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## The British Columbian Stamps.

Written for the INTERNATIONAL by Omon.

The British Columbian stamps in which we include the Vancouver Island issues although comparatively rare are seldom honored by being written up, and as the writer specializes the stamps of British North America he thought to make a few remarks on this subject which might prove interesting to some readers of the INTERNATIONAL. First he thinks that these handsomely designed stamps are placed by American cataloguers at far too low a value. Especially is this true of the used specimens. It may be that because we live in Eastern Canada, we see numbers of the high priced Canadian stamps while the lower priced British Columbians are few and far between. Compare the numbers of the used 5c and 10c. perforated British Columbian offered for sale or exchange with the 3 pence perforated, the half-penny unused or even the 6 pence Canada that are continually passing around. It is doubtful if many, be they dealers or collectors have met with one of the former to ten of the latter. Rarely do we get an auction catalogue that has not quite a list of Canadian stamps valued from one dollar upwards but do we not often find the name of British Columbia does not appear at all in these very catalogues? The only conclusion that can be come to is that these stamps are much rarer than the prices in our Standard Catalogues would indicate.

There is a point about British Columbian stamps that is unknown to many, some dealers not being aware of the existence of the variety and others ignorant of its true value.

One hardly expects that a general collector would know all the different varieties

of paper, watermark and perforation of the stamps of each country that he collects, but why do many specialists of British North America issues not know the varieties of perforation of the British Columbian surcharges? In the catalogue for advanced collectors by Collin and Calvan these varieties are given as 14 and 12 1-2, the former being the regular perforation and the latter the variety. In all other catalogues that the writer has seen the regular perforation where mentioned at all is given as 14. The writer has used the Scott Stamp and Coin Co.'s gauge in measuring some twenty British Columbian surcharges that are now in his possession, and many others that have at various times passed through his hands, but has never found one stamp that showed 14 perforations by the gauge. The 12 1-2 variety were exactly as stated, but all the rest measured 13 1-2 only. On an approval sheet now before him, sent by a prominent Canadian dealer, is an unused \$1.00 marked "perf. 14" but the gauge shows 13 1-2 whether applied to bottom, top or sides. On the same sheet is a 3 pence Canada also marked "perf. 14" and in this case gauges nicely to that number. The stamps before mentioned as having tested at 13 1-2 were not what had been received in one lot but were received at various times extending over years and from as widely separated points as London, Eng., San Francisco, where by the way many good British Columbians are picked up, New York and other stamp centres and all in small lots or singly. As to the value of the stamps perforated 12 1-2 a safe estimate would be three times the listed prices of the 14 perforation excepting the 10 cent and \$1.00 values which are worth about the same for either variety or about fifteen dollars each.