

Replacement Coupons

by Don Bradt

Replacement coupons are coupons inserted into a bundle of coupons to replace any coupons damaged in the printing/cutting process. They are used to ensure that the serial numbers give a true count of the coupons. For example, you can depend on finding exactly 500 coupons in a bundle whose first coupon is A6000001 and last coupon is A6000500, even if one or more coupons in that range were too badly damaged to have been used.

For Canadian Currency, easily detectable replacement notes began with the shift to banknotes depicting Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. Independently numbered notes were produced with an asterisk preceding the prefix of the serial number. These "*" (asterisk) notes were then used to replace any damaged note. Previously a single note had to be numbered separately to match the damaged one, a very time consuming process. Later, when the Bank of Canada converted to three prefix letters on currency, replacement notes had the third prefix letter as an "X". The eleven digit five and twenty dollar notes used a "1" for the second digit for replacement notes. See figures 1 and 2 for a selection of Canadian Currency replacement notes.

The BABN (British American Banknote Company) printed all the Canadian Tire gas coupons, except for the denominations less than five cents which were printed by Canadian Tire. BABN also printed the store coupons which have large serial numbers and a single letter prefix. For Canadian Tire coupons, BABN continued the tradition of numbering a replacement coupon to match the serial number replaced. This makes replacement coupons printed by BABN very difficult to detect.

The CBN (Canadian Banknote Company) printed the remaining store coupons. These coupons have a two letter prefix with large or small serial numbers. They also printed the CTC S13-14-15 and S16 series, which have a one letter prefix and eight digits or ten digits respectively. For most series printed by CBN, independently numbered coupons containing an asterisk were used to replace damaged coupons. Although scarce, they are very noticeable when looking through coupons and there is no question that they are valid replacement coupons. Series CTC S4, S9 and S13 (CT-23, CT-28 and CT-31?) have replacement coupons of this type. CBN also, at times, used the old method and printed replacement coupons to match the serial number replaced. Series CTC S12 and CTC S13 (CT-23-16A and CT-31?) have coupons of this type, both discovered by Jerome Fourre. Note that series S13 has both types. With the new series of coupons (CTC S15 & S16) just released, CBN printed an independent series with the first (of ten) digit a nine. They have been found in every denomination, from the five cent to the two dollar coupon.

Coupons have been discovered in the CTC S11 and S10 series (printed by BABN) which are probably replacement notes. As mentioned above, these coupons have serial numbers in sequence with the coupons around them but it is obvious they were not printed with the others. The distance between the serial numbers is different than preceding and following coupons. The coupon is also centered differently on the paper, making the margins slightly different than nearby coupons. Finally (and most easily detected), the actual digits comprising the serial number have different shapes and different thicknesses. In particular, the digit "1" is very different. It is assumed that these coupons were numbered later using a small "hand" press.

The one dollar coupon Q1070111 (Figure 3) and the ten cent coupons E5311830 and E5311909 (Figure 4) clearly shows the different "1" digit. The three replacement coupons A4090435 - A4090437, (Figure 5) with bracketing coupons clearly show the different spacing between the two serial numbers and the different size margins.

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