

Canadian 1938 5 Cents

A study of Varieties

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General Information

In his report to the Dept. of Finance, the mint master H. E. Ewart commented that the year 1938 was a very busy year for the Royal Canadian Mint. Among other things it saw the retirement of mint master J.H. Campbell on the 31st of March and 7,534 visitors to the minting facilities.

From a production perspective it was a record year with a total of 34,953,472 pieces passing for issue; requiring the production staff work 50% over-time during the months of November and December.

The total number of matrices, punches and dies manufactured during 1938 for Canadian coinage purposes was 1,134; of this there were a total of 848 (376 Obverse and 472 Reverse) dies used in the press room on Canadian coinage from those produced.

Denomination	Obverse Dies		Reverse Dies		Mintage
	Made	Used	Made	Used	
Dollars	48	3	6	1	90,304
50 Cents	0	4	18	5	192,018
25 Cents	114	84	239	222	3,149,245
10 Cents	132	146	156	142	4,197,323
5 Cents	54	47	48	34	3,898,974
1 Cent	108	92	96	68	18,365,608

Table 1: Dies and Mintages

Nickel blanks were purchased from Falconbridge Nickel Mines in five consignments of one million pieces each; the blanks were shipped from Oslo, Norway.

From the table above we see that each 5 cents reverse die would have struck on average approximately 115,000 coins.

Varieties

Although 1938 was a busy year in the mints production facilities there are surprisingly few varieties identified for this year.

Three forms of 3's – By examining the date of the 5 cents piece closely we see that there are three varieties of the flat top 3 in the date.



After study, it appears that the differences between the “Blunt 3” and the “Pointed 3” can be attributed to die resurfacing applied to worn dies extending their usefulness. The “Extra Pointed 3” variety does appear to be slightly different however. The position of the 3 in relation to the 8 seems to be higher and the flat top slightly thinner on this variety. Further investigation is required, with a wider sampling necessary, to develop a different theory.