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1907 Christmas Seals

Miss Bissell Tells of Original Seals

In the March 1933 BULLETIN, the National Tuberculosis Association published a statement with regard to the 1907 Christmas seals. Since that statement was issued, the Delaware Anti-Tuberculosis Society has given very careful consideration to this whole matter and Miss Emily P. Bissell, President of the Society, has herself prepared a statement which we take great pleasure in publishing in full. The new price list for the 1907 seals should make it possible for anyone who is at all interested, to secure copies for his collection. Miss Bissell's statement follows:

"I am assuming everyone knows the history of the Christmas Seal in this country, beginning with the Delaware Seal of 1907. The Delaware Anti-Tuberculosis Society was incorporated in 1907, and for many years had no full time, paid secretary or permanent offices. In fact, until comparatively recent years the business affairs of our Society rested upon volunteer workers. It was, therefore, perfectly natural in closing up the 1907 sale of seals, following the rush of Christmas and New Year holidays, the material left over, including seals, should have been stored away, shortly to be forgotten in the rush of individual interests of our workers. Years passed without thought of old seals, as each succeeding year brought new ones at Christmas time on a national scope. For years the 1907 remained valueless, stored away in boxes, bundles and cabinets, uncounted and forgotten. Many years later, when our Society became strong enough to maintain an office and part-time worker, I gave to the Society the seals remaining in my possession. Offices of the Society were moved from time to time, along with changes in our paid workers. Five or six years ago, with the aid of reliable appraisers and interested ones, an appraisal was made on a perfectly honest survey of the known existing quantity at that time. This resulted in a list price being established in May 1928 of \$5.00 and \$7.50 per seal.

About two years ago, during a thorough going through of our stock of tuberculosis supplies, storage cabinets, transfer files, etc., with a view to compiling an accurate inventory of supplies and equipment, we found a quantity of both type I and type II. The 'find' was later reported to our Executive Committee, resulting in an order to withdraw all sales through our Society until such time as the exact quantity could be determined. Several months later the tabulation was completed. The inventory showed 212,000 seals, which included printer's waste, shopworn, torn, faded, rat-eaten edges, great quantities gummed together, seals badly cracked, brittle, and broken, due to age. The Executive Committee reaffirmed its order that no more of our 1907 seals be sold, giving instructions that the entire stock be gone over again and all imperfect sheets and seals be burned, the remaining perfect seals to be classified, counted and inventoried. This was completed several weeks ago. We then took under consideration the matter of arriving at a reasonable price on the seals, a price that would make it possible for everyone to own a copy. We also established the fact that the original plates and drawings had been destroyed.

"We regret that discovery of a quantity of these 1907 seals in cleaning up our offices has brought us so much unfavorable publicity, causing people to think we are dickering in the seal trade. We wish to emphasize the fact that our Society is not in the out-dated Christmas seal business, and has not tried to deal in or put up the prices of our 1907 seals. We prefer that the seals should be within reach of all, and that the collecting public should buy through dealers rather than our office as we cannot turn from our regular work to enter the seal trade, and will not promise to continue selling from our office if we find it takes up too much time.