

## Part Twenty Three

*The Essay Proof Journal*, Whole No. 29, Vol. 8 No. 1, January 1951, pp. 25-27

### Switzerland Its Essays and Proofs Addenda

By George W. Caldwell, E. P. S. 318

(Continued from JOURNAL No. 28, Page 229.)

#### B. Postal Adhesives — Special

As defined in the original text of this monograph, (68) a special stamp is one for which no postal need existed, as that particular denomination already was provided in the regular series.

Discussed in this Addenda are Commemoratives, Semi-Postals, and Propaganda Stamps which were not treated in the original text.

#### Commemorative Issues

Some of Switzerland's commemorative issues partake also of the character of semi-postals in that they were issued at a price in excess of their franking value. For convenience, we arbitrarily discuss them under the commemorative grouping. Cross-reference is made in the semi-postal group.

#### Peace Issue, 1919

Anticipating the termination of World War I and wishing to be prepared to commemorate that event postally, the Department in 1917 invited ten prominent artists to essay designs for a series of postage stamps. From the designs submitted, the Department selected those of Ed. Vallet of Saviese, P. Th. Robert of St. Blaise, and Otto Baumberger of Zurich; and assigned them respectively to the values of 7½ Centimes, 10 Centimes and 15 Centimes (Scott's designs A32-34). J. Sprenger of Bienne engraved the original dies in steel.

Documentation concerning the plates is not available. However, the author suspects they were 25-subject nickel electrotypes. And considering the quantities issued it is assumed four of these were used as an assembly in the typographic printing which took place in the Mint.

The Sihl Mills supplied a chalky surfaced, watermarked paper. This was the first time such paper had been used by the Swiss. The watermark is difficult to see, which probably accounts for an incorrect designation in Scott. The stamps were perforated 11¾ and were placed on first day sale August 1, 1919.

The author knows of no essays nor proofs in private ownership.

#### Universal Postal Union, 1924

On October 9, 1924 the Department issued two stamps (Scott's designs A37-38) commemorating this postal reform. The Swiss specialized catalogs designate these as a 50th anniversary issue. In view of the fact that the 1900 set commemorating this Union is designated in those catalogs as a 25th anniversary issue, some confusion exists in the minds of many philatelists as to what actually was being commemorated. With the view to clearing up this confusion, we record a few pertinent facts.

p. 26 On September 15, 1874 a meeting of delegates from twenty-two governments opened in Bern. Fourteen sittings were held and on October 9th of that year the representatives signed a treaty subject to ratification by their respective governments. The effective date selected for this treaty to come into force was July 1, 1875. The exchange of ratifications took place in Bern on May 3, 1875.

---

68 See JOURNAL No. 14, page 99.

Thus it is clear that the earlier issue commemorated the 25th anniversary of the official birth of the Union, whereas the later one which we now have under discussion refers to the preliminary sessions, and more particularly to the signing of the treaty by the delegates. It should be noted that the date of that signing appears in the stamp design and corresponds with the date of issue of the stamp.

Two values comprise this issue: 20 Centimes and 30 Centimes. These were essayed by A. Tieche and W. Stettler respectively, both of Bern. The building embodied in the designs is that of the Federal Diet in which this first meeting of the Union was held. Intaglio copper electrotype plates were used in the printing, the 20 Centimes by the Federal Printing Plant and the 30 Centimes by Orell Fussli of Zurich. The paper is watermarked and contains the usual red and blue granite fibers. Presumably this was supplied by the Sihl Mills.

Neither essays nor proofs are known to the author.

### **World Disarmament Conference, 1932**

This forward-looking but unsuccessful movement entered its formal discussion stage on February 2, 1932, when, on that date, the first session of delegates from the principal governments of the World convened in the League of Nations building in Geneva.

The importance of this occasion prompted the Department to issue a series of stamps in honor of the event. Several artists had been invited to submit designs, of which two were accepted. The symbol of peace — a dove with an olive branch in its beak and perched on the hilt end of a broken sword — was essayed by Maurice Barraud of Geneva. This composition (Scott's design A41) was assigned to the low values: 5 Centimes thru 60 Centimes. A stylized concept representing Peace (Scott's design A42) was essayed by George Fustier of Geneva and used for the 1 Franc value.

Dies for the low values were engraved by G. Matter of Zurich and the stamps were typographed in the Postal Printing Plant. The size and type of these plates do not appear to have been philatelically recorded. The paper used was chalky surfaced granite (red and blue fibers) and contains the usual watermark.

The 1-Franc value was rotogravure printed by Courvoisier Inc., of La Chaux-de-Fonds, using unwatermarked granite paper (red and blue fibers).

Essays and proofs of this issue are not known to the author.

### **St. Gotthard Railroad, 1932**

On May 31, 1932 the Department issued three portrait stamps commemorating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the St. Gotthard Railroad, which forms a link in the important rail system connecting Central Europe with the Mediterranean. In some records this issue is attributed to the completion of the St. Gotthard Tunnel, which provides a 9½ mile passage under the Alps between Goeschenen and Airolo. This is the attribution given in a monograph (69) issued by the Department in 1943. However, a gift booklet, issued for limited distribution on the occasion of the stamp issue, indicates the opening of the Railroad. Admittedly, the question is somewhat academic, but factual accuracy would seem to warrant research in an effort to discover what the Department had in mind at the time. In the meantime, the author prefers the attribution given in the booklet issued contemporaneously with the stamps.

**p. 27** Karl Bickel of Wallenstadtberg designed the stamps (Scott's designs A43-45) and engraved the steel dies. These depict three of the men who had much to do with this railroad project: Louis Favre, builder of the tunnel, is shown on the 10 Centimes stamp; Alfred Escher, first president of the St. Gotthard Railroad, founded in 1871, is depicted on the 20 Centimes value; and Federal Councilor Emil Welti, who was Chief of the Department of Posts and Railroads at the time the line was opened, appears on the 30 Centimes stamp.

---

69 Le Centenaire des Timbres-Poste Suisses 1843-1943, issued by the Swiss Department of Postes, Telegraphs and Telephones – 1943.

Orell Fussli of Zurich printed these stamps, using intaglio plates — probably copper electros — and watermarked granite paper (red and blue fibers). The size of the plates is not available.

The gift booklet to which reference has been made contains the only proofs of this issue known to the author. The booklet consists of seven very light-weight cardboard pages of pale buff color in a cardboard cover tied with a silk cord of alternate red and white strands, the national colors of Switzerland. Three of the pages are die sunk proofs of this issue; three others contain a mint block of four and a similar block postmarked May 31, 1932, the day of issue of the stamps. The seventh page functions as a fly-leaf carrying the legends *Zum fünfzigsten Gedenktage der Eröffnung der Gottardbahn/ Souvenir du cinquantenaire de la ligne du St. Gotthard/ Per it cinquantesimo desercizio della ferrovia del S. Gottardo 11/VI/1882-1932*. (For the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the St. Gotthard Railroad).

## Proofs

**1932. Designed and engraved by Karl Bickel. Die proofs die sunk directly on card (.007") probably by Orell Fussli, Zurich.**

**524. 10 Centimes, red-brown (216P2) .**

**525. 20 Centimes, red (217P2).**

**526. 30 Centimes, blue (218P2).**

Neither essays nor additional proofs are known to the author.

## Naba Block, 1934

Switzerland's first souvenir block (Scott's design A52a) was issued in honor of the National Philatelic Exhibition held in Zurich from September 29 through October 27, 1934. This block consists of four then current stamps arranged in square format and perforated within an inscriptional border. The name of the designer of this border does not appear to have been recorded philatelically.

These blocks were typographed in the Postal Printing Plant using watermarked, chalky surfaced, lightly grilled granite paper (red and blue fibers). Further manufacturing details are not available.

Each ticket of admission to the show entitled its holder to purchase one of these blocks at face value. They were obtainable only at the show. The entire issue of 50,000 was sold, which speaks well for the manner in which this exhibition was supported.

The author is unaware of either essays or proofs of this block in private ownership.

## League of Nations, 1938

On May 2, 1938, the Department issued four stamps (Scott's designs A63-66) commemorating the opening of the Assembly Hall of the Palace of the League of Nations. These were designed by Hans Fischer of Zurich and Bern, and rotogravure printed by Courvoisier using 100-subject etched cylinders. The layout on the cylinders consisted of four quads of 25 subjects separated by the usual horizontal and vertical gutters. Unwatermarked granite paper (red and blue fibers) was used.

We know of neither essays nor proofs in philatelic ownership.

(To be continued.)