

Canada changes size of Flag stamp

By Charles J.G. Verge

Canada Post announced Jan. 5 that effective Feb. 2 orders for the 45¢ Canadian Flag Over Building regular-issue definitive stamp would be filled with a smaller-size stamp both in sheet and booklet formats.

Canada Post spokeswoman Elia Anioia also said that the sheet layout of the stamp would be changed.

The new definitive stamp will have the same design as the current 45¢, a red and white Canadian Maple Leaf flag flying in the breeze in front of a high-rise office tower, Scott 1360J.

The dimensions of the stamp as issued in 1995 are 22 millimeters by 26mm. The new design will be reduced to 20mm by 24mm.

By doing so, Canada Post will be able to print the stamps in sheets of 120 stamps: two panes of 60 separated by a gutter.

The layout of each pane will be five stamps across by 12 down.

According to Canada Post, the new printing allows Canada Post to cut printing costs and help preserve the environment by using less paper.

The gutter, a feature in the printing of Canadian definitives at the turn of the century, is a blank stamp-size row between the fifth and six vertical rows of the larger sheet.



Canada's 1995 45¢ Flag stamp gets smaller Feb. 2.

Will this mean that gutter pairs will become a new collectible area for Canadian collectors? There are now enough examples of gutter pairs available from the Canada Day issue of 1992 (Scott 1420-31) to the Confederation Bridge issue of 1997 (Scott 1645-46) to make it worthwhile.

Adding the older gutter pairs to a collection would make a good contrast and an interesting study of the different printing techniques used.

Anioia said, "The reason for the addition of the gutter was again to reduce costs."

She added, "The same printer's sheet can now be used both for counter sales as well as be cut into booklet panes."

Although one layout will work for sheet stamps and booklet stamps, the booklet stamps have the selvage imprints on the right vertical

selvage while the sheet stamps have the imprints on the right and left corners of the top and bottom selvage.

This seems to mean that the booklet stamps may be from a different printing.

The cost of a full sheet of the 45¢ first-class letter-rate stamp increases by \$9, from \$45 to \$54, to cover the cost of the additional 20 stamps per sheet.

Existing booklets and their panes also will be reduced in size.

The booklet stamps will have the same new dimensions as the sheet stamps, and the contents of the 10-stamp booklet and its price, \$4.50, will remain the same.

However, the 25-stamp booklet will now contain 30 stamps and will cost \$13.50, in contrast to the previous \$11.25 for the 25-stamp booklet.

The printing layout for the sheet stamps allows for 12 10-stamp booklets or four 30-stamp booklets.

The 30-stamp booklets are cut across the width of the sheet giving two panes of 15 separated by a gutter.

The Canadian Bank Note Co. is printing the sheet stamps and making the 10-stamp booklets, while Ashton Potter Canada Ltd. will be responsible for the 30-stamp booklet.

Stamps will be printed on coated paper in all cases.

The perforations for the booklet stamps remain at 13½ by 13 as they are for the larger-size stamp booklets, with the top and bottom row being imperforate.

The sheet stamp perforations have been reduced to 13½ by 13½ from their current 14½ all around.

Previous to this issue, Canada has only twice issued stamps in a 120-stamp pane format: the 10-pence Jacques Cartier of 1855 and the ½p of 1857.

In January 1855, the 10p Jacques Cartier stamp paid the British packet rate to the United Kingdom per ½ ounce and the rate per ¼ oz. to Algeria and France by Canadian packet.

In July 1857, a ½p stamp was issued to pay the rate for drop letters, transient and remailed papers and periodicals.

The official first-day cover for the new Flag stamp will be canceled at Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

For information on ordering stamps and FDCs, write to Canada Post Corp., 75 St. Ninian St., Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2R8, Canada; or telephone 800-565-4362. The stamps also may be purchased from Interpost, Box 378, Malverne, NY 11565.

Charles J.G. Verge of Ontario writes the stamp column that runs every third week in the Ottawa Citizen. ■

Fifty Years Ago

A page 1 story in *Linn's* issue of Jan. 26, 1948, written by managing editor Carl P. Rueth, discussed the release two days earlier of the California Gold Centennial commemorative (Scott 954). "Gold has left happiness and despair, and newly made lives and violent deaths in its wake," he wrote.

In his editorial, founder George W. Linn said, "We would not recommend anyone to become a general collector for the task is a hopeless one except for a millionaire or a man who could afford to hire one or two secretaries to do the job for him."

Sunshine Stamps of St. Petersburg, Fla., advertised very fine mint sets of Germany Scott B134-36, the 1939 semipostal issue for the Berlin Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition, for \$1. Today, a never-hinged set catalogs \$65.

Hopkins, Lunch Wagon

The United States \$1 Johns Hopkins stamp and the 23¢ Lunch Wagon coil stamp may be getting renewed life. Both are regular-issue stamps manufactured by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

In early January, philatelic clerk Robert Sharkey of the Providence, R.I., post office ordered new \$1 stamps from his stamp distribution office.

The stamps the office received are the \$1 Hopkins stamp, not the \$1 Surrender at Saratoga stamp of 1994.

Although the Hopkins stamp, first issued in 1989, has not gone off sale, most post offices stock only the \$1 Surrender at Saratoga stamp manufactured by Stamp Venturers.

According to Sharkey, the shrinkwrapping for the Hopkins stamps he received bore

a Dec. 17, 1997, date, perhaps a packaging date. The stamps, from plate No. 2, are on a new paper that he described as "very white."

The 23¢ Lunch Wagon coils stamps that collector Murray Eskenazi found in November 1997 in East Rockaway, N.Y., also appear to be on a new paper.

Examples of the stamps he submitted to *Linn's* are printed from plate No. 3, but they are a noticeably lighter blue than previous plate 3 stamps.

Both stamps seem to be from new Bureau printings.

It is not unusual for the Bureau to be requested to supply additional stamps at the end of contract periods for the private-sector stamp manufacturers, just weeks before the new contracts are announced. ■