

## The 1893 New Hebrides Military Essay

By J. Crompton and H. G. L. Fletcher T. D.



A complete sheet (reduced by approximately one-half).

New Caledonia was a French penal settlement and fully garrisoned with French troops. In order to provide the troops with a 10 centimes reduction in the postal rate, the New Caledonian military authorities issued stamps for their specific use. These originally bore the value 10 centimes and were issued free to the troops to be used on their mail together with a 15 centimes New Caledonian stamp, thus giving them a 10 centimes reduction in postage. The postal authorities objected to the value being expressed, so the military re-issued the stamps, without value, in various types and colors for the different regiments on the island.

New Hebrides was under the joint administration of France and Britain, both having many colonists there, France having stationed troops on the islands to protect her colonists from the natives. The French wished to send a stronger military force to subdue the islands and to divide it between Great Britain and France. To give a similar 10 centimes concession to the troops, a military franchise stamp for New Hebrides was prepared.\* This was designed as a bi-national stamp in the hope that Britain would also participate in the subduing of the natives. This essay, however, was never issued as, under the Convention of 1888 placing the islands under the Joint Anglo-French naval commission, this gave Great Britain the right to protest, and she objected to the use of military force.

\* The origin of this essay was contained in a short article by the same author in JOURNAL No. 70, with further notes in JOURNAL No. 74.

A Lieut.-Colonel Delauney is credited with the design of the essay, which is of particular interest on account of it being a bi-national design.

**A complete sheet (reduced) of the essay from the original printing**

The essay took the form of a crude drawing of Sadi Carnot, President of France, on the left of the circle, with a very poor drawing of Queen Victoria on the right. Above their heads appeared the inscription "Honni soit qui mal y pense". (Note "Honni" spelt with two n's this being originally a French proverb "Evil to him who evil thinks.") RF appeared six times between and below the two portraits with PROTECTORAT in a box panel in the top right, "Nouvles Hebrides" in a curved panel attached to the outer circle and "Anglo-Francais" in the space between the panels. At the bottom right is the value " $2\frac{1}{2}d.=25c.$ ". The presence of the expressed value in full has brought forward suggestions that this essay was not intended purely for military franchise but may have been the precursor of the joint Anglo-French stamp which was eventually issued in 1911. A close study of these essays suggests that there was more than one printing.

### Original Printing

The essays were produced and lithographed at Noumea, the capital and administrative center of New Caledonia, on white and toned paper, sheets 200mm.x123mm., in a group of four, 2x2, separated 13mm. horizontally, 14—15mm. vertically, with color registration marks centrally at each side 160mm. apart.

They were printed in four colors, thus necessitating four stones.

#### Design stone.

It is probable that the designs for the original printing were drawn in reverse directly on to the stone; this would account for the differences in the drawings of Carnot and Victoria and the letterings in the central circle; the differences in the types of PROTECTORAT, "Anglo-Francais" and "Nouvles Hebrides" may have been deliberate, to see which type the authorities liked best.

There are four distinct designs:—

*Stamp 1 (top left).*

PROTECTORAT upright,  $20\frac{3}{4}$ mm. long, round end to box.  
Nles HEBRIDES fancy letters, wide box, joins low.  
Anglo-Francais, only top right tip of A shows.

*Stamp 2 (top right).*

PROTECTORAT slopes left,  $15\frac{3}{4}$ mm. long, round end to box.  
Nles HEBRIDES, block letters, wide box, joins high.  
Anglo-Francais, only top right tip of A shows.

*Stamp 3 (bottom left).*

PROTECTORAT, first R like P, slopes right,  $20\frac{3}{4}$ mm. long, forked end.  
Nles HEBRIDES, fancy letters, tail joins high.  
Anglo-Francais, all of A shows

*Stamp 4 (bottom right).*

PROTECTORAT slopes left, 19mm. long, forked end to box.  
Nouvles HEBRIDES, block letters, narrow box, joins high.  
Anglo-Francais, top of A shows.

**Center circle stone.**

Center circle 24mm. in diameter repeated four times for the four designs.

**Outer circle with "tail" and "Protectoral" box stone.**

1. Tail broad, joins low; round end to top box.
2. Tail broad, joins high; round end to top box.
3. Tail broad, joins high; forked end to box.
4. Tail narrow, joins high; forked end to top box.

**Background stone.**

1. Tail joins low; round end to top box.
2. Tail joins high; round end to top box.
3. Tail joins high; forked end to top box.
4. Narrow tail joins high; forked end to top box.

These stones will produce four distinct types in four colors. So far, the original printing has only been seen with:

Design and all lettering in black.  
Center circle in yellow.  
Outer circle, tail and box in red.  
Background in green.

## Second Printing

At a later date, a second printing was called for and it is surmised that the Design stone had been damaged; Nles HEBRIDES was damaged on 1 and 3, and so was deleted and NOUVLES HEBRIDES added and printed from the center circle stone. This a a different type, in block letters with accent over the first E of HEBRIDES. PROTECTORAT was damaged and deleted from 2 and 4 and added and printed from the background stone. This was, again, a different type, with sloping block letters.

We thus have the following adjustments to the original stones:—

**Design stone.**

1. Same as original with Nles HEBRIDES deleted.
2. Same as original with PROTECTORAT erased.
3. Same as original with Nles HEBRIDES erased.
4. Same as original with PROTECTORAT erased.

**Center circle stone.**

1. NOUVLES HEBRIDES added to fit low tail.
2. As original, no change.
3. NOUVLES HEBRIDES added to fit high tail.
4. As original, no change.

**Outer circle, tail and box stone.**

No alteration to any of the four original transfers.

**Background stone.**

1. No alteration required.
2. PROTECTORAT added, slopes right, 22mm. long.
3. No alteration required.
4. PROTECTORAT added, slopes right, 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ mm. long.

Color-trial printings from the altered center circle and background stones with the original outer circle, tail and box stone have been seen. These, with the deleted design stone in black, would give the completed essay in the second printing.

Complete essays from the second printing have been seen in the following colors:—

Center circle:	Blue.	Red.	Dark green.
Background:	Red.	Grey.	Yellow.
Outer circle, etc.:	Yellow.	Yellow.	Grey.
Deleted design:	Black.	Black.	Black.

It is possible that further damage and repair may have occurred to the original stones which would give further types, but so far no evidence of this has been seen.

### Forgery of Transfer Type Ia.

A fairly obvious forgery, but one which might be accepted in view of how little is known of this essay, is worth recording. It is apparently based on the second printing from repaired stones with *NOUVLES HEBRIDES* printed from, and in color of, center circle stone. (See illustration below.)



Genuine.

Lithographed in four colors.  
Design in black, except *NOUVLES HEBRIDES* which is in color of center.  
**PROTECTORAT**, upright block letters 20  $\frac{3}{4}$  mm. long.  
Carnot, from top of head to point of neck, 15 mm.  
Victoria, top of crown to point of neck, 15  $\frac{3}{4}$  mm.  
2  $\frac{1}{2}$  d.-25c., from left of 2 to right of 5, 11  $\frac{1}{2}$  mm.  
Top of A of Anglo shows.  
Outer circle, five dots at top, five at bottom.



Forgery.

Hand-stamped from a line block.  
All design in black on orange paper, colored through.  
**PROTECTORAT**, smaller upright letters, 20 mm. long.  
Carnot, from top of head to point of neck, 14  $\frac{3}{4}$  mm.  
Victoria, top of crown to point of neck, 15 mm.  
2  $\frac{1}{2}$  d.-25c., from left of 2 to right of 5, 11  $\frac{3}{4}$  mm.  
No sign of A of Anglo.  
Outer circle has seven dots at top, 10 at bottom.

The forgery appears to be the same as the illustrations in "Les Timbres des Colonies Francais, New Hebrides" by M. Jurion (1928), and "Yvert's Specialised Catalogue of France & Colonies (1929)", page 723.

H. G. L. Fletcher, who has helped me with this study, reports a new forgery now on the market. Emanating from Paris, this is photographically produced and printed on tinted paper from the design of the original printing. The size and designs showing all four types is accurate, although the lines are a little thicker and the lettering not so legible. It is, however very crudely hand-colored, which is easily apparent if carefully examined, especially in comparison with a genuine essay.

These forgeries have been seen in the original colors of the first printing (center—yellow, background—green, outer circle—red), and also in bogus colors not seen in the original printing:

(a) center—red, background—yellow, outer circle—green;

(b) center—green, background—red, outer circle—yellow.

Although not dangerous to anyone who has the genuine essay and has examined it carefully, these forgeries may fool the unwary.

#### Bibliography

"Les Timbres des Colonies Francais, New Hebrides", M. Jurion, 1928. (Forgery of Type 1a illustrated.)

Yvert's Specialised Catalogue of France & Colonies, 1929, page 723. (Forgery of Type 1a illustrated.)

"Les Timbres des Colonies Francais", by Darand, 1943, page 142.

*Philately from Australia*, P. Collas, Vol. 2, 1950, page 31. (Original Type 3 illustrated.)

*Stamp Collecting*, J. Crompton, Vol. 95, page 671 (February 10th, 1961). (Original sheet of four illustrated.)

*S. P. A. Journal*, N. Hals, April 1961, page 381. (Forgery of Type 1a illustrated.)

### Background Footnote

*Following publication of Mr. Compton's original article (JOURNAL 70) and the further notes from Ronald Hughes (JOURNAL 74) Nathan Hals, of New York, sent the following background notes to Stamp Collecting, London, which published the first Studies and the preceding data (SC., Oct. 24, 1962). Mr. Hals' footnote also appearing in SC Oct. 24, 1962:*

Whatever their source, whatever their purpose, these essays represent an attempt to influence political thought through a completely unofficial action, and this action was promptly decried.

The apparent wounds to English national pride (or to French) are just not there. Only the extreme suspicions of the Australians prevented English-speaking people from accepting these essays for what they were—a proagenda label which intimated an equality of the French and English interests in the New Hebrides.

The French on New Caledonia had made several occupations of various islands for the purpose of pacifying the savages, and on each occasion the British had raised the roof about it. The year 1892 saw a turning-point in French attitudes anent the New Hebrides and an all-out effort was instituted to gain economic ascendancy in the islands. When, in 1893, the need to further quell the natives arose, the French military on New Caledonia conceived the idea of inviting the British to join them in this purpose—the French to occupy one part, the British another—and the idea behind this was that the occupation would become permanent and give *de facto* sovereignty over the occupied parts, thus settling the problem of who would own the archipelago. The design of the franchise stamp was a clever step in the plan—sort of a carrot on the stick. There is some reason to believe that it was designed, before the troubles, with those for New Caledonia, which had been rejected for bearing a denomination, but why the value was 25c.-2½d. is an enigma.

Anyway, it was a clever scheme and it failed very cleverly; the civilian authorities, who in those miraculous days gave orders to the military, turned the idea down cold. What the European inhabitants of New Hebrides, Australia, and New Caledonia never could get through their heads (oh, there is nothing so patriotic as a man away from his homeland) was that Paris and London were in complete agreement as to the non-desirability of owning these wet, volcanic, hurricaneridden, hot cannibal-infested, unselfsustaining islands.

So let's not glower over the wording but admire the overclever scamps who had their hands slapped (as they did too on the New Caledonia military franchise essays), and let's get on with collecting these very interesting pieces of political history with no philatelic content.

The following data and illustrations were prepared by the authors especially for  
THE ESSAY-PROOF JOURNAL.

## New Hebrides

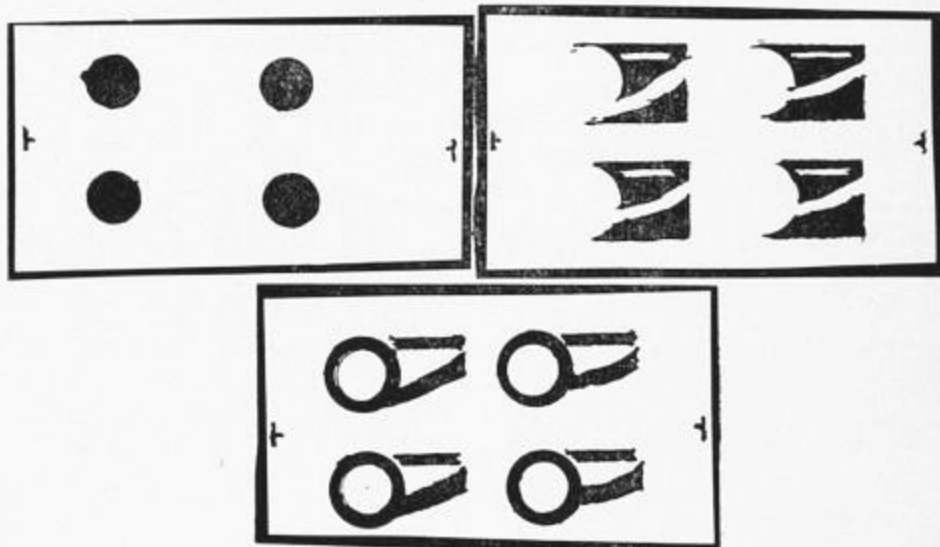
1893. — 2½d — 25c. Anglo-French Military Essay

### Original Printing

Lithographed in sheets of 4 slightly differing designs in black, with 3 other colors,  
necessitating the use of four stones.

Center Circle stone (yellow).

Background stone (green.)



Outer circle with tail for New Hebrides  
and Protectorat box (red).



Design stone (black).

## New Hebrides

1893. — 2½d — 25c. Anglo-French Military Essay

*Second Printing*

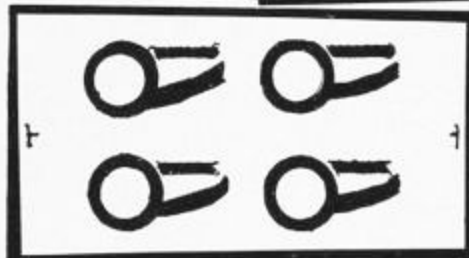
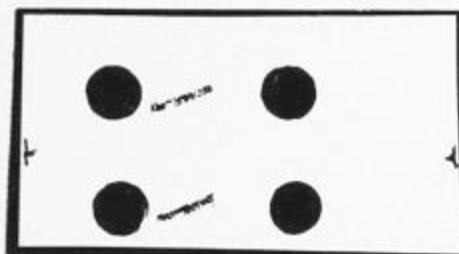
Possibly owing to damage to the design stone,—Nles Hebrides was deleted from 1 and 3 and added to center circle stone. Protectorat deleted from 2 and 4 and added to background stone.

Center Circle stone (blue).

NOUVLES HEBRIDES added to 1 and 3.

Background stone (red).

PROTECTORAT added to 2 and 4.



Outer circle, tail and box stone,  
unchanged (yellow).



Design stone.

Nles HEBRIDES deleted from 1 and 3.  
PROTECTORAT deleted from 2 and 4.

## New Hebrides

1893. — 2½d — 25c. Anglo-French Military Essay

### Color Trials of Second Printing

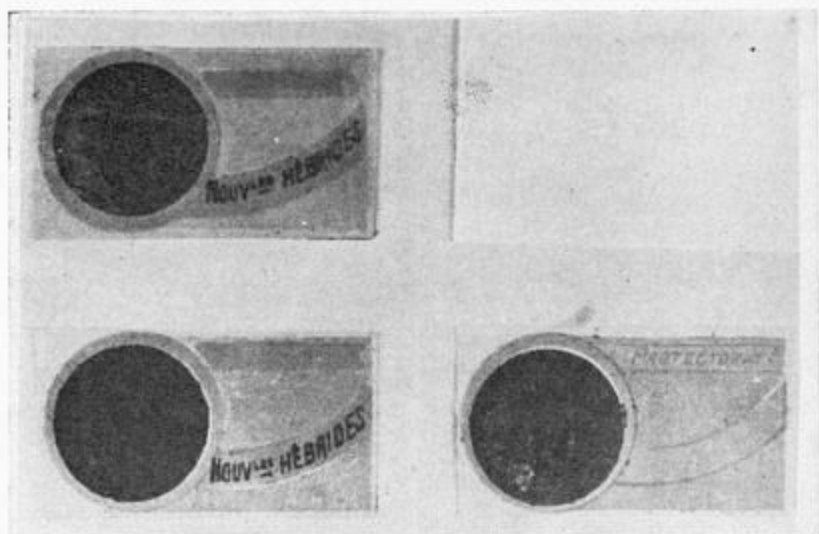
Color trials are known of the additions to the center circle and background stones.

Center circle with NOUVLES HEBRIDES added to 1 and 3.

Background stone with PROTECTORAT added to 2 and 4.

Outer circle, tail and box stone unchanged.

With the deleted design in black would give the complete essay.



### Complete Essay of Second Printing

Seen in the following combination of colors.—

Center circle	Blue	Red	Dark green
Background	Red	Grey	Yellow
Outer circle, etc.	Yellow	Yellow	Grey

