

## The Local Stamps of China.

The legitimacy of the so called "local stamps" of certain Chinese ports has created considerable discussion in the philatelic world, many claiming that the stamps in question are merely labels issued by private companies, and that they are unworthy of collection. It now seems to be generally conceded, however, that they are perfectly legitimate in every way, and that there is no earthly reason why they should not be admitted to collections.

They are issued by the highest governing authority of independent communities which are governed by what are called municipal councils, in which all interests are represented. The stamps carry mail matter to every part of the Celestial Empire having a post office of its own.

The fact that these issues by the foreign municipalities do not carry letters out of China is undoubtedly due to the size of these municipalities, which are not sufficiently large to make contracts with the ocean steamers and are also too small to enter the Postal Union.

But if they are too small to be rejected on that score, we should likewise discard such stamps as those from the native Indian states, the various Mexican, aside from the general government issues, and all other stamps which do not carry mail matter beyond the confines of the country where issued.

The states which have thus far issued postage stamps are Shanghai, Chefoo, Hankow, Chungking, Kewkiang; Tientsin and Chinkiang are said to be about to follow the example of the communities aforementioned.

It is asserted that China is seriously contemplating the establishment of a complete government postal system and entrance to the Postal Union, and when this takes place it must necessarily terminate the issue of the stamps of the various local posts, which may consequently command some very fancy prices at no distant day.

More than 60,000 stamps are said to be found every year loose in the letter-boxes of the United Kingdom.

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