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Canada Post Announces Smaller Dimensions for the Current Canadian 45¢ Flag Definitive

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Canada Post spokesperson Elia Anola announced on 5 January 1998 that effective 2 February 1998 orders for the 45¢ Canadian Flag definitives would be filled with a smaller size stamp both in the sheet and booklet pane formats. The sheet layout would also be changed (illustrated at the end of this page is the top half of the new pane).

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 highrise office tower (Scott # 1360J). The current dimensions of the stamp are 22 x 26 mm (illustrated at right). The new design will be reduced to 20 x 24 mm. By doing so, Canada Post will be able to print the stamps in sheets of 120 comprised of two panes of 60 (5 x 12) separated by a gutter. This 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 pane.



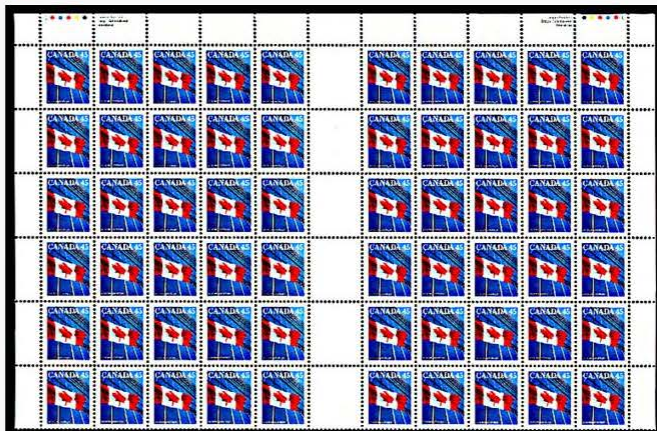
Will this mean that gutter pairs will become a new collectible area of Canadian philately? There are now enough examples of these available from the Canada Day issue of 1992 (Scott # 1420-1431) to the Confederation Bridge issue of 1997 (Scott # 1645-6) to make it worthwhile. Adding the older gutter pairs to the collection would make a good contrast and an interesting study of the different printing techniques used.

Anola said that "the reason for the addition of the gutter was again to reduce costs." She added "that the same printer's sheet can now be used both for counter sales as well as being cut into booklet panes." Although the layout may be the same, the booklets have the 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 booklets come from a different printing. Cost of a full sheet of the 45¢ first class letter rate increases by \$9, from \$45 to \$54, to cover the cost of the additional 20 stamps per sheet.

Existing booklets and their panes will also be reduced in size. The booklet stamps will have the same new dimensions as the sheet stamps. 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 layout of the sheet stamps allows for twelve 10-stamp booklets or four 30-stamp booklets. The 30-stamp booklet are cut across the width of the sheet giving two panes of 15 separated by a gutter.

The Canadian Bank Note Company will be printing the sheet stamps and making up the 10-stamp booklets while Ashton Potter Canada, Ltd. will be responsible for the 30-stamp booklet. Stamps will be printed on Coated Papers paper in all cases. The perforations for the booklet stamps remain at 13½ x 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 x 13½ from their current 14½ all around.

Previous to this issue, Canada has only twice issued stamps in a 120-stamp pane format: in January 1855, the ten pence Jacques Cartier stamp which paid the British Packet rate to the United Kingdom per ½ oz. and the rate per 1/4 oz. to Algeria and France by Canadian Packet and in July 1857, a ½ penny was issued that was used to pay the rate for drop letters, transient and re-mailed papers and periodicals.



Top half of new 120-subject pane



New 30-subject booklet pane