

sovereign authority over which had previously been granted to the incorporators by the Sultan of Brunei and the Sultan of Sulu—adjoining Sultanates. The government of North Borneo is therefore peculiar, in that it is the government of a corporation conducted on business principles. The area of the territory is about 30,000 square miles, and the population, of whom a very large majority are of course natives, is said to be less than 200,000.

In 1883 the Company issued a series of postage stamps, of which the 2, 4 and 8 cents were for postage, and the 50c. and 1 dollar were for postage and revenue. Within a month or two after their appearance, the 2c. stamp was announced by the philatelic chroniclers as having been surcharged with a new value, being in one case that of "eight cents" in two lines horizontally and in another "8 cents" in one line vertically. These were duly accepted and catalogued all round, and when priced the latter was valued the higher. I am not aware that the authenticity of either of these surcharges was questioned until in December, 1887, when the *Philatelic Record* states that "A correspondent whose information we have always relied on, writes us that after making the most careful investigation at Sandakan, he is convinced that the surcharge of '8 cents' on 2 cents brown, chronicled by us in 1883, as also the 8c. blue, are inventions. They certainly never emanated from the post office at Sandakan, nor from any of the branch offices in the territory. We think that they have always been suspects, and it is far better that they should be convicted and banished.

In the next issue the same paper states that "the condemnation of the '8 cents' on 2c. brown, as mentioned in our last, might lead to the inference that our correspondent equally condemns the 2c. surcharged "eight cents." This latter is a genuine surcharge, but we agree with our correspondent as to the one to which he referred." Notwithstanding this adverse testimony the stamp surcharged "8 cents" still holds its place in the latest catalogues and is priced by Durbin & Hanes at \$2.00. This need occasion no surprise, however, for most of the leading stamp dealers who issue catalogues, are stolidly indifferent to the clearest demonstrations of the worthlessness of stamps they have listed—especially if they have them in stock.

Late in 1886, or early in 1887, the $\frac{1}{2}$ c. and 10c., which just a short time previous, it had been found necessary to issue, appeared with the surcharge "and Revenue," and soon afterward Pemberton, Wilson & Co., of London, publishers of *Philatelic Record*, enclosed me some stamps on approval among which were the two just mentioned. To commend them to my favorable consideration, they were accompanied by the remark "Only in use a few days and likely to become very rare." I did not stop to consider how they were to become so rare since they seemed to be comparatively plenty at the time, nor did I pause to estimate the probable number of collectors who had received the same stamps about the same time with a similar prediction as to their future rarity; but I at once added them to my little collection at a cost of about a dollar apiece. What headway they have since made in the direction of scarcity, may be inferred from the fact that at two recent auction sales, unused copies brought five cents each.