

Swiss Postage Due Stamps

by Rolf Rölli

In order to collect the due postage tax on underpaid mail in Switzerland "postage due stamps" were introduced on 1st July 1878. The last Swiss issue of "postage due stamps" was in 1938, and retained validity until 31st March 1956.

Thereafter ordinary and commemorative stamps were used to collect underpaid postage – they were cancelled with various T-cancellations. More recently the Postal Service has used a "claim form" to collect the missing postage from the sender. Due to rationalisation or lack of knowledge of the correct rates, small amounts are usually no longer collected. From 1878 until 1909

the Swiss Postage Due stamps were issued in an identical design. Despite this apparent monotony, there is still a broad scope to fascinate and challenge the collector.

Proofs and Specimens

- 35 Print runs were the root cause of the wide variation of colours: Blue until 1882, followed by a large variety of greens.

- There are two distinguishable Border designs described as Type I and Type II. Additionally there are two orientations which are to be found on each of the two aforementioned border Types, these are described as normal (N) or inverted (K).

The bluish-green issue is only known in Type II. Conversely very few Type I's are found in the various green issues: this is why they are very rare.

Orientations N and K are found in similar numbers on the 100 stamp printing sheets, the distribution is irregular.

- Various papers:

White or granite paper was used for the blue issues, although granite paper was only used for the 3rd blue issue and this for quantities of between 195'000 and 980'000 pieces: therefore these are very rare and are seldom found in good quality.

- Control marks: there are the 2 security marks used on Swiss Postage Due Stamps:

first an embossed mark (applied after the printing process) of which there are two styles: "narrow" and "wide". Later issues carry a Watermark in the form of a „Swiss Cross" in the paper (applied during the paper making process).

- Varieties such as printers creases, damaged printing blocks, incorrectly positioned num-

bers (denominations) within the central circle and deformed stars are just a few of the many known "printing faults".

Besides the usual round postmarks, it is fascinating but not easy to find the many different varieties of uncommon postmarks.

For the collector who's main interest lays in Postal History, Postage



Above: form accompanying parcels with a 500c. Postage Due stamp. Postage for 3 parcels from Chiavenna (Swiss Post Office in Italy) to Pontresina.(808)



Example of TYPE I (in a pair with TYPE II) - (780)

Left: Multiple Swiss/French Postage Due franking on a "Irrläufer" cover. (822)

Dues open a vast field of interest as the fixing of the rates changed several times in the course of the years:

- Double penalty less the actual postage used.
- Just the missing postage as penalty.
- Double penalty of the missing postage.
- Sfr. 0,50 + the missing postage.

A greatly appreciated

interesting cases that occurred before 1900. I should just like to mention:

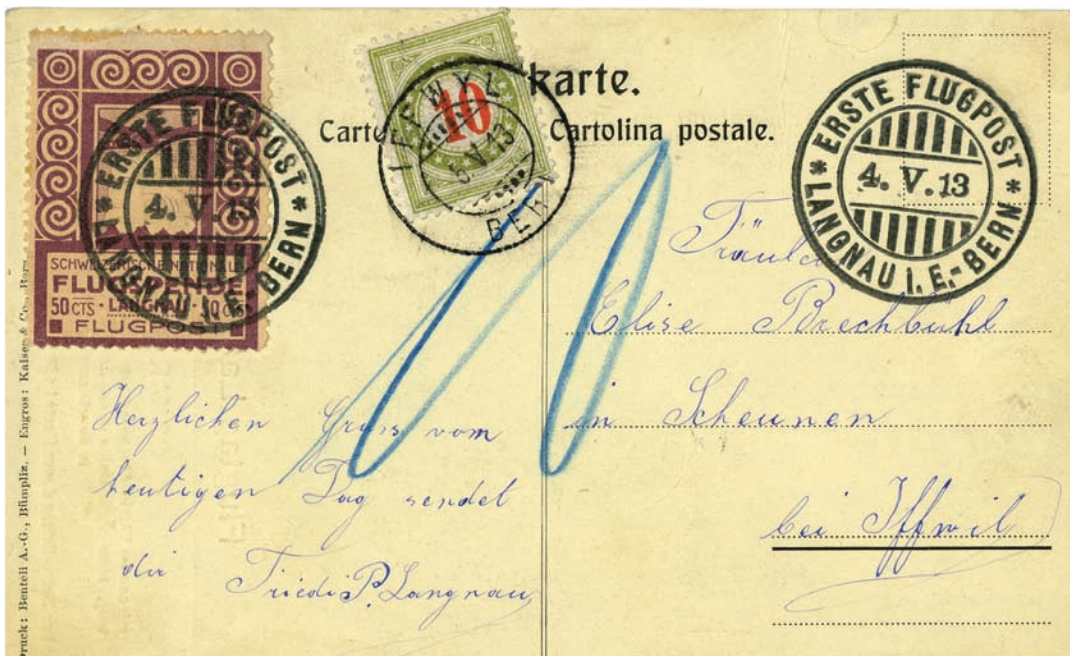
- The collectors finds many covers despatched from official offices in Germany. The senders were allowed to despatch postage free their mail to other official offices within the country. Mail to such offices abroad had to be franked. The official

German offices apparently found that the addressee abroad could just as well pay the postage due, very often with 100 cts or more; this amount then had much a higher purchasing power than today.

• Quite often one finds diplomatic mail from Swiss diplomatic offices abroad to Swiss governmental addressees. Here the facts were



Above: proof in a complete double-strip, the only known. (867)



different. The diplomatic offices abroad were instructed to despatch their mail to Switzerland unfranked. Thus the postal revenue was collected by the Swiss Post.

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Imperforated proof with the mark of the company DEYHLE (the oldest stamp dealer in Berne). (937)

speciality is the use of the 500c Postage Due stamp as normal postage. This was allowed for forms accompanying parcels or bulk despatches of printed matters of any kind.

Lower values were not permitted for this purpose, but they were tolerated in the rare cases they were applied.

I will not go into details of calculating postage due rates on mail coming into Switzerland. Very often such calculations were extremely complicated as for instance during the inflation period in Germany in 1923, when rates changed weekly or, in the end, daily.

There were however 2 unusual and specially



SPECIMEN overprint with a spectacular perforation error. (871)

Center: As Pionierflights, as well as later special flights were posted at (special) post-offices, the postal-clerks usually checked carefully the correct franking. (828)

Right: "Tüblis" were used for registered or COD mail only in exceptional cases for this reason errors in calculation the correct postage did not occur often. (829)



The unused rarest Postage Due stamps with N - respectively K - frame. (889-890)



Unusual postmarks of any kind were only used in small-post-offices. For this reason they are rare, especially in top quality (898)

