AN INTERESTING ERROR
THE $2 VALUE OF THE THIRD ISSUE OF CANADA BILL STAMPS
WITH INVERTED MEDALLION
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Today the collecting of oddities is not in as much vogue as it was a decade ago, yet an oddity that
is really interesting is to day regarded by many in as friendly a manner as was an oddity ten years ago. By
this I mean that a stamp that in some way differs from all others printed from the same plate or die in
some salient point enjoys much favor in the sight of true philatelists. The tendency of collectors to
possess something that no one else can secure is very manifest to anyone having dealings with
philatelists. It seems to be an inherent trait of the human race for each person, to, in some way, differ in
habits from the rest of humanity, and in collecting this trait is carried even farther than in every day life.
Some collectors take pleasure from the collecting of oddities and errors of all classes, and certainly a
collection of this kind presents a very pleasing and interesting appearance. If a stamp that differs only in
the lacking or the addition of some unimportant feature is worthy of collecting at all surely the real
oddities, such as the stamp being printed in the wrong color or the inverting of the centre portion of the
stamp, are worthy of rank as really collectable classes. These show misunderstanding of orders or
carelessness on the part of the printers and are not accountable for by broken dies, worn plates, etc., but
are the true oddities and as such are well worthy of collection.

Chief among the class of inverted medallion varieties must necessarily come the revenues of the
second, third and fourth issues of United States revenues. Various scribes have described and explained
the issuance of these interesting issues in so thorough a manner that it would be unwise for me to say
anything respecting them. But there is another specimen of this inverting of the medallion that, owing to
the lack of definite in formation regarding it known, is even more interesting than those varieties I have
mentioned. I refer to the $2 value of the third issue of Canadian Bill stamps, than which to my mind, no
more interesting stamp exists.

Very little definite knowledge is known regarding the number of such stamps issued, etc., but I
will give a general view of how these stamps were issued to the public. This view may or may not be
correct but as it is the generally accepted view of all collectors it is more than probably so.

These stamps were printed by the American Bank Note Co., New York, which company printed
other classes of revenues as well as the Canadian Telegraph Franks. They were printed in two colors – red
for frame and black for the medallion and it was necessary for the sheet to be run through the press twice,
once for each color. The sheet was first run through the press to receive the impression of not only the
frame, as would be supposed, but also a small circular piece of red color, about one-sixteenth of an inch
wide composed of fine vertical lines, running out side of, and inside of the usually seen red color, the
white spaces left for the medallion. In the second run through the press the medallion in black was
printed. The sheet was run through the first time and received the red color but when the sheet was fed to
the press the second time it was fed upside down and in consequence the queen is standing on her head –
a very ludicrous position for her Majesty.
This inverting of the medallion is not an unusual occurrence in a large printing house but the fact that such a sheet was allowed to get into circulation is indeed strange as they are usually promptly destroyed. For some reason, no doubt carelessness on the part of the printers the sheets was (sic) allowed to get beyond the walls of the printing house, where every stamp was worth two dollars. Here it could not be so easily recalled and the sheet was broken and some specimens sold and undoubtedly used. The date on which this sheet was issued is not known, and will probably never be but is thought to be some time after the stamps were first issued, 1869.

One writer has alleged that the sheet was the last one, used to fill a requisition from headquarters in the way. A demand was received and no other sheets being available several “cull” sheets were “run in” to help fill the order. Several sheets of poor impression, etc., were used and this sheet with the inverted medallion was among those so utilized. Perhaps they thought it would make no difference, and in truth, little difference it seems to have made. Another variety for the collector, then almost undreamed of, was the only result.

Only one sheet could possibly have been used at the most, and the stamp is very rare especially in unused condition and is possessed by but few collectors. It is rarer than its catalogue price - $20 in used condition would indicate.