

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

ADDRESS by Dr. J.H. Mercieca, President of the Philatelic Society, delivered at the Annual General Meeting at the Catholic Institute on the 11-1-82.

It is indeed with much pleasure, that I welcome you to this 16th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Philatelic Society, in Malta and I thank you very much for your participation at this important annual gathering of our Society. My thoughts a'so go, to those membre, who are not gracing us, with their presence, this evening and also, to our overseas members, who are supporting the Society and who, for obvious reasons, are precluded, from joining us.

At a Society's Annual General Meeting it is customary and also appropriate, to glance in retrospect, at the main positive and negative aspects, in the Society's previous year of life, and to rightfully elate on the former, and possibly find adequate corrective, and remedial measures for the latter, in order, that we could, in good time, prevent these from adversely affecting the life the life, and the smooth running of the Society.

I do not deny the fact that during 1981, the Society also had its ups and downs, as, most naturally, everything existing under the sun does, from time to time, have, but, all in all, I feel that 1981 has been another relatively healthy year in the Society's existence. Our continuing happy relations with the Malta Study Circle of London, with which our Society has very close and friendly ties, and whose scope of existence, is also much akin to ours, have yet continued to be further strengthened, by the arrival and stay amongst us of two prominent, and now all too-well known members, of the Circle. Mr. Alan Bannister and Mr. Graham Smeed, whom we were very happy to re-welcome in our midst during last year.

It is with much pleasure that I state that during 1981, committee meetings, were held more or less regularly, and the attendance of members, was, on the whole, satisfactory, and I avail myself of this opportunity, to thank them all for their co-operation, and for the good work they have put in for the Society in their respective offices, and I assure them, that it has been my great pleasure to work with them all.

At last year's first committee meeting, it was decided to effect a change in the Editorship of our Magazine, and the consequent long change-over, from the old to the new editor was definitely a dull note in last year's happenings, in the Society's life. This not only resulted, in the publication, and distribution to members, of only one, instead of the three numbers of the magazine, usually appearing, during the course of the year, but has also, unfortunately, had a harmful effect, vis-a-vis our relations, with our overseas members, with whom the magazine, serves as the Society's main life-line, and which, I much fear, may eventually mean the loss to the Society, of some of these overseas members, a situation to be regretted.

Now, that this rather unfortunate

situation has been happily solved, I sincerely trust, that during the current year, the publication of the Magazine, will again take its normal course, and we look forward with pleasure, to the usual three numbers, coming out at the stipulated dates.

Something on which I have repeatedly been harping, and which up till now has not been solved, is the fact, that, after 16 years we have not, as yet, succeeded in finding suitable permanent premises, to house the Society. This no doubt, is keeping the Society aback from expanding, and increasing its activities. It is therefore my earnest wish that the new committee, soon to be elected by you, will seriously tackle the matter, and study all possibilities, to arrive at a solution, of this long, outstanding problem.

Cooperation and collaboration between the Postal Administration and our Society, is something, I would very much like to see materializing. It really pains me, to see, that whereas in many countries of the world, there exists regular organized contact and collaboration, between the local Philatelic Societies or Federation and the Postal administration (particularly the Philatelic Section), such is far from being the case obtaining in this country. I may here recall, that some months ago, while at Mr. Godwin Said's waiting room, I picked on a French philatelic journal (which I asked Mr. Said to put aside) and in it I read a report of one of the periodic meetings between officials from the postal administration and the Philatelic Federation.

Some years ago, availing myself of an opportunity that presented itself, at a meeting with the then Postmaster General I did mention and hint at the appropriateness and desirability of such relations,

being established between the two bodies, but unfortunately my suggestions and my proposals have not yielded any favourable result. Surely the Philatelic Section of the Postal Administration stands much to gain from close relations with the Society, whose members have bags of experience and healthy ideas in the different branches of philately in general, and of Maltese Philately in particular.

Now, my dear friends and members, I turn my words to you and I thank you all for the valuable and unstinting support, you have been giving the Society, particularly during the year under review, which, no doubt is a source of much encouragement to those, whom you yourselves have entrusted with the management of the Society. It is an undeniable fact, that in every sphere, there is always more scope for advancement, and I therefore, appeal to you to increase yet more, the interest you already have in the welfare of our Society. Make it a point to attend all throughout the year, the monthly meetings, which the Society organises specifically for you, and NOT, for the four walls, and the empty chairs, of the big hall wherein we meet.

Please do realise, and appreciate, that each and every one of you, is a cog, in the big wheel of our Society and even if you do not happen to be a member of the committee, do come enthusiastically forward with your suggestions and ideas, as to how best we could improve the life of our Society, and possibly introduce innovations, so as to make our meetings, and our activities yet more worthwhile, attractive, and of a higher standard. Always do your utmost to diffuse the name of the Society amongst your stamp friends, and do encourage and try to per-

suade them, to join us, that our Society, may grow even bigger and stronger, and yet more truly representative, of the hundred of philatelists in Malta. From a long personal experience, I know only too well, how difficult, and how hard it could be, to prevail on some stamp collectors, who, for reasons of their own, are contented to pursue their hobby in strict seclusion and isolation, and absolutely shun joining a Society. I must admit, however, to have, in the end, succeeded in persuading a few of these "isolationists" or "seclusionists" (term them how you will), to join the fold. So do not get discouraged in this respect.

Before bringing to a close, this address of mine, I would like to express my, and your deep gratitude and thanks, to the Director of the Catholic Institute, as also to the good Franciscan nuns in the past, have again throughout 1981, most willingly and most helpfully, provided the Society, with suitable accom-

modation, for its committee and may I herefore, in my own, and in your name, assure them of our appreciation, and thanks for their kind cooperation and help.

And finally, to conclude these words of mine, I want to thank you, most sincerely, for having giving me the opportunity to serve you, the Society and my lifelong favourite hobby, in the highest office of President for the last ten consecutive years. It has, no doubt, been quite an experience o me and I do hereby affirms, that I have always done my utmost, to hold high, the name and the interests of our Society. I thank you for the confidence you have shown in me, for your consideration and your continued support and may I finally assure you, that meeting you, and being with you, is one of the things I do thoroughly enjoy, and always, very much, look forward to.

Thank you for listening to me.

STAMPS & STAMP EXCHANGES

G. ROGERIO MENDS, Caixa Postal 1686, 90000 Porto Alegre-RS, Brasil. Interested exchanging stamps of Brazil for mint sets of Malta, both recent and old issues, basis catalogue.

T. SAWICKI, PL-01582 Warszawa, Filarecka St. 3/3, Poland wants exchange partner for mint new issues topics etc., of Malta for same of Poland. May also be contacted PL- 00950 Warsaw. Skrytka 520.

MARTIN KORTE Charlottenstr. 3, D-3300 Braunschweig, West Germany, would like to establish contact with young Maltese stamp collectors (up to 25 years of age) for exchange arrangements young German collectors. Write to above address giving age, address, exchange interests/bassi and languages used.