

# THE SIX CENT "GUY ISSUE" OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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In Scott's Standard Catalogue of 1912 is found their first record of the "Guy Issue" of Newfoundland in which are included the two types of the Six Cent value with the laconic headnote, "SIX CENTS; Type 1, 'Z' of 'Colonization' reversed" and "Type 2, 'Z' of 'Colonization' normal."

It is with Type 1 of this issue that this article is concerned for since 1912, in every catalogue printed both in English and foreign languages the same brief record of these two types has occurred, but no definite explanation has been offered as to the reason for this apparently unusual error.

The observations now being made, and the questionability of Type 1 being an inexcusable error, or even an error at all, has no bearing on the scarcity or value of the stamp itself, but rather concerns the correctness, shall we say, of the usage of the phrase "The 'Z' reversed."

Let us first consider for a moment some facts that perhaps could shed a different light on the matter. First of all the stamps were lithographed by an English firm, Whitehead Morris & Company, who have acknowledged that this was their first attempt in lithographing stamps, a fact admittedly accountable for the poor workmanship. Secondly let us call attention to the fact that many words have minor differences in spelling in Britain than the same word in use in Continental North America, and this word "COLONIZATION" happens to be one of these words. The British use the "S" whereas we in the States, Canada and Newfoundland use the "Z."

Next let us observe the Two Cent value of this issue, the No. 88. The legend at the bottom of the stamp reads: "Arms of the London and Bristol Company for Colonising Newfoundland." Note the usage of the "S" instead of the "Z," and furthermore it will be noted that in Gibbons and other British catalogues, in fact in any British publication, the usage of the "S" will be found whenever the word COLONISATION or other words with the same suffix are used; such as, realise, etc.

Whether Scott or Gibbons published the first recording of this issue, or whether one was copied from the other is immaterial, but the fact remains that since 1912 every catalogue has used the same head or foot note which includes the unsupported reference to Type 1 as "Z" reversed.

It is the belief of the writer that in Type 1 the letter in question is NOT a "Z," never was intended as a "Z," but rather it is an "S," the word Colonisation being spelled in the English manner. Possibly the second type was a correction and made to conform to the Continental North American spelling of the word; hence the use of the "Z," although why a similar correction was not made in the before mentioned Two Cent value, No. 88, is not explained.

Admittedly the letter in question is badly formed and does have the appearance of an equally malformed "Z" in reverse. Why, therefore, is it not just as reasonable to suppose the letter to be an "S." Poorly formed letters are quite frequent in the lithographed portion of this issue.

In the preliminary work it seems incredible that the engraver, an expert in his line, in preparing the design for the transfer to the lithographic stone should be guilty of such an unpardonable error as to make a "Z" in reverse. Such errors as this are to be found, surely, and are not uncommon, but only among the illiterate. Similar reversals are found in the letters "N" and "B." Most of us at some time or other have seen illustrations of these "Cockeyed" letters in the home made signs by individuals who apparently have but scant knowledge of the alphabet, or at least the correct formation of some of its letters, but such evidence of ignorance would hardly be found among members of the printing and engraving fraternity. To misspell a word, yes, for even the literary genius is sometimes a notoriously poor speller, but for the engraver to reverse a "Z" would seem almost incredible, unless of course done purposely, and for some specific reason.

Surely some explanation should have been forthcoming when two stamps of the same issue, of the same denomination, printed in the same color and identical in every way but for the two letters in question, appear in the Post Office for sale and are quoted in our catalogues as two types; the statement re-

garding Type 1 which the writer believes to be unsupported and unsound.

Was the second type made upon order from the Department? Have the publishers of the catalogues any valid authority for making such a statement or is it another of those "snap judgement" decisions that occur frequently. The writer sincerely would like to know. Perhaps if these questions could be answered the facts could be established as to whether the catalogues are right and the writer "off the beam," or vice versa.

Unless the headnote of Type 1 (The "Z" reversed) can be substantiated it would seem that in cataloging these two types it would be more correct to state "Type 1, Colonisation spelled with an 'S'. Type 2, Colonization spelled with a 'Z'."

To some this dissertation perhaps may appear somewhat of a 'storm in a teacup.' Be that as it may, there is no personal attack intended but rather a wholesome desire to clarify a statement that may be the result of snap judgement. There have been too many unqualified and unsubstantiated statements made in the field of philately, and too much has been catalogued as fact without the benefits of thoughtful consideration and frank discussion.

This is not intended as a tirade against Scott's or any other catalogue, for our catalogues have a very definite and important place in philately, and regardless of their shortcomings, they must be given credit for widening the scope of the general collector who in turn makes possible greater potentialities for study among the more serious collector, the student and specialist.

Philately, after all, is not only a hobby and one of the greatest hobbies today, it is a science and an intricate one at that, and deserves consideration of the highest order in settling any problem of a controversial nature.

## CANADIAN METERS

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