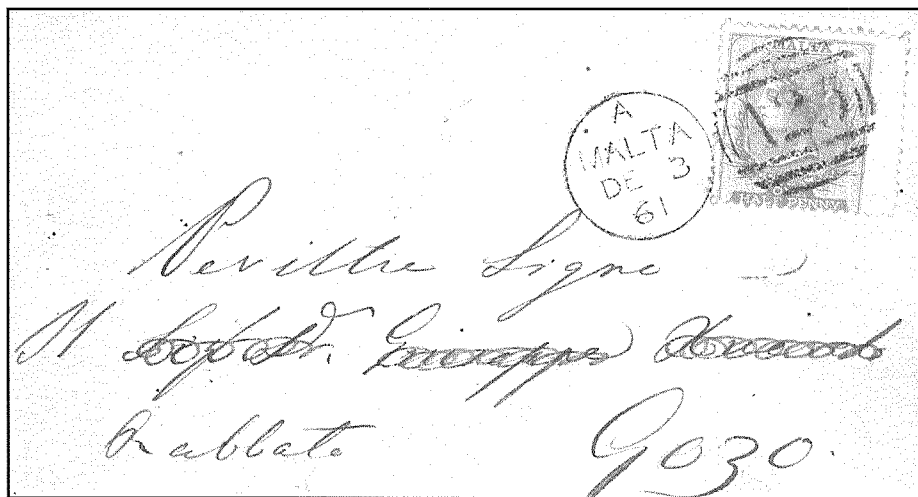
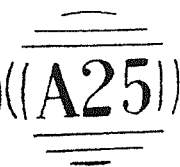
Saturday, March 11, 1905

POSTAGE STAMPS

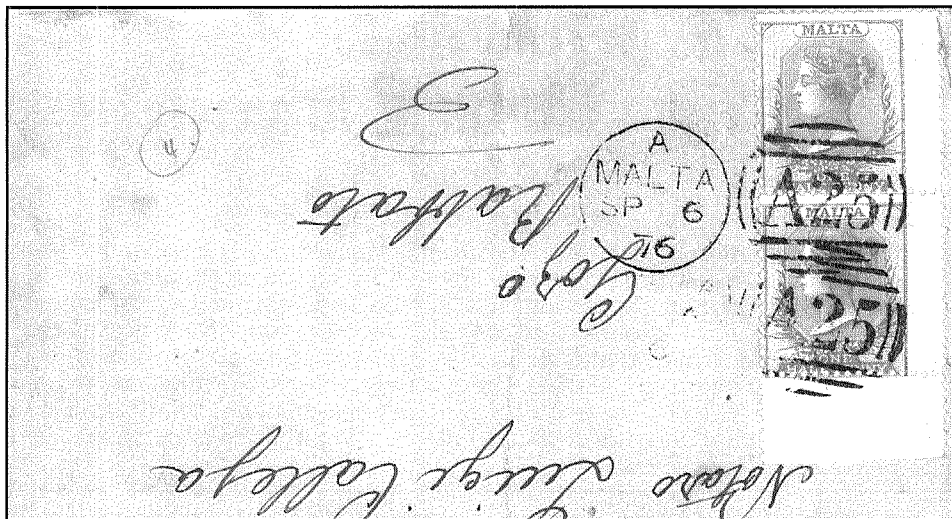
An improvement in the way of obliterating postage-stamps on registered letters has been laterly introduced at our Post Office on the recommendation of the Postmaster General, the Honourable T. Vella, to whom much credit is due. Since 1860 most of the stamps were cancelled by the untidy "A 25" postmark, which has spoiled so many valuable stamps. The new postmark consists of two concentric circles showing a Maltese Cross between them. The inner circle contains the letters "G.P.O.". Parts of a third circle are seen under the Cross. This improvement is hailed with pleasure both by the public in general and by stamp collectors in particular.

"Since 1860 most of the stamps were cancelled by the untidy "A 25" postmark, which has spoiled so many valuable stamps."

There were three oval "A 25" duplex handstamps. For more detailed information see G.B. used in Malta (PSM Journal Vol. 30 /3 by A. Fenech).



S.G. 1, 1/2d Q.V. buff on blue paper, no watermark, issued on 1 December 1860. Cancelled by the circular A 25 - duplex, bearing very late 3 December 1861, date stamp to Gozo.



S.G. 10, 1/2 d pair Q.V. yellow buff, 17th printing dated 6 September 1876, cancelled by the small "A 25" duplex.

There were three types of oval "A 25":

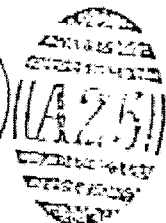
Malta 14.12.80

Type One
20 x 26 mm



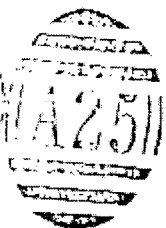
Malta 23.1.86

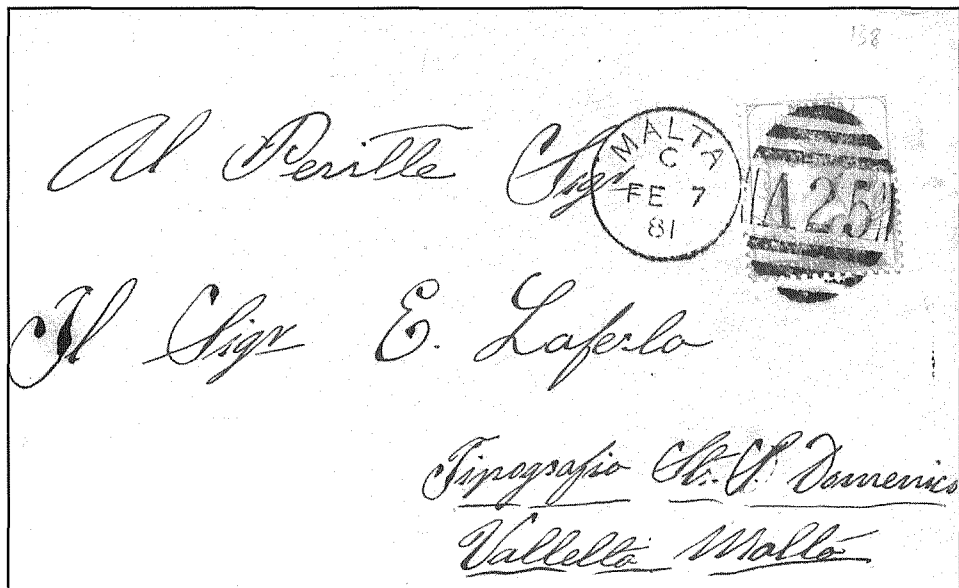
Type Two
19 x 27 1/2 mm



Malta 24.12.87

Type Three
19 1/2 x 28 mm

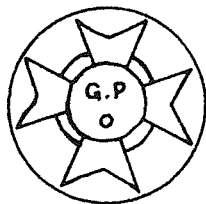
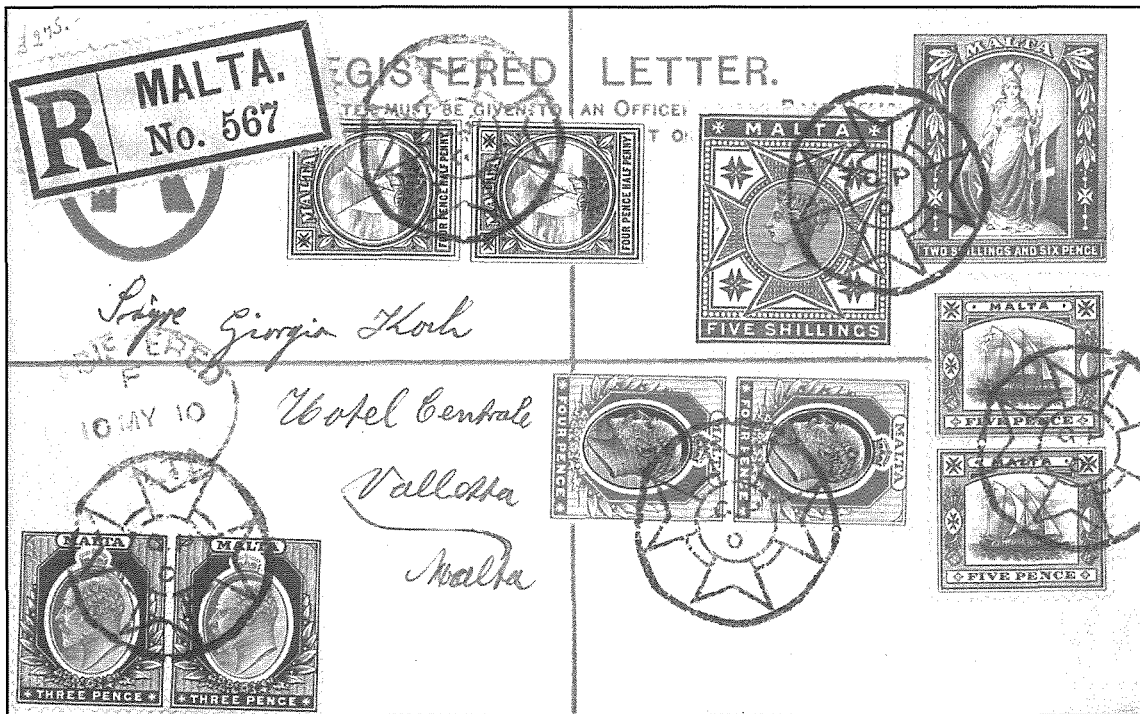




S.G. 16, Bright orange yellow 23rd printing, bearing the date 7 September 1881.



A 25 without small circular day stamp used on block of six Queen Victoria, 5/- stamp, having inverted watermark.



“The new postmark consists of two concentric circles showing a Maltese Cross between them. The inner circle contains the letters “G.P.O.”. Parts of a third circle are seen under the Cross. This improvement is hailed with pleasure both by the public in general and by stamp collectors in particular.”

(Daily Malta Chronicle 11 March 1905.)

Half a century ago

TIMES OF MALTA

Tuesday, November 23, 1954

'GRANDPA' OF THE GPO RETIRES

Mr Carmelo Coppini, Chief Clerk and "grnadpa" of the General Post Office terminated his long and outstanding association with the General Post Office. Mr Coppini retired on his 60th birthday after a span of service lasting 39 years. The clerical staff and postmen gave the chief clerk a rousing send-off. The occasion was honoured by the presence of the Hon Dr C. Caruana, Minister for Posts and Agriculture, Mr C. Thake, Official Secretary to the Prime Minister and Mr A. C. Crockford, Post Master General. The entire clerical staff was there while postmen hastened to join the occasion after their second delivery of the morning. Speeches were delivered by Dr Caruana and Mr Crockford. Mr Coppini's long career during which he served under 11 Post Masters General and in all sections of the Post Office, were alluded to. A birthday cake with 60 small candles were placed in the centre of the long table where also rested a pair of silver candelabra later presented by the Minister for Posts and Agriculture on behalf of the staff of the General Post Office.

The following information & photo have been supplied by Mr. Coppini's son – Mr. Henry Coppini.

"Carmelo Coppini joined the Department Staff of the General Post Office as 1st Class Clerk in 1921. The idea behind having such staff in those days was to retain specialist experience within the Department as such staff was not transferable to other Government Departments.

His first posting was Postmaster, Gozo where he stayed until 1925. (In fact the first child of the union – he was married in 1923 – was born and baptized there.)

On his return to Malta in 1925 he was appointed Officer-in-Charge of the Mail Office at Head Office. He was responsible for the safe and timely collection of mail from branches as well as that arriving from abroad, its sorting, its distribution to branches and its delivery to addressees. Postmen, Branch officials and "Bahrin" all formed part of his division. ("Bahrin" in Maltese means sailors, but at the Post Office this word was used for employees collecting or delivering mail to ships.)

Overseas mail was brought to Malta by ship through contracted agents, collected by the GPO "bahrin" and transported to the Mail Room by contractors under the surveillance of the GPO Inspectors. Separately sacked *articles of value* and *security items* were accorded special treatment and moved directly from the ship to the secure *safe* within the Mail Section under joint GPO/Police control.

At the time he resided in St. Paul's Street, a stone's throw from the GPO. This made it relatively easy to go to the office – on any day and at any time of the day –

to organize and receive the overseas incoming mail and the shipment of the outgoing. One help was that the Mail Boat on arrival at the Breakwater signalled its arrival there by way of a double *hoot*, in time for the staff to mobilize at the landing point (and for him to arrive at the office).

About 1935 he was appointed Chief Cashier responsible, inter alia, for all revenues from the sale of stamps, postal orders, etc. by Head Office and all branches, for stocks at each location and for monthly reconciliation of sales and stocks in each of them. As the postal services were the main, if not sole, means of communications, volumes were substantial, yet all accounting had necessarily to be done *by hand*.

On a weekly basis each branch had to submit:

- a statement of sales of stamps by denomination;
- a cash remittance covering the value of the sales;
- a stock sheet showing balances on hand;
- a requisition for replenishment requirements.

All these were checked against Head Office documentation and occasional random on-the-spot checks were carried out to verify the correctness of the branch returns.

As Chief Clerk, he was the departmental General Manager at the GPO. This was because the post of General Post Master was *reserved* for the general staff Civil Servants who moved around Government Departments so that the most senior permanent GPO Officer was to all intents and purposes the manager since the transient PMG could not accumulate the background, experience and years of office required for the particular exigencies of the GPO.”



The Hon. Min. for Posts Dr. C. Caruana. presenting a pair of silver candelabra to Mr. C. Coppini.