

The Editor's Miscellany

SOME months ago a Constable Abbotts asked the origin of the B.S.A. Police badge of a lion leaping over a Matabele war shield, and the Police colours of blue and old gold.

In reply, we said that the badge was derived from the design on the reverse of the Rebellion medals struck for award in recognition of service in the Rebellions of 1896-97 and also in recognition of service during the Occupation of 1890 and the Matabele War of 1893. The B.S.A. Police colours are the colours of the medal ribbon. This raised the question of who originally designed the medal and where was it struck, concerning which some correspondence ensued. The most recent letter, from Mr. J. N. Turner (ex-896), appears in this number. In it he refutes suggestions that these medals were struck at the Mint and suggests they may have been struck at Woolwich Arsenal. A letter from the Librarian and Curator of the Royal Mint, dated 25th August, 1960, confirms this:

The series of three medals for service in Matabeleland (1893), Rhodesia (1896) and Mashonaland (1897) were awarded and paid for, with the Queen's approval, by the British South Africa Company. The medals were not struck at the Royal Mint and I have been unable to trace in our records any reference which might indicate where they were manufactured.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Turner for clearing up this point. Perhaps someone will now find out just where the medals were struck.

THE BANNER

Captain A. E. Beechey, M.M., the last surviving member of two "Colour Parties"—one a B.S.A. Police party and one a party of Southern Rhodesia Volunteers—who went to Mafeking from Rhodesia in 1904 to receive "Colours" presented by King Edward VII for services in the South African Wars, insists that what were presented to the two Forces were in fact "King's Colours."

Captain Beechey was there.

Police General Headquarters begged to differ from this view. And it had good grounds for doing so. Correspondence is on file at Headquarters resulting from an enquiry, some 20 years ago, into the exact status of the B.S.A. Police Colours. What clinches the matter, as far as P.G.H.Q. is concerned, is that among the correspondence there is a letter from the War Office in London stating that the proper description of the emblem presented to the Force is a "Banner."

A third party now enters the dispute. This is Messrs. Gale & Polden Limited, of Aldershot, Printers, Publishers, Booksellers and Stationers to the Services, and publishers of such authoritative works as *Standards, Guidons and Colours of the*

Commonwealth Forces, by the late Major T. J. Edwards, M.B.E., F.R.HIST.S.

A letter from Messrs. Gale & Polden reads:

In October, 1904, Princess Christian, on behalf of King Edward VII, presented emblems to about a dozen South African Regiments. In each case the emblem consisted of a "King's Colour." To each mounted unit she referred to it as "this Standard," and to each infantry unit she referred to it as "this Colour." As you will see from the foregoing, it would appear that the correct title for the Colour is that of a "Standard." Gale & Polden also make it clear in their letter

that the authority at the War Office they consulted gave the assurance that "as the British South Africa Police were, at the time, a mounted unit, it should be referred to as a Standard."

Despite the authority at the War Office, it still remains uncertain that Princess Christian spoke the words "this Standard" when she presented the emblem to the B.S.A. Police Colour Party. The Party obviously did not parade mounted at Mafeking for the presentation and Princess Christian may well have been in some doubt as to whether the British South Africa Police operated in the South African War as infantry or as a mounted unit.

In fact, it did both. Proof of its operation as a mounted unit appears in a photograph (now with Archives) of a Police Squadron parading in Bulawayo in 1900, prior to departure on active service.

Even more confusing for Princess Christian must have been the fact that the British South Africa Police also operated an armoured train (not very successfully) and a Mountain Gun Battery (with great distinction) in Mafeking.

We are no less confused to-day.