



Centennial Definitive
Study Group Newsletter



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NOTES FROM YOUR EDITOR

This spring has been a busy stamp collecting season for me: with the annual Winnipeg Philatelic Society stamp show I got a chance to talk to John Jamieson of Saskatoon Stamp Center. I also presented Andy Liptak's slides (vide infra) at the regional BNAPS meeting held in conjunction with the show.

John Aitken as well as many others continue to supply me with material for the newsletter- it certainly makes my job easier. The material in this issue on Centennial Rate Covers and Postal Mechanization was put together by John at about the time he turned over the editorship to me. I must admit it got me hooked on Centennial Covers-I now rummage through the "junque" cover box whenever I visit a stamp store or dealer's table. Andy Liptak kindly allowed me to duplicate the slides that accompany the writeup on pages 522-527. I have two copies of these slides available to Study Group members. If you would like to view them, drop me a line at:

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19 Petersfield Place
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 3V5

(A small donation to cover postage & slide duplicating costs would be appreciated). The reprinted articles on Postal Mechanization by Sally Tunnickliff are included to give some background for Andy's Section 7: Mechanization.

John also reports that a number of Study Group members are exhibiting their Centennials: Wayne Harms exhibited Centennial Rate Covers at the Waterloo Philatelic Society show, winning a silver plus an award for best BNA; Jack Myers won a vermeil and the AAPE award at STAMPEX in Toronto May 20-22 for his exhibit of stamps and covers. Jack's exhibit included a 6 cent WT HB on cover and a used block of 8; as well as many misperfs, foldovers " and other exotica" (to quote John). Mike Painter plans to exhibit in Vernon BC shortly. Congratulations and good luck to all exhibitors!

Thanks to Peter Moisan for the financial support and note of encouragement. Thanks also to Maurice Rondeau for a donation of Centennial material to be included in a forthcoming auction, the proceeds of which will go to the Study Group.

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It was a great convention. There were opportunities aplenty to see Centennials, to buy Centennials and to talk Centennials.

There were two exhibits of Centennials. A. J. Quattrochi showed how extensive the issue is with a basic exhibit of used stamps including se-tenants. Rich Toop took home a vermeil for a very polished display which included one of the four known 15 cent Plate 1 blocks on PVA gum, and the experimental "TWO BOOKLETS OF" variety.

There were plenty of networking opportunities. It was sometimes hard to get around, what with the constant meeting and greeting of people. (A common and enjoyable problem.) Over dinner at his favourite Greek restaurant, Leopold Beudet discussed perf. and printing varieties. Asked about booklet plate layout, Leopold recalled seeing a Gronbeck-Jones article about this and hopes to track it down. After an absence of several years Leopold decided to rejoin our Study Group. Welcome back! We also picked up Bruce McCallum. Bruce shares my interest in postal stationery and rate covers and has a talent for finding the unusual.

Speaking of finds, at the show Robert Lemire found a new corner card on the #8 6 cent orange special order envelope. Doug Irwin turned up an early registered airmail to Great Britain, and mentioned finding a registered post card as well. We hope to have photocopies for the newsletter.

At the Elizabethan Study Group meeting on Saturday, Jim Watt made a surprise visit and gave a short but fascinating talk, illustrated with slides, on his ongoing researches into paper fluorescence. The studies were prompted by Jim's desire to simplify the Keane & Hughes specialized tables and make them easier to use. As part of his research Jim investigated how the human eye perceives paper under UV light, and whether different UV lights perform comparably. Without stealing his thunder I can relate that Jim was able to show scientifically that the fluorescence levels selected by Keane & Hughes were measurably different and usefully so. There were also interesting implications for the study of the low-level papers. Let's hope Jim can get his research onto paper so we can all hear about it.

In addition to the variety of informal gatherings there was a scheduled Study Group meeting on the Sunday afternoon. Doug Irwin had prepared an interesting slide selection of the Centennial essays and proofs displayed at the last CAPEX. Unfortunately, the slide projector provided by the hotel was not up to the task. What we saw was tantalizing. Perhaps we can do something about making this material more accessible? Doug had some ideas on this which he will look into.

There were about 16 people present. I regret that I did not remember to sign everyone in. I did recognize Scott Traquair, Jack Myers, A.J. Quattrochi, Rich Toop, Doug Irwin, Bob Prince and Bill Topping.

After speaking briefly about the Study Group finances (we are solvent) John Aitken proposed some changes to the Study Group structure. The main one was that Study Group officers should have a limited term of office. John proposed a one year term with a second year possible at the incumbent's option, but no further extension. John feels this is necessary for a number of reasons, as follows: (a) It would allow more people to be involved, and more involvement would mean more enthusiasm and vitality for the Study Group. (b) John feels that under the current set-up, members are reluctant to take on Study Group offices because these are open-ended (never-ending?) commitments. A fixed term would remove the uncertainty.

John also proposed that a "standby" officer be appointed in case the principal was unable or unwilling to complete the term. John feels this would further reassure potential officers who might be apprehensive about making a commitment.

In the discussion that followed it was pointed out that having the Study Group contact address constantly changed would be disruptive. It is possible that the changed format of TOPICS, or rather the addition of BNAPortraits with its reduced time to deadline could make Study Group change notices less delayed. Given the rate of post office closures we are experiencing in Canada, some confusion from changed addresses will almost certainly occur.

Further discussions were wide-ranging. Two topics relevant to the Study Group were: what role should the Study Group play in educating newcomers to our area of interest? and what goals should we be setting for our Study Group?

The first question was posed by a lady interested in learning more about the Centennials (I am sorry I did not get her name) and passing along her love of philately to a youth club she has organized. She wished to use

the Centennials as an example of how interesting stamp collecting can be. At the meeting it was suggested that she refer to a number of published references, including those by Hansen, and the K & H simplified tables. I don't think she was entirely satisfied with the answer, but her question points out the need for something. Perhaps we should have a form letter that tells prospective members not only what studies our group is engaged in, but also what published references are available to them, and where they may be obtained.

Personally, I feel that it is not the role of the Study Group to re-hash the basic features of the Centennials. Our members, by and large, are networking to discover the information that is not yet in the handbooks (or in some cases has been written up but is not readily accessible and thus has been "forgotten"). However, I do think that we should help new-comers "get up to speed" so that they can enjoy the search too. We all benefit from fresh enthusiasm and a fresh perspective on the subject.

As a sidelight, it was suggested at one of the dinner table discussions that a list of good sources for material might also be welcome to the newcomer. Nothing definite was decided about Study Group goals. It seems that individual initiative will continue to be the norm for the present.

BOOK REVIEW

by John Aitken

Canadian Military Post Offices to 1986

by W.J. Bailey and E.R. Toop

published 1987 by The Unitrade Press of Toronto 98 pp

(updated version includes checklist up to 1993)

This handbook is an update of 'Canadian Military Postmarks' by L Col Bailey. It is a listing of military post offices with their office number, location and period of use; and usually the military formation they were attached to.

There are 20 chapters in the handbook, beginning with the early postmarkings from 1886, and continuing up to 1986. Topics covered include military markings, expeditionary forces, overseas post offices, P.O.W. and internment camps, CAPOs, MPOs, CFPOs, naval markings, RCAF stations, and miscellaneous. Even such areas as British FPO hammers used by Canadian units in WWII are listed. Three appendices conclude the book- military abbreviations, a selected bibliography, and a checklist of the various markings, with space for the different possible types of cancel.

Of particular interest to Centennial collectors are the lists of MPOs from 1946, CFPOs from 1950, RCAF stations, and miscellaneous Camps/Bases. The dates and locations of the various offices are given. This is important in determining the theatre of operations of the post.office, as from time to time they were relocated, so that it is possible to have the same cancel used from different locations depending on the date or point in time. For example, some of the NATO forces moved from France to Germany in 1967, and within Germany in 1969. Using this handbook, the Centennial collector can prepare a checklist of the various Canadian military post offices active in the Centennial Period.

A couple of areas are not included in the handbook-specifically the wardroom markings applied on Canadian naval mail, and the UN emergency force markings. Variations in the hammers are also beyond the scope of the handbook.Those who seek greater detail should refer to the three volumes on Canadian Military Post Offices by the same authors that are part of the Commonwealth Military Series, edited by Edward B. Proud .

The book is well organized, easy to use and easy to understand. I highly recommend it.

The Centennial Issue on Cover

Slides and notes prepared by Andrew Liptak, August 1991

Introduction

Slide 1 - Centennial Handbooks, Study Group Newsletter

The centennial issue has proven to be among the most interesting definitives of the century. Specialists have been provided with a wealth of paper, gum, perforation and tagging varieties which have been described in many excellent handbooks. The BNAPS study group continues to reveal the complexities of the issue through its newsletter and meetings.

However one facet of the issue that has received less attention is its postal history. This slide presentation will explore this exciting and challenging field and will propose a model for organizing centennial covers and will explain the significant changes in postal rates and mail conveyance during the 1967-73 period.

1. Domestic Postage Rates

Slide 2 - 5c forward rate

The 5c forward (out of town) letter rate was introduced on April 1, 1954 and was still in effect when the Centennials were issued on February 8, 1967. This cover is an attractive illustrated item that is uncommon for the period. By the mid-60s many businesses were using larger envelopes for their correspondence and meters instead of stamps.

Slide 3 - 6c, 7c, 8c rates

From 1900 to 1968, postage rates were very stable and changed infrequently but during the centennial period they increased three times. By 1973 the forward rate was 60% higher than it had been in 1967.

Slide 4 - 4c, 6c local rate

On November 1, 1968 the local first class mail rate was eliminated. The cost of sending a one oz. local letter increased from 4c to 6c—a 50% jump. The domestic post card rate which had been cheaper than the forward rate was made equal to the forward rate as well.

Slide 5 - 3c, 5c, 6c printed matter rate

There were two significant increases in the third class rate (printed matter) for individually addressed items resulting in a doubling in the rate over a four year period.

Slide 6 - Householder Mail

The printed matter rate for items addressed 'Householder' or 'Boxholder' was 2 cents (up to 2 oz.) at the beginning of the centennial period. On Nov. 1, 1968 the rate was increased to 3 cents. \$11.25 postage was affixed to this Householder label addressed to the Postmaster of Virginiatown, Ontario. This was to pay for the distribution of 375 IGA flyers.

Slide 7-Fourth Class Mail

Fourth Class Mail was defined as all mailable matter over one pound in weight which did not include the other class categories. The parcel rates in effect at the beginning of the centennial period were increased on January 1, 1970. The country was divided into rate zones. Rates were set according to the weight of the parcel and the number of zones crossed. This parcel was sent within the same zone. 65 cents was the rate for a 2-3 lb. parcel. Had it been sent from Ontario to B.C. the rate would have been 75 cents.

2. International Postage Rates

Slide 8-8c to U.S.

The international airmail rate schedule was greatly simplified during the centennial period. Initially there were four different letter rates but by July 1, 1971, there were only two international rates. Letters and post cards posted to the U.S. and its possessions were charged 8c per oz.

Slide 9-10c to U.S.

On November 1, 1968, the letter and post card rate to the U.S. increased to 10 cents

Slide 10-15c to Europe

The airmail letter rate to Bermuda, Mexico, Central and South America and the West Indies was 10 cents per half oz. which was increased to 15 cents on June 1, 1967. The 10 cent rate was only in effect for 4 months of the centennial period. (slides of these two rates are not available) The half ounce rate to Great Britain, Ireland, and Europe was 15 cents. This pretty cover to Germany received Vancouver's centennial machine cancellation.

Slide 11-30c to Europe

30 cents paid the double (1 oz.) rate to Sweden in 1967.

Slide 12-25c to the Philippines

The airmail rate to Africa, Asia and Oceania was 25 cents per half oz. This cover shows correct single usage of the 25 cent value on a cover to the Philippines, June 1968.

Slide 13-25c to Africa

A 15 cent centennial and a pair of Christmas stamps make up the 25 cent rate to Uganda, October 1970.

Slide 14-15c to Japan

On July 1, 1971 the airmail rate to all countries except the U.S. was set at 15 cents per oz. This represented a rate reduction for all destinations since the previous rates were for each half oz. At the same time the surface first class rate to all countries except the U.S. was abolished; however, all first class letters had to be sent by air. It only cost 15 cents to send this letter to Japan in 1973. Prior to July, 1971, the rate might have been as high as 50 cents. This represents a 70% decrease in cost.

Slide 15 - Shortpaid to Azores

This letter was sent to the Portuguese Azores in October 1972. The correct rate was 15 cents for the 1 oz. airmail fee. The letter was shortpaid 7 cents. An international fractional postage due marking was applied T 14 15. The numerator 14 represents double the deficiency (2x7c) and the denominator 15 represents the international letter rate, 1st weight step (15c). The tax to be collected in Portugal was the fraction 14 15 multiplied by the international rate from Portugal to Canada.

Slide 16 - Shortpaid to England

A shortpaid letter similar to the previous slide but with a British 3p postage due stamp.

Slide 17 - 10c postcard rate to Europe

The airmail post card rate to all countries other than the U.S., introduced on January 1, 1966, was 10 cents. This rate remained in effect during the entire life of the centennial issue. This card was cancelled at the Montreal Airport Mail Facility (AMF), Montreal International Airport at Dorval, and sent to Holland.

Slide 18 - 10c Other to Ireland

The airmail printed matter rate to Great Britain and Ireland was 10c per oz., until June 1, 1967. The 10 cent definitive paid the "Other Matter" airmail rate to Ireland, April 3, 1967.

Slide 19 - 12c Surface rate to Belgium

The international surface letter rate to countries other than Great Britain, the Commonwealth, U.S., countries of North, Central and South America, West Indies, France and Spain was 10 cents per oz. at the beginning of the Centennial period. The rate was increased to 12c on November 1, 1968. Two six cent black definitives paid the 12 c rate to Belgium, January 1971.

Slide 20 - 4c surface printed matter to Greece

The surface printed matter rate (up to 2 oz.) to Europe was 4c. This cover mailed to Greece, November, 1967, could not be delivered and was returned to its sender in Canada. This section has illustrated a few of the international rates in effect during the centennial period but it must be emphasized that the most significant rate change was the introduction of the 1 oz. 15 cent airmail letter rate and the elimination of the first class surface rate to all countries except the U.S.

3. Special Services

Slide 21 - 40c Registration St. John's

Special services include registration, acknowledgment of receipt, special delivery and money packet fees. At the beginning of the centennial period the minimum registration fee for an item mailed to a Canadian or U.S. address was 35 cents which provided for indemnity up to \$25.00. Registration fees were paid in addition to postage rates as is illustrated in this cover sent on May 13, 1967, from St John's. The forward letter rate was five cents and the registration fee was 35 cents.

Slide 22 - 68 cents registration to US

Until June 1, 1967, the maximum Canadian or U.S. registration fee was 60 cents which provided up to \$100.00 indemnity. 68 cents paid the 8 cent airmail postage and the 60 cents registration fee for this cover sent on March 11, 1967, to the U.S.

Slide 23- 54c registered local

On June 1, 1967, the registration fees were reduced in number but increased in cost. The minimum fee was 50 cents which provided up to \$50.00 indemnity. This cover is a local registered letter sent in 1968. It shows one of the principal uses of the 50 cent definitive stamps.

Slide 24- Registered to Poland

The registration fee to countries other than the U.S. was fixed at 50 cents on June 1, 1967. This airmail, registered letter to Poland is unusual because of a rectangular handstamp applied on arrival at the Warsaw 3 Post Office. Translated it says: "This correspondence arrived in the country in an unsealed envelope". Were Polish government officials censoring inbound correspondence, spying on their citizens, or stealing the contents of registered mail?

Slide 25- Acknowledgment of Receipt

This special service enables the sender of a registered article to attach an acknowledgment of receipt (AR) card to the item at the time of mailing. The card is forwarded to the sender when the addressee acknowledges receipt of the mail. The AR fee in effect at the beginning of the centennial period was 10 cents. This fee had been introduced on October 1, 1921!

This is an AR card that was mailed on March 29, 1967. It shows an interesting usage of the 10 cent definitive.

The AR fee was increased to 15 cents on June 1, 1967.

Slide 26- AR handstamp

This cover addressed to the U.S. had an AR card attached to it as indicated by the AR handstamp.

Slide 27- 25c Special Delivery

The special delivery rate to Canadian towns and cities that offered the service was 25 cents at the beginning of the centennial period. The sender of this cover requested and paid for special delivery service but did not receive this service because the Port Burwell Post Office did not provide it.

Slide 28- 40 cents SD

On June 1, 1967, the special delivery fee jumped to 40 cents. This cover sent on June 19, 1967, from Kenora to Toronto did receive Special Delivery service.

Slide 29- International Reg. & SD

This spectacular special delivery, registered cover was sent on March 16, 1973 from Toronto to London, England and received a March 17 London backstamp. The \$1.05 postage can be accounted for as follows: 15c for airmail, 50c for registration and 40c for special delivery.

Slide 30- Money Packet

Money packets consisted of mailable matter containing valuables such as bank notes, gold bullion, jewels, stocks. Here we see tags that were attached to bags of bank notes that were sent from Windsor, Nfld., to Halifax. The \$10.50 fee paid the 9 lb. money packet rate. Registration was included in the fee.

4. Armed Forces Mail

Slide 31-Curtis Park

Civilian rates were in effect for armed forces personnel stationed in Canada. Between 1966 and 1967, RCAF stations were civilianized and renamed. This is a registered cover from Curtis Park, N.B., the civilianized name for the former RCAF Station Chatam.

Slide 32-CFPO 112

Armed Forces postal regulations applied to mail sent to or by

a) any member of the Canadian Forces outside Canada served through a Canadian Forces Post Office (CFPO) or Fleet Mail Office

b) any civilian who normally received his mail through a CFPO

This letter was sent from CFPO 112, Isherlon, Germany. 6 cents paid the first class surface rate.

Slide 33-Military Exercises

The rate for Forces Air Letters (no enclosures) was the same as the first class surface rate.

This Air Letter was sent from a temporary CFPO (5046) assigned to the military exercise Green Express which took place in Denmark in September, 1969.

5. Undeliverable and Redirected Mail

Slide 34-Returned first class

The Undeliverable and redirected mail regulations applied to all mail that could not be delivered as addressed.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to locate the addressee and this first class letter was returned to its sender without penalty.

Slide 35-Returned Third Class

Third class mail returned to its sender was subject to postage due equal to the third class rate.

This Christmas card could not be delivered and was returned. A "RETURN TO 6c DUE" handstamp was applied just under the stamp and 6 cents postage due was paid.

Slide 36-DLO

Undeliverable first class mail without return address was sent to an Undeliverable Mail Office where the mail was opened and the address of the sender determined. The mail was returned to the sender but postage due was collected. At the beginning of the centennial period to November 1, 1968, the fee was 5 cents.

This cover was mailed to the U.S. but could not be delivered and was returned to Canada. Since there was no return address the letter was sent to the Undeliverable Mail Office in Toronto. This office's meter cancel was applied on Sept. 19, 1968. The letter was then returned to the sender in an outer wrapper and charged 5 cents postage due.

6. Mail Transportation

Slide 37 PEI Ferry

This is a photograph on a post card of the ferry which carried railway and automobile traffic between Cape Borden, PEI, and Cape Tormentine, N.B., in 1967. The train had a Railway Post Office which cancelled and sorted mail.

Slide 38 Charlottetown & Sackville RPO

This is the address and message side of the card which was posted on board the ferry. It received the Charlottetown & Sackville RPO handstamp.

Slide 39 RPOs to US

This is a registered letter from Nipper's Harbor Nfld. to Winchendon, Mass., sent in May, 1967. The next slide shows its

Slide 40 Backstamps

The backstamps enable us to determine the route taken within Canada. The letter travelled by truck and train in Newfoundland, across to Nova Scotia by ferry, and from Nova Scotia to Montreal by train. Transit markings include the St. John's and Corner Brook RPO Train 203 handstamp and the Campbellton & Levis RPO cancel. In 1971 Railway Post Offices were eliminated, bringing to an end a method of mail handling that began in the mid-nineteenth century.

7. Mechanization

Slide 41 Winnipeg 2c & 4c

In 1962 automation of letter cancelling and sorting began in Winnipeg on a trial basis. The system called Sefacan (segregating, facing and cancelling) was developed in Britain. Mail was automatically sorted into 4 size categories. The Automatic Letter Facing Cancelling (ALF) machine detected phosphorescent bars on stamps and mechanically faced letters for cancellation. This slide shows how the phosphorescent bars appear under ultra-violet light.

Slide 42 5c Winnipeg

The Winnipeg ALF machine separated mail into two categories, local and forward. The machine could distinguish between stamps having one phosphorescent bar, the 4 cent stamp which paid the local rate, and other values which had two bars. Scanners detected the two bars on the 5 cent stamp on this cover and sent the letter into the forward stream for cancellation. The local letter rate was eliminated on November 1, 1968 and ALF machine sorting ended. The machine however continued to face and cancel mail until 1972.

Slide 43 Ottawa

In 1972, a facer-canceller system able to detect fluorescent bars on stamps was installed in Ottawa. The fluorescent bars are very bright under UV light.

Slide 44 Coding Machines

Canadians were assigned postal codes beginning in Ottawa, April, 1971. Coding machines were installed in Ottawa and were functional in late August, 1972. Operators at one of 24 consoles read the postal codes on the envelopes and typed the codes on keyboards. Yellow fluorescent bars and the console number (upright) were then printed on the envelope. The letter was automatically sorted. The yellow fluorescent bars on this envelope represent postal code L3B 5S3. The upright "6" identifies the console number.

Slide 45 Winnipeg Fluorescent

The Ottawa trials were successful and beginning in 1974, automatic letter facer, canceller and sorting machines were installed across the country. On February 18, 1974, Winnipeg became the second city to implement fluorescent detection of stamps and coding machines. This Winnipeg cover cancelled on March 4, 1974, is an early example of the national implementation of the Ottawa trials. Within a few years, letter processing was mechanized across the country.

Conclusion

This presentation has been an introduction to the postal history of the centennial definitive issue. The collection and analysis of centennial covers can be as exciting and rewarding as the study of the stamps themselves.

Letter Sorting Mechanization in Canada

by SALLY S. TUNNICLIFFE

First of a series

This article will give the reader a general idea of the sequence of events which have taken place in order to bring the post office to its present state of letter sorting mechanization. Later articles will cover the philatelic evidence of present day machines in greater depth.

Although letter sorting machines were in use in other countries as early as 1928, it was not until the 1950's that the Canada Post Office seriously began to consider their use. At that time it was considered necessary to find some way to cope with the ever-increasing volume of mail. A computer-controlled machine, developed and built in Canadian workshops, was probably one of the most advanced systems for its time. This machine was put to test but unfortunately was judged to be uneconomical. It was never put into operation on the public's mail.

A Dutch machine, called the Transorma, was tested and actually put into use in Peterborough beginning in 1965 and continuing until 1963. This type of machine, which had widespread use in Europe and South America, had 5 keyboards. Mail was sorted into 300 receptacles. The letters appeared before each operator at a rate of 30-53 per minute. The operator would then press the keys and the letter would be sent to the proper receptacle. The machine served mainly as an extension of the operator's arm.

Before beginning, each operator was required to insert a marking key containing 2 letters into the machine. As a result these letters appeared in red or black ink on the front of the envelope and identified the operator who sorted the letter. The following letter combinations have been reported: AA, AC, AD, AH, AJ, AP, AQ, AS, AT, AU, AV, AX, AZ, BA, BB, BC, BH, BK, and BL.

The Transorma machine, although considered a success in Europe, was unsuitable for the number 10 size envelopes so common in North America. These long en-

velopes often stopped the sorting machine and all five states would have to wait until the envelope was removed. Window envelopes created other problems, and the post office eventually concluded that it was faster to sort letters by hand.

In addition to the Canadian and Dutch machines, I have found reference to one more sorting machine which I feel belongs in the former category, although these machines were in use in Canada simultaneously with the present more sophisticated machines. I refer to the Burroughs sorting machine reported by Ken Rose in his Tagging Along column. This machine was in use in Winnipeg in the early 1970's and was composed of 12 consoles each printing a purple number from 1 to 12 on the reverse side of the envelope. Most readers will have seen envelopes from the United States with letters or numbers printed in colour on the reverse side. Burroughs machines are one type of sorting machine commonly in use in the United States.

One of the big problems with the above machines was the lack of a postal code. Even if the machines were able to increase sorting speed satisfactorily, the problem still remained that letters would have to be re-sorted numerous times by post office personnel. Machine operators were required to know thoroughly the keyboard as well as the separation into which the letter would be deposited.

In 1969 a group of Montreal consultants were employed by the Post Office to study the feasibility of a postal code to be written by the public as part of the address . . . after further study and more reports, the coding and mechanization branch of the Post Office was established and work began on the present system.

Making up a code for Canada was much more difficult than merely assigning a group of letters and numbers to each customer. A code had to be developed which was adequately complex to function efficiently and yet not so complex that the public would not accept it. In addition, it was

necessary to consider the possibility of optical character recognition equipment becoming available. Hence, the code would have to be capable of being read by machine.

Post Office personnel studied the codes of many other countries, particularly Great Britain and Germany. A combination of letters and numbers was chosen, as in the British postal code, because of a much greater number of possible separations. The form finally chosen was ANA NAN (A-letter, N-number). With this combination over 17 million different codes are possible. The German code is composed of four numbers which gives 10,000 possible codes. The American zip code with its five numbers has 100,000 possible codes. In reality there are 7,200,000 possible codes in Canada because in order to make the code machine readable the letters D, F, I, O, Q, and U have not been used. Also there are many codes unassigned, and kept in reserve.

Residents of Ottawa, the pilot city, were the first to be assigned a code on April 1, 1971. The remaining regions and provinces were assigned codes over the next 2½ years, it being completed one-half year earlier than the most optimistic date expected by the Post Office.

It had been recommended by the consultants that a system be devised that placed markings on the envelopes which represented the address. These markings would enable the Post Office to apply the code markings in one city and subsequently have the code read by machines in other cities. The letter need not go through coding consoles a second time. In the present system the sender writes the postal code as part of the address. It is then translated by the coding machinery to a system of bars on the envelope which can be read by the sorting machines.

There are two methods by which the Canada Post Office at present prints code bars on an envelope. One method is to have an operator read the code written on the envelope, and then press a key which causes bars to be printed on the envelope. Operator coded letters are common in most of the cities which have the equipment (Ottawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and Hamilton). Envelopes can be recognized

by vertical yellow bars below the address.

A console number identifying the console used appears centrally located in either an upright or sideways position. Although the bars and the console number are highly fluorescent under ultra violet they can be seen quite easily without a light. Some envelopes have a console number only, which indicates that the letter went through a machine but a postal code was not included in the address by the sender.

In the second method of printing code bars called optical character recognition indexing (OCR), a machine reads the postal code on the envelope and automatically prints red-orange bars (composed of eight dots) below the address. There is no need for an operator. However, the address must be typewritten or foundry printed and it must appear in the proper position on the envelope. This system is in the beginning stages, and envelopes bearing the red-orange bars are not yet common. They appear the most often on government envelopes. Four cities, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg, have the equipment in operation.

There is no console number printed on the envelopes coded by OCR. There is, however, an extra bar or bars at the far left which serve to identify the machine. The other bars representing the address are located in the same position as are the yellow bars.

The first coding machines installed required an operator. Built in Belgium, they arrived in Ottawa January 4, 1972 and by August 22 were handling live mail. After a one year trial the machines began to be installed in other cities. The story is still unfolding. Many more Canadian cities are destined to install mechanized systems.

With the help of other collectors I hope to establish which dates are important and which console numbers are the most common.

Letter Sorting Mechanization

in Canada

by SALLY S. TUNNICLIFFE

Second in the series

In my first article on letter sorting mechanismization I mentioned the two methods by which the Canada Post Office is applying code bars to envelopes. In this article I will cover some of the philatelic aspects of the first method in which coding consoles are used, resulting in the envelopes with the yellow code bars.

By now most Canadian residents will have seen envelopes with the yellow code bars. Even in the Montreal area where I live and where there are no coding machines yet in operation, about 5 percent of the mail, at least in my box, has the code bars. This mail has either originated in a "mechanized" city or gone through one in transit to Lachine. In a mechanized post office such as exists in Winnipeg or Ottawa where coding has been done for several years the percentage of coded envelopes reaching the individual is undoubtedly much higher.

The coded envelopes have a row of vertical yellow bars below the address measuring up to 79mm across (see illustration). Each individual bar measures 1 x 6mm and is spaced at least 2mm from each bar on either side. In the center of the envelope and usually in a sideways position is a number which corresponds to the coding console through which the envelope was processed. The console numbers generally begin at 1 and run consecutively up to each facility's highest number. However, one office, Toronto-South Central, has numbers which run from 13-96. All coding consoles come in units of 12, called group desk suites. Therefore, the highest console number in each facility will be a unit of 12 (ie. 12, 24, 36, etc.). An operator sits at each coding console. When a letter is automatically presented, the operator reads the postal code applied by the sender and by means of a 28 digit keyboard causes the computer to activate the printing head which prints the yellow bars.

Ottawa was the pilot city for letter sorting mechanization. Mail coding began in Aug-

ust 1972 with only 24 coding consoles. Envelopes coded early in the program can be easily recognized because the console numbers were upright rather than sideways. All machines which have been subsequently installed have had sideways numbers. The first were Ottawa consoles 25-48 whose installation began in May 1973. It was not until Fall 1974 that the original 24 consoles had the numbers turned sideways.

Many post office customers complained about the console numbers because the impression would go through and print on the contents of the envelope especially if carbon paper was inside. Consequently the post office decided to print the console numbers in a sideways position. This did not prevent the impression going through but sideways numbers are much easier to identify as not being part of the original content of the letter.

The first Ottawa machines were built in Belgium by Bell Telephone Manufacturing Co., an I.T.T. member company. These machines are still in operation in Ottawa and show no signs of abnormal wear. They are expected to last at least 15 years.

The second group of Ottawa machines, consoles Nos. 25-48 and the machines which have been subsequently installed in other cities were manufactured in Canada at the Guelph plant of I.T.T., Ltd. The post office is still in the process of installing automatic equipment in cities across Canada. In the future it will probably be unusual to find envelopes which have not passed through a coding center.

I have been collecting coded envelopes for 18 months and have found that it is sometimes quite a challenge to determine the coding center through which the envelope went. Most of the time, however, the coding center is easy to determine. For example, many of the letters mailed in Ottawa are destined for other Ottawa addresses. A large proportion of mail is either from a "mechanized" city to a "non-mechanized" city or vice versa. The difficulty arises when one tries to decide where a

letter was coded if the post office of origin and destination are both mechanized or if the two offices are both non-mechanized.

Table I shows the number of consoles at each coding facility and the dates which coding began on public mail. The dates in most cases have been provided by the post office. If any readers have philatelic evidence to support these dates, the author would appreciate correspondence in this regard. Data required are console number, postmarking city, date, and city of destination. The offices listed are all at present placing code bars on mail; some offices, however, are still in the testing stages and the percentage of mail which is coded may be considerably lower than in other offices. Because of the rapid progress being made in postal automation, this chart will no doubt be outdated by the time this article is published. There will quite likely be more offices with mechanized equipment and there may be a few changes in the number of coding consoles.

In the cases where mail is exchanged between two mechanized post offices, I file my envelopes with the city of origin. I do this because according to post office policy the letter should have the code applied in the city where it was mailed. In the city of origin the envelope should have the code bars applied and be sorted according to the first three digits of the code. The letter is then sent to the appropriate distributing office where it is sorted according to the last three digits of the code. The distributing office is the one which delivers the letter to the addressee. Envelopes can often be found which are sent from one "non-mechanized" city to another and yet code bars are present. These envelopes have obviously passed through a coding center in transit. Mail destined for Yellowknife, N.W.T., generally passes through Edmonton and thus receives Edmonton code bars. I have found several letters with code bars from relatively small Quebec or Ontario towns which are addressed to "non-mechanized" cities. These letters have undoubtedly passed through a coding center because of post

office planning or if they were missorted somewhere along the way.

Mail from foreign sources often has Canadian code bars. Much of this mail is routed through Toronto, but some also goes through Vancouver and perhaps other cities in transit. I have recently received several letters from Saskatoon which have console numbers in the 40's. Originally I thought that these had also passed through Toronto. Upon inquiry, however, I have found that console numbers 1-12 in Saskatoon have been changed to Nos. 37-48. This was done in order to distinguish Saskatoon consoles from Regina consoles.

Because Toronto handles 45 percent of Canada's mail every day, it was necessary to have three mechanized facilities in the Toronto area. The Toronto system is not fully operational yet. Eventually each plant will be handling mail collected from its surrounding areas. All international mail addressed to Toronto will go through Mississauga or directly to the letter processing plant through which it will be handled, depending upon volume. Some mail originating in the Toronto area is now being run through different plants to keep the latter operational until the system is fully implemented. Because there are three plants in Toronto it is often difficult to determine which one coded each letter. For those who wish to try, I would suggest looking carefully at the date and city or postal code in the postmark and also the console number. Often the coding facility can be determined.

Much of the information in this article was obtained by correspondence with J. G. Fultz, former director of coding and mechanization in the post office.

POST OFFICE MECHANIZATION SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 1977

Coding Centre	Console Numbers	Date Yellow Bar Coding Began	Number of OCR Machines	Date Red Bar Coding Began
Ottawa	1-24 Upright	Aug. 21, 1972	3	Oct. 21, 1974?*
	1-24 Sideways	Late Oct. to Early Dec. 1974		
	25-36	Dec. 1, 1973		
Winnipeg	37-48**	Dec. 1, 1973	2	Jan. 12, 1976
	1-36	Mar. 25, 1974		
Saskatoon	37-48**	Mar. 25, 1974	0	
	1-12***	April 8, 1974		
Regina	37-48	Feb. 1, 1976	0	
	1-12	April 29, 1974		
Edmonton	1-24 (no dot)	June 3, 1974	2	Sept. 27, 1976
	25-36 (no dot)**	June 3, 1974		
	1-24 (with dot)	Feb. 1977		
Calgary	1-24 (no dot)	Oct. 21, 1974	2	Sept. 20, 1976
	1-24 (dashes)	Aug. 16, 1976?		
	1-24 (dot)	Sept. 9-11, 1976?		
Mississauga (L4W 1T0)	1-60	Oct. 7, 1974	4	Dec. 15, 1975
Scarborough (M1P 4T0)	1-36	Nov. 13, 1974	2	June 16, 1975
South Central (M4L 3T0)	13-96	Jan. 7, 1975	7	Feb. 2, 1976
Vancouver (V6B 3A0)	1-48	July 14, 1975	4	Aug. 5, 1975
Hamilton	1-24	Dec. 8, 1975	0	
London	1-24	Apr. 12, 1976	0	
St. John, N.B.	1-12	May 10, 1976	0	
St. John's, Nfld.	1-12	June 14, 1976	0	
Laval (H7S 1Z0)	1-36?	Nov. 1, 1976	2	Nov. 1, 1976
Burlington (L7R 2H0)	1-12	Jan. 4, 1977?*	0	
Kingston	1-12	Dec. 13, 1976	0	
Sudbury	1-12	Jan. 13, 1977	0	
Windsor	1-12	Mar. 21, 1977	0	
Montreal (Peel)****	1-24?	Apr. 18, 1977	2	Apr. 18, 1977

* Earlier dates reported.

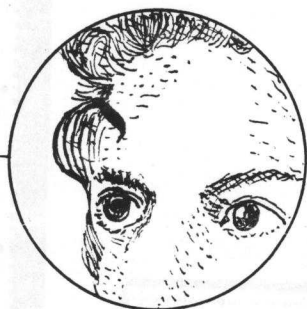
** Ottawa #37-48 last coded mail Jan. 22, 1975; Winnipeg #37-48, May 1, 1975; and Edmonton #25-36, April 15, 1976.

*** Saskatoon #1-12 changed to #37-48 on February 1, 1976.

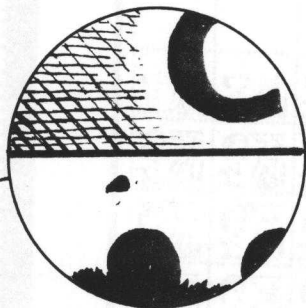
**** More machines to become operational soon.



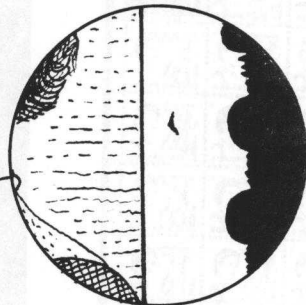
Dot below left leg of 2nd A and another to right of L.R. corner. Occurs on 6¢ orange, perf 10, plain. Elmore Von Hagen provided examples. I also have some with just the dot by the left leg of the A, but missing the dot in the right margin.



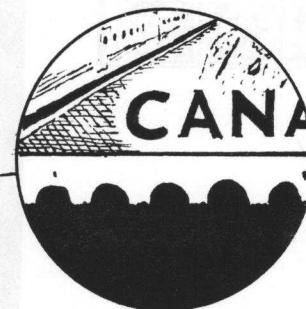
A substantial gouge on the Queen's forehead. At first glance it looks like one of the thick blobs of ink that sometimes splatter on the sheet. The examples were provided by Elmore Von Hagen. Although this is a BABNC printing (6¢ orange, perf 10, plain), it reminded me of CBNC engraver Yves Baril's remark about paper clips damaging the plate (page 203 of Newsletters).



Pear shaped dot and two accompanying specks to the left and below the C. 6¢ orange, perf 10, plain. This is a new discovery of mine.



Tick shaped mark which was previously reported on page 106 #25 of newsletter, but not well illustrated (at that time I had no idea how many constant flaws would show up, some quite close to each other). Initially it was found on the 6¢ orange perf 12½ x 12, plain, but now Elmore Von Hagen has provided an example on the 6¢ black, perf 12½ x 12, plain.



Two dots in the lower margin, previously reported on page 107 #32. 6¢ orange perf 12½ x 12, plain. I have now found that these also occur on the 6¢ orange, perf 10, plain.

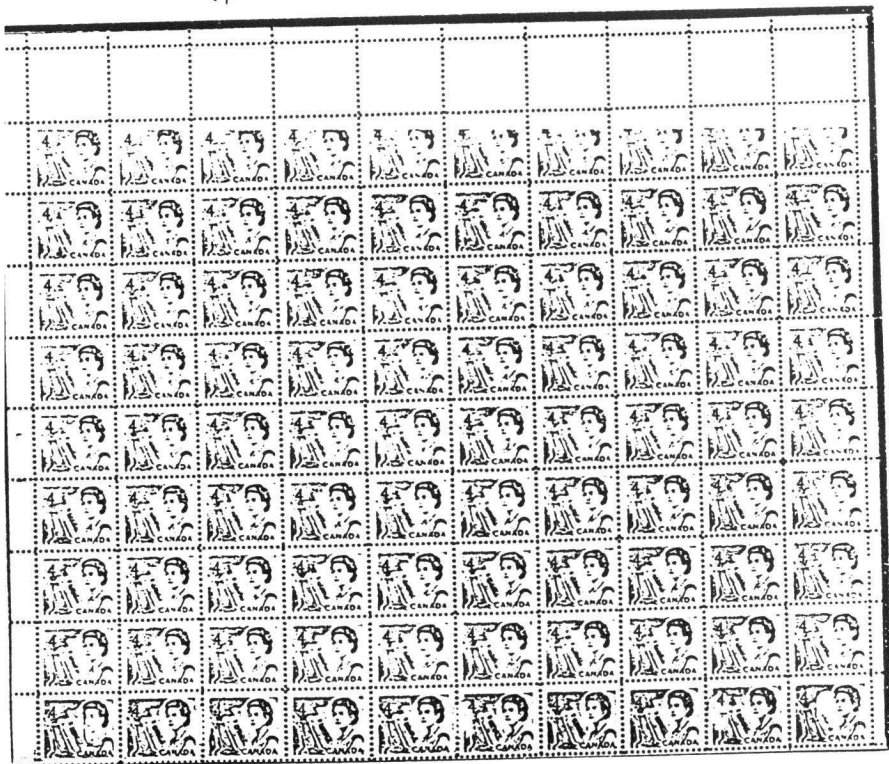


Bulge at the top left side of the second A. This looks like a large example of the thickening of letters that sometimes occurs from overinking, but Elmore Von Hagen has provided enough examples to confirm that it is constant. It occurs on the 6¢ perf 12½ x 12, plain, on both the black and the orange, and also on the orange Wpg tagged.

From John Jamieson (Saskatoon Stamp Centre):

4c Centennial MISSING COLOUR "Album"

*



*

*Photo Copy of the UNIQUE Sheet
This strip is the 3rd Column from this sheet.*



CANADA 457iv var 4c Centennial RED DESIGN MISSING on TOP STAMP
in vertical strip of 10 with photocopy of sheet it comes from.
ONLY 10 SUCH "MISSING COLOUR" Error stamps exist. SHOWPIECE!

Keane/Hughes		PLATE										NO ID				W2			W1		Pcni	
		1a	1c	1d	1h	2a 2h	2b	2c	2e	2f 2g	A	B	C	I	A	B	C	A B	A	B		
PAPER	off-white	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
GUM	DEX(streaky)			•	•	•		•		•			•		•		•					
	DEX(smooth)	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•		•		•		•	•	•		
INK SHADE	green	•		•	•		•	•	•				•	•	•		•	•	•			
	dark green		•			•																
	light green										•	•	•				•					
UV BRIGHTNESS		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
UV COLOUR	dk.green /off-white																	•		•		
INK/PAPER	dk.green /lt. ivory						•					•										
	black /ivory								•		•									•		
	light green/cream									•												
	dark green/cream	•	•	•									•			•	•					
	green /greyish-cream													•								
	black /light brown				•				•													
	black /brown					•									•							
	NOTES		a	a	a	a, d	a	a	a, g	a	a	a, e	a	a	a	a	b	b	b	c	f	

- a- PL,Dex Feb/8/67
- b- 455p: W2Bar,Dex Feb/8/67
- c- 455pi: W1Bar,Dex Dec/?/68
- d- New listing, this Newsletter (OK'd with Doug Irwin)
- e- No dot for UV colour in K&H Tables: assume dot in "B" column for "black on ivory" belongs in "A" column
- f- No dot for UV colour in K&H Tables: assume dot in "B" column for "black on ivory" belongs in "A" column
- g- The entry "2i" has been deleted as it is the same as "2c"

		PLATE							NO ID				WI	GT-OP2										
Keane/Hughes		1b	1e	1f	1g	2d	2j	2k	D	E	F	H	C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	
PAPER	white	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
GUM	PVA (dull)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
INK SHADE	green	•	•	•	•								•			•								
	dark green						•																	
	light green				•			•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
UV BRIGHTNESS		2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	7	2	2	5	7	7	6	2	3	2	2	2	2	
UV COLOUR	black /ivory		•				•																	
INK/PAPER	black /ivory,flkd			•																				
	green /dk.violet,flkd							•																
	dk.green /violet,flkd								•															
	black /violet												•											
	black /violet-blue													•										
	dk.green /med.violet																	•						
	black /med.violet,flkd				•	•																		
	black /lt. violet	•																						
	dk.green /dk.violet																				•			
	black /dk.blue											•												
	dk.green /brt.blue												•										•	
	black /blue																		•		•			
	dk.green /grey-blue																						•	
	dk.green /lt.ivory										•													
	black /lt.blue,flkd															•	•	•						
NOTES		a	a	b	b	b	a	b	b	a	f	a	c	d	g	g	g	d	d	e	d	d	d	

- a- i: RIB, PVA March/?/72
- b- ii: Smooth SF, PVA March/?/72
- c- 455pii: SF, W1 Bar, PVA March/?/72
- d- 455piii: SF, GT, PVA December/?/72
- e- 455piv: very dull paper, GT, PVA December/?/72
- f- Unlisted in Scott: should be HF, PVA
- g- Unlisted in Scott: should be HF,PVA