

NEWFOUNDLAND:

The Rare 1d Reddish-Brown

(Scott No. 16 : Gibbons No. 17a)

SPECIALISTS have for a number of years been perplexed by this stamp, which is undoubtedly one of the great rarities of British North America.

In "The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Newfoundland" by Winthrop S. Boggs, the stamp is listed under the caption, "Prepared for use but not issued" No. U.11—1d Reddish brown, and the statement that "these appeared on the market long after the stamps had become obsolete—apparently they were never sent to the Colony". While I have no reason to doubt this statement, I would like to mention that from my own experience everything indicates that the majority of the existing specimens have found their way into the collections belonging to American or Canadian collectors of this colony.

During the last 10 years no less than seven copies have passed through my hands, and it is perhaps worthwhile to record that only three of these had gum. Two of these specimens originated from undoubtedly English sources; the other five specimens originated from the United States, and four were without gum. During this period I can recall only one copy being offered for sale through the English auctions (H. R. Harmer, Vowles Sale, Jan. 10, 1949) while no less than six copies have been offered by the principal New York auctioneers and of these the Reford collection contained three specimens.

As a point of rarity, one should observe that during the same period the number of 1/- Scarlet Vermillions that have passed through the auctions must be at least ten times greater.

No Support for New Die Theory

Many of the experts have been of the opinion that a new die and plate were prepared for this stamp, but I find no evidence to support this theory. Boggs states that the stamp is smaller than the 1857 issues in the Brown Purple shade, and other specialists believe that the numerals are larger in the Reddish Brown than in the Brown-

purple and Chocolate shade. This is contrary to the evidence I have obtained from the stamps in my hands. The measurements are as follows:

1d Brownish-purple, Scott No. 1 (Gibbons No. 1), 22.1/22.3 x 22.4/22.6.

1d Chocolate, Scott No. 15a (Gibbons No. 17), 21.9/22.9 x 21.8/22.

1d Reddish-brown, Scott No. 16 (Gibbons No. 17a), 22.3 x 22.25.

Size of numerals in all three issues, 1 4/5 mm.

The Brownish-purple is printed on a thick opaque white wove paper, similar to the papers used for the Barbados and Trinidad stamps of the same period, and most probably was made by T. H. Saunders. The Chocolate shade is on a very thin wove paper, a product of Stacey Wise.

Now it may be that the thin Stacey Wise paper, after being dampened for printing, shrank much more than the other paper, thus producing the difference in the size of the two issues. Cases of shrinkage of 1 mm. have been reported on other stamps, especially the Canada 1854 10d on thin oily paper, which differed in width by 1 mm. from the later printings on thicker paper.

Shrinkage Varies Considerably

The Reddish-brown, however, differs only slightly in size from the first issue, consistent with the normal shrinkage difference between thick and thin paper, but this stamp is printed on similar paper to the Chocolate shade, so it is apparent that the shrinkage to each sheet must have varied considerably, and that the size of a stamp must not be taken into account when considering whether a new die or new plate was made.

When the firm of Perkins Bacon Ltd. was liquidated, the dies and plates of this issue were defaced and then presented to the Newfoundland Government, who in turn presented them to the Royal Philatelic Society, in whose archives they at present repose, available for examination at any time by members. It is interesting to note that

this plate consists of 120 subjects, which finally disposes of the theory of many collectors that, because the sheets of the 5d denomination comprised 40 subjects, it was more than likely that the 1d sheets were of the same format. The defacing of the plate has made careful and thorough examination difficult, but it was my opinion that one die and one plate was used for printing all three issues, but just prior to the printing in Reddish-brown, the plate was re-entered.

No Repair Is Recorded

However, on discussing this point with Sir John Wilson, he very quickly disposed of my theory by stating that no record of a repair to this plate was contained in the day records of Messrs. Perkins Bacon, which were published by the Royal Philatelic Society. He accounts for the blurred appear-

ance of the Red-brown printing by the fact that the inkmaker failed to compound an ink to suit the absorbent qualities of the Stacey Wise paper, so that after one sheet had been pulled in the Red-brown shade, Perkins Bacon, noting the blurred appearance, decided on a change in the ingredients, and the Chocolate-brown shade was used in preference to the Red-brown. This theory does not account for the burr marks which appear in profusion in the margins of all the Red-brown stamps I have examined. Incidentally, these burr marks are a definite aid in identifying this very rare stamp.

It may be that, owing to the great scarcity of this stamp, and the impossibility of acquiring sufficient copies for study, that the explanation of these burr marks may remain a mystery for all time. ★ ★

Groups In the News

CALGARY BNAPSers ELECTED—At the 33rd annual meeting of the Calgary (Alberta) Philatelic Society, BNAPS member G. H. Moxham was elected president, and BNAPSer G. M. Hill, secretary. Another member, S. T. Richardson, is past president, having just completed his third consecutive term of office.

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PHILLY GROUP BUSY—The Philadelphia metropolitan area is learning more and more about our society due to the fact that the group is being called upon more frequently when a speaker is wanted for meetings. During May, Bert Llewellyn was called upon to talk and exhibit for the Monmouth County Philatelic Society; Jim Culhane for the Princeton Philatelic Society, and Al Kessler for the quarterly meeting of CENJEX. Naturally, when any BNAPSer gets before a group, you can depend upon it that before he sits down everyone present will know that "there must be something about the British North America Philatelic Society".

Al Kessler of the Philly Group will be glad to hear from any of the other groups that are being called upon to furnish speakers, etc. Let him know so if there are any inquiries (and there are!) as to whom is available in such and such a place, he can contact you.

The Philadelphia Group wishes to hereby advise (or shall we say "warn") that they will be present in force at Niagara Falls, come October 27. We will be looking forward to seeing you all there. Let's give Dick Hedley, et al, of the Niagara Group, our 100 per cent support—in attendance, if possible; financial support where possible; and, what's more, all the exhibits he can handle. Can we count on you?

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12d BLACKS!—Winnipeg is now in the philatelic forefront. K. Bileski has purchased four 12d Blacks on wove paper, including the only known mint copy; one on cover and a used pair. Highlight of a recent meeting of the Winnipeg BNAPS Group was the showing by Mr. Bileski of a card on which was mounted: (1) Mint 12d Black on wove paper, with Royal Certificate; (2) Used 12d Black on laid paper; (3) Used 2c green No. 32, on laid paper (only three known copies in the world!).

The card was passed around that members might feast their eyes on these philatelic gems—the first time in history that these three jewels have been brought together and shown jointly to a gathering of fanatical stamp collectors. It may well be said that Mr. Bileski has put Winnipeg on the philatelic map. ★ ★