

RARE CANADIAN COINS MINTED SINCE 1967

by Horst Kahlmeier

It is now already eight years since our nickel coinage has appeared in every day change. Indeed it is a rare occurrence today to find any remaining silver dime or quarter in circulation. Their disappearing act is the result of mass melting programs, legal by the government and illegal by certain enterprising individuals. The result of all this is an unfortunate blow for the youngster or beginner, who obviously starts his collection from finds in circulation. Gone are the days when one could find an old 1939 quarter with the head of King George VI to fill a space in the coin album. The silver coinage, once abundantly supplied, is now reduced and every date, once only worth face value, is now worth a premium above face value.

Another rather puzzling fact worth mentioning is the disappearance of older pre-1960 cents from circulation. The price of copper, lower now than it once was, has not yet been the cause for melting our cents as in the case of silver. Yet it is a rarity to find a King George VI date today. Fortunately, however, all this has not had any real influence on coin collecting. Interest is still alive for one to search through his change for not only silver and copper pieces but also for certain dates.

In its eight years of pure nickel coinage production, our mint has created a few collector delights to look for. An item which is listed but not seen is the 1969 dime with a large date. In this year the reverse was re-designed with a smaller date and ship than in the past. Sometimes certain designs may have to be re-engraved, as constant use over many years results in the disappearance of fine detail. Apparently the reverse die from the previous year was used at the beginning of the year but quickly abandoned.

The year 1970 provided a very low coinage production of every denomination. The mint and banks were all stocked up with the previous years' mintages and thus very low demand existed for any new coins.

The two 1970 coins to watch out for are the nickels and dimes. Compared to previous years, the mintages of almost six million five-cent pieces and just over five million ten-cent pieces are very low. Just try to find either in change. A roll of forty nickels in mint condition sells for over twelve dollars presently and a roll of 50 dimes for close to twenty dollars. In circulated condition they are worth at least twice face value.

The 1973 special issue "Mountie" quarter with a large obverse bust is the more startling and popular variety to look out for. Exact quantity minted is not really known but has been estimated at perhaps two thousand. Most have already been taken out of circulation by lucky individuals. Worth around a hundred dollars each, they are also found in the special proof-like sets sealed by the mint and also in the presentation sets and are worth even more. Even though finding one may be unlikely today, it provides another challenge and more interest in coin collecting.