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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Under the heading "Norway" on page 32 of your March 1987 issue you give your readers the following information:

"In 1877 the currency was changed to that of Sweden, and krona and öre became the coins of Norway."

This is not quite correct. Please therefore be informed that:

(1) The relevant year was not 1877, but 1875.

(2) It was not a matter of Norway's currency being "changed to that of Sweden", but a change implemented by three countries - Denmark, Norway and Sweden - who all dropped their respective ancient currency systems in favour of a more uniform decimal-type system.

(3) The Swedish terms "krona" and "öre" were not used in Norway (the equivalent terms in Norwegian being "krone" and "øre").

More specifically, the main facts of the story are as follows:

Together with their adoption of the metric system of measurements, the three Nordic countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden in the mid-1870's also reformed their respective national currencies by introducing the decimal system (or more precisely, a system of main units subdivided by 100). These reforms were implemented within the frameworks of a trilateral agreement - the so-called "Scandinavian Monetary Convention" - which came into effect in 1875. The Convention provided *inter alia* for common currency denominations, with the necessary allowances for the linguistic differences between the three countries. Thus, since 1875 the currency units in Denmark and Norway have been the *krona* (plural *kroner*) = 100 *öre* (singular & plural), whereas in Sweden it has been the *krona* (plural *kronor*) = 100 *öre* (singular & plural).

It may be added that the Scandinavian Monetary Convention also provided for common currency parities, based on the gold standard. That arrangement functioned well until 1914, but lost its significance during World War I and the subsequent collapse of the goldstandard-based international monetary order.

Returning to the information given in your article, it should, however, for the philatelicly interested, be rightfully noted that although Norway changed her currency in 1875, the first postage stamps with the new *öre* denominations were issued only in 1877.

Yours faithfully,

O.G. Skagestad
Consul of Norway and Vice-Consul (Hon.)
of Sweden in Cape Town