



## L10: 8d TUATARA TYPE (Recess)

### Notes from Vol 2, The Postage Stamps of New Zealand.

The unique Tuatara lizard was the central subject of this denomination. The artist was Mr. L. C. Mitchell, of Wellington.

The first plate laid down for this value was not satisfactory and a second plate was made and was numbered A2, the number appearing on the selvedge under the second stamp in the bottom row. Printings from this plate with multiple watermark were issued in June, 1936. The watermark was sideways and in the majority of sheets the stars when viewed from the front, were to the right of NZ. In the first supply 40 sheets had the star to the left of the letters.

In July, 1939, printings appeared from a new plate numbered 3 under the ninth stamp of the bottom row. All sheets of this value contained 160 stamps in 16 rows of 10. A very small portion of the issue of July, 1939, had the watermark sideways but the bulk of the supply had the watermark upright.

A comb machine gauging 14 x 13 ½ was used for the perforations. A sepia-brown ink was used with some variation in intensity.

Late in 1940 plate 3 was: handed over to Waterlow & Sons who made an initial printing of 52,500 sheets which were returned to De La Rue & Co to be perforated. At the time of the fire in December, 1940, 34,500 sheets were lost, leaving 7,500 sheets still unperforated.

In April, 7,497 sheets were forwarded to Waterlow & Sons to be perforated and although the records state that these sheets had not been printed by Waterlow & Sons, there is reason to doubt this, and to believe that these sheets represented the batch that had been printed by Waterlow & Sons and were held by De La Rue & Co. and were salvaged from the fire. On April 21, 1941, an order was lodged for 38,700 sheets and these were printed and perforated by Waterlow & Sons. The perforations were effected by means of the line machine gauging 12 ½ and the stamps were placed on sale in July, 1941.

Considerable variation is to be found in the colour, the shades ranging from deep sepia-brown to sepia-

brown. Some supplies had a greater percentage of red and were in deep reddish-sepia.

Waterlow & Sons Bank Note Department's shift markings are found on the top selvedge of the sheets perf. 12 ½.

The following variations of these markings are known:

*Two rows of dots, the first containing four, the second three, dots; two rows of four dots; six dots in the top row and seven in the bottom; two rows of seven dots and seven dots in the top and eight on the bottom row.*

When De La Rue & Co. resumed printing they used plate 3 and also a new plate numbered 4 under the ninth stamp in the bottom row. The sheets were perforated 14 x 14 ½ and the paper was the "Royal Cypher" grade, with the watermark sideways. These stamps were first placed on sale in July, 1942. Again there was considerable variation in shade which ranged from deep reddish-sepia to reddish-sepia and with a supply in pale reddish-brown. Normally the star when viewed from the front of the stamp was on the right of NZ but some sheets in the reddish-sepia shade had the star to the left of the letters. One sheet had a double print, one albino.

During the process of printing from plate 3, R13/10 developed a break which showed as filling-in in colour of the middle stroke of the figure 8 on the right-hand side. This is found on some of the sheets perf 12 ½ and in all sheets from plate 3, perf 14 x 14 ½. Another small break occurred in R3/5 and is known as "tuatara with tongue out". This is not found on the stamps with perf 12 ½ and developed during the printing by De La Rue & Co. on the "Royal Cypher" paper.

Just before these stamps were superseded on May 1, 1947, the bulk of the sheets available at the post offices had been printed from plate 3 with the watermark upright. These sheets were from a supply that had been dispersed to selected post offices following Japan's entry into the war.

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## Fifty Years Ago From the CP NZ Bulletin – October 1965

### “New Zealand Stamps” by Campbell Paterson



Because of the existence of both upright and sideways watermarks in the various issues of this value the usual good standby of paper mesh as the most reliable aid to identification is here somewhat discredited. This is because a stamp having vertical mesh paper used sideways will have all the appearance of being on horizontal mesh paper. But in fact, with necessary reservations and changes of the usual routine we can still use mesh as our main guide.

The 8d Tuatara exists with single watermark sideways perf14x13½ L10a and with multiple watermark sideways in perfs 14x13½, 12½ and 14x14½ L10b, d, e.

There is also the one issue with multiple watermark upright perf14x13½ L10c. Now remembering that a vertical mesh paper used sideways has the mesh running horizontally across the stamp and vice versa, we should ignore the ‘odd man out’ L10c and treat all these stamps as having sideways watermarks.

Treated thus we can take all stamps with apparently vertical mesh and safely reckon these to have horizontal mesh. That done we will find that these stamps are either perf 14x13½ L10b, 12½ L10d or 14x14½ L10e. As L10e was always on the coarse wartime paper it is easily recognized without a perf gauge. The same applies to the 12½ perfs of L10d which are large and readily distinguishable from the neat perfs of L10b.

We have now left only the stamps having apparently horizontal mesh. Using the watermark detector or black tray used with “white spirit”, we can easily see that some of these stamps have sideways watermark and some have upright wmk. The upright watermark stamps are obviously all L10c, this being the only 8d issued that way, and the remainder will be all L10a the issue with sideways single watermark.

If this sounds all too easy that is because in fact it is easy! To the collector who can recognize the mesh of papers the identification of nearly all NZ stamps becomes a pleasure, not a trying bore.