

1894

Various Perfs.

The Old Calabar Provisional
10 Aug. 1894

Early in August, 1894, the General Post Office at Old Calabar ran out of Halfpenny stamps, and a supply of these was provided by surcharging twenty sheets of the Two Pence Halfpenny stamps of 1894, with the words 'One Halfpenny' in black, in two lines of small Sans Serif 1¼ m.m. in height, with two short thick bars at either side to obliterate the numerals '2½', and two long thinner bars to strike out the original value in words at the bottom of the stamp. The twenty sheets were surcharged in rows of eight stamps.— the last stamp of each row having a broken N in the word ONE, making it look like an 'I'.

Number Issued equal to	1	960
'O I E' Variety	120	
Double Surcharge	<u>16</u>	<u>136</u>
	<u>136</u>	<u>824</u>

Mr. Alfred W. Bates, of Orpington, Kent, very kindly sends me these notes on the "One Half penny" provisional on 2½d. blue of 1894 (Niger Coast).

"Date of issue, 5th September, 1894 (?). There had not been a ½d. stamp in Old Calabar for three weeks when this variety was issued. The overprinting was done on the government press in Old Calabar. Mr. _____, the European officer in charge of the printing department, was sick at the time, and the work was done by the natives. The printing was done on an ordinary Albion hand press, and eight stamps, which constituted a row in a sheet, were impressed at one time. On two occasions the sheet moved in the sliding of the tympan, and thus two rows of sixteen stamps were printed out of place, and the defect was remedied by their being printed again. The broken N in ONE, making it read O I E, said to have occurred in each end stamp of the twenty sheets (which would mean 120 of the O I E error) cannot be correct as on the 16 stamps or two rows of the double impression there is no broken N, and how many more sheets were without this defect I have not been able to ascertain, and I fear that the real number of the O I E error must remain problematical, but anyway it cannot be more than 114."

NIGER COAST: THE RARE PROVISIONAL, SMALL "1" ON HALF OF THE 2d. GREEN AND CARMINE. JUNE-OCTOBER, 1894.

AMONG the stamps of Niger Coast, there is one variety so rare that few of my readers can ever have seen a specimen, though they must have read the description many times in Stanley Gibbons' Catalogue. I refer to Stanley Gibbons' No. 49, the half of a 2d. green and carmine, surcharged with a small "1," 4½mm. high instead of 12mm. high, as in the normal variety, which is Stanley Gibbons' No. 48. It has been said that only two specimens of this stamp exist, but I think it more probable that three, or possibly four specimens were originally printed. As our publishers have recently purchased a genuine copy of this stamp, I thought it was a good opportunity to describe it to my readers. The stamp in question was recently sold in auction, and was secured by our Publishers for the nominal sum of £50, which is naturally very much below its value and a price which they consider represented one of the greatest bargains they have ever made at a public sale. The reason for this low price is doubtless the excessive rarity of the stamp which had prevented many possible buyers from ever having seen a genuine copy, or from knowing whether the copy offered was really the right thing. It so happened that our Publishers knew the previous owner of the collection (Mrs. Ashcroft) and knew that this stamp was in the collection, and that it had originally come from Mr. W. H. Peckitt. They also had had

the opportunity of inspecting another genuine copy, which had been passed by the Royal Philatelic Society, so that they were able to bid knowing exactly what they were buying.

Illustration "A" shows our Publishers' specimen, and illustration "B" shows the "Hirschberg" copy, which has been expertised and passed as genuine by the Royal Philatelic Society. The "Hirschberg" copy has the perforations on the left slightly clipped, while our Publishers' specimen is perfect, but both of them have a slight horizontal crease in the same position. In the "London Philatelist," Vol. XIII., page 38, we find the following note:—

"A hitherto unknown variety of the 1d. surcharged on half 2d. green and carmine Niger Coast Protectorate, S.G. No. 9, has lately been discovered amongst a number of the stamps of this country, which were brought over by a gentleman for many years resident in that district, and disposed of in London as an ordinary variety. The copy is a used one, with the postmark distinctly over the surcharge. The difference between the ordinary variety and this one

lies in the colour and size of the surcharge—the former is carmine instead of vermilion—and the size of the figure of value, 4½mm. high, and nearly 1mm. wide, and base of figure nearly 2½mm. long instead of 12mm. high, 2 mm. broad, and base 5½ mm. broad as in the ordinary. The stamp is from the top row of a pane, which seems to bear out the theory arrived at by Mr. A. G. Griffith in his letter, that this small figure of value was first tried, and not being found large enough, was then altered to the one of a larger size, and more easily seen, and naturally the top row would be the first surcharged."

Mr. Griffiths, in his letter, wrote that there was no printing press of any sort or kind at Opobo, and that the probability was that Acting Vice Consul Tanner, who issued these surcharges, cut the die himself out of a piece of wood, and after trying it on one or two stamps of the sheet thought a larger "1" would be better, and therefore surcharged the rest of the sheet with the larger and generally known type of "1"; as each individual stamp would have to be accounted for in the monthly account, the few stamps surcharged with the small "1" would naturally be put into stock with the others sold to the public.

The Royal Philatelic Society, in their certificate for the Hirschberg copy say that it is not the actual stamp referred to in the "London Philatelist," Vol. XIII., and we do not know whether our Publishers' copy is the original first specimen discovered. As both the specimens illustrated are left-hand stamps it seems reasonable to suppose that the right-hand halves were also surcharged, and it is on that account that I base my assumption that four copies were probably printed.



A B

forations on the left slightly clipped, while our Publishers' specimen is perfect, but both of them have a slight horizontal crease in the same position. In the "London Philatelist," Vol. XIII., page 38, we find the following note:—

VARIETY - SMALLER '1' (4 3/4 mm. high)

This was probably a trial surcharge and probably abandoned in favour of the larger figure '1'. Only four specimens are said to be known, — one of which is from the top of the sheet.

A HITHERTO unknown variety of the 1d., surcharged on half 2d., green and carmine, Niger Coast Protectorate, S. G. No. 9, has lately been discovered amongst a number of the stamps of this country, which were brought over by a gentleman for many years resident in that district, and disposed of in London as an ordinary variety. The copy is a used one, with the postmark distinctly over the surcharge. The difference between the ordinary variety and this one lies in the colour and size of the surcharge—the former is carmine instead of vermilion—and the size of the figure of value, 4 3/4 mm. high, and nearly 1 mm. wide, and base of figure nearly 2 1/2 mm. long, instead of 12 mm. high, 2 mm. broad, and base 5 1/2 mm. broad as in the ordinary. The stamp is from the top row of a pane, which seems to bear out the theory arrived at by Mr. A. G. Griffith in his letter (copy of which is appended), that this small figure of value was first tried, and not being found large enough was then altered to the one of a larger size and more easily seen, and naturally the top row would be the first surcharged. Perhaps some of our readers can throw some further light upon the subject.

Copy of letter from Mr. A. G. Griffith.

"I now return you the 1d. on half of 2d. Niger Coast stamp, on which you asked my opinion. The postmark, which is of the usual sort in use at the time, is evidently over the surcharge, and though I did not know that such a type of '1' had ever been issued, I should say the stamp was all right. It is evidently a variety of the *Opobo* surcharges issued by Acting Vice-Consul Tanner in 1894, marked No. 9 in Gibbons' Catalogue. There was (and is) no printing-press of any sort or kind at *Opobo*, and the probability is that this is a sort of essay. He (Tanner) probably cut the die himself out of a piece of wood, and after doing one stamp (or possibly several) of the sheet with this small '1,' he may have thought a larger '1' would be better, and therefore surcharged the rest with the larger and generally known type of '1'; but as each individual 2d. (or any other value) stamp had to be accounted for in the monthly account of 'stamps sold and remaining on hand' (rendered by outstations to the G.P.O. at Old Calabar), these essays (or this one essay!) would go in and be used as *part of the issue*, and probably no account was taken of how many were of one type of '1' and how many of the other; and poor Tanner is dead, so I can't get him to tell me, even if he remembered!

"I have never seen another of this stamp, and I think what I have said would be the probable explanation of its existence."

NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

H.B.M. VICE-CONSULATE,
OLD CALABAR,
14th August, 1894.

DEAR SIR,—It may interest you and the members of your Society to know that, to meet the demand for $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps (pending arrival of a new lot from England) 960 of the $\frac{2}{3}$ d., blue, stamps of the third issue of this Protectorate were surcharged "one half-penny," and were issued to the public on the 10th inst.—the not very large stock (only 8000 for the whole of the districts of the Protectorate) of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., green, stamps of the third issue being entirely sold out by the end of last month.

The Postmaster-General not being a Philatelic enthusiast, put off surcharging as long as possible, in hopes that the new lot of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps would arrive so as not to necessitate provisionals.

The stamps of this Protectorate however, which ought to become *very* rare, are the 1d., blue, stamps of the second issue cut vertically in *half*, each half being surcharged " $\frac{1}{2}$ " (not $\frac{1}{3}$ d.), in red, in May last at Opobo, one of our districts (they being short supplied them with $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps), pending arrival of others from head-office, and communication between there and here not being frequent. Only 120 of these provisionals were surcharged, *i.e.*, one sheet of 60 penny stamps, the district being small and not many being required.

Of the first issue—"Oil Rivers" surcharged on English stamps—the 1s. and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. have been quite unobtainable for a long time.

Of the second issue the 2d., green, is also quite unobtainable, and in a lesser degree the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., red.

Of the third issue very few of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., green, were sent, and they are all sold out, hence the surcharging of these blue ones now.

No stamps of this Protectorate have been genuinely used through the post unless obliterated with the square outgoing postmark. You will probably find many with a little *circular* postmark put neatly in the middle of the stamp, whole uncut sheets being so obliterated to oblige dealers! Of course these stamps are postmarked, but, in my opinion, cannot properly be called used—a distinction with a difference.

Having been a collector for 20 years, I take note of these little matters.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR J. GRIFFITH,
Acting Vice-Consul.

THE SECRETARY PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF LONDON.

THE NIGER COAST STAMPS.

To the Editor of the "London Philatelist."

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a letter from Mr. A. J. Griffiths, acting Vice-Consul at Old Calabar, which appeared in your number of September of this year.

I quite agree with your want of appreciation of the "natural causes" which have led to the creation of the surcharges mentioned in Mr. Griffith's letter, a want of appreciation which will be shewn in a marked manner when I arrive on the Coast, for which I leave next Saturday. Mr. Griffiths has only been in the Protectorate service a few months; his letter, which was written without authority of any kind, contains many inaccuracies; 20,000 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps were sent out, not 8000 as stated by Mr. Griffiths—a further supply of 36,000 are now on their way out.

All obliterating marks are now circular and not square, and have so been for some time. The square ones were abolished by circular letter sent to all stations by my order. The damp climate of the Protectorate does not allow of a large stock of stamps being kept on hand, but every effort is made to keep up a constant supply. Surcharging is strictly forbidden, unless with the special sanction of the officer administering the government for the time being.

Faithfully yours,

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD,

*H.M.'s Commissioner and Consul-General,
Niger Coast Protectorate.*

14, SUFFOLK STREET, PALL MALL,
LONDON, S.W., October 9th, 1894.

THE NIGER COAST STAMPS.

DEAR SIR,—In the interesting letter from Mr. Griffith, which appears in the September number of the *London Philatelist*, he states, in the last paragraph but one, that "no stamps of this Protectorate (Oil Rivers) have been genuinely used through the post unless obliterated with the square outgoing postmark."

This statement cannot be quite correct, as I possess several of the Oil Rivers stamps on their original envelopes, and none of them are obliterated in the manner he says is necessary—they all bear the little *circular* postmark he condemns—although they were posted in the Protectorate, were delivered by the postman here in the usual way, and safely acted as covers to various communications!

In proof of what I say I am sending you herewith three of the envelopes—posted respectively November 17, 1892, January 10, 1893, and December 11, 1893—for your inspection. Kindly return at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT TYETH STEVENS.

6, ST. JAMES' TERRACE, PLYMOUTH,
October 18th, 1894.

1894

Various Perfs.

The Old Calabar Provisionals.

Surcharge Double.



A STUDY OF THE 1st. TWO LINES OF THE "OLD CALABAR" 1894 "DOUBLE SURCHARGE"

POSITION 1

FIRST LINE

POSITION 1 has "notched" left side bars.

SECOND LINE

POSITION 1

There were at least 3 lines of "Double-Surcharges" — caused by the sheet moving in the sliding tray.
No. 8 position exists — ("Double-Surcharge") — with and without the broken "N" in "ONE".
The unbroken "N" in No. 8 — is also very scarce.

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