

1977 12¢ PARLIAMENT DEFINITIVE

with Extra Vertical Perforations

BY LEOPOLD BEAUDET, FRPSC OTB



In September 1995, John Jamieson of Saskatoon Stamp Centre sent me a photocopy of a strip of 20 of the 1977 12¢ Parliament definitive with the vertical perforations doubled in both stamp columns and in the right pane margin (Figure 1). The block comes from philatelic stock and has the British American Bank Note Co. (BABN) imprint in the pane margin. John Jamieson also sent a photocopy of a strip of 17 14¢ Parliament coils, 13 of which had double perforations, and a registered cover with a pair of 12¢ Parliament stamps with double perforations and a normal \$1.25 CAPEX stamp. All three lots came from the same consignor, and all three were certified as genuine by the Comité d'expertise de la Fédération québécoise de philatélie (CEFQP) as described in the October 1995 issue of *Philatélie Québec*.

The first time I saw the 12¢ Parliament with doubled vertical perfs was in an auction conducted by J&M Philatelic Auction of Vancouver on 8 July 1979. Lot 895 consisted of a lower left plate block of four with the BABN imprint. J&M offered one or two more blocks in subsequent auctions in the same time period. I did not see this variety again until it popped up in the August 19, 1995 Eastern Auctions Ltd. auction. Lot 882 in that auction was an upper left plate block of the 12¢ Parliament with doubled vertical perforations. Although the lot description included the phrase "as is", it sold for \$125.

I believe the "variety" is a fake simply based on how BABN produced the stamps. In addition, there is at least one anomaly in the extra perforations that reinforces the conclusion that they are fake.

The 12¢ Parliament definitive issued on 3 May 1977 was printed by BABN. The following March, Canadian Bank Note Co. (CBN)

reprinted the stamp. The stamps with the extra perforations are unquestionably from BABN because the "variety" comes from philatelic stock with the BABN imprint in the pane margin.

BABN printed the 12¢ Parliament on its Goebel press. This web-fed press prints the stamps on a large roll of paper, not individual sheets. It prints stamps and perforates them on the roll, and cuts the roll into individual panes in one continuous operation.^[4] There were six panes of 100 on the cylinder, three around the circumference by two along the axis (Figure 2). On the Goebel press, the stamp design is impressed on a solid steel cylinder, not a flat plate that is subsequently bent to fit on the press.

The Goebel press perforator is a platen perforator. It perforates all the panes along the axis of the cylinder (two for the 12¢ Parliament) with a single strike. It hovers above the web. When the just-printed stamps are in the correct position, it drops down on the paper, perforating all the stamps in the two panes with one strike, and immediately rises again. In contrast, a one-row comb perforator perforates just a single row of stamps with each strike.

The platen perforates the panes while the roll of paper is moving continuously through the press. Only after the stamps are perforated does the web travel to the slitters and guillotine where it is cut into individual panes.

Because one strike of the platen perforates an entire pane, a slight misalignment between two successive strikes will form just a single row or column of irregular perforations in the pane. The misalignment always appears in one of the pane margins. If the misalignment occurs in the vertical perforations, the stamps must have travelled vertically through the web-fed press. If the misalignment shows up in the horizontal perforations, the stamps must have travelled sideways.

Figure 1. Extra perforations on the 12¢ Parliament definitive.

Figure 2. Cylinder layout of the BABN printing of the 12¢ Parliament (courtesy Robin Harris ^[2]).

The 12¢ Parliament definitive travelled vertically through the press because the misalignment between successive strikes of the platen produces an irregularity in the vertical perfs at the very top or bottom of the pane. As shown in Figure 3, the irregularity on the strip of 20 of the 12¢ Parliament occurs in the top pane margin and is quite apparent. Thus, the extra columns of perforations run along the web of paper, that is, in the same direction that the web itself moved through the press.

For the platen perforator to produce the extra perforations, the following three things would have to happen:

Despite the continuous movement of the paper through the Goebel press, the platen would have to strike the same part of the web twice to produce the extra vertical perforations. How could this happen?

The extra perforations run along the web of paper, so the platen perforator would have to be shifted sideways relative to the web to produce them. How could this happen?

On the extra strike, the horizontal pins on the platen would have to mesh perfectly with the existing horizontal perforations because there is no doubling of the horizontal perforation holes anywhere in the strip of 20 stamps. What are the odds of this happening?

Note that, because the stamps are printed on a web-fed press and are perforated before the web is guillotined into panes, the variety couldn't be the result of a pane going through the perforator twice. At the point where the stamps are perforated, they don't exist as panes.

I referred to a little anomaly in the extra perforations of 12¢ Parliament. Consider again the misalignment between two successive strikes of the platen perforator. The misalignment shows up as a perforation irregularity in the perforations at the top or bottom of the pane. This perforation irregularity is present almost without fail on pane after pane, and it is quite apparent on the strip of 20 with doubled perforations. There is no such irregularity anywhere in the extra perforations. While I wouldn't necessarily expect

it to occur in the top or bottom pane margin, I would expect it to appear somewhere in the extra vertical perforations if there were more than one extra strike of the perforator. It isn't there. It doesn't exist. If the irregularity did exist in the extra perforations, it would be quite noticeable because at some point the extra horizontal perforations (if indeed this “variety” were genuine) wouldn't line up with the regular ones. There would be some doubled horizontal perforations.

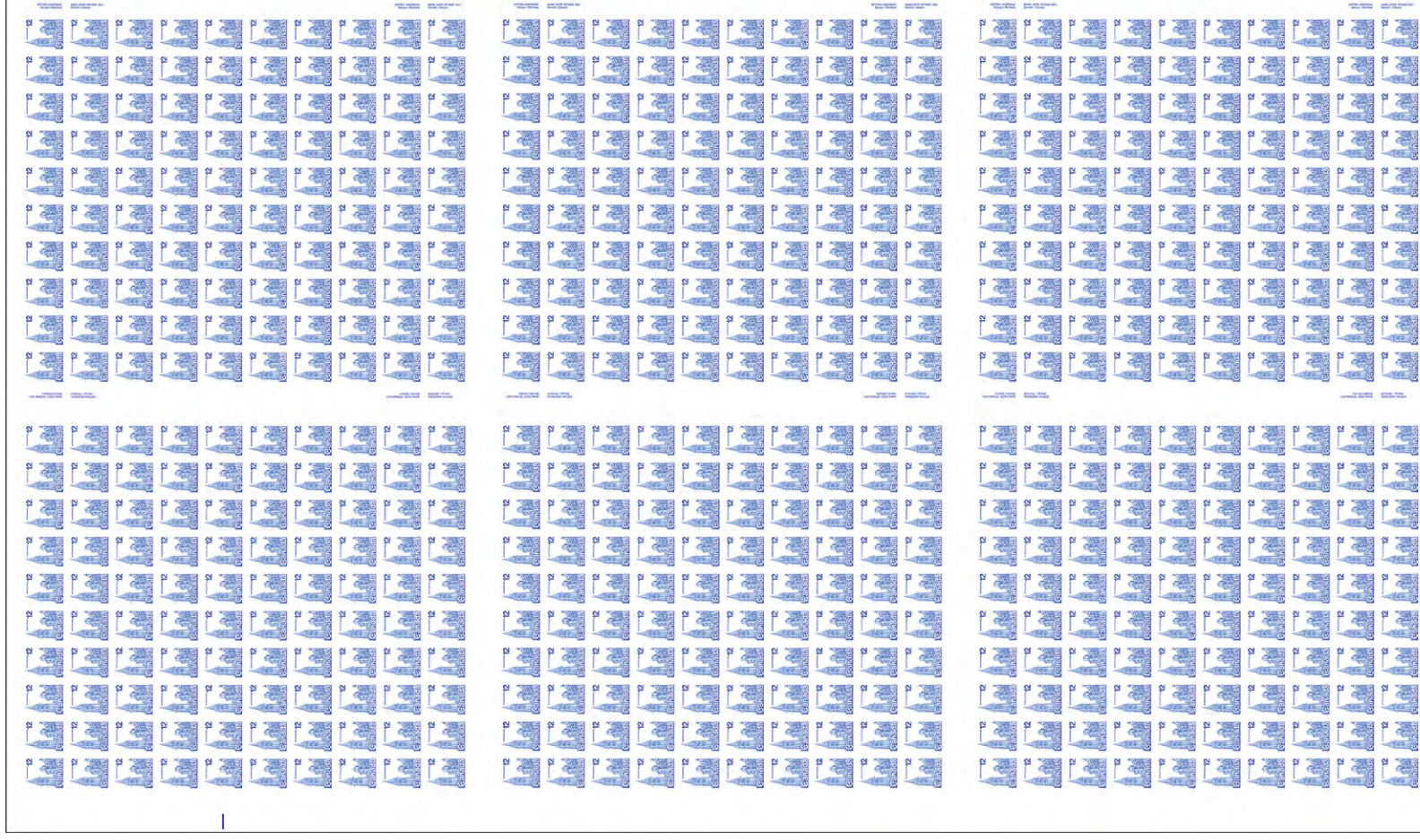
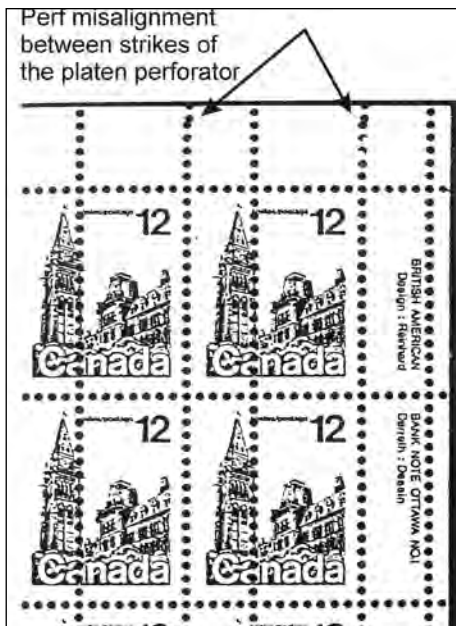


Figure 3. Noticeable perf misalignment at the top of the normal perforations.

Based on the analysis above, I believe that it would be impossible for the platen perforator to produce the extra perforations. I believe the perforations are fake. Most examples of this perforation "variety" are offered in blocks of four. While it is easier to make the case that the perforations are fake when analyzing a vertical strip of 20, even for a block of four it is extremely difficult to explain how such a variety could occur on the Goebel press.

To be fair, BABN has produced a somewhat related variety on the Goebel press that I can't explain although it is unquestionably genuine. The BABN printing of the 1973 8¢ QE II Caricature definitive exists with the tagging bars shifted almost to the middle of the stamp. How could the photogravure cylinder that printed the tagging be shifted so much relative to the engraved cylinder that printed the blue colour? However it was produced, the tagging variety is different from the perforation variety in that the tagging is shifted, not doubled.

John Jamieson returned this block of 20 and the two other extra perf "variety" lots to the consignor because he thought they were fake, even though they had been certified as genu-



ine by the CEFQP. The consignor is the same individual who later offered a stock book full of extra perforation "varieties" on coils and other stamps to dealers at the Great Western Stamp Show in Vancouver on 14-16 February 1997. An article analyzing these fake perforation "varieties" is available online.^[3] It was also published in several periodicals including *The Canadian Philatelist*.^[1]

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