

## Vienna International Stamp Exhibition

(From our Special Correspondent.)

**B**EFORE the leading philatelists of Brunn had resolved to open a stamp exhibition in August, a similar idea had been conceived by an Austrian committee in Vienna. Keen competition arose between these two towns, and it was feared that the bulk of the Brunn exhibits would be found again at the Vienna exhibition in September, so that the second exhibition, though prepared the first, would be but a duplicate of the former one. Owing to various reasons—some of them of a political nature—this fear did not materialize. On the other hand the Vienna Exhibition was a real disappointment to all true philatelists who remembered the exhibitions held in this capital before the war. Vienna has always been among the most important centres of Philately, and Austria has furnished quite a number of pioneers to philatelic science. So it was extraordinary to note that the Austrian exhibits were more noticeable for the value of the stamps shown than for careful study or æsthetic presentation.

Moreover, the participation was less international than in Brunn; among the 59 exhibitors, 36 belonged to the former Monarchy (30 to Austria, 3 to Czecho-Slovakia, 2 to Hungary and 1 to Jugoslavia); furthermore, there were 13 Germans, and the real foreign element was only represented by 10 collectors, 3 belonging to Switzerland, 2 each to Norway and to the United States, one each to Great Britain, France and Holland. But if the number of the collections sent from abroad was small, their interest was great.

Four Governments sent exhibits: Austria, Bavaria, Germany and Italy. The Austrian Post Ministry illustrated the three different processes of stamp printing used in Vienna, and showed proofs of the last issue of Charity stamps. The Bavarian and German exhibits consisted of essays and proofs of the last issues of these two countries. Italy showed a complete collection of its issues, especially the overprinted sets for use abroad.

Notwithstanding the strong participation of Austrian philatelists, Austrian stamps did not hold a predominant place. Some collections presented rare varieties of the first issues, studies of cancellations, reprints, etc. But if they contained priceless things, they were generally of little interest to small collectors.

The first issue of Hungary came next with three marvellous collections of Consul Weinberger, M. E. Kraus of Vienna, and M. Z. Mauthner of Budapest.

A special section was devoted to the stamps of the Danube Navigation Company, and much was to be learnt from the two exhibits of Messrs. J. Sturamy (Vienna) and E. Klein (Philadelphia). Especially the means of detecting reprints and falsifications were splendidly explained: full sheets of originals and of reprints being put side by side. Stamps on covers and rare postmarks were also shown.

The old German States were also strongly represented. Heligoland held the first place, being twice exhibited: stamps on covers from Consul Weinberger (already seen in Brunn) and unused stamps from M. Elster of Vienna. Two special collections of Prussia (M. Baldus) and of Hamburg (M. Ott) were shown. This latter gentleman also showed a great number of covers with stamps of Schleswig-Holstein, rich material for a study of this country as nearly all the postmarks were included.

France and the French Colonies were missing from the Exhibition, so was Great Britain; but the British Empire was represented by two big collections of unused Georgians.

Of exhibits already seen at Brunn we may note the Service stamps of British Somaliland (M. Baumgarten), Orange River Colony overprinted "V.R.I." (M. de Raay), Montenegro (M. Doenges), the first issue of Turkey (M. Adolf Passer, who exhibited also a splendid collection of the stamps issued by the Angora Government); also the very interesting collection of the old Philippines with reconstructed sheets of the 5 c., orange, of 1854 (also of the 10 c., red, and of the 1 r., blue). Particularly interesting was the sheet with the error "CORROS." This error was also shown in strips, blocks and single copies, as well as various covers and sheets of the values from 1859 to 1863. The recent issues were not exhibited; M. Kleeman's collection of the Service "O.B." over print is said to be the most complete in the world.

Mexico was represented by two small collections belonging to M. Stephen Mayer, consisting of a study of the postmarks and a reconstruction of the plates of the 1868 issue, ten types being distinguished for the four lower values.

There were only two entries in the Air Mail class, a general collection from M. Marquard (Berlin) and Mr. F. P. Renaut's careful study already seen at Brunn.

Two collections were sent to the Exhibition after the publication of the catalogue and were by no means the least important items. The first was a marvellous display of the old issues of Sicily, numerous singles of each value, two strips of ten of the 1 g., blue, unused, large blocks of the  $\frac{1}{2}$  g., orange, three blocks of fifteen of the 2 g., ultramarine and a block of thirty-nine stamps of the 2 g., deep blue. The second exhibit consisted of various blocks and strips of the popular 1843 issue of Brazil. Some items were unique, such as a vertical block of twenty 60 reis, used, a block of eighteen of the 90 reis, used, reconstructed sheets of all values, and a block of eight of the scarce 600 reis with slanting figures.

The Austrian Postal Administration established a special Exhibition post-office which used a distinctive cancellation and sold all the values of the present issue, including those which were recently put out of use.