

CASUAL PHILATELIC NOTES
FROM COOK ISLANDS.

BY RALPH W. GOSSET.

In Tahiti, (the chief French colony in the Eastern Pacific), a great number of the 10c black on lavender, 1881-6 issue, are being used on correspondence, a large amount of them pass through the Post-office here, from which I presume they are on sale at the Post-office at that place.

It is interesting to note that between the Cook Islands and Tahiti the postage is 5d from either place, but from either of these places to any other part of the world the postage is 2½d. Truly some great anomalies exist in the postal union.

A new stock of stamps arrived at the post office at this place from the Government printer at Wellington N. Z. recently, and are all printed on hard brittle paper, as compared with the kind they were printed on formerly. The heat here makes a great many of the sheets of stamps stick firmly together, and the colors of some are spoiled in soaking them apart again.

One sees some funny addresses some times. The following address was on a letter that passed through the post office at this place recently. After deciphering it, it was duly sent on to its destination, viz :

2033. Herrn Ingenieur Herzfelder
I Pigotangaffa 4.
Auckland
a. Neuseeland
Cooks office
Wien
über amer ka

A little while back a post office was opened at Port Moresby, British New Guinea, and was placed under the auspices of the Queensland Postal Department, and in consequence Queensland stamps are used there. They are unsurcharged and only the Postmark shews that they have been used at that place.

The 1d brown Cook Islands' stamp which first came out in 1893, was a fairly rare stamp, as in old catalogues it was priced approximately 1s; in 1894 it was changed to blue,—for what reason no one can say—but I know that a certain person on this Island made a corner in them on the change of color. It was on account of a fraud that was practiced to a very large extent on the Government that they were changed back to brown again. At the present time the 1d blue is a fairly uncommon stamp and will get more so as

time goes on, for the next change in color in the 1d if there is one will be to rose—the Postal union color.—

I have received permission to forward you a copy of the two following documents re the surcharging of the 1d blue Cook Islands stamp to one half penny viz:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF
POSTMASTER

The old brown 1d stamp having been revived and a supply received in this office.

You are hereby authorised on and after the 24th inst to make the following changes:

To reduce the balance of all the 1d blue stamps to one half penny and to issue the old brown stamp as the one penny stamp of the Federation.

(Signed) MAKEA,

Chief of the Federal Government.

Approved:

(Signed) W. E. GUDGEON,

British Resident.

24th April 1899.

Rarotonga. April 24th 1899.

I hereby certify that I have this day examined the quantity of one penny blue stamps now on hand and I further certify them to be as follows:

90 (ninety) sheets of 120 stamps.

Authority from the Chief of the Cook Islands Federal Government approved by the British Resident has also been produced before me for the reduction of the above "one penny" blue stamps to "one half penny."

[Signed] A. VON HOFF.

Government Auditor.

According to the above it will be seen that 10,800 stamps were surcharged valued before the reduction £45. and afterwards £22. 10s.

While in conversation with the Government printer at this place recently, he informed me that while printing the ½d surcharges two errors were made viz: half a sheet (60 stamps) of 1d blues was doubly surcharged as per my notes in this paper of November and that another half sheet (60 stamps) was surcharged inverted; (see paragraph in my notes on page 109, Mnrch 1900). So this clears up all doubts as to whether any inverted surcharges occurred although I have not yet seen any.

Then of course there is the "full stop" error which I have already described at length in a recent letter.