

THE GAMBIA.

The 1880 and the 1886/7 Issues.

It appears from the De La Rue History that the following consignments of the 1880 issue as recorded by Dalwick have been incorrectly listed:-

1883	Aug. 27	3d.	500	sheets of 15	= 7500	stamps
1885	Sept. 6	4d.	500	" " "	= 7500	"
		1/-	205	" " "	= 3075	"

The first item, the 3d. value, is specifically referred to on page 382. It appears that on 5th July, 1883, the Crown Agents sent to De La Rue a letter from the Colony objecting to the lack of contrast between the colours of the 3d. and 6d. values which were both being printed in blue. They suggested that the 3d. be printed in black and asked for a supply of 500 sheets in the new colour.

"The firm replied that 'there are many objections to using black for stamp printing', and suggested grey. They took the opportunity of sending the new colour scale, in which all stamps were printed from the Halfpenny plate, and showed grey for the Threepence. The new colour was approved by the Crown Agents on August 9th, and the stamps were invoiced on August 27th, when 500 sheets (7,500 stamps) were despatched. There is nothing in the correspondence to suggest that on their arrival in the colony the surviving blue stamps were destroyed."

When the 2½d. value was requisitioned in October, 1885, the colour blue was objected to as conflicting with the 3d. and 6d. in the same colour. The firm referred to "the new Scale of Colours, which were approved some time ago" and to the fact that the 3d. had already been printed in grey although no 6d., which was to be in olive green, had been ordered since the scheme was approved. (page 428)

The History reference to the 1885 consignment of the 4d. and 6d. stamps is not so definite:

"The first requisition to come from Gambia after the institution of the colour scheme in 1883 was sent by the Crown Agents on July 29, 1885, and called for Fourpence and One Shilling. There was no correspondence on the question of colour, and no specimens were invoiced when the stamps were charged on September 3rd. De La Rue printed 3275 of One Shilling and 7500 of Fourpence. As the Crown Agents had approved the new colour scheme for Gambia on August 9, 1883 it is probable that the new One Shilling was printed in violet. The Fourpence was not affected"

However, further evidence may lie in the watermark as no copy of the green shilling is known on the 'C.A.' paper. On 22nd. March, 1881, De La Rue reported to the Crown Agents that the 'C.C.' dandyroll was "fairly worn out" having been in use since 1862, and quoted for a new roll. This was accepted with the proviso that the letters 'C.A.' be used and that the old 'C.C.' marks be destroyed "in the presence of our Inspector" on its completion. The 'C.A.' dandyroll was invoiced on 29th June, 1881.

As the paper was invoiced direct to the Crown Agents there is no evidence as to when the 'C.A.' paper was available but it was certainly in general use for the Colonies in 1882. Having been used for the 1883 printing of the 3d. value which is not known in grey on the 'C.C.' paper it appears all but certain that the 'C.A.' paper was used for the 1885 printings of the 4d. and 1/- values.

The History also states that the second 6d. plate was invoiced on 20th May, 1890, and that the first printing from it was the 5th December, 1893, consignment of 2000 sheets.

It appears clear, therefore, that the last consignment of the 1880 issue was that of 30th May, 1881, and that the totals sent to the Colony were as follows:-

1880 Issue on 'C.C.' paper:

1/4d.	4,534	sheets	=	68,010	stamps
1d.	4,046	"	=	60,690	"
2d.	2,677	"	=	40,155	"
3d.	1,180	"	=	17,700	"
4d.	2,553	"	=	38,295	"
6d.	756	"	=	11,340	"
1/-	270	"	=	4,050	"

1883-7 Issue on 'C.A.' paper:

1/4d.	15,089	sheets	=	226,335	stamps
1d.	7,933	"	=	82,502	" 118,995 stamps
2d.	5,500	"	=	82,500	stamps
2 1/4d.	11,358	"	=	170,370	"
3d.	3,993	"	=	59,970	"
4d.	6,540	"	=	98,100	"
Plate I 6d.	2,010	"	=	30,150	"
" II 6d.	2,000	"	=	30,000	"
1/-	3,205	"	=	43,075	"

It will now be worth checking the earlier dates on the 'C.A.' issues of the 3d., 4d., and 1/- values with a view to discovering when they may have been brought into use in the Colony.

Incidentally, the above list shows that fewer of the green shilling were printed than either of the 1874 imperfs.

Bonnie Baird
Oct. 1918.