

United States Minutes.

CONDUCTED BY USONA.

Precancellations have a new feature—they are dated. A one-cent green received from Montgomery, Ward & Co. of Chicago says "Chicago 4-1 Illinois" in three lines, with bar above and below.

An acquaintance of mine, an employe in an office has devised a substitute for the rather costly "watermark detector." One of the brass boxes which hold the No. 1 size of McGills fasteners, with a circular piece of thin hard rubber (black) put in the bottom of it is his scheme. He says that it is effective, that the rubber is not affected by the benzine and that the box is practically air tight.

The Director of Posts for the Philippine Islands complains that mail for the province of Quebec, (P. Q.), is missent to the Philippines (P. I.) A carelessly made "T" of the Spencerian variety does look like a carelessly made "Q."

It is about time for some influential dealer to begin advertising "errors" of the Buffalo issue, inverted centres, transposed centres, and omitted centres.

H. D. Shaw, advertised as a doubtful case in last issue, is evidently operating widely, as the writer received one of his requests for sheets almost identical with the one published, and the reference the same. Fort valley is quite a large village (over 2000) and a customer at that point inquired about the matter for me and stated that Shaw had been receiving mail at the office there, but had now left for other points. Always write to the reference.

Wiedlings Stamp News of Canton, Ohio is the latest aspirant for journalistic

honors, it is not devoted entirely to stamp however, but contains mathematical and educational items.

The numbers of Pan American stamps called for, (stated in my last month's notes) are of course only an estimate of what will be required. If there is sufficient demand, any quantity required will be printed. They only cost 20c a thousand to print and the set costs an average of 5c per stamp, so every set sold to a collector and unused is a profit to Uncle Sam of 29 88-100 cents so he can afford to supply the demand.

The high value revenue stamps of the present issue are slowly but surely coming down in price, and collectors should wait and not be in a hurry to fill up the values of \$10 and above. "Cut" covers a wide variation, my collection has only the cut specimens above the \$5, but the cuts, clean made with a sharp instrument, are barely discernible, and detract nothing from the beauty of the stamp. Go to a good dealer and get cut specimens rather than pay fancy prices for uncut, and wait anyhow, until the prices come down to a rate more nearly consistent with the supply. Compare the prices of the Civil War Revenues used when our country was much smaller and fewer were used.

The customs regulations of Canada are frequently troublesome for stamp dealers. The U. S. postal rules provide, in consequence of these regulations, that "sealed packages other than letters in their usual and ordinary form" are not admissible to the mails. Now the question seems to arise as to what is the "usual and ordinary form" of a letter. A letter containing approval sheets, laid out flat, was refused, while the same about 2 inches thick was afterwards admitted. What is the criterion, anyhow?