



L8: 5d SWORDFISH TYPE (Recess) Notes from Vol 2, The Postage Stamps of New Zealand.

in R4/10 and R5/10 and took the form of irregular patches of colour joining the bottom of the L and A of ZEALAND in R4/10. In R5/10 a flaw runs horizontally across the label under NEW ZEALAND and through the frame in the bottom right-hand corner. In other sheets there was a break running vertically down the right-hand side of R5/10 and R6/10 and appearing also in the gutter between these stamps. R4/10 showed a thickening of the outer line on the right-hand side and a curved mark in the right-hand corner. It seems probable that the horizontal flaws were the first to develop and that these were corrected and that later the vertical flaw became obvious. It is a matter of interest as to why the horizontal flaws should have been removed and yet the crescent-shaped flaw

and the one under the A in R6/10 did not receive attention."

The printings with perf. 14 x 13 1/2 ranged from bright ultramarine to pale bright ultramarine and some sheets had a greater amount of blue in the pigment. One sheet had a double print, one albino. The paper had been run through the machine with another sheet and had received an un-inked impression which had the effect of closing the pores of the paper so that when the sheet was again run through the machine and received an inked impression the pigment did not become as absorbed as usual and consequently the stamp has a cobalt blue colour. The 5d. was withdrawn from sale on April 30, 1947.

L8: 5d SWORDFISH TYPE (Recess) Campbell Paterson's Notes 5d



I last dealt with the 4d Mitre Peak and we now come to the 5d – one of the most interesting stamps of the set. The main issues are clearly defined and easily separated – when one knows how. They are:

L8a Single wmk, fine Vert mesh paper, perf 13-14x13 1/2

L8b Single wmk, fine Vert mesh paper, perf 13 1/2x14

L8c Mult wmk, fine Horiz mesh paper, perf 13-14x13 1/2

L8d Mult wmk, fine Horiz mesh paper, perf 12 1/2

L8e Mult wmk, coarse Horiz mesh paper, perf 12 1/2

L8f Mult wmk, coarse Horiz mesh paper, perf 13 3/4 x13 1/2

This may seem a formidable list but given a methodical approach it becomes readily manageable. Let us suppose we have a large pile of 5d Swordfish, possibly containing many of every one of the above variations.

The first step is to segregate all stamps on the coarse paper. This is a war-time paper-grade and viewed from the back of the stamps is of decidedly coarse, rough finish; the watermarks are easily seen and the paper usually of a rather dirty or yellowish tone. So all must be either L8e perf 12 1/2 which means larger, clumsy perfs, or L8f perf 13 3/4 x 13 1/2.

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Continued

We now have left only stamps on fine grade papers and the list above shows that two of these have the Single watermark with vertical mesh while the other two have multiple watermark with Horizontal mesh. Dealing with the multiple watermark first we find the difference is one of perfs and again one perf is 12½; once segregated all others are perf 13-14x13½.

Finally we have only the two perfs of the Single wmk. L8a is difficult for the beginner to gauge, for it has the odd irregular perf 13-14x13½ which means partly perf13 and partly perf14 as to top and bottom with perf13½ at both sides. Concentrate on picking out the perf 13½x14; this gauges an even 13½ for the whole length of the top and bottom and is easily gauged.

Once the stamps are identified we look for the varieties. This should be done only after the basic sorting for many varieties occur only on one issue and it is a waste of time to look for them in all issues. L8a and L8b show few variations even of shade but in L8a an albino double print is known. This is a beautiful variety with the second colourless impression best seen by reflected light. It was first discovered by its owner when he was leafing through his collection while lying prone, ill in bed. Quite a tonic! In this albino the inked impression is normal, being neither blurred nor of unusual shade.

L8c is relatively common with inverted water-

mark and gives us an interesting reentry or flaw showing as two lines at the foot of the left figure 5. The early wartime issue on fine paper perf 12½, L8d is interesting in showing us the first change of paper brought about by the war's cutting off of supplies of esparto-grass fibre from North Africa. L8d paper is fine and smooth but lacks something of the spring and resilience of L8c. L8a and b are officially described as on 'rag' paper; the difference is not obvious nor is it important. L8e and L8f demonstrate the deterioration in printing that results from use of a coarse rough paper.

The stamps lack the fine definition of the earlier issues. The original Plate 1 was still in use when coarse paper was first used but was soon replaced by Plate 2 and later Plate 3. Plate blocks of Plate 1 from L8e and L8f are of considerable rarity. Some extensive reentering of Plate 2 was done after the plate developed an ugly pitting of the surface. The plate was inadvertently exposed to damp in the war period and the pitting is a result of rusting. Some fine reentries are found.

A notable variety is another case of albino double print. Here the sheet was detected for it was in a vivid, blurred cobalt blue quite spectacularly different from the normal. This is one variety that it is useless to look for in used lots – all copies are known and are much treasured by their owners.