



Stamps by Larry McInnis

The Word Cents Sometimes Omitted From Our Stamps

Stamp collecting teaches not only geography and history, but the importance of being observant.

That's what I tell anyone who will listen. I've heard a hundred lecturers at school stamp clubs say the same.

After all, if you're not observant, you'll miss that great error that we all seek, the one that will bring untold wealth.

This came to mind recently as I was going over a number of Canada Post philatelic bulletins giving details of recent stamp issues.

I noted that the monetary value printed on the stamps — face, as it's referred to in philately — did not include the word *cents* or carry that little *c* with a stroke through it.

A discovery, I thought. This hasn't been announced. Is it a sneak trial run?

I recalled the big brouhaha in American philatelic circles when it was announced in 1984 that, starting with U.S. issues in 1985, only the figures would be shown — no *c* (the Americans didn't use the stroke through it).

In Canada imitating the U.S. yet again, I asked myself

My quick research knocked me for a loop. I must confess.

The first Canadian stamps to show only a figure were issued a quarter-century ago, in 1962. Don't let the catalogue numbers confuse you because the five-stamp set actually began with the

October 3, 1962 issue of a 5-cent stamp (Scott 405), followed by a 1-cent (Scott 401) and 4-cent (Scott 404), on February 4, 1963, and a 2-cent (Scott 402) and 3-cent (Scott 403) issued on May 2, 1963.

The set is known as the Queen Elizabeth II "Cameo" issue, because the main design is the Queen's head in cameo.

All the other 1963 issues had *cents* or *c*.

On March 11, 1964, a 7-cent stamp showing a jet airliner over an airport terminal (Scott 414) was issued — showing only the number 7.

Was that the end of it?

Not quite. Two stamps were issued on October 13,

1965 as the Christmas issue, a 3-cent and 5-cent (Scott 443 and 444) with an American-style *c* (no stroke) following the numeral.

That was the end of it... except for stamps with the value of \$1 or higher; these carry the dollar sign.

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