

MEKEEL PHILATELIC  
COOK  
ISLANDS  
BY B. W. H. POOLE.  
HAND BOOKS

No 1

THE  
Stamps of Cook Islands

BY BERTRAM W. H. POOLE

---

Mekeel Handbook No. 1

Price 25 Cents

---

PUBLISHED BY  
MEKEEL-SEVERN-WYLIE CO.  
BOSTON, MASS.

1913

## FOREWORD.

*Among the smaller stamp issuing states of the Pacific the postal issues of the Cook Islands are deservedly popular. The stamps are straightforward, unburdened by a plethora of surcharged provisionals, and yet they provide a number of varieties of considerable rarity as well as others of undisputed philatelic interest.*

*The only article of any importance on the subject is that from the pen of Mr. A. F. Basset Hull, which appeared in the "Monthly Journal" so long ago as 1901, and to this I am indebted for much valuable information in the way of official records. Other useful items have been culled from the "new issues" columns of various philatelic journals, with due acknowledgement, and much has been gleaned from a careful study of the stamps themselves.*

*Since this article first appeared in serial form in MEKEEL'S WEEKLY STAMP NEWS little new information has transpired. With regard to the first issue Mr. A. H. Weber tells me he can identify each one of the six types of the 1d and that it is also possible to identify each of the ten blocks that go to the make-up of the sheet. Mr. Weber has also succeeded in finding points of difference between the six types of the 2½d though he says the color of this makes them extremely hard to distinguish with certainty. The large flaw on the 10d mentioned on page 19 is, as I there surmised, located on the right hand pane. I have been fortunate in acquiring a large block of this stamp with margins and I find the flaw occurs on the sixth stamp in the second row of this pane.*

*Queen Makea died May 1, 1911, at the age of seventy-two but this lamentable event has, at the time of writing, had no effect on the postage stamps.*

B. W. H. P.

# THE STAMPS OF COOK ISLANDS.

By BERTRAM W. H. POOLE.

## I. GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES.

The Cook Islands, or Hervey Archipelago, are a small cluster in the South Pacific Ocean lying midway between Samoa and Tahiti and about 1700 miles north-north-east of Auckland, New Zealand. The group consists of six islands and nine islets, some being of coral formation and others owing their origin to volcanic activity. The largest and most important island is Rarotonga, which has a circumference of 20 miles. It is volcanic and hilly, (its highest peak rising to 3000 feet), and has numerous fertile and well-watered valleys. Its capital and port, Avatiu, is the trade centre of the group, and has a population of well over 2000. The other islands are Mangeia, Atiu, Mauki, Mitiero, Aitutaki (which now issues stamps of its own), and the Hervey Islands proper.

The total area of the group is 280 square miles and its present population exceeds 12,000. The natives belong to the large brown Polynesian race, closely related to the Maoris of New Zealand, and their speech is closely allied to Samoan. There is a distinct strain of Melanesian blood, especially conspicuous in Mangeia, where frizzly black hair and a very dark complexion predominate. Fifty years ago all were fierce cannibals, but the natives are now in an advanced state of civilization, professing Christianity, dressing after the European fashion, and living in stone houses grouped in small townships.

The chief products of the islands are copra, coffee, oranges, limes, cotton and pineapples, besides such native foods as taro, breadfruit and yams. Most of the trade is with New Zealand, this now amounting to about \$400,000 per annum.

The Cook Islands were discovered by Captain Cook in 1777 when on his second voyage of discovery in the Pacific. Civilizing influences first commenced in 1823 when missionaries visited the islands and succeeded in making many converts. In 1864 the native chiefs petitioned for annexation to Great Britain, but it was not until 1888 that a British Protectorate was established. The islands were formally annexed to the British Empire in October, 1900, and since June, 1901, have been included in the boundaries of New Zealand. At the same time Niue (or Savage Island), and Penrhyn Island and a few smaller islands were included with this group for administrative purposes under the general title of the "Cook Islands Administration." The government is administered locally under the direction of New Zealand. The Federal Council of the Cook Islands legislates for all the islands (except Niue), under the direction of the Resident Commissioner at Rarotonga. The native chiefs are all members of the Council and Makea Ariki, as the head native chief of the group, receives an allowance from the government.

## II. EARLY POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Following in the wake of the missionaries a few white traders established "stations" on the islands but for many years there was no organized postal system. Those who wished to send correspondence to their friends in the outside world handed their letters, as opportunity permitted, to the captain of any vessel calling at the islands, together with sufficient money to pay the postage from the first civilized port of call to destination. There was, of course, no systematic arrangement, the seamen took charge of the letters as a personal favor, and consequently their duties as mail-carriers were performed in a somewhat perfunctory manner.

In 1884-85 Mr. Richard Exham was appointed Acting British pro-Consul at Rarotonga and Mr. Basset Hull informs us that he conducted a somewhat primitive postal system. Old residents aver

that the contemporary stamps of Great Britain were used at this consular post-office but there appear to be no records of any sort in verification of this statement. If such stamps were used they were not cancelled by any of the regular British obliterating marks for the office was of a private character and in no way under the jurisdiction of the British Post Office. Owing to certain irregularities this consular post fell into disrepute and it was eventually discontinued.

With the establishment of a British Protectorate in 1888 some provision for the collection and dispatch of letters was probably made but what form this "post" took I have been unable to discover. Possibly the letters were dispatched by the men-of-war of the Pacific Squadron, which would occasionally call at the port of Avatiu, or by trading

vessels to New Zealand as opportunity offered. Whether New Zealand stamps were used at any period or not is another point in which information is altogether lacking.

Mr. Bassett Hull tells us that "after the appointment of Mr. Moss as British Resident in 1891, Mr. J. H. Garnier was appointed Postmaster under Statute. The Post Office was then in Donald and

Edenborough's store at Avatiu, Rarotonga." From this it would seem that an official Post-office was established at any rate as early as 1891, but what system was in vogue and what stamps, if any, were used before the appearance of the regular Cook Islands emission in the following year are, again, matters regarding which no information seems to have been published.

### III. PHILATELIC HISTORY.

The philatelic history proper of the islands commences in 1892 with the issue of four large and anything but handsome labels. They were somewhat in the nature of an experiment but their issue was attended with such success that arrangements were made for the issue of a more pretentious set. Accordingly in the following year a set of five values bearing the portrait of Makea made its appearance. These stamps, like those of the first and all succeeding issues, were produced at the New Zealand Government Stamp Printing establishment and they were printed on the same paper and have a similar perforation to that of the New Zealand stamps of the same date. In 1894 the colour of the 1d was changed from brown to blue, while in 1898 its original colour was reverted to. At the same period 2d, 6d and 1s stamps in a new design were issued these and the other values of the set having a new perforation (gauging 11) corresponding to that of the contemporary New Zealand stamps.

A demand for a ½d denomination arose in 1899 and, while regular stamps of this value were being prepared, a temporary label was provided by surcharging the balance of the discarded 1d blue stamps with "ONE-HALF-PENNY" in three lines. The regular ½d stamp arrived in 1900 and was found to be in the same type as the 2d, 6d and 1s issued in 1898. To mark the annexation of the group to New Zealand in 1901 a number of the 1d brown stamps were overprinted with an Imperial crown. It was intended, I believe, to apply this device to the other values as well but the printer made such a bad job of the 1d and spoiled so many stamps that the idea was abandoned.

In 1902 the ½d, 1d and 2½d values were issued in Postal Union colours, and were printed on the unwatermarked paper then in favour at the Government atelier in Wellington. This paper was soon superseded by a variety containing a new version of the N. Z. and Star watermark, i. e., with the star closer to the letters than in that hitherto employed. The other values of the set were gradually issued on the new paper and in 1909 a further change was made by the emission of the 1d with a perforation gauging 14.

That the issue of postage stamps has been of some benefit to the revenue of the Cook Islands, as, indeed, it must be to every stamp issuing country, no one would be so foolish as to deny, but to assert that the stamps were issued solely for speculative purposes would be more foolish still. This idea was, however, more or less prevalent some years ago as the following extract from one of the issues of the London *Times* for March, 1894, will show:—

"A British protectorate was established over the islands in 1888, and a year and a half ago they found that the ways of civilization required the use of postage stamps. They accordingly got a supply from New Zealand—printed with a neat border, in ordinary letter-press, on ordinary gummed paper. Before long the dealers began to buy up these very unpretending stamps, and so many were asked for that the native rulers found there was here the possibility of a market even more profitable than coffee or copra. They speedily rose to the occasion, and, some five months ago, they had a further issue. The new stamps were properly engraved, instead of being merely printed, and now, of course, the wholesale dealers are sending for the new issue as well. For every stamp actually used in the islands for postal purposes 100 or 200 are despatched abroad, and the sale of the 100 or 200 represents no actual postal work at all. Indeed, it is even said the receipts from this source alone are sufficient to cover all the expenses of governing the islands."

And now for the other side of the story. Facts are incontrovertible and the following interesting extract from the *Australian Philatelist* for September, 1899, puts quite a different complexion on the matter:—

"The following is the postal revenue of the Cook Islands Federation from 1892 to 1898:—

1892-3	£245.5.9	1895-6	£120.8.5
1893-4	£278.2.3	1896-7	£120.5.3
1894-5	£228.0.1	1897-8	£179.16.2

For six years the revenue has been only £1171.17.11, or under £200 per annum. During this period there were no less than three different series of stamps issued, comprising thirteen varieties (not counting the two papers of the first issue). This allows for an average of £90 for each variety. Now, from the virtuously indignant remarks of certain speculative stamp suppressors, one would naturally suppose that the 'bleeding' of stamp collectors so largely descanted upon would be of something like a respectable amount. After allowing for the value of the stamps legitimately used for postal purposes, and there can be no doubt that more than one-half of those issued in Cook Islands were so used, the long suffering philatelist appears to have been 'bled' to the extent of possibly £500 for thirteen new kinds of stamps, or less than £40 worth of each. When the bill for engraving and printing was paid very little would be left over to be reckoned as philatelic profit."

## V. THE FIRST ISSUE.

In a previous chapter reference is made to the appointment of a responsible Postmaster in 1891, and coincident with the appointment of this officer steps were taken to establish a regular postal service. Postage stamps were, of course, a prime necessity and Mr. Frederick J. Moss, the British Resident, who was about to visit New Zealand, was commissioned by the Cook Islands Government to make the necessary arrangements for securing a supply of stamps and also for procuring recognition of their franking power from the New Zealand Government.

On January 27th, 1892, Mr. Moss wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, N. Z., as follows:—

At the request of the Cook Islands Government, I have the honour to inform you that a Post Office having been established at Rarotonga with a responsible Postmaster, they ask:—

- (1) If the New Zealand Government will be kind enough to allow stamps for the use of the Post Office to be printed at the Government Printing Office, the Cook Islands Government paying for the same.
- (2) On what terms the stamps will be recognized by the New Zealand Post Office and letters bearing them be posted to their destination.

This letter was sent to the Post Office Department and the Secretary of the General Post Office (Mr. W. Gray) appended the following comments on February 1st:—

The Postmaster-General agrees to recognise postage stamps issued by the Rarotonga Post Office, and that correspondence originating in the Cook Islands group, prepaid with the proposed stamps, shall be delivered in New Zealand without charge.

It probably would be desirable that the British Agent should obtain the consent of the other countries and colonies to the use of the proposed stamps for the prepayment of correspondence to destination.

Mr. Bassett Hull tells us that this latter suggestion was considered an excellent one and it was immediately acted upon by Mr. Moss, who wrote, under date of February 12th, 1892, from Auckland, N. Z., to the Directors of the Postal Administrations of India, Germany and the United States in the following terms:—

Having on behalf of the Native Government of the Federated Cook Islands arranged with the New Zealand Government for their recognition of the Cook Islands postage stamps and conveyance of mails by their contract steamer, I have the honour to ask, at the request of the Native Government, if you will also kindly recognise the stamps and forward correspondence bearing them to their destination without charge.

To save delay I have, pending your reply, advised the Native Government to send correspondence bearing their postage stamps, on the understanding that they accept for letters so sent, such terms as you may consider suitable.

The replies to this communication being of considerable interest I venture to

give them in full as detailed by Mr. Bassett Hull in the *Monthly Journal*:—

Copy of No. 133c dated May 11th, 1892, from the Director-General of the Post Office of India to the British Resident, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, Auckland, New Zealand.

(1). I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th February last, and to say that I shall be glad to recognise the postage stamps of the Native Government of the Federated Cook Islands, in prepayment of correspondence sent from those islands to India.

(2). I understand that correspondence for India posted in the Cook Islands will be forwarded through the medium of the Postal Administration of New Zealand, and any such correspondence that may be received in this country from the Post Office of that colony as fully prepaid, will be delivered free of any charge.

(3). The Native Government is no doubt in its turn willing to recognise the postage stamps of this country in prepayment of any correspondence that may be posted in India for the Cook Islands; and I am now addressing the New Zealand Administration to ascertain the conditions under which correspondence may be forwarded through it to those Islands, though the exchange is likely to be very insignificant.

\* \* \*

Kaiserlich Deutsches Reichs-Postamt.  
Berlin, W., 21 Mai, 1892.  
(Translation.)

The Imperial Post Office is in receipt of a letter, dated 12th February (Copy attached), from the British Resident at Rarotonga, in which request is made for the recognition of the postage stamps issued by the Cook Islands. In view of the fact that transmission to and from the Islands is effected through the intermediary of the Post and Telegraph Department, the Imperial Post Office considers it should settle this question with the concurrence of the Post and Telegraph Department. The Imperial Post Office, therefore, has the honour to inform the Post and Telegraph Department that, on condition of reciprocity, provided the stamps are also recognised by the Post and Telegraph Department, it is prepared to treat correspondence bearing Cook Islands stamps as fully paid.

Letters of this description will not, therefore, be subject to any surcharge in Germany, provided correspondence for the Cook Islands bearing German postage stamps is treated in like manner. If these conditions are accepted, as the Imperial Post Office believes they will be, it would beg leave to request the Post and Telegraph Department to kindly communicate its consent to the British Resident at Rarotonga. It would also be desirable that the Imperial Post Office be informed by the Post and Telegraph Department as to the transit-costs correspondence for the Cook Islands would be subject to. A reply would be acceptable to the Imperial Post Office.

\* \* \*

Post Office Department,  
Office of Foreign Mails,  
Washington, D. C., April 20th, 1892.

Sir:—I have the honour, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to inform you that this Department is in receipt of a letter dated at Auckland, February 12th, 1892, and signed "Frederick J. Moss, British Resident, Cook Islands," announcing that the Native Government of the Federated Cook Islands have arranged with the Government of New Zealand for recognition by the latter of the Cook Islands postage stamps; and enquiring

whether this Department will likewise recognise the stamps in question and deliver without charge articles bearing said stamps. Before replying to Mr. Moss the Postmaster-General would be glad if you would furnish this Department with further information relative to the arrangement in question, and as to the status of Cook Islands with respect to the Government of New Zealand; that is to say, whether the islands can be considered, for postal purposes, as a dependency of New Zealand, and whether your Administration would make any claim against this Department for intermediary transit charges on articles mailed in the United States addressed for delivery in Cook Islands and despatched in mails for New Zealand to be forwarded from New Zealand to destination.

It may be well to add that if articles, mailed in Cook Islands, addressed for delivery in the United States, were received in this country as open-mail matter in mails for the United States made up in New Zealand, without any indication on the articles of sufficient prepayment of postage, the Department would be disposed to treat them as fully prepaid articles.

I am, etc.,  
(Sgd.) N. M. BROOKS,  
Superintendent of Foreign Mails.

The Postmaster-General, etc.,  
Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 103,027 N. Z.

Post Office Department,  
Office of Foreign Mails,  
Washington, D. C., July 13th, 1892.

Sir:—Referring to your reply, under date of the 7th ultimo, and No. 2,314, to this Department's letter of the 20th April last, No. 101,630, relative to the status—for postal purposes—of the "Federated Cook Islands" in the relations of those islands with New Zealand; I have the honour, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to inform you that, in view of the information therein contained, the Postmaster-General has directed that articles mailed in the Cook Islands with postage prepaid by means of Cook Islands postage stamps, and received in this country in the mails from New Zealand, which do not bear the impress of stamped "T", be treated as fully prepaid articles and forwarded as such to their destination.

I am, etc.,  
(Sgd.) N. M. BROOKS,  
Superintendent of Foreign Mails.  
The Postmaster-General, etc.,  
Wellington, New Zealand.

These letters plainly establish the status of the Cook Islands stamps and they were from the first available for international correspondence, thanks to the backing of New Zealand, instead of being semi-locals like so many other "first issues."

Mr. Moss personally superintended the arrangements regarding the supply of postage stamps but who is responsible for the design has never transpired. The stamps were printed at the Government Printing Office, Wellington. The design is simple in the extreme and consists of a rectangular Greek border within a single-line outer frame measuring 25 mm. in width and 30 mm. in height. Inside the Greek border is a frame of

short lines, enclosed by a single-line rectangle, and this, in turn, contains an inner fringe of short lines placed horizontally at the sides and vertically at top and bottom. In the centre are seven stars, or asterisks, arranged in three



lines of two, three, and two respectively, the middle one being larger than the others. This "constellation" is intended to represent the seven chief islands of the group, the largest one, of course, typifying Rarotonga, and the others stand for Mangeia, Atiu, Mitiaro, Aitutaki, Manuae and Mauke. At the top, above the stars, is "POSTAGE" in block capitals, and "COOK ISLANDS" in tall sans-serif capitals, these inscriptions being divided by a fairly thick line. At the base the inscriptions are "FEDERATION" and the value—expressed as "ONE PENNY", "1½ PENCE", "2½ PENCE", or "TEN PENCE"—also in sans-serif capitals and divided by a line.

Some writers tell us these stamps were type-set while Mr. Basset Hull states that they were printed "from electro prepared from a single type-set matrix, the value only being altered for each denomination." Neither of these descriptions of the method of manufacture is quite correct or adequate. A careful examination of the stamps will show two fairly wide breaks in the outer frame line at the bottom, an irregularity in the alignment of the Greek border at the right-hand lower corner, and several small breaks in the outer border at the right and in other parts of the design. These all prove that one original "die" set from type, and without the value served for all four denominations. Evidently casts were taken from this original in which the values were inserted in type and these formed the subsidiary dies. From each of the secondary dies six replicas were made and arranged in two horizontal rows of three each. The blocks of six were then re-duplicated ten times and arranged in two vertical rows of five each, which formed the printing plates thus:—



1 2 3	1 2 3
4 5 6	4 5 6
1 2 3	1 2 3
4 5 6	4 5 6
1 2 3	1 2 3
4 5 6	4 5 6
1 2 3	1 2 3
4 5 6	4 5 6
1 2 3	1 2 3
4 5 6	4 5 6

It will be seen that there are six types of each value, varying in minute details, repeated ten times in each sheet. Whether it would be possible to recognise the six types of each value or not, I cannot say. I have been unable to do so, though I have identified sufficient to prove that the printing plates consisted of a repetition of blocks of six as shown above.

In the 1d No. 2 in each block of six, has a small indentation in the top of the "T" of "POSTAGE."

In the 1½d No. 1, in each block has a smudge of colour on the Greek border at the lower left corner, and No. 6 has a large portion of the outer frame line completely cut away from the left lower corner.

In the 2½d No. 3 in each block has a small nick on the underside of the upper limb of the "E" of "POSTAGE", and No. 6 has a break in the inner frame line above the space between the "GE" of "POSTAGE."

In the 10d No 1, in each block shows the third star in the centre row minus the ends of the projections on its right side, and No. 6 has a small nick at the top of the left-hand leg of the "N" of "PENCE."

I have had the opportunity of examining a number of entire sheets of all except the 10d value and I find certain stamps show small defects or little peculiarities by means of which their positions can be readily identified. The following is a list of these:—

#### One Penny.

No. 13. The "F" and "R" of "FEDERATION" are shorter than usual.

No. 20. Similar to No. 13 and also has several extra lines in the fringed border at the right, just above the "N" of "FEDERATION".

#### Three half-pence.

No. 1. The "F" of "FEDERATION" is short, the "1" of "½" has no serif and the "2" is malformed.

No. 8. The right vertical stroke of the "N" of "FEDERATION" is short and the "1" of "½" has no serif.

No. 9. The "N" in both "FEDERATION" and "PENCE" are similarly shortened and the second "E" of the latter word has a small break at the base.

No. 17. There is a coloured dot inside the rectangle at the left opposite the "C" of "COOK".

No. 28. The "N" of "FEDERATION" is short, the "1" of "½" has no serif, and the second "E" of "PENCE" has very short arms.

No. 43. Is similar to No. 8.

No. 52. The second "E" of "PENCE" has unusually short limbs.

No. 58. Is similar to No. 28.

#### Two pence half-penny.

No. 3. There is a smudge of colour near the right side of the central star.

No. 25. There is a flaw on the inside line of the Greek border at right opposite the last "S" of "ISLANDS".

No. 26. There is a coloured dot on the fringed border at the left near the top of the "F" of "FEDERATION".

No. 29. The second "O" of "COOK" contains a large coloured dot.

No. 54. There is a coloured dot at the right hand end of the central row of stars.

#### Ten Pence.

No. 2. The "R" of "FEDERATION" is shorter than usual.

No. 23. There is a coloured flaw on the dotted border at the base below the "T" of "TEN".

No. 30. The right hand border is broken near the top.

(a) The "T" of "ISLANDS" is broken in the centre and the "N" of "FEDERATION" is short.

(b) The Greek border is defective at the bottom of the left-hand side.

(c) Similar to (b) and the fourth section of the Greek border at the base, counting from the left, is broken.

I have been unable to ascertain the positions of the three last varieties of the 10d.

The stamps were printed on a fairly thick wove paper sometimes quite white and sometimes having a yellowish or toned appearance. Whether the latter represents a distinct variety or not is a debatable point. Some writers aver that the yellowish tinge is due to climatic conditions, but the difference seems to have been noticed almost as soon as the stamps appeared. That the toned paper represents a distinct printing, however, we have not a shred of evidence to prove. The two sorts of paper have been catalogued for so long now, that they have almost become standard varieties.

The sheets have fairly wide margins, those at the sides always being wider than those at the top and bottom.

The stamps were perforated by a single-line machine, gauging 12½ and the row of punches was sufficiently long for the perforation to extend across the margin on all four sides. There was a broken pin near one end of the machine



and from this it would appear that it was not possible to work a whole sheet under the perforator in the same direction. In the sheets of the 1d, the broken pin shows about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches from the bottom in the first five vertical rows of perforation, counting from the left side, and then near the top in the remaining rows. This shows that after five rows of perforation were punched, the sheets were removed and turned round before being completely perforated. The same arrangement may be found in the sheets of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d, while in the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d I note the broken pin is generally near the top in the first five rows and near the base in the others.

An error of perforation is known in the 1d, vertical pairs being found imperf. between. The error is an exceedingly rare one and I believe only occurred on one sheet so that only six of these pairs can exist. One I have shows a piece of the top margin proving that the perforation was omitted from between the two upper rows of stamps on the sheet.

Another curious error of some rarity I have is a block of four of the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d from the right hand side of the sheet with the vertical rows of perforation double. In his first attempt at perforating these the workman managed to run the line of holes right through the Greek border of the right-hand stamp. He then pasted a strip of paper at the back of the sheet and reperforated it in the correct position and added a superfluous row of holes in the right-hand margin. Mr. D. Field has shown me a similar variety in the  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d value.

The first supply of stamps was printed on February 29th, 1892, and consisted of:—

47 sheets	or	2820 stamps	of' the	1d
44 "	"	2640 "	"	$1\frac{1}{2}$ d
48 "	"	2880 "	"	$2\frac{1}{2}$ d
9 "	"	540 "	"	10d

Mr. Moss was advised of the despatch of these and on March 24th he wrote to the Colonial Secretary as follows:—

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day received from the Printing Office a letter advising the despatch by mail of the postage stamps for the Cook Islands Government in accordance with your letter to me of 3rd February last.

The Cook Islands Government has been duly informed by me of the kindness of the New Zealand Government in this matter and will, I have no doubt, acknowledge it with thanks.

When this consignment reached Rarotonga and when the stamps were first placed on sale are points on which there

appear to be no official records. Mr. Basset Hull states that they were probably issued on April 1st, but the Wellington correspondent of the *Monthly Journal*, writing in 1893, distinctly states that they were first placed on sale on April 19th.

The following table shows the numbers printed and delivered to the Cook Islands Government:—

Date	1d	$1\frac{1}{2}$ d	$2\frac{1}{2}$ d	10d
29 Feb. 1892	2820	2640	2880	540
19 Mar. "	1800	1740	1740	—
23 Aug. "	6000	6000	6000	3000
16 Sept. "	6000	6000	6000	3000
3 Oct. "	6000	6000	6000	3000
11 Nov. "	18000	18000	18000	9000
4 Dec. "	250	200	150	110
14 Dec. "	36000	36000	36000	18000
Totals,	76870	76580	76770	36650

Although there were nine printings of all except the 10d value there are no very marked shades beyond the pale and deep tints which may be found in most stamps.

The gum varies in colour from yellowish to a fairly dark brown.

When the second issue appeared there were a number of the first set on hand and according to a paragraph in the *London Philatelist* for February, 1894, official intimation was published that these remainders had been destroyed viz:—

"The whole stock of the stamps of the first issue which remained on hand when the current series were issued were destroyed on November 28th last, in the presence of the British Resident, the Public Auditor, the Chief Postmaster and others."

Doubts have been expressed on the accuracy of this report. In any case it is probable that the number destroyed was very small indeed.

That there can be no reprints is evidenced from the following extract from a letter sent by Mr. Gray to Mr. Moss on August 17th, 1894:—

I enclose herewith a certificate that the electrotypes used for the printing of the old series of the Cook Islands postage stamps have been destroyed.

The following is a synopsis of the varieties:—

- April, 1892. No Wmk. Perf.  $12\frac{1}{2}$ .
- 1d black (six types).
    - (a) Toned paper.
    - (b) Vertical pair, imperf. between.
  - $1\frac{1}{2}$  mauve (six types).
    - (a) Toned paper.
    - (b) Double perf. vertically.
  - $2\frac{1}{2}$ d indigo (six types).
    - (a) Toned paper.
    - (b) Double perf. vertically.
  - 10d carmine (six types).
    - (a) Toned paper.

## V. THE SECOND ISSUE.

The first set was so well received and the Islanders were so delighted with the way the stamps were appreciated abroad—as evidenced by the numerous orders received from dealers and collectors—that it was decided to embark on a much more pretentious set. The native "Queen" was considerably gratified and on June 12th, 1892, she wrote the following quaint letter to the then Premier of New Zealand (the Hon. J. Ballance):

Sir:—I wish to thank you and the New Zealand Government and people for their many kindnesses to us in these islands. Mr. Moss, the British Resident, has told us all about it—the Post Office Stamps, the printing, and many other things. We are grateful for them.

Our Post Office is at work, and people from England and other places are sending money to buy our stamps. Mr. Moss advises us to get new and good stamps with this money and the Parliament have decided that my likeness as Chief of the Government shall be upon them. Will you kindly allow those who made the New Zealand stamps to make ours? If it can be done for fifty pounds get them done and we will send the money. If it is to cost more please to let us know before they are made.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) MAKEA ARIKI,  
Chief of the Government of the Cook Islands.

This letter, with a covering one from the British Resident, was forwarded to the Premier. Makea's simple requisition for "stamps" was somewhat indefinite so Mr. Moss stated that the values required would be 1d, 1½d, 2½d and 5d and that a first supply of 2000 of each should be sent, supplemented by monthly supplies of 600 of each denomination. Evidently Makea's desire to have her portrait on the stamps caused some jealousy on the part of the other native chiefs as shown by the following excerpt from Mr. Moss's letter:—

With reference to the postage stamps about which Makea has written, the Federal Parliament decided that they should bear Makea's likeness upon them. This has been the subject of much heartburning with some other of the Arikis, but was carried in Parliament by ten to two. A very troublesome question indirectly affecting many others was thus settled, but I venture to ask that the work may be done with as little delay as possible.

I also send herewith a photograph of Makea, obtained, by good fortune, from a Chief who prizes it greatly. No other is to be obtained, for Makea has not kept any. The owner of this photograph asks me to have it returned if possible after use.

At the same time Mr. Moss wrote to the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand, as follows:—

I have the honor, at the request of the Federal Government, to ask if you will kindly order for them from the Government Printing Office a monthly supply of Cook Islands Postage Stamps, at the rate of 600 sets per month dating from 1st July. The sale to curiosity buyers is rapidly exhausting the stock in hand.

On July 23rd, 1892, Mr. Moss wrote

to the Secretary of the Post Office (Mr. Gray) in the following terms:—

We are doing wonderfully well with the Postage Stamps and are to get proper ones made. Makea has written to Mr. Ballance on other matters, and at the same time asked him if he would let the New Zealand maker of stamps make them for her. If to be done for £50 to be done at once. If more to let her know first. Makea's head is to be upon them, and they are to be 1d, 1½d, 2½d and 5d.

I presume Mr. Ballance will not lose time, but should have preferred writing myself to the Colonial Secretary. But Makea had written. Will you kindly see that it does not sleep?

I understand from you that the cost would be under £40.

Unfortunately, however, the sanguine expectations of the native Government that a new issue could be produced for such a modest sum as fifty pounds were not destined to be realized. Mr. Ballance replied to Makea's letter on Aug. 13th, 1892, and after referring to the pleasure it gave him to know that her Government so fully appreciated the good offices of the New Zealand Government he added: "I am sorry to say that your wish for new Postage Stamps with your likeness on them cannot be carried out for anything like the amount you mention. I am informed that the cost of engraving and electrotyping alone will come to about £160. I retain your portrait in case you wish the new stamps to be gone on with. If not I will return it as soon as I know what are your wishes."

This was only a temporary setback, for the Cook Islands Government had, by then, a sum of nearly \$500.00 on hand, realised from the sale of stamps, and as there was every probability that this sum would be greatly increased it was considered that the Government might acquiesce in an expenditure of £200 without undue hesitation. Consequently, on September 28th, 1892, Makea again wrote to the Premier:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 13th, and thank you for the information you have kindly given me about the stamps. The Government here have received already nearly one hundred pounds for the sale of stamps, which has been unexpectedly large. We cannot, of course, expect it will continue, but may rely so sufficiently to justify an outlay of £200, and so get the new stamps into use.

The British Resident, Mr. Moss, is likely to go to New Zealand by the Richmond, and the Government have given him full power to arrange with the New Zealand Government for these stamps if such an arrangement is possible.

I ask a continuance of your kind and powerful assistance in this matter.

The resolution giving Mr. Moss full power to act as he thought best in the matter was passed at a meeting of the Cook Islands Executive Government held about a fortnight before the above

letter was written. It was worded as follows:—

Resolved, that Mr. Moss is hereby requested to have the stamps manufactured on such terms and in such denominations as he may consider expedient. The Chief Postmaster to pay for these stamps out of the Postal Revenue collected by him for the sale thereof—towards which he has at the present time £60 in hand.

(Signed) MAKEA ARIKI.

Mr. Moss wrote to the Premier, at the same time as Makea's letter was forwarded, announcing his intention of paying a short visit to New Zealand so that he could himself personally supervise the arrangements made with regard to the issue of this new set.

Some little time previous to this it had been decided that a 10d value should also be included in the new series and in a letter written by Mr. Moss on Aug. 29th, 1892, the Colonial Secretary was asked to "send one thousand and twenty with the others, and a subsequent number at the rate of 360 (three hundred and sixty) per month."

It is evident that specimens of the proposed stamps were submitted to Mr. Moss, for just before leaving Rarotonga for New Zealand he wrote to Mr. Gray as follows:—

September 30th, 1892.

My dear Mr. Gray:—

Thanks for your letter of 11th August with specimen stamps enclosed. I write to the Colonial Secretary about them by this mail.

I am myself going to Auckland by this steamer, and have full authority to arrange for the stamps if possible. The hitch is this.

We have £100 and a little over in hand from the sale of stamps since 7th May. Not bad. But we would like to get the new issue completed altogether, or there may be more "bobbery" over the second lot. The jealousies of the other Arikis were warmly excited at Makea's likeness being upon them. A second edition of that trouble is not desirable.

The issue proposed is 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d and it will cost evidently £200. If I can arrange to pay the £100 at once, and the other £100 from the sales still being made with a further obligation that if not fully paid for by 30th June next the balance will be provided for in Appropriations for 1893-4 we will have them done at once. It is very unlikely that the sales will suddenly stop, and if not we shall be easily able to pay long before June next. Now you see how the case stands. I presume the Colonial Secretary will refer it to you. I have to communicate in official matters with him.

You must excuse my blunder about cost. At the time I had no idea of being able so soon to contemplate a new issue, and did not look into the matter.

The workmanship of the stamp is satisfactory, and I return it and King George's herewith as requested. Queen Makea is much pleased.

Of course, if the new issue is made any of the old on hand will be destroyed. Ought not that to compensate collectors?

Take care that Makea's likeness is not made too dark. The engraver should stick to the rough sketch as far as possible. It promises to be very good when finally touched up.

The Postmaster here thinks the colours might be the same as at present except the penny stamp, which is very dull and poor.

He thinks green would be well for that, and the new 5d a bright yellow.

Drop me a line in Auckland, and with thanks,

I am, etc.,

(Signed) FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Mr. Gray did not reply to the above letter until November 8th, 1892, when Mr. Moss was in Auckland:—

My dear Mr. Moss,

I have yours of the 30th September, dated from Rarotonga, returning the stamps I sent you. I have had your letter to the Colonial Secretary referred to me with the Premier's approval giving effect to your request that part payment for the stamps may stand over until Government is in funds. I note that you want 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d stamps and also 1d postcard, the whole of which should not cost more than £210 or £220. I assume that if the latter figure is not exceeded, you will agree to have the postcard put in hand as well.

Every endeavor will be made to comply with your request in engraving Queen Makea's likeness. The engraver understands that the likeness is not to be made too dark, and I am satisfied that he will do his best to carry this out. The order has been given him for five stamps, and he is already at work on them, but before he begins engraving he is to submit to me another pencil sketch of her Majesty.

The colours are really a matter of little moment, but I would advise you to have them as bright as possible without being too much like each other. Unfortunately, we have not a wide selection of colours, but I think we have sufficient to satisfy you. You have done remarkably well with the stamp collectors and you will do even better with the new issue. The present issue should of course be withdrawn, but I would not advise that you should destroy the stamps. They will be invaluable hereafter for collectors' purposes, and will always command face value, and this will be an additional source of revenue to your exchequer. If anything strikes you before leaving Auckland just drop me a line.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) W. GRAY.

On the 14th November Mr. Moss replied to this letter in the following terms:—

My dear Mr. Gray,

I have just received yours of the 8th. Thanks for what you are doing re the Postage Stamps for Cook Islands. I find that £20 more has just been sent to the bank by the Richmond. I will get a cheque to draw it by her next trip. Meanwhile have sent £100 on up to Wellington.

I leave the colours to your good judgment. Do what you think best.

But as to the total cost I would rather it be under than over £200, as there is a great deal of jealousy among the islands over the impress of Makea on them.

The postcards are very little used and the old ones will do for the present at all events.

We informed the purchasers of present stamps that they would be set aside entirely on the new issue. That is why the present will have to be destroyed. Can you tell me about when the new issue will be available? I should like to make it public in other countries as soon as possible, so as to lose no time in getting fresh orders.

Yours, etc.,

(Signed) FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Mr. Moss certainly seems to have entertained a very tender solicitude for stamp collectors!

The matter was thus finally settled though Mr. Gray's statement, in his

letter of the 8th November, that the engraver was already at work on the stamps would seem a little premature in view of the fact that no agreement was signed with the engraver until the 23rd of that month.

The work of engraving the dies was entrusted to Mr. A. E. Cousins, who had just previously engraved the dies for the 1892 stamps of Tonga, and had also done other work for the New Zealand Government, *i. e.*, engraved the dies for the ½d, 2½d and 5d values of the 1882-97 issue and recut the 1d, 2d, 6d and 8d dies of the same series.

The following specification was submitted to Mr. Cousins, at the time the agreement was signed:—

Specifications for engraving and manufacturing five steel dies for 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d stamps for the Post Office, Rarotonga.

1. The work required is the engraving of original dies.

2. The designs adopted are those already approved and sent to you.

3. The dies to be made of best steel, and of the same size as the dies recently supplied by you to this office for the Tonga Post Office.

4. The face of the dies to be perfectly level and true with the base.

5. The dies to fit the collar used at the Government Printing Office for the moulding of postage stamps.

6. The dies to be subjected to a test of striking thirty perfect moulds each in the moulding metal used for that purpose at the Government Printing Office.

7. The dies to be engraved and finished to the satisfaction of the Government Printer, and completed, and the whole of them delivered, by the 7th day of April, 1890.

The agreement to which these specifications were attached was worded as follows:—

Memorandum of Agreement made this 23rd day of November, 1892, between Alfred Ernest Cousins, Engraver, of the one part and the Postmaster-General of New Zealand of the other part. The said Alfred Ernest Cousins agrees to make and engrave, for the Post Office, Rarotonga, five dies in hardened steel, *viz.*, 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d, in accordance with the conditions here-to attached, with the impression of the Queen Makea's head and surroundings for the sum of one hundred and seventy-five pounds. And it is hereby agreed and declared by and between the said parties hereto that payment shall be made to the said Alfred Ernest Cousins within thirty days after the delivery of the dies as provided by the said conditions, upon the said Alfred Ernest Cousins declaring that he has delivered to the Postmaster-General not only the dies but also all incomplete or spoiled work in connection with the dies, to the intent that no portion of the dies whatever, whether usable or not, shall remain in the custody of the said Alfred Ernest Cousins. And it is hereby expressly declared that no payment shall be made except on the solemn declaration in writing of the said Alfred Ernest Cousins that all work, in connection with the dies for which payment is sought, whether complete, incomplete, or spoiled, has been delivered up; and that the said Alfred Ernest Cousins does not retain any portion whatever in his custody, or in the custody of any person on his behalf. And it is hereby expressly agreed that no payment is to be made unless the work done

is of the highest character, and shall be approved by the Government Printer.

As witness the hands of the parties,

Signed by the said Alfred Ernest Cousins at Wellington aforesaid on the above date in the presence of

(Signed)

Alfred E. Cousins.

(Signed) L. HALLIWELL. L. S.

Mr. Cousins completed the steel die for the penny stamp first and this was delivered to the Printing and Stationery Department on February 13th, 1893; the dies for the 1½d and 2½d stamps were delivered on March 13th; and on the 30th of the same month the dies for the 5d and 10d denominations, as well as the matrix and original die, were delivered. Mr. Cousins thus completed his contract eight days before the stipulated time. The dies were tested and on April 27th Mr. Samuel Costell, the acting Government Printer, certified they were in good order and ready to be put into use. Mr. Gray then wrote to Mr. Moss as follows:—

I have the honour to inform you that the dies for the Cook Islands, 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d postage stamps are finished, and have borne the required test. The engraver has been paid the sum of £175, the contract price, by this Department for the work, and a refund will be claimed from the Colonial Secretary's Office in the usual way. It is expected that the stamps will be ready for despatch within a fortnight.

Mr. Gray's prognostications as to the early appearance of the stamps were not destined to be realized for it was not until the following June 21st he forwarded a memorandum to the Government Printer informing that official that the colours chosen for the 1d, 1½d and 2½d values were brown, mauve, and carmine-lake respectively. The colours for the other two values still remained to be decided and on July 7th the Government Printer sent proof copies of these in seven different colours for selection.

Mr. Gray returned these on July 11th with the following communication:—

In reply to your memo. of 7th inst. with reference to the Cook Islands stamps. I have selected silver-grey for the fivepenny and green for the tenpenny stamp. I return herewith the proofs. I think it would be as well to increase the number of stamps to the number enumerated by Mr. Moss. I was not aware that he had requisitioned. Hereafter I think it better that Mr. Moss should communicate with only one Department, and I am going to suggest to him that this should be the Post Office. For the present it would be as well to send me the accounts and forward the stamps to this office, as in the case of Samoa and Tonga. You will of course send the stamps to Mr. MacFarlane as requested by Mr. Moss, and send me the duplicate advice when you forward the stamps for Mr. Moss. I understood that the post cards were not to be printed in the meantime.

It is evident that at this date (July 11th) the plates were all ready and the

colours being decided on, printing was commenced forthwith. Before, however, dealing with the first delivery of stamps it will be as well to describe the design.

In the centre is a three-quarter face portrait of Makea, with head to right. Her abundant hair is heavily braided over her forehead and hangs over her right shoulder in a long plait, while around her neck she wears a scarf. The portrait is on a horizontally lined circle enclosed in a circular band on which "POSTAGE" and the value in words



are inscribed in uncoloured Roman capitals. At the top and bottom are straight labels inscribed "COOK" and "ISLANDS" respectively in coloured capitals. In the upper spandrels are trifoliate ornaments while in the lower ones are palette-shaped shields bearing the denominations in figures. There is an ornamental border at each side and the whole is enclosed in a single-line rectangular frame. The stamps measure 18 mm. in width by 21½ mm. in height.

Writing in the *Montreal Philatelist* in 1902 Mr. Vivian C. Gossett gives an interesting sketch of the old lady whose portrait adorns these stamps:—

The stamps bear the effigy of a native "Lady of the Royal Blood" who is known as Makea-Takau Ariki, but is generally mis-called "Queen" Makea. She is not queen of the Cook Islands, but is only Ariki or chief of her district, Avarua, in Rarotonga, although at present she holds office as chief of the Cook Islands Federal Government. She is a very portly old lady about 65 years of age and I believe she has held the Arikiship of Avarua for about 45 years; although she cannot speak a word of English she is a very intelligent, common-sense woman for a Maori. The elderly married native women of Rarotonga have a custom of plaiting their hair into two long tails which they sometimes carry over either shoulder; one of these "tails" can be seen over the right shoulder of Makea on the stamp. She has, like all Maori women, a fine head of hair. Around her neck is seen a large white silken scarf, as all the Maoris are very fond of finery and bright colours. Makea belongs to the old predominating Makea-Karika clan who emigrated from Hawaiki many, many generations back. They discovered Rarotonga where they set-

tled. Makea is married to Ngamaru-Ariki, the hereditary chief of the Islands of Aitu, Mitiaro, and Mauke. She has no direct descendant, but the title will go to her cousin, Rangī-Makea.

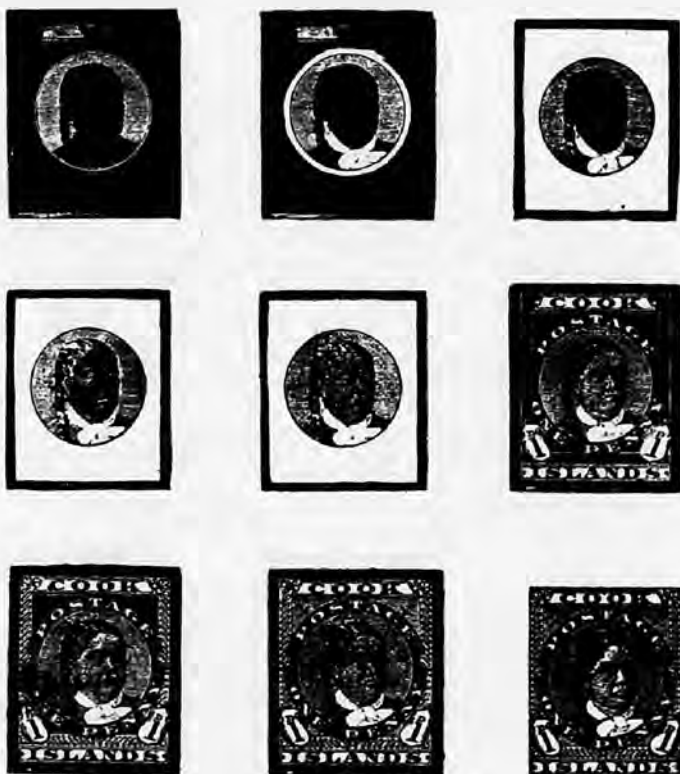
I have only to add that the old lady is still alive and holds the chieftainship of the Cook Islands, while her portrait still adorns the 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d stamps used in those Islands.



Mr. Cousins informed Mr. Basset Hull that he had a rather indifferent photograph to copy but those who have seen Makea agree that he succeeded in producing a wonderfully accurate and expressive likeness.

One die was engraved for the portrait and this served for all values. The rest of the design was, however, separately engraved for each denomination as can be proved by various differences in each. Owing to the greater length of the designation of value the word "POSTAGE" occupies less space on the 1½d and 2½d stamps than on the other values. The small segment cut from each side of the circular band differs in position on each, the value tablets at the base are not exactly alike, the space between the circle and lower frame varies, the ornaments in the upper spandrels do not tally, etc. All these little differences prove that with the exception of the portrait medallion all five dies were separately engraved.

The accompanying illustrations, which originally appeared in the *Monthly Journal*, and which I am able to reproduce by the courtesy of Mr. C. J. Phillips, of Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., show in an interesting manner the progress of the engraving of the portrait and the frame for the 1d value from the first rough outlines to the completed design. These proofs were, of course, taken by the engraver from time to time so that he could see how his work was progressing.

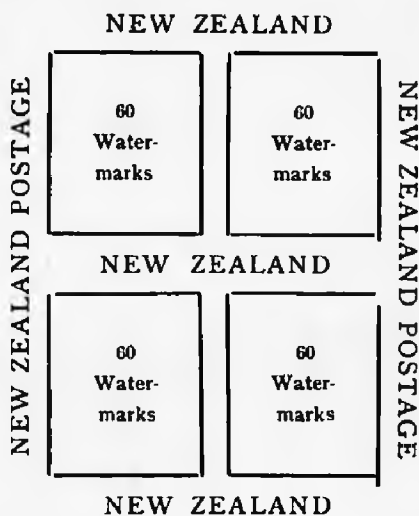


The plates were made at the Government Printing Office at Wellington and each contained 120 impressions arranged in two panes of 60 each (ten horizontal rows of six), placed side by side.

The margins were quite plain and the panes were divided by a space measuring 10 mm.

The stamps were printed on the same watermarked paper as that then used for the ordinary New Zealand stamps and they were perforated by the same perforating machine and received similar gum.

The watermarked paper was made for sheets of 240 stamps arranged in four panes of 60 so that these sheets were either cut in half before printing the Cook Islands labels, or two impressions were printed on each sheet of paper and then cut apart before leaving the printing establishment. The watermarked device consisted of the letters "NZ" above a small star and the "bits" were so arranged that one complete watermark was apportioned to each stamp. Around each set of sixty devices was a single-line frame and outside these the words "NEW ZEALAND" and "POSTAGE", in large double lined capitals were arranged in the following manner:



The sheets were, of course, severed through the centre for the Cook Islands stamps. The large sheets bore a consecutive number, in the right lower corner, in black figures, so that some of the Cook Islands sheets show these numbers and others do not. The watermarked paper was evidently kept in book form and the sheets were torn out as required. To facilitate their removal they were perforated at the top,

the gauge of this line of perforated holes being quite distinct from that of the stamps. I have only one sheet with top margin showing this perforation and I find the gauge is exactly 14.

The stamps were perforated by a comb-machine with a gauge of 12x 11½ and a whole horizontal row of 12 stamps was perforated at a time.

The gauge of the long row of holes was not quite accurate with the result that the ninth stamp furnishes a variety perf. 11½ all round. The philatelic value of this, however, is but small. It merely represents a slight inaccuracy in the perforating punches and is not the work of a special machine as was at one time erroneously supposed. In the long row of holes the 22nd one, counting from the left, is missing and in the third vertical row the fourth hole, counting from the top is absent. These small defects are of course, due to broken punches.

The gum is invariably white, smooth, and very shiny.

In the later printings of these stamps perforated 11 various minor flaws and defects occur. As the same plates were used as for the issue now under notice these varieties should also occur in the stamps perf. 12x11½, but as I have been unable to verify their existence I think it best only to refer to them in connection with the stamps on which I have actually seen them.

The only exception I have a note of is the 2½d and in this value the 14th stamp on the right-hand pane has two or three coloured dots below the letters "AN" of "ISLANDS".

The first supply of stamps was apparently shipped to Rarotonga on July 17th, 1893, and on the same date Mr. Gray wrote to the British Resident as follows:—

I have the honour to forward herewith in a sealed registered packet addressed to yourself, the following postage stamps printed to your order for the Government of Rarotonga:—

	£	s.	d.
30½ sheets at 1d,	30	10	0
29 " " 1½d,	43	10	0
28½ " " 2½d,	71	5	0
27½ " " 5d,	137	10	0
28½ " " 10d,	285	0	0

These quantities represent as nearly as the circumstances of issuing and printing the watermarked paper would permit the numbers of stamps for which you asked. Those which you desired should be sent Mr. MacFarlane were posted to him on the 15th instant by the Government Printer. It will, however, obviate complication and possible mistake as well as delay in future if you order all supplies of stamps through this office; and I suggest that you do so, if you have no objection.

The cost of the present remittance is £3, 6s, 8d, which I shall be glad to receive free of exchange at your early convenience.

The stamps referred to as sent to Mr. MacFarlane comprised the following quantities:

	£	s.	d.
1d, 12½ sheets, 3000 stamps, value,	12	10	0
1½d, 9 " " 2160 " " "	13	10	0
2½d, 5 " " 1200 " " "	12	10	0
5d, 2½ " " 800 " " "	12	10	0
10d, 1½ " " 360 " " "	15	0	0

These were evidently to fill dealers' orders and there is little doubt that the new stamps reached the European dealers as soon as the first supply was on sale in the Cook Islands.

The actual date of issue of these stamps is unknown. Mr. Basset Hull says "there can be little doubt that the issue took place within a few days of arrival at Rarotonga," and as they were recorded in the *Monthly Journal* for August, 1893, supplies evidently reached Europe some time during that month.

It will be noted that in the letter quoted above the stamps are referred to as in "sheets" of 240. This undoubtedly refers to the large sheets of water-marked paper used and the fact that "half" sheets were included in the consignment would seem to show that the stamps were actually printed on half-sheets of this paper i. e., in "Post Office" sheets of 120 stamps.

No further supplies of the 1d in brown or of the 10d with the 12x11½ perf. were printed, but on May 31st, 1894, a further batch of 7,200 1½d and 7,320 2½d were sent to the Islands; on Sept. 24th, 1894, a printing of 4,080 1½d, 2,160 2½d, and 12,000 5d took place; on Oct. 23d, 1894, 2,040 each of the 1½d and 2½d were despatched; on July 27th, 1896, a further printing of 23,760 2½d was made; and lastly, on 21st August, 1896, 20,260 1½d, 9,600 2½d, and 9,600 5d were printed. As it has been generally believed that the 11 perforation did not come into use until 1898 it would follow that all the above were perf. 12x11½. But, as I shall show in a later chapter, the 11 perforation was really introduced in 1896, so that the actual quantities printed with the 12x11½ perforation were as follows:—

1d brown,	10,320
1½d mauve,	25,440
2½d rose,	19,560
5d olive black,	19,200
10d green,	7,200

The 1½d and 2½d values may be found in a good range of shades, but the colours of the other three denominations vary but slightly.

The following is a synopsis of the varieties:—

1893. Wmk. N. Z. over Star wide apart.  
Perf. 12x11½.

- 1d brown.
- (a) Variety; perf. 11½.
- 1½d mauve (shades).
- (a) Variety; perf. 11½.
- 2½d rose (shades).
- (a) Variety; perf. 11½.
- 5d olive black.
- (a) Variety; perf. 11½.
- 10d green.
- (a) Variety; perf. 11½.



## VI. THE 1894 ISSUE.

Early in 1894, the colour of the 1d stamp was changed from brown to blue, but for what reason does not appear to be known. Mr. Bassett Hull was unable to trace any record of the official requisition for these stamps but the following letter shows when the first supply was despatched:—

26th February, 1894.

Sir:—I have the honour to forward under separate cover registered, in accordance with your request of the 11th December last, seven thousand four hundred and forty Cook Islands postage stamps at one penny. The cost of printing, gumming, etc., is 12s, which amount I shall be glad to receive at your earliest convenience.

As desired the stamps have been printed a dark blue colour, which I trust will prove satisfactory.

Yours, etc.,  
(Signed) THOMAS ROSE,  
For the Secretary.

The Chief Postmaster,  
Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

Mr. MacFarlane, of Auckland, who seems to have been entrusted with the task of filling dealers' orders for these stamps received a supply on April 7th.

I can find no information relating to the actual date of issue, but some of these new stamps reached London in May, 1894.

These blue stamps were, of course, printed from the same plate as was employed for the 1d stamps of the preceding issue. The same watermarked paper was used and also the same perforating machine with the 12x11½ gauge.

I find three minor varieties in the

right hand panes of these stamps, viz:—

No. 31. The "L" of "ISLANDS" is joined to the line below.

No. 43. The "I" of "ISLANDS" is joined to the line below.

No. 47. There is a coloured flaw on the bottom frame line below the "N" of "ISLANDS".

These probably also exist in the early 1d brown stamps, as I stated before, and they are evidently due to slight defects in the casts taken for making the plate.

The stamp varies in colour from a fairly bright to a deep dull blue.

In addition to the first supply of 7,440 stamps, the following printings took place:—

7th April, 1894,	2,880
31st May, 1894,	10,920
24th September, 1894,	6,120
23rd October, 1894,	6,240
21st August, 1896,	24,000

The total number of the 1d blue stamps printed was, therefore, 57,600.

It has been up to the present, generally agreed that the 11 perforation was not introduced until 1898, so that all these stamps would be perf. 12x11½. But as I shall show in a later chapter, it is fairly evident that the 11 perforation was introduced in 1896 so that the last supply of 1d blue (24,000) had this perforation and the total number perf. 12x11½ is, thus, 33,600.

1894. Wmk. N. Z. over Star Wide Apart.  
Perf. 12x11½.

1a blue (shades).

(a) Variety; perf. 11½.

## VII. THE 1896-98 ISSUE.

In 1898, three new stamps bearing the facial values of 2d, 6d, and 1s, respectively were issued. Proposals to issue one of these stamps were entertained some two years previous to this date for on May 22nd, 1896, Mr. Moss wrote to Mr. Gray as follows:—

We shall want 1½d, 6d, and 7½d stamps in addition to those we have. Kindly let me know if the present dies will answer, so as to reduce the expense, and what the probable cost will be. Then I will write officially for the C. I. Government.

To this communication Mr. Gray replied on June 17th in the following terms:—

I have your note of the 22nd ultimo in reference to the proposed ½d, 6d and 7½d Cook Islands postage stamps.

I find that the only way to avoid the engraving of new dies, which would cost about £35 each, would be to overprint an impression of the present issue with the new denomination, such as was done with the attached specimen. These stamps are not liked by stamp collectors, but they fill every postal purpose.

As the enclosed stamp forms part of the official collection of this department you will, no doubt, return it to me when done with.

Mr. Gray was evidently a connoisseur on the subject of collectors' likes and dislikes and as Mr. Moss seems to have entertained a touching regard for philatelists' wishes he refused to consider the idea of surcharges. The matter was then referred by Mr. Gray to the Government Printer in the form of the following memorandum dated September 19th, 1896:—

On the 8th June last I asked the acting Government Printer, at the request of the British Resident at Rarotonga, whether it would be possible to electotype a new value of postage stamps for that Dependency by means of one of the existing dies and type for the denomination. This I was informed could not be done, but I think I should have referred to the matrix, which is in the possession of the Stamp Department, and not to a completed die. I find that the whole of the Queensland stamps are electotyped in this way. In a recent communication from the General Post Office, Brisbane, I was advised that only one die is used, and that the denominations are altered in the process of electotyping. Perhaps you would kindly look into the matter, as the saving in cost would be very considerable. I had overlooked for the moment the existence of the matrix, which, if I remember rightly, provides for the head.

In reply Mr. Gray was informed that there would of course, be no difficulty in producing different values from one die if the die had been originally cut with that object. But as this had not been done in the case of the Cook Islands stamps it would be necessary to have a new die cut for all except the portrait.

The Cook Islands Government was not prepared to go to the expense of having new dies cut and the proposal was dropped for the time being. As a matter of fact there could have been no postal need for a ½d stamp at that period for newspapers passed free within the Islands, and the postage to places beyond was 1d. The idea of having a 7½d stamp was probably conceived from the series for Tonga, but in reality it was a quite unnecessary value.

In 1897 the question of issuing new stamps was re-opened. A 6d value was considered desirable for use on parcels etc., and it was thought 2d and 1s stamps would be equally useful. On August 24th, 1897, therefore, Mr. Moss wrote to Mr. Gray:—

Might I ask you if you would kindly help the Cook Islands Government to add three new stamps to the present issue? They are designed to use for postal and revenue purposes, and the idea is to have them with the bird "Torea" on the face, the denominations to be 2d, 6d and 1s respectively.

I enclose the Torea from the newspaper heading of that name, but the beak should be longer and slender, and the legs the same. If to be done I should be obliged for a specimen as soon as convenient, with the probable cost.

The sketch sent was a very rough one which might have been intended for almost any small bird and it is little wonder that Mr. Gray was unable to identify it. He wrote to Mr. Moss on September 27th, 1897, as follows:—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo, with reference to designs for three new stamps for Cook Islands.

In reply, I beg to forward herewith six designs for your consideration; also drawings of the black-headed tern.

The designs marked 1 to 6 are for separate stamps; and the cost of the dies would be £30 each for the smaller size, and £45 each for the Jubilee pattern. If, however, the stamps are desired to be of the same pattern with an interchangeable bar to alter the values, the die, etc., would cost in all £40 for the smaller size and about £50 for the larger, I also enclose a specimen (which please return) of a Barbados 6d stamp, for which an interchangeable die has been used in production. I should mention that as there will have to be two printings for each sheet of stamps, the cost of producing the sheets would be slightly increased.

The designer has done his best in reproducing the bird from the wood-cut forwarded. As, however, he could not identify "Te Torea" in the museum here, he cannot guarantee accuracy, but if you will advise me of its scientific name I will arrange for a drawing to be made at the museum. Mr. Cousins desired to add an outline of characteristic Rarotonga scenery, but he was unable to procure a suitable photograph. The enclosed has since come into my hands and

may be considered sufficiently characteristic to be included in the design, but if not perhaps you would forward another photograph.

The tern (sternula) depicted in the drawings referred to above is a common bird found in huge numbers on the coasts of New Zealand but it was very unlike the Torea represented in the newspaper heading. Mr. Moss hastened to correct the wrong impression formed by Mr. Gray in the following letter:—

Sir:—Thanks for your letter F 97/997, dated 27 Sept., and enclosing designs for new stamps. All are good, and the selection is difficult, but the design marked No. 1 is preferred. The stamps to have an interchangeable bar, as the small additional cost of printing will be more than compensated by the saving in original expense.

I enclose the Barbados stamp, and the photo, together with another photo of scenery, which would be pretty and characteristic if room can be made for it—even if the stamp had to be a little larger, though that is to be avoided if possible.

I am sorry not to be able to give you the scientific name of the Torea. It is a snipe, not a tern, and the beak and legs are long and fine. If Mr. Percy Smith is in Wellington he could give it exactly.

On going into the matter carefully it was found that the cost of cutting the dies for the figures of value would exceed the estimate previously given to Mr. Moss, so on November 8th, 1897, Mr. Gray wrote to that gentleman as follows:—

Referring to your letter of the 16th ultimo forwarding an approved design for the new postage stamps for Cook Islands. I beg to inform you that, after conferring with the engraver and printer, it is found that it would cost an additional £25 to make three dies for the four corners of the design selected. This, together with the cost of engraving the matrix (£35), would amount to £60 for the complete work for the three new stamps. Before anything further is done I shall be obliged if you will say whether you still desire a stamp with interchangeable value plates. To make three original dies complete would cost £105 in all, and the subsequent cost of printing would of course be less. In addition to this the stamps can each be of different design if desired.

In the meantime the engraver is working on the main portion of the plate.

The last sentence is somewhat cryptic and for the word "plate" it is fairly evident "design" or "die" is meant. It would also seem that as the matter had not then been finally settled and no agreement had been signed, the engraver was a little premature in starting the work at all. Mr. Moss acknowledged the receipt of the above letter and authorised the extra expense.

The following agreement was then signed by the engraver:—

Memorandum of Agreement made this 25th day of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, between Alfred Ernest Cousins, Engraver, of the one part, and the Postmaster-General of New Zealand of the other part. The said Alfred Ernest Cousins agrees to make and engrave for the Post Office, Rarotonga, four dies in hardened steel in accordance with the conditions hereto attached, viz., one die with a representa-

tion of the bird locally known as "Te Torea," with suitable border and surroundings, and the words "COOK ISLANDS, POSTAGE & REVENUE" thereupon; also, three dies for the corners of the aforesaid stamp, viz., 2d, 6d and 1s, for the sum of sixty pounds. And it is hereby agreed and declared by and between the said parties hereto that payment shall be made to the said Alfred Ernest Cousins within thirty days after delivery of the dies as provided by the said conditions, upon the said Alfred Ernest Cousins declaring that he had delivered to the Postmaster-General not only the dies but also all incomplete or spoiled work in connection with the dies, to the intent that no portion of the dies whatever, whether usable or not, shall remain in the custody of the said Alfred Ernest Cousins. And it is hereby expressly declared that no payment shall be made except on the solemn declaration in writing of the said Alfred Ernest Cousins that all work in connection with the dies for which payment is sought, whether complete, incomplete, or spoiled, has been delivered up; and that the said Alfred Ernest Cousins does not retain any portion whatever in his custody or in the custody of any person on his behalf. And it is hereby expressly agreed that no payment is to be made unless the work done is of the highest character, and shall be approved by the Government Printer.

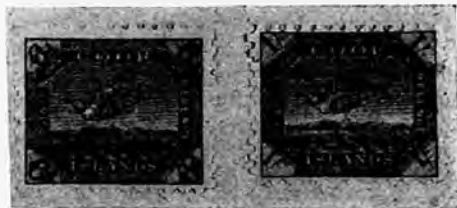
As witness the hands of the parties.  
 Signed by the said Alfred Ernest Cousins at Wellington aforesaid on the } (Signed)  
 above date in the presence } Alfred E. Cousins.  
 of (Signed) D. Robertson.

The specifications attached to this Agreement were of a similar character to those already quoted in connection with the Makea dies. It was specified that the work should be delivered by the 15th April, 1898, and eight days before that date, the four completed dies—one for the main design, and one for each of the three values for the corner numerals—were in the hands of the Government Printer. They were duly tested by that official and on the 19th April, were certified as being completely satisfactory. It only remains to be added that on the 29th April, Mr. Cousins made his "solemn declaration in writing," before a Justice of the Peace, that he had conscientiously carried out all the provisions set forth in the Agreement. As this document is merely a repetition of the essential provisions of the Agreement, it is hardly of sufficient interest to warrant reproducing *in extenso*.

The stamps are oblong rectangular in shape, measuring 21½mm by 17½mm. In the centre is a representation of the "Torea" flying at a great height



above the sea, while on the horizon the coast line of Rarotonga, with its twin peaks, is depicted. An inscribed octagonal band forms a border to the centre-piece and on this "COOK" appears at the top, "ISLANDS" at the base, "POSTAGE &" at the left, and "REVENUE" at the right. On the four shorter sides



of the octagon, dividing the several inscriptions, are fantastically shaped stars. The design is completed by bands of ornamentation along the four sides, while the corners are lightly shaded with diagonal lines. The numerals of value were printed on these angle spaces at a second operation. The centre-piece is described by Mr. Gossett as follows:—

The torea is one of the plover species and its scientific name is *Totanus Cancellatus*. It is mentioned in numerous Maori songs, laments, and traditions, hence the suitability of placing it on the stamps. The torea are not now so plentiful in the Cook Islands as they were in former times, having suffered much by the depredations of the natives for the purposes of food. They are of a light brown color with bright red beak and legs and frequent the low lying sandy flats on the seashore and also the tide levels.

Rarotonga, which appears in the background, is viewed from the north, looking south. Along the seashore is the settlement of Avarua on the northern side. The two peaks seen are Mount Ikurangi, the eastern peak, 2100 feet in height, and Mount Te Atua Kura, the western peak, 3000 feet elevation. The latter is a well known landmark to mariners around the group, as it can be seen on clear days for a distance of 60 miles.

The plates were made at the Government Printing Office, Wellington, and the first printings were made on June 7th, 1898. The plates consisted of only 60 impressions, in lieu of the 120 of the Makea series, and these were arranged in six horizontal rows of ten. The values were, of course, inserted by a second printing, but the colours were so well matched that differences of shade between the numerals and main portion of the design are rare. Occasionally, owing to faulty register, the numerals will be found somewhat out of place—too high, too low, or too far to the right or left.

The dies for the numerals call for a little notice. In engraving the 2d, the engraver gave the top numerals straight tails, to match the line of the octagonal band, while the lower figures have curved tails. These, of course, are less conspicuous against the indentations of the lower angles that would have been

the case had all the numerals been alike. In the 6d, the "d" in the upper angles is level with the base of the "6" and those at the base are in a line with the centre of the figures. This, again, has been done with a purpose, for had the "d" been as low on the bottom as on the top angles, the letter would have printed outside the frame line of the design.

The stamps were printed on the same "N. Z." and Star paper as that used for the 1893 emission, the watermark being sideways as the stamps were of oblong shape. As the sheets of watermarked paper were intended for 240 stamps each sheet had, perforce, to be cut into four sections for printing these Torea stamps. The perforation gauges 11 and was the work of the single-line machine used for the New Zealand stamps of the same period.

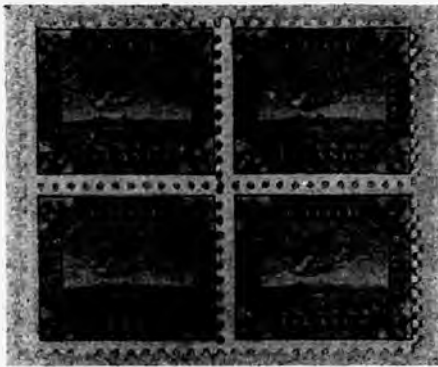
Three stamps on each sheet show interesting flaws—little varieties that are not, perhaps, of particular moment in themselves, but as they show in all the printings of these values, they are important as showing that only one "Torea" plate was ever used. The varieties are:—

No. 3. There is a white flaw on the lower wing of the bird, in line with the "D" of "ISLANDS".

No. 17. There is an uncoloured flaw on the ornament on the right lower side of the inscribed octagonal band.

No. 18. A white flaw, almost circular in shape, is attached to the bird's beak.

The block of four sixpenny stamps illustrated distinctly shows the flaws on Nos. 17 and 18.



The order for the first supply of these stamps was given on April 25th, 1898, Mr. Gray writing to the Secretary for stamps as follows:—

I have to request that you will be so good as to order from the Government Printer the following Rarotonga (Cook Islands) stamps printed from the new plates:—

2d.	£90
6d.	£250
1s.	£310

£10 worth of each denomination should be sent to this office, accompanied by the account for printing, etc., and the balance to the British Resident, Rarotonga.

This order was evidently sent before the plates were ready, for as we have already stated, the first printing was not made until June 7th. The stamps were despatched to Rarotonga on June 11th and Mr. Bassett Hull thinks they were probably issued about the middle of July. They do not appear to have been chronicled in the philatelic journals, however, until September, 1898.

Mr. Bassett Hull obtained records of two printings, viz:—

	2d.	6d.	1s.
7 June, 1898,	12,000	10,200	6,960
16 Feb., 1900,	23,520	23,760	11,520
Totals,	35,520	33,960	18,480

It is probable these represent the total numbers printed on the watermarked paper with N. Z. and star wide apart for the new paper came into use in 1902.

Fairly well marked shades of all three values may be found and they are also known on a cream-coloured paper somewhat similar to that of the toned paper of the first issue. The importance of this variety would, however, appear to be but slight, for it seems more than likely that the colouration is due to the gum or climatic conditions rather than to any actual variation in the paper itself.

These three stamps marked, as our readers will have noted, not only a change of design, but also one of perforation. It therefore follows that all supplies of the Makea stamps printed subsequently to 1898 would also have the same perforation *i. e.*, 11 instead of  $12 \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  as before. Mr. Bassett Hull states that "about 1898, the perforation of the stamps then current was altered to 11" and 1898 is the generally accepted date for this change. But, I am inclined to think that the 11 perforation came into use about two years earlier as I will endeavor to show by following the history of the 1d stamp.

When the 1d value was issued in blue it was decided to destroy the remaining stock of the brown stamps. A number were certainly burnt and it appears equally certain that a quantity were saved for on February 28th, 1899, Mr. T. S. Cotterill, (the then Chief Postmaster), wrote to Lieut-Col. Gudgeon, who succeeded Mr. Moss as British Resident, informing him that a further supply of 1d stamps was needed. "Having good reason," he wrote, "to believe that there is still in private hands a large supply of the old brown issue T marked" (what he meant by this I cannot say), "I would respectfully suggest that any further supply be of that colour."

The order for more 1d stamps was forwarded to New Zealand, and on

March 17th, 1899, Mr. Gray wrote to the Stamp Department as follows:—

I have to ask that you will be so good as to have printed for the Post Office at Cook Islands, 12,000 penny postage stamps. It is requested that they be printed in a brown colour, as formerly.

Would you kindly have the stamps packed and sent direct from your office to the British Resident, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, and the account for printing forwarded to me with a notification that the stamps have been despatched?

The stamps were printed and despatched on March 31st, 1899. These stamps were perf. 11 and from the official records we know that two subsequent supplies were sent, viz:—23,880 on Feb. 10th, 1900, and 14,280 on May 26th of the same year, making a total of 50,160.

The first supply reached the Islands towards the end of April and, as we shall show in our next chapter, on their arrival the remaining stock of 1d blue were withdrawn from sale and surcharged  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. As this stock consisted of 10,800 stamps there would appear to have been no pressing need for the new supply ordered in March.

We know, therefore, that no more 1d stamps in blue were ordered and from the records already quoted the last supply of this variety was printed on Aug. 21st, 1896, and consisted of 24,000 stamps. The blue stamp perf. 11 is at least twice as common as the variety perf. 12x11½ and it would appear obvious that this 1896 printing must have had the 11 perforation. It thus seems certain that the 11 perforation dates from 1896 so that the 23,260, 1½d; 9,600, 2½d; and 9,600, 5d printed at the same time as the 24,000 1d would also be perf. 11. I think it highly probable, too, that the 23,760 2½d stamps printed on July 27th, 1896, were also perf. 11. This theory would appear to receive ample confirmation when the rarity of the 2½d perf. 12x11½ as compared to that perf. 11 is taken into consideration. Had the 23,760 printed in July, 1896, been perf. 12x11½, the stamp would hardly now be four times as rare as the perf. 11 variety.

On the 10th February 1900 additional supplies of the 1½d (11,880), 2½d (13,440), 5d (23,520), and 10d (24,000), were also despatched to Rarotonga. The stamps of this date are all in much brighter colours than those of the earlier printings.

There are minor varieties on these stamps, particularly numerous on the 1½d, which, as I stated previously, probably also exist with the first perforation. Those on the 1d and 2½d have been described in preceding chapters, so I now come to the 1½d:—

*Left hand Pane.*

No. 21. The "I" of "ISLANDS" is joined to the line below.

No. 32. The line above the tablet containing "ISLANDS" is broken or missing for nearly half its length.

No. 34. The thick line under the second "O" of "COOK" is broken.

No. 46. There is a large coloured dot on the centre of the scarf.

No. 56. The "A" of "ISLANDS" is joined by its right leg to the line below.

*Right-hand pane.*

No. 15. There is a coloured dot under the "I" of "ISLANDS".

No. 36. There is a large white flaw on the hair and the left-hand frame line is broken 1½ mm. from top corner, the break extending the length of nearly 1 mm.

No. 40. There is a dot under the "I" of "ISLANDS".

No. 53. There is a large coloured dot above the first "O" of "COOK".

The only minor variety I note on the 5d, is a break in the line below the second "o" of "Cook," which occurs on No. 35, in the left-hand pane.

On the 10d, I find No. 46 in the left-hand pane, has a flaw, on the right-hand value tablet close to the frame line. Another and more interesting flaw which I have failed to locate (it probably appears on the right-hand pane) consists of an uncoloured irregularly-shaped patch, removing most of the trefoil ornament in the upper right spandrel and extending in an upward direction to the frame at the right. I have seen several copies and all have been perf. 11.

In all other respects—watermark, sheet numbers, etc.—the 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d, stamps of this issue correspond to those of 1893. Shades are more numerous, especially so as regards the 1½d. Some of these values may be found on the cream-coloured paper referred to in the case of the 2d, 6d, and 1sh, and the remarks there made also apply to these.

Early in 1900, it was rumored that the 1½d stamp was to be withdrawn, but as this value then represented the single-letter ( $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.) rate on interinsular correspondence it is hardly likely that the authorities ever seriously contemplated this step.

The following is a synopsis of the varieties:—

1896-98. Wmk. N. Z. and Star Wide Apart.  
Perf. 11

*Makea design.*

1d blue.  
1d brown (shades).  
1½d violet (shades).  
2½d rose (shades).  
5d olive gray.  
10d green.

*Torea design.*

2d brown (shades).  
6d purple (shades).  
1sh carmine (shades).

## VIII. THE HALFPENNY PROVISIONAL.

Although a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d stamp was projected in 1896, this value, as we have already shown, was not then actually required as there was no halfpenny rate of postage. In 1899, however, there was evidently a real need for this value for supplies were ordered from Wellington, and a few months before this, the balance of the 1d blue stamps which, as related in the last chapter, were replaced by the 1d brown were used up by being converted into  $\frac{1}{2}$ d stamps. On April 24th, 1899, the British Resident approved of the following:—

### Memorandum for the Chief Postmaster.

The old brown Penny stamp having been revived, and a supply received in this office You are hereby authorized on and after the 24th instant to make the following changes:—

To reduce the balance of all the One Penny blue stamps to one half penny, and to issue the old brown stamps of the Federation.

(Signed) MAKEA,

Chief of the Federal Government.

Approved,

(Signed) W. E. GUDGEON,  
British Resident.

On the same date stock was taken of the blue stamps and the following certificate was published:—

I hereby certify that I have this day examined the quantity of one penny blue stamps now on hand and I further certify them to be as follows:—

90 (ninety) sheets of 120 stamps.

Authority from the Chief of the Cook Islands Federal Government approved by the British Resident has also been produced before me for the reduction of the above "one penny" blue stamps to "one half penny."

(Signed) A. VON HOFF,  
Government Auditor.

The total number of stamps surcharged was, therefore, 10,800. The overprint was evidently applied locally and it is more than likely that the surcharge was only applied to a pane of 60 stamps (*i. e.* half a sheet) at a time. I have been

unable to examine any large blocks of this stamp so cannot say if there are any varieties in the lettering. It is said one stamp in each 60 had a period after the word "PENNY," but its position in the setting does not appear to have been



published. The surcharge, as will be seen from our illustration, consists of the words "ONE-HALF-PENNY," in Roman capitals, arranged in three lines. Mr. Basset Hull says one sheet of 120 stamps was issued with the surcharge double. Mr. Gossett, however, who had the opportunity of personally interviewing the Government Printer, tells us that only one pane of 60 stamps received the surcharge twice, while on another pane of 60 the overprint was applied upside down.

The actual date of issue of this variety—like that of so many other Cook Islands stamps—is unknown. Mr. Basset Hull says May, 1899, while the earliest mention I can find of it in contemporary philatelic journals is August of the same year.

1899. Wmk. N. Z. and Star wide apart.  
Perf. 11.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d in black on 1d blue.

(a.) Inverted surcharge.

(b.) Double surcharge.

(c.) Period after "PENNY".

## IX. THE REGULAR $\frac{1}{2}$ d STAMP.

On August 19th, 1899, a requisition for permanent half penny stamps was sent to the Secretary of the General Post Office, Wellington. The request was for 20,000 stamps to be printed in *blue* and it was asked that the design should be similar to the 1d with portrait of Makea.

On September 30th of the same year Mr. Gray wrote to the Chief Postmaster, Rarotonga, as follows:—

As requested in your letter of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that Rarotonga Postage Stamps at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d have been printed and posted to you. The cost of printing as shown below, is £3.12.0, a remittance for which, with exchange added, I should be glad to receive at your earliest convenience.

22,740 Rarotonga  $\frac{1}{2}$ d stamps, @ 3sh 2d,  
£3.12.0.

The stamps despatched at the same time as this letter were of the Torea

type and not the Makea type ordered though, curiously enough, Mr. Gray



makes no mention of this fact. Evidently Mr. Gray used his own discretion and gave instructions that the stamps should be prepared from the "Torea" key-plate. This meant a saving of both time and expense for, had the order been followed to the letter, a new die,

costing at least £30, would have had to be engraved, whereas by using the same key-plate as was employed for the 2d, 6d and 1sh values the new stamps could be produced at quite a small cost. Mr. Basset Hull tells us that the figures of value, which had, of course, to be inserted at a second printing, were set in ordinary type and a stereo plate was then made and used for the actual printing.

Instead of setting the type sixty times and then casting the stereo it appears that only enough was set for the figures of value on a horizontal pair of stamps. This pair was then reduplicated thirty times and these thirty *clichés* were clamped together. Whether these then formed the printing plate or whether a stereo was made from them I cannot say for certain but it seems more probable that the former was the case. The two types in the pair as originally set can be identified by certain little peculiarities, viz. :—

a.—The “d” is so placed at all four corners that if the hyphen of “½” were extended it would touch the circular portion somewhere near the centre.

d.—The “d” in three corners is too low so that, were the hyphen continued it would touch the top of the circular portion, while the fourth letter (in the lower right corner) is too high and is exactly on a line with the hyphen.

Nine of the 30 *clichés* show a slight defect, the lower serif of the “d” in the

left lower corner being broken away. The complete setting was, therefore, as follows, a capital letter indicating the defective *clichés* :—

```

a b a b a b a b a b
a b a b a b a B a b
a B a b a B a b a b
a B a B a b a b a b
a B a b a B a b a B
a b a b a b a B a b

```

I have only to add that the last *cliché* in the top row was placed too low and a little too far to the right, so that the figures of value on stamps 9 and 10 in each sheet are not in correct alignment.

The same flaws occur as have been already mentioned in the case of the 2d, 6d and 1sh denominations. The paper is also the same as that used for the other values then current and the perforation gauges 11.

The stamps included in the first supply were of a steely-blue shade, while later printings were darker. In some cases the difference in tint between the figures of value and the main portion of the design is very marked.

Mr. Basset Hull tells us that “the issue to the public took place early in October, 1899,” which could hardly have been the case, as the first supply did not leave Wellington until the end of September. The stamp was not chronicled in the Australian journals until December, so that the actual date of issue was probably some time in November.

1899. Wmk. N. Z. and Star Wide Apart.  
Perf. 11.

½d blue (shades).

## X. THE CROWN OVERPRINT.

The protectorate over the Cook Islands came to an end in October, 1900, and the group was formally annexed to the British Empire. Instead of being made a Crown Colony, however, it was handed over to New Zealand for administrative purposes and on June 10th, 1901, the latter Colony published a proclamation announcing the extension of its boundaries to include the Cook and various other islands in the Pacific.

To mark the annexation Lord Ranfurly, the then Governor of New Zealand, ordered that the stamps should be overprinted with a crown. Operations were started on the then current 1d brown and altogether 20 sheets (2400 stamps) were overprinted. The crown was applied by means of a hand stamp but the work was done so badly and so many stamps were spoiled in the process that the idea was abandoned and the other values of the set thus escaped disfigurement.

The actual date of issue of these overprinted stamps appears to be unknown.

They were not recorded in the English journals until early in December, 1901, and almost as soon as the news of their issue was reported it was stated that



they were obsolete. If a statement that they were “only in use for about two months” is to be relied on it would seem that they were probably placed on sale early in October, 1901.

In *Ewen's Weekly Stamp News* for Jan. 17th, 1903, we read that the majority of these stamps “were sent to outlying stations where they speedily stuck



together owing to the dampness or heat. No doubt a very large proportion of the issue was genuinely used, as no one thought of going to any trouble in collecting them until it became definitely known that no more would be made. Certain residents in the islands then made enquiries and we understand managed to secure about 380 copies, which we believe to be almost the only ones which have already come, or are likely to come, on the market. Almost all were without gum and a good few damaged." Judging by present day catalogue prices a good many more than 380 copies must have been saved and nowadays used specimens are infinitely scarcer than unused ones. It is a fact,

however, that the vast majority of these stamps one sees are in very poor condition and well-centered, with full gum, the stamp is quite rare.

Naturally, as the overprint was applied by hand, errors were made. The stamp is known with crown inverted, double, and sideways and some years ago a vertical pair was recorded, one of which had the overprint upside down, thus forming a *tête-bêche* variety.

1901. Wmk. N. Z. and Star Wide Apart.  
Perf. 11.

1d brown overprinted with a crown in black.

- (a) With crown inverted.
- (b) With crown double.
- (c) With crown sideways.
- (d) Vertical pair showing overprint *tête-bêche*.

## XI. THE ISSUE ON UNWATERMARKED PAPER.

At the time of the annexation of the Islands to New Zealand and more particularly after the issue of the 1d stamp with Crown overprint speculations were rife as to what changes would be made in the Federation's postage stamps. As New Zealand laws and tariffs were adopted it was suggested that the postage stamps of that colony would replace the distinctive issue of the Cook Islands. In any case, it was asserted, the portrait of Makea could not be allowed to remain as this would be an abuse of the Royal prerogative. As a matter of fact no changes in the designs were, or have been, made. The British Resident, who was asked his opinion on the matter, stated that as Makea had been instrumental in paving the way for annexation it would not be advisable to hurt her feelings and that, until her death, or so long as the Islands had their own stamps her portrait should certainly be allowed to remain.

The first change made under the new régime affected the colors of the ½d and 1d values, these being issued in the Postal Union colours of green and red respectively. These were probably issued towards the end of February, 1902. The 2½d value in the Postal Union color of blue was issued about four months later. At the time these stamps were printed the New Zealand Printing Office was experimenting with various sorts of paper. During the early part of 1902 unwatermarked paper was being used, consequently these three Cook Islands stamps were also on paper without watermark. The first supply of ½d and 1d stamps were on the thin, hard paper supplied by Messrs. Cowan & Co., while the 2½d and a second supply of ½d and 1d printed after the issue of this value were on a thick, soft paper. The gum in all cases is "dull," as contrasted with the "shiny" mucilage of the watermarked stamps, and the perforation is the usual 11.

The first printing of the ½d were in blue-green—quite distinct from the shade of the second supply. The 1d varies in shade from a pale rose to a fairly bright carmine, the former being the shade of the earliest printing.

Sometime previous to, or, more probably, during the last printing of the 1d stamp, the plate received a slight damage. Evidently something was dropped on it and the result is a long uncoloured flaw on the fourth stamp in the top row of the left-hand pane. The flaw extends from the left of the "O" of



"POSTAGE" to Makea's hair, as shown in the accompanying illustration.

I have a sheet of the 1d which clearly evidences the economical motives actuating the New Zealand Printing establishment at that period. In making the two first horizontal rows of perforation the machine ran askew, with the result that the perforation went too far upwards in a diagonal direction from left to right, penetrating some way into the design of the stamps. The top row did not matter, as it was on the margin, but the operator made a good job of the second

row by pasting a narrow strip of paper on the back of the sheet and then re-perforating along that line. To complete the work he ran his gum brush along the strip, the gum used being distinctly shiny, as compared with the dull gum originally applied to the sheet.

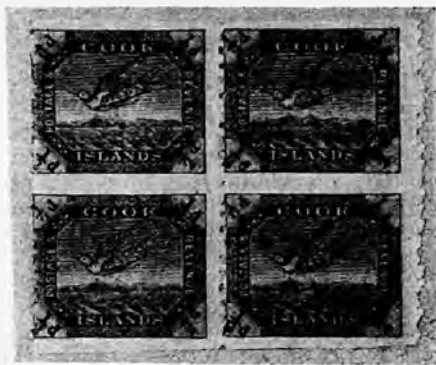
One sheet of the ½d of the second printing had at least three of the horizontal rows of perforation missing. By the courtesy of Mr. E. M. Taylor I am able to illustrate an interesting block of four from this sheet which, it will be seen, is imperf. horizontally.

The following is a synopsis of the varieties:—

1902. No Watermark. Perf. 11.

- (a) Thin Hard Paper.  
 ½d blue green.  
 1d rose.

- (b) Thick Soft Paper.  
 ½d green.  
 (a) Imperf. horizontally.  
 1d carmine (shades).  
 2½d dull blue.



## XII. THE WATERMARKED COWAN PAPER.

About May, 1902, the many experiments of the New Zealand Printing Office, in their attempt to find a suitable paper, came to an end by the selection of a thin, hard paper, watermarked N. Z. and Star close together, manufactured by Messrs. Cowan & Co. Consequently, as one would naturally expect, the Cook Islands stamps printed subsequent to this date are on the new paper. The ½d, 1d, and 2½d values appeared first, these being probably issued in September, 1902, while the other denominations were all on sale by the middle of October.

The new paper, which was, of course, primarily intended for New Zealand stamps, is kept at the Printing Office in book form, each sheet being numbered consecutively in black figures in the top right hand corner. The sheets are oblong in shape and are watermarked with 240 devices composed of the letters "N Z" above a small star. These watermarked "bits" are arranged in ten horizontal rows of 24 with the words "NEW ZEALAND POSTAGE" along the upper and lower borders, and "NEW ZEALAND" at the sides, all in large double-lined capitals. In the lower right hand corner a figure (1, 2, 3 or 4) is watermarked. The arrangement of the whole watermark is thus as follows:—

NEW ZEALAND POSTAGE

NEW ZEALAND  
NEW ZEALAND  
NEW ZEALAND

NZ over star  
repeated 240 times

NEW ZEALAND  
NEW ZEALAND  
NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND POSTAGE

The paper was manufactured in large sheets containing four of these watermarks which were numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively to facilitate cutting into four printers' sheets.

For printing the Cook Islands stamps these printers' sheets (each with 240 representations of the N. Z. and star device) were apparently cut in half. A half sheet of paper was thus just the correct size for printing a full sheet of the 1d, 1½d, 2½d, 5d and 10d values, but as these were in horizontal rows of twelve and there were only ten watermarks for each row the watermarks, of course, failed to "fit" the stamps. On these values the watermark is always sideways. For the ½d, 2d, 6d and 1sh stamps the paper proved an even worse fit. The plates for these denominations consisted of 60 impressions only so that each half-sheet of watermarked paper was large enough for two full-sized sheets of stamps. The two impressions were evidently printed before the paper was cut and it would seem that these were *tête-bêche*, though separated by a fairly wide margin. Probably an impression was first printed on the top half of the sheet and it was then turned around to receive the second impression. This is evidenced by the fact that about half the ½d, 2d, 6d and 1sh stamps one sees have inverted watermarks. Owing to the fact that this paper was never intended to fit plates of 60 impressions a certain number of stamps in each sheet show part of the marginal watermark and occasionally the 9th and 10th stamps in the bottom row escape the watermark altogether.

The only value that varies much in shade is the ½d. In the first supplies which reached London several distinct shades were found varying from a dull

bluish or grey green to a deep yellow green. It was suggested that these were probably sample sheets printed before the exact shade had been decided on.

The perforation gauges 11 and the gum is the "shiny" variety generally associated with the Cowan paper of this period.

The flaws referred to in previous chapters still appear with unfailing regularity, proving that the original plates are still in use. The only exception is the flaw on stamp No. 3 on the plate of the "Torea" type which has become partly filled up and is thus indistinct on most sheets.

The following is a synopsis of the varieties:—

1902. Wmk. N. Z. and Star Close Together.  
Perf. 11.
- A. Watermark Sideways.  
1d rose (shades).  
1½d deep mauve.  
2½d deep blue (shades).  
5d olive black.  
10d green.
- B. Watermark Upright or Inverted.  
½d grey-green (shades).  
(a) Variety; No watermark.  
½d yellow green (shades).  
(a) Variety; No watermark.  
2d deep brown (shades).  
(a) Variety; No watermark.  
6d purple.  
(a) Variety; No watermark.  
1sh carmine.  
(a) Variety; No watermark.

### XIII. THE 1909 ISSUE.

In August, 1909, the 1d stamp was issued in a deep shade of carmine and perf. 14, by a single line machine. The plate was altered for this issue, the two panes of 60, which had hitherto been separated by a narrow margin, now being clamped together to form a solid block of 120 stamps in ten horizontal rows of 12 each. That the panes were moved together and not transposed can

be proved by the presence of the uncoloured flaw on the fourth stamp in the top row. With this new arrangement the stamps fit the paper better and the watermark is now found upright instead of sideways as in the previous issue.

1909. Wmk. N. Z. and Star Close Together.  
Perf. 14.  
1d deep carmine.

### XIV. POSTMARKS.

"Prior to the introduction of postage stamps," Mr. Basset Hull tells us, "pre-paid letters were generally marked with an impression of the Consulate hand-stamp, a large circular mark, the outer lines of which are broken at each side; in the centre are the Royal Arms, at top 'H. B. M. CONSULATE', at foot 'RAROTONGA'." How long prior to the issue of stamps this mark was used we have now no means of ascertaining.

The first obliterator used for cancelling the postage stamps consisted of "RAROTONGA" in capital letters, with parallel lines of unequal length above and below, the whole mark being oval in shape. This was only in use for a short time in 1892 and it was followed by a circular mark having the letters "P. O." in a small ring in the centre. Around this was "COOK ISLANDS—RAROTONGA" and these inscriptions were enclosed by a double-lined circle. This mark, like the oval one previously described, is only found on the stamps of the first issue.

Mr. Basset Hull says this mark was succeeded by an oblong stamp having "POST OFFICE" at the top, then the date, and then "COOK ISLANDS", the three inscriptions being separated by short lines. I have not come across this postmark but find the one most generally used from 1894 to about 1898 was circular in

shape with "RAROTONGA" and the date printed in two straight lines across its centre.

About 1896 a large double-lined circular mark was introduced. This has "COOK ISLANDS" between the rings at the top, and "RAROTONGA," the date, and "1" in three lines across the centre of the inner circle. This and the other circular dated mark were used concurrently for a time, but since about 1901 the use of the smaller mark seems to have been discontinued.

A mark very occasionally met with consists of a number of thick parallel bars, arranged in the shape of an oval, with a space cut in the centre for the insertion of the letter "A" above the figures "36". Whether this was used for any special purpose or not I cannot say. All these marks are struck in black ink and the first one of all—"RAROTONGA" between thin lines—is also found in violet. Registered letters are marked with an octagonal stamp having a large "R" at its left side and "COOK ISLANDS, RAROTONGA", the date and "NO—" in four lines on the right. Sometimes the date is omitted from this mark. This registered postmark is always in violet and is never struck on the postage stamps.