

The Overprinted Issues of Switzerland for the League of Nations and International Labor Organization (1922-1946)

Purpose: This is a Traditional study of the Swiss issues overprinted for use by the League of Nations (Société des Nations - SdN) and International Labor Organization (Bureau International du Travail - BIT) during the period of the League's existence. The SdN and BIT were established on June 28, 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, with the BIT as an affiliated agency of the League. Included in this study are the genuine overprints, specimens, overprint varieties, forged overprints, and service mail from both organizations.

Background: The history of the SdN and BIT overprints is held at the Swiss PTT, Bern, and the SdN Archives, Genève.

01 January 1921 - Sir Herbert B. Ames, the director of financial administration at the League of Nations Secretariat, requested Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General, submit a formal request to the head of the Swiss Directorate of General Post, Dr. Haab, Bern.

11 August 1921 - Swiss Chief Post Director, Dr. Furrer, discussed the topic of "official Stamps" with Lieutenant Colonel. T.A. Hiam from the League of Nations Secretariat

03 September 1921 - A letter is sent to the League containing 16 samples of Swiss overprints with "SdN" printed on them. It is stated in the letter that the printing clichés are custom-made.

16 September 1921 - The League of Nations agreed to the Post's suggestions and asked for the stamps to be executed with a horizontal overprint.

30 September 1921 - The Swiss Directorate of General Post replies with samples of a Swiss overprint with the desired horizontal imprint "Société des Nations." The letter further states that the official stamps would be sent to the post office of the League of Nations Secretariat.

23 May 1922 - The Swiss Directorate of General Post advises Lieutenant Colonel. T. A. Hiam that the first order of official stamps had been delivered to the League post office in the Hotel National.

26 May 1922 - Internal Memo from L. Munier, Deputy Chief of the Internal Service of the League to Secretariat staff announces the availability of SdN official stamps at the League post office for official use only.

Between 1922 -1944, the Swiss PTT issued 91 different stamps overprinted for use by the SdN and 89 different stamps overprinted for use by the BIT. On 19 April 1946, The SdN was dissolved and all remaining assets given to the United Nations. SdN and BIT issues in circulation at that time remained valid for use through 31 March 1947 and 30 April 1957, respectively. Examples of these post-SdN usages are presented in the exhibit epilogue.



Denotes Personal Research

Exhibit Plan

Forerunner Pre-Overprint Period - SdN

Rue du Mont Blanc Post Office - Genève I
Hotel National Post Office - Genève I

Forerunner Pre-Overprint Period - BIT

Rue du Mont Blanc Post Office - Genève I

First Series

Tell, Tellboy, Helvetia, and Mountain Scenes 1922 - 1923
Tell, Tellboy, Helvetia, and Mountain Scenes 1924 -1944
-Additional Printings and Denominations

Second Series

Shield and Cross Issues - 1924
Additional Printings - 1936-1942

Third Series

Disarmament - 1932

Fourth Series

Typographed Landscapes - 1934-1935

Fifth Series

Engraved Landscapes - 1936-1937

Sixth Series

Building Series - 1938

Seventh Series

Symbolic Scenes - 1939

Eighth Series

Castles and Mythen - 1942 - 1943

Ninth Series

Landscapes, Historical Motifs, Symbolic Scenes - 1944

Epilogue

SdN Transitional Period - 1946 - 1947
BIT Transitional Period - 1946 - 1957

Note: Exceptional items of which typically 10 or less are known are highlighted using a red border.

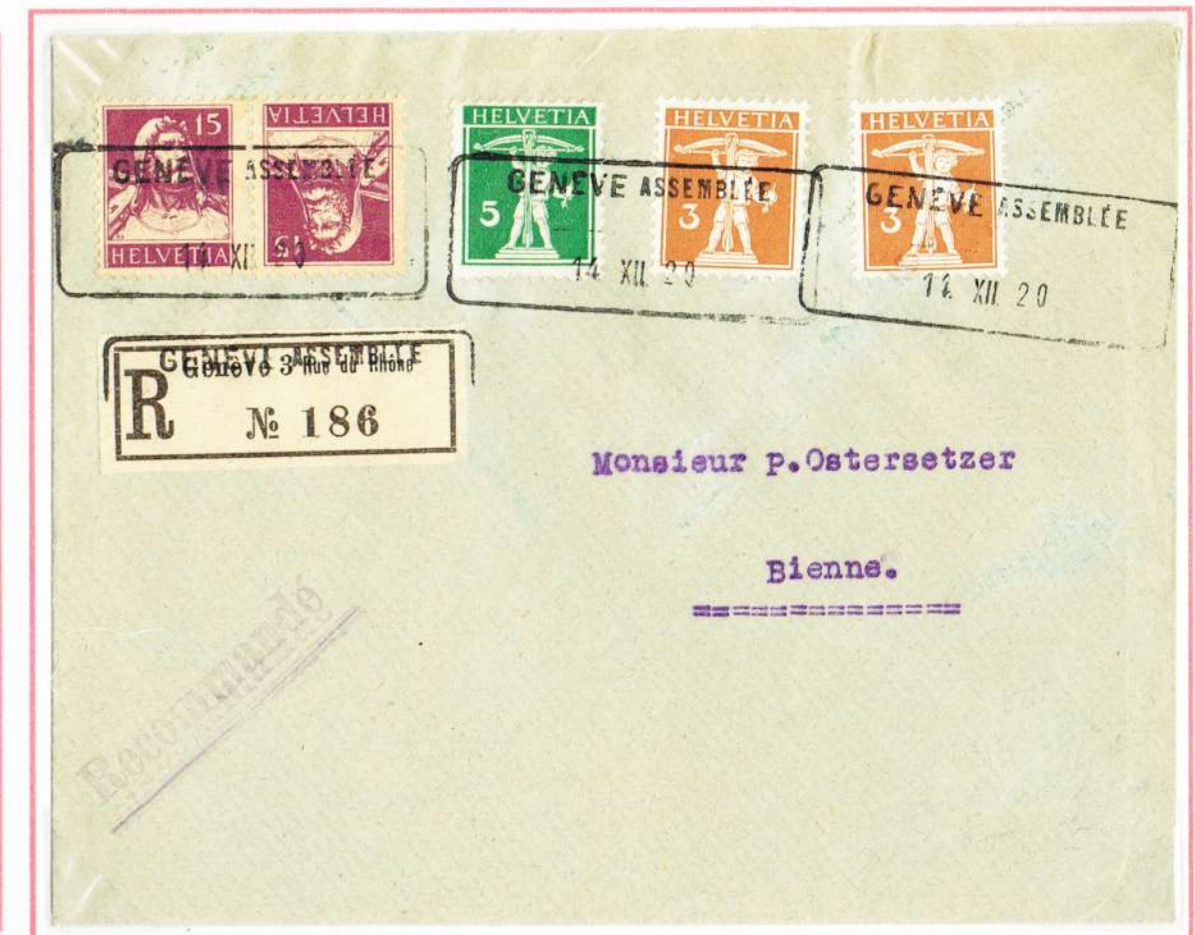
Forerunner Pre-Overprint Period - SdN

The Swiss Post, Telegraph, and Telephone (PTT) established a League Post Office in the hotel for handling of official service mail of the organization. The SdN post office maintained a supply of Swiss stamps which were affixed to SdN service mail and then carried to the adjacent local Swiss post office at Rue du Mont Blanc where the *Genève 1 Société des Nations* hand cancel was applied to the mail and then dispatched.



4 December 1920 - city (local) letter within Genève, Switzerland, paid 10c letter rate. Tied by *Genève 1 Société des Nations* hand cancel. SdN hand cancel put into service 1 November 1920 and used through 6 July 1927, when it was replaced with the *Genève 10 Société des Nations* hand cancel. (Earliest observed usage)

Rue du Mont Blanc Post Office - Genève I



14 December 1920 - domestic letter to Bienne, Switzerland, paid 20c letter rate plus 20c registration surcharge = 40c (overpaid 1c). Tied by emergency rectangular cancel *Genève Assemblée* hand cancel used exclusively at the 1st League Assembly. Both the Assembly cancel and registration label with overprint used 15 November - 21 December 1920. (Three observed)