



THE MAIL BOAT, CAPE TOWN DOCKS

CAPE-OF-GOOD-HOPE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY

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Cover image: This cover image shows Jo Bodeon, a back-roper in the mule room at Chace Cotton Mill. Burlington, Vermont. This and other similar images in this book were taken by Lewis W. Hine, in the period between 1908-1912. These images as well as social campaigns by many including Hine, helped to formulate America's anti-child labour laws...

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PATENT_AND_PROPRIETA

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Patent and Proprietary Stamps

In 1908 a new form of taxation was introduced in the Cape of Good Hope. By means of stamp duties all medicine was to be taxed. Brian Trotter¹ gives the reason that the tax was introduced so that additional revenue could be earned as the coming up of the National Convention to discuss the Union of the South Africa, the Cape's prime Minister feared that the Cape's influence would be diminished at the convention if the financial position was not strengthened.

Initially the stamps were produced locally, probably by the Cape Times. The values of these stamps were 2d, 4d, 6d, 2s 6d, 4s 6d, 10s and £1. The stamp was designed by Sturman, Chief Clerk of the Government Post office and the design selected by the Cape prime Minister, John Merriman, as the most suitable from the six designs submitted by Sturman. These stamps were the only locally printed stamps during the Edwardian Period.

No convincing reason can be found as why existing revenue stamps could not have been used for this purpose, or at least overprinting them.

The Act No.39 of September, 1908 prescribed that the duty was to be collected by "means of stamps".

Medicine Price	Stamp Duty
Retail (up to)	
1s 6d 2d	
2s 6d 4d	
4s 6d	
10s 1s 6d	
£1 2s 6d	
£1 10s 4s 6d	
£2 10s 10s	
Over £2 10s £1	

The Act had only been in place for a little more than a year, when an amendment was issued by Act No.16 of 30 November 1909. This changed the duty on patent and proprietary medicines to 2d if the container retailed at less than 1s 6d, then an "additional stamp duty of 1d for every additional 6d or part thereof of such price".

This change in the regulations impacted on the stamps required, as it now required the issue of a 1d stamp. This denomination was not available either at the local printing or De La Rue. To alleviate the



Figure 1: 1909 KEVII 1d carmine over-printed PATENT AND PROPRIETARY in black reading vertically upward. SG 71 var. The stamp was overprinted due to rate changes in 1909.

problem the then current 1d Cape postage stamps, were overprinted.

The stamps were required to be affixed to the box, bottles and other containers holding the medicines, they were discarded with the empty containers and very few have survived used.

This duty was repelled by the South Africa Act No. 30 of 1 July 1911.



Figure 2: De La Rue's First design proposal.

References

1. Trotter Brian, Cape of Good Hope Patent and Proprietary Stamps, *London Philatelist*, March 2002, **111**:57.
2. Government Gazettes and Acts of Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope and the Union of South Africa.