

OBSOLETE STAMPS.

As some discussion has taken place of late with regard to the matter of destroying the obsolete postage stamps, we have made inquiries which have resulted in our obtaining the following information: The reasons for destroying the obsolete stamps may be classed under three heads, (1) to insure a thorough and accurate audit, (2) to retrieve the reputation of our postal service which has greatly suffered abroad through questionable methods adopted in the past, and (3) to remove from postal officials the possibilities and inducements to stamp jobbing which now exist.

Newfoundland stamps may be divided into three classes: (1) actually obsolete issues, (2) the Cabot issue, (3) the Royal issue. The Royal issue is taking the place of the Cabot series, as the latter becomes exhausted, and at present 1/2, 1, 2, 3 and 5 cent stamps are on sale.

Although postage stamps cost only a small percentage of their face value, yet, the fact remains that in the colony they actually pass at face value, and may consequently be regarded as in a sense paper money. The unsatisfactory manner in which these articles had been handled caused the late government to remove all except those in immediate use to the vaults of the Colonial Building, but when an Auditor-General was appointed it was deemed unnecessary to continue the system. Matters, however, called for interference, when it was found that several issues of the same denomination were on sale at the same time, advertised as such by the Postmaster General, and therefore under Government sanction. Immediate audit became imperative. The vast quantities of stamps in stock rendered this almost impossible of performance. It was therefore the more necessary that the postage stamps of the colony should be confined to those issues actually in use. When we say that over half a million of obsolete stamps alone remained in the Post Office on June 30th last, the force of the Auditor-General's suggestions will be very evident.

Writing to the Colonial Secretary under date Sept. 20th, and Hon. Mr. Robinson has kindly furnished us with a copy of the letter, the Auditor says:—

"With reference to the enclosed balance of stamps remaining in the general post office on the 30th day of June, 1899, I have the honor to state:—

(1) That for purposes of audit it is necessary that the obsolete and unnecessary stamps should be destroyed after reasonable notice. With so many issues of the same denomination it will be extremely difficult

to follow the withdrawals on mixed account, intelligently and correctly.

(2) The possibility of obtaining stamps of old issues at face value offers a chance to post office officials for speculation. It is highly undesirable that such an opportunity should exist.

(3) All the denominations of obsolete issues have been replaced by either the 'Royal' or the 'Cabot' issues and are therefore of no use for purposes of postage or revenue.

(4) The same applies to the 1c., 2c., 3c. and 5c. of the Cabot issue which has been replaced by the Royal issue of the same denomination.

(5) The 60c., 35c., 30c. and 24c. of the Cabot issue are practically useless for postage purposes, a fact evidenced by the large number of 24c. of the obsolete issue remaining on hand, although the original stock (100,000) was obtained as far back as 1866.

For the above reason I beg respectfully to suggest the destruction, after reasonable notice, of all stamps of the Cabot issue, of the following denominations, i. e.: 1c., 2c., 3c., 4c., 5c., 24c., 30c., 35c. and 60c. The 4c. stamp is very seldom used. The retention of the Cabot issue of 6c., 8c., 10c., 12c. and 15c. denomination, until replaced by stamps of another issue.

I also beg to suggest that no stamps shall be ordered for post office account, either new issues or reprints of old issues, except on order of the Governor-in-Council or the Colonial Secretary.

These recommendations are being carried out by the Government except so far as the destruction of the 4c., 24c., 30c., 35c. and 60c. Cabot is concerned, as stamps of these denominations may yet prove of use and the cost of new issues be therefore obviated.

It is high time that the purchase and sale of postage should be rigidly guarded and a system of speculation whether by the colony or its officials and which is pernicious and demoralizing, be frowned down. The obsolete stamps will be destroyed, the presence of witnesses and representatives of the press on Tuesday or Wednesday next.

When answering advts. kindly mention THE JUBILEE PHILATELIST.

I WISH

To exchange Canadian Stamps with Foreign Dealers and Collectors. All Correspondence will be Answered Promptly.

Jno. V. McGOWAN, Smith's Falls, Ont.

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