



REGULAR



INVERT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS STAMP?

by Jerry Klein

Because of a freak printing error,
this 5-cent stamp is worth up to \$2,500

DO YOU HAVE one of the postage stamps shown (in enlargement) above? If you do, or can find one, you'll be a lot richer.

The stamp was issued by Canada last June to mark the opening of the Saint Lawrence Seaway but, through a printing error, some of them came off the presses topsy-turvy. Such specimens, originally worth five cents, may now fetch as much as \$2,500.

The excitement started the day an office boy named Ernest Slutchuk went to a post office in Ottawa to buy some stamps. When he returned to work, it was noticed that the blue eagle and maple leaf in the center of some of the stamps were printed upside-down from the red lettering which appears at the top and bottom.

Soon there was a scramble to post offices. Some similar misprints were found in Winnipeg and Picton, but elsewhere postal officials located—and promptly withdrew—the rare and valuable inverts.

Canada issued 40 million of these Seaway stamps, but so far only 58 of the freak specimens are believed to have been discovered—six of them after being used on letters. No doubt there are others waiting to be found.

(The United States issued 120 million of these same stamps in a four-cent denomination, but so far no misprints have occurred.)

Rich rewards have gone to those lucky enough to find one of the errors. The Ottawa office boy who started the furor is reported to have received \$3,500 for one, while a secretary in the same office is said to have successfully held out for \$5,500.

Currently, a perfect unused copy is quoted in Canada at \$2,500. Gimbels, a New York department store, claims to have cornered the only copy in America but offers to part with it at the bargain-basement price of \$1,000 because the specimen isn't in perfect condition. Used copies carry a \$500 price tag.

Because the stamps are in two colors, they go through two presses. The upside-down effect apparently was the result of a printing pressman feeding the paper into one press the wrong way.

Although Canada has been printing postage stamps for more than a century, only three times previously had so serious a blunder gotten into circulation. Canadian Postmaster General W. M. Hamilton asserts:

"I do not expect it to occur again!"

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