

Board of Trade and Similar Perfins

John Nelson has come across the following cutting from *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* November 1942. It offers an interesting insight into Gibbons thinking about these perfins almost sixty years ago.

Stamps Perforated with Initials

Postage stamps perforated with initials fall into two classes, those in which the perforated letters are official and take the place of an overprint and those done by private firms or individuals to protect their stamps from pilfering. The last-named have no importance for the collector, except that their presence is generally regarded as a bad point so far as condition is concerned.

Examples of officially perforated initials are numerous — the "Crown Over BT" of the Board of Trade on the Victorian and Edwardian issues of Great Britain, the "WA" and "OS" of Western Australia and similar perforations in other Australian states, the "OS" of the Australian Commonwealth and the "T" of Tunis spring to mind at once and there are quite a few others. Canadian stamps with "OHMS" are amongst the latest additions.

Stamps of this class (with the exception of two of Sudan, whose presence nobody seems able to explain) have been excluded from the Gibbons' Catalogues, for three reasons - first that they are not in great demand; second, that they would take up a good deal of space; and third, that, if they were listed and attained wide popularity, the rarities among them would be extraordinarily easy to imitate. It must be admitted that the third reason might be applied with almost equal force to some overprinted

stamps, and if there were a general demand for the inclusion of this group of stamps it would certainly be treated with consideration by the publishers.

Even if the Catalogue does boycott these stamps and there is no general demand for them, this is not to say that they are without importance. If a postage stamp with an overprint allocating it to official use is collectable, so, logically, is a postage stamp perforated with initials instead of being overprinted. Therefore a specialist desiring to make a complete collection of the stamps of his pet country would be well-advised to include all the officially perforated stamps he can find, for they are a necessary part of that country's philatelic history.

It might even be interesting to make a collection of such issues only, as a sideline.

The above is written at the request of a reader who has found difficulty in convincing friends that perforated stamps are of any interest because they are "not in Gibbons". There are lots of interesting things that are not in Gibbons', because the scope of the Catalogue has to be limited at some point, for reasons of space.

[Ed:-for the many members who have an interest in this subject - and my post bag tells me there are many - this article is a useful addition to the previous crop of articles and opinions on the subject of the Board of Trade perfins which have appeared in the Bulletin. It pre-dates by some twenty years the article by Capt.H.T.Jackson which has been debated in this magazine.]