



L4: Notes from Vol 2 Postage Stamps of New Zealand

The main feature of this denomination was the Maori Wharewhakairo. It was designed by Mr. H. W. Young who had been successful in the competition for the 1898 issue. One plate containing 480 impressions and divided into two groups distinguished by the markings 1A and 1B was originally laid down.

The printing with multiple watermark was issued in March, 1936, and there were marked differences in the colour which ranged from deep to pale bright orange and instances occurred where, because of the wiper not removing all the ink from the surface of the plate, stamps had a yellowish toning on the face.

The paper used for printings to 1941 was a good quality esparto. Printings from two new plates, each with 480 impressions, were issued in October, 1938. One of these plates had the markings 2A and 2B, the number and letter being larger than in the case of 1A and 2B but the position was the same, the marking appearing under the second stamp in the bottom row of the issued sheet. The other plate had the markings 3A and 3B and the number and letters were in the same sized type as 1A and 1B but these markings appeared under the twenty-third stamp in the bottom row of the issued sheets.

In the printings from plates 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B on the good quality esparto paper, there was considerable variation in colour. For some supplies a brownish ink was mixed with the orange while for other supplies the amount of red was increased.

Some sheets of this value showed the effect of the use of a liquid to clean the plate and stamps are found where the cleaning liquid had not been completely removed from the plate and as a result the colour approaches bistre.

A word of warning is necessary in regard to colour changelings in this value. Heat has a tendency to deepen the colour while certain chemical agents such as chloroform will wash out the red in the orange and will change the colour to pale yellow.

All printings prior to 1941 were run through perforating heads gauging $14 \times 13 \frac{1}{2}$. One vertical row in a few sheets had double perfs. But the sheets were divided before issue and the row removed. Some copies from the adjoining row showed traces of the doubling down the left-hand side.

In some of the sheets printed from panel 1B, a mark corresponding exactly in shape with the tekoteko (the little carved figure surmounting the gable of the Whare) appeared on R2/3, to the right of and a little lower than the tekoteko. This could represent the remains of an impression that had been out of alignment when rolled in and after the first impression had been burnished off the plate, a second impression was then placed in the correct position, that is to say, it is evidence of a re-entry. As an alternative explanation, it is possible that, when the transfer roller was being placed near the plate in readiness for an impression to be rolled in, the roller touched the plate with sufficient pressure to make a shallow impression of the tekoteko only. The tekoteko in the design was very prominent in comparison with the fern, hence the lines of the tekoteko on the roller would project further from the surface than the lines reproducing the fern and if a slight pressure had been exerted the tekoteko only would have been transferred. The gradual appearance of the extra lines as the plate wore is consistent with either explanation.



The stamps in one sheet printed from the first plate had a curious flat appearance with the detail blurred and indistinct, particularly in the figure of value and in the inscription at the bottom of the stamp. This may have been an instance of double print one albino but if so the registration must have been exact for both impressions as there was no trace of the albino print on the margin.



L4: Notes from Vol 2 Postage Stamps of New Zealand

Continued

The stamps in one sheet printed from the first plate had a curious flat appearance with the detail blurred and indistinct, particularly in the figure of value and in the inscription at the bottom of the stamp. This may have been an instance of double print one albino but if so the registration must have been exact for both impressions as there was no trace of the albino print on the margin.

In 1936 a crack developed in 1B in the tenth vertical row. The flaw extended from the top of the row down to the seventh stamp and was particularly evident in the gutters between the stamps. It appeared as a number of vertical irregular, wavy lines. Because of the state of the plate it was condemned in January, 1937. Sheets showing the crack were placed on issue about May, 1938.

Although the plates used by De La Rue & Co. were curved to fit the cylinder on special rotary machines, they stated that, unless damage was extensive, there was no difficulty in repairing a plate. For instance, if the impression for one particular stamp became damaged it was their practice to re-enter that particular impression on the plate.

On the night of 29/30th December, 1940, both Messrs. Samuel Jones and De La Rue & Co. were burnt out as a result of the blitz on London. A quantity of pictorial stamps ready for shipment was destroyed and there was also a loss of the special watermarked paper.

By the end of January, the position in regard to the 2d. and 2s values was becoming desperate as stocks were so low and the position was not eased by the fact that at that time the situation in regard to paper was most difficult in England. Fortunately, although much of the machinery at De La Rue & Co's works in London had been destroyed, all the dies and plates of New Zealand stamps were intact. Arrangements were therefore made to hand over some of the plates to Waterlow & Sons until such time as De La Rue's works could be reinstated. The position in regard to the 2d value was eased in New Zealand by the provisional use of the 1d. George VI surcharged and in April it was decided to take precautions in the event of the 2d pictorial not being available by arranging for two years' supply of the 2d with portrait of King George VI to be printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co.

Although De La Rue & Co. continued to print all supplies of the 2d they were themselves unable to

undertake all the perforating and in this instance they obtained assistance from both Waterlow & Sons and Harrison & Sons. Printings had been made from the plate with markings 2A and 2B on esparto paper of a good quality and taking the impression clearly. In February, 1941, 10,000 sheets of 240 stamps were perforated by Messrs. Harrison & Sons by means of line machines. The gauge of the head used for the horizontal rows was 14, while that of the head used for the vertical rows was 14 $\frac{1}{2}$. The stamps are generally referred to as being 14 x 15.

Two batches each comprising 50,000 sheets of 240 stamps were perforated by Waterlow & Sons. The first batch was perforated in February and the second in July, 1941. These were run through a line



SS Norfork

machine gauging 12 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Sixty thousand sheets of 2d stamps were lost when the "Norfolk" was torpedoed and it is possible that these included some of the sheets that had been perforated by Waterlow & Sons.

De La Rue & Co. used line heads gauging 14 for a batch of the 2d but the number printed is not available from the records. As this stamp (including both the ordinary issue and that overprinted "Official") is relatively about half as scarce as the perf 14 x 15 it seems possible that the number of sheets perforated 14 was from twenty to twenty-five thousand. De La Rue's record attributes 34,600 sheets to Harrison & Sons but Harrison's own record shows only 10,000 sheets as being perforated by them. Because of the dislocation of their business De La Rue's records are not complete and it is possible that 24,600 sheets may have been those that they themselves perforated.



L4: Notes from Vol 2 Postage Stamps of New Zealand

Continued

Stamps with the line perforations were placed on issue in New Zealand in June, 1941. The colour was a deep full orange, bright in tone and the stamps with perf. 12 1/2 varied slightly, some having more



red than others. In some of the sheets with perf 12 1/2 there was a double row on the bottom selvedge.

Panel 2B developed a flaw in R4/9 the flaw taking the form of a spot of colour over the figure in the right-hand top corner.

In October, 1941, printings appeared from a new plate, the markings 4A and 4B again appearing under the second stamp in the bottom row. The initial supply was printed on the esparto paper and the shade was more yellow than previously. These, and all subsequent printings, were again perforated by means of comb machines gauging 14 x 13 1/2.

After the initial printing had been made from the plate with markings 4A and 4B supplies of the good quality esparto paper were exhausted and a new and inferior paper had to be employed. This paper was made to the specification of the British Post Office and contained 50 per cent cotton-rag with not less than 10 per cent nor more than 15 per cent of mineral matter. The balance of the raw material was intended to be esparto but, because of the difficulty in obtaining supplies, little or no esparto was available and chemical wood had to be substituted. This paper is known as "Royal Cypher" grade.

Printings were made from plates 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B; and 4A, 4B as well from a new plate first used in 1943. The two panels of this new plate were both numbered 5 under the second stamp in the bottom row, but after the plate had been in use for a short period, the panels were distinguished by the letters A and B being hand-cut on the plate after the figure.

In April, 1942, De La Rue & Co. stated that they were running short of chrome which was a necessary ingredient for the orange ink. The British Government, because of the seriousness of the war position at that time, advised that all chrome was required for munition work. The printers supplied a proof sheet in a new shade, using what ink was available. The High Commissioner reported that the printing with the new ink was much inferior to that of the

earlier supplies, but that he had perforce to approve it as there was no alternative pigment available.

An additional difficulty that faced the printers was the fact that the Royal Cypher" paper was spotted, but this defect was not as obvious with the pictorials as it was with the lighter engraving of the George VI stamps and it was decided to accept sheets that in normal circumstances would have been rejected. The colour of the ink that did not contain chrome was a pale orange, varying in the amount of red content and in some instances having a yellow-orange tint.

The printings from plate .5 appeared in April, 1943, while the printings from this plate showing the markings 5A and 5B were placed on sale in May, 1943. A crack developed in the gutter between stamps 1 and 2 in row 6 of the panel marked 5A. The fault is in the form of a wavy line running from the top of the stamps down to the third decoration in the vertical borders. Panel 5B developed a break particularly above R1/10, and down through the first six stamps in the 10th vertical row. The break was mostly evident on the right-hand side of the stamps. Another break appeared in a position similar to the one on the 5A panel.

In some of the sheets with the marking 2B the letters EN were scratched on the selvedge on the right-hand side near the perforation the letter N was in reverse. The perforation guide mark, in the form of a cross with a dot where the arms of the cross meet, is found on the selvedge at both sides of all values of the Pictorials, except the 9d. Similar marks are found on the top and bottom selvedge 1d, 1 1/2 d, 2d, 4d, 5d, 6d, 8d, 1s, 2s and 3s.

Apparently the curving of the plates caused a weakening near the middle as, in addition to 1B and 5B, 4A also developed a crack in row 10/1, a line joining the left-hand frame line of this stamp to row 9/1. In 4B a flaw developed in row 6 No. 3, the right-hand side of the tekoteko and the ends of the fern fronds becoming weak.

Some sheets on the "Royal Cypher" paper had the watermark inverted a few had double perforations on the bottom row.

During the currency of the Centennial stamps, the 2d. Pictorial remained available at Post Offices for use on receipts. It was not finally superseded until May 1, 1947.