

NOVA SCOTIA STAMPS AND PROVISIONALS

(BY HENRY HECHLER.)

Continued.

Since I wrote the article which appeared in the July number of this journal I have received specimens of the 6d. light green, surcharged 5 cents in red to which I then alluded. These specimens are surcharged with the numeral "5" above the centre of the word "cents" which is in small pica, the initial letter only being a capital. There were two distinctly different sorts of type employed. I have only recently obtained the second variety which is now before me and of which I will give the following description:—The figure "5" is larger than in the other kind as above, and the word "cents" is printed in italic capitals. The stamp is surcharged in the 3d. blue and red ink is employed. I have not as yet succeeded in obtaining a specimen of this stamp surcharged in black, but, arguing from the fact that both the 3d. and the 6d. stamps are known to have been (and specimens exist to prove the fact) surcharged in both colors in small pica type, and also in red with the italic caps, it certainly appears reasonable to suppose that if one value was surcharged with both varieties of type and both colors, the other must also have been.

As there have therefore been surcharges, proved to be authentic, in two sorts of type as also in red and black ink on two different values—3d. blue and 6d. green—the series would comprise eight varieties. However as many of our philatelic friends recognise distinctions in shades of the colors of stamps—as of a light and dark shade of the same color—the series might be much further extended. This is, however, a matter of taste and must be left to individual collectors to decide for themselves.

An interesting circumstance in connection with these provisionals is that the very fact of their having existed was nearly forgotten and was only discovered by means of an enquiry in these columns. They were quoted in catalogues, but as no description whatever was given of them a doubt as to their existence prevailed. On mentioning these facts in the PHILATELIC COURIER, I was enabled to unearth the above facts, and thus to settle all doubts on the subject. These make a valuable and important addition to philately and will be gladly hailed by collectors as furnishing a missing link in the history of the science. They must be classified and rated as one of the rarest varieties in existence.

THE requisitions upon the U. S. post office department by postmasters for the new two cent stamps are all so large that contractors are unable to supply the demand and the department consequently is reducing the amounts called for in the requisitions. Contractors at present are able to furnish one and a half million stamps daily, but this is much less than the number demanded.

AN absent-minded woman in Kentucky put a corn-plaster on a letter and stuck a postage stamp on her corn. Neither the letter nor the corn went away, she having neglected to write "in haste" on the left-hand corner of her stamped corn.

THE BRITISH POSTAL SERVICE.

From the 29th annual report of the Postmaster-General, of Great Britain and Ireland we get a succinct idea of the wonderful postal business conducted in that thickly settled empire. Our readers will best appreciate this if we arrange the principal items in a table:—

Letters delivered	1,230,636,000	increase 4.2 pc.
Postal cards	145,016,000	" 6.4 pc.
Book packets and circulars	288,206,000	" 6.8 pc.
Newspapers	140,682,000	" "
Registered letters	11,265,000	" 3.3 pc.
Telegraph messages	39,092,000	" "
Savings bank deposits	\$60,000,000	" "
No. postoffices	15,480	" "
Postal revenue	\$ 47,065,000	" "
Telegraph revenue	\$ 8,840,000	" "

In England and Wales the average number of letters per capita of the population was 40, in Scotland 30, and in Ireland 16. The permanent officers of the post offices of the United Kingdom are 44,000, including 2,561 women, of whom 455 are clerks and 216 telegraphists or counter women. A system has been adopted of giving "good conduct stripes" to letter carriers, and has been found to work well. Each stripe entitles the wearer to a special advance of one shilling a week, and the maximum number which can be earned is three.

The department has introduced reply-post-cards, and the change has resulted in a wonderful extension in that line of communication. According to a resolution passed in the last session of Parliament telegraph messages will be sent for sixpence for ten words. This will multiply to a very large extent the business of that department. Altogether the progress shown in the important matters of facilitating the transaction of business and promoting the interchange of social communication among the people has been most wonderful and satisfactory in its results. Compared with the limited and tedious methods of 25 years ago, it is simply marvellous.

POSTAL ORDERS.—The new questions of the parcels post and sixpenny telegrams have not prevented Mr. Fawcett, the English Postmaster-General, from giving his attention to possible improvements in any of his already existing schemes. Next, perhaps, to the "thrift cards," none of Mr. Fawcett's innovations has been more appreciated than that of the postal orders. Four millions and a half of them, representing an amount of £2,000,000, were issued during the first year of their circulation, but the full development of the system is hindered by the hard-and-fast provisions of the Act which sanctioned it, somewhat reluctantly, in 1880. Mr. Fawcett has accordingly introduced a bill the object of which is to give the Postmaster-General discretion to vary the amounts of orders and the rates of poundage, always provided that no order shall exceed 20s., and no poundage shall exceed 2d.

DIO LEWIS' MONTHLY for October is the best that has issued. This magazine has as yet issued but three numbers, and each successive one has been an improvement on its predecessor. The contents of the last number are:—"Our Young Women," by Rev. Dr. Howard Crosby, "Idol Worship in India," by a native, "Sandwich Island Sketches," and a large number of other articles as essays, poetry, tales, etc. We heartily commend this valuable periodical to our readers.

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