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## A PLATE VARIETY OF THE 5 CENT WALLOON.

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A defect occurs in some of the 5c Huguenot-Walloon stamps that has created a great deal of interest. This is found in most of the stamps of the two upper panes of plate number 15,754. It has been variously referred to as an "error", a "die shift", and a "double transfer", none of which appellations is correct, and it has been advertised as a "rarity" at a considerable premium.

I have studied this defect rather carefully with a binocular microscope, and I have come to the conclusion that it was produced by a defective transfer roll. Before going on to a discussion of how the defect occurred, of what it should be called, and of its philatelic value, I will explain what and where it is. The defect consists primarily of a flaw in the lower part of the thin colored line encircling the right figure 5. For the sake of convenience, I will consider the sheet of stamps as a whole, before being divided into post office panes of 50. In the whole sheet, there are 20 horizontal rows of 10 stamps each.

Beginning at the upper left hand corner, we find the following:

### Row 1.

Stamps 1-4.—Normal.

Stamps 5 and 6.—Colored line slightly bent outward at bottom.

Stamp 7.—Colored line broken (Fig. 1).

Stamp 8 (under upper right plate number).—Broken part of line bent down, right end almost touching outer colored circle.

Stamps 9 and 10.—Broken part touches outer circle. Very thin line in normal position of broken portion (Fig. 2).

### Row 2.

Stamps 1-10.—Lower part of circle thin and irregular. Broken part has disappeared. Diagonal colored line at left of circle between the two outer horizontal lines (Fig. 3).

### Row 3.

Stamps 1-4.—Same.

Stamps 5-10.—Same, but diagonal colored line has disappeared.

### Rows 4-10.

Same.

I have not seen the two lower panes from this plate, but I presume the lower portion of the colored circle is thin on these stamps as well.

Now as to the cause of this defect. In making these stamps, a transfer roll of soft steel is rolled over the master die, producing the stamp design in relief on the roll. This is then hardened and used to roll in the designs on the plate. It is evident that the designs are entered from left to right and from top to bottom. In this case, the

thin ridge of steel forming the colored circle in question broke away gradually as the stamps were entered. It started when stamp 5 of row 1 was entered, and the broken portion became more and more out of place as

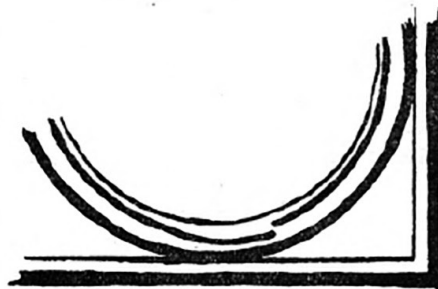


Figure 1.

the succeeding stamps in this row were entered. (Fig. 1). Enough seems to have remained in place, however, to make a slight impression on the plate, which prints very lightly (Fig. 2).

When the end of the row was reached, the broken bit of steel seems to have broken off entirely, as it does not show in the second row. A short diagonal line (Fig. 3) on the stamps of this row and part of row 3 may have been caused by a part of this broken piece of steel adhering to the transfer roll. This disappears in stamp 5 of row 3, but all the other stamps in the upper half of the plate show the lower part of the circle thinned, and it is probable that the same defect continues throughout the lower half of the plate.

Four plates were used in making this stamp, numbers 15,752, 15,753, 15,754



Figure 2.

and 15,755. Aside from 15,754, I have seen stamps from 15,753, and the defect does not show in this plate. If the plates were made in numerical order,