NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Robert W. Marcello, Editor



PROGRESS REPORT, SUMMER 1988

This issue of the newsletter focuses on catalogs -- particularly, Scott catalogs.

We begin with an editorial and then progress into a discussion and comments from members, about a subject which may become the major project for our study group during 1988 and 1989: correcting errors and misinformation in the catalogs we use!

Membership has increased slightly, since the last report. We welcome our two newest members, Paul J. Kukstis and Erling S.J. van Dam.

Paul is a dealer friend who runs stamp auctions on a regular basis in the greater Boston area. He is president of Satuit Philatelics Corporation. Paul's address is: 6 Bound Brook Court, P.O. Box 300, North Scituate, Massachusetts 02060.

Mr. van Dam, as most of you may know, is also a stamp dealer, author of <u>The Canadian Revenue Stamp Catalogue</u>, and president of the Canadian Stamp Dealers! Association. His address: P.O. Box 300, Bridgenorth, Ontario KOL 1HO.

THE 1989 SCOTT CATALOGUE FIASCO

Scott's monumental blunder has many dealers screaming bloody murder and some collectors applauding the dirty deed.

The stamp world was shaken early this summer, by a handful of apparently misguided people innovating a strange pricing policy at Scott Publishing Co. Ignoring upward market trends, Scott's pricing staff performed like mindless zanies, slashing values arbitrarily and drastically for some of the most popular British Commonwealth issues in the Volume 1 stamp catalog.

I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

The Canada section of the new Scott catalog was particularly hard hit; the revised values are truly absurd and ridiculous. I feel as though I've lost tens of thousands of dollars of net worth in inventory because of Scott's nonsensical price revisions.

Scott's monumental blunder has many dealers screaming bloody murder and some collectors applauding the dirty deed. (Naive collectors seem eager to believe the delusion that expensive stamps can now be purchased at cheap prices because Scott says the stamps are worth less.) The chopped prices in the 1989 catalog are so out of touch with the reality of the marketplace that most major dealers and auction houses have decided to continue using the 1988 Scott Volume 1 catalog.

The crux of the problem now seems to lie with the attitude of executives at Scott Publishing Co., Linn's Stemp News and Amos Press (both Scott and Linn's are owned by Amos Press). They've displayed an almost smug unwillingness to be candid; their feeble public excuses for the new catalog values lack substance to the point of being virtually meaningless.

Compounding the turmoil created by incredible price cuts in a rising market, this Corn Belt crowd stubbornly resists admitting its colossal mistake, despite unprecedented criticism. Like ostriches hiding their heads

The 1989 Scott Catalogue Fiasco (cont'd)

in the sand, these executives fool no one but themselves by pretending that if they refuse to see it, a problem doesn't exist.

Sadly, even the president of Amos Press is exhibiting a siege mentality, instead of reconsidering the soundness of the new catalog values. In a recent issue of Linn's, he stated: "Any attempts ... to pressure Scott to (change) its prices, will be resisted to the utmost."

Clearly, that is the wrong attitude.

Scott's hatchet job on the prices in the Volume 1 catalog was a travesty and is indefensible. The ensudouble talk and flapdoodle, coming out of the "Alice in Wonderland" world at Scott, Linn's and Amos, was disgraceful. It looked like an attempt to evade the real issues by trotting out a smoke and mirrors act. And it was an unconvincing performance. stamp collecting community has been poorly served by the entire fiasco.

Sooner or later, the pricing controversy and its solution must be faced, squarely and without flinching, by the people who created the problem in the first place. It's time for the folks at Scott and the rest of the Sidney, Ohio conglomerate to open their eyes, face facts and make amends. Scott's editors should admit they erred and catalog values should be restored to former levels.

-Bob Marcello

Throw out the clowns

The incredible announcement about Voiume 1 of the new 1989 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue (Linn's, May 30, page 10) made me wonder for a moment if the Marx Brothers had invaded the Scott editorial offices. That would be as good a reason as any for the drastic price cuts for the three popular Canadian issues cited in the article.

I envisioned a scene of pandemonium, with the comedians cavorting in Scott's inner sanctum: Groucho tossing catalog pages into the air with abandon, Harpo wielding a meat cleaver as he hacks the fresh volume with delight, and Chico singing, to the tune of "Yes! We Have no Bananas," "Yes! We help you revise it... We help you revise it today."

If Scott Publishing Co. expects to maintain credibility, editorial director Richard L. Sine could start by throwing out the clowns that helped him dictate the new catalog values,

Robert W. Marcello Boston, Mass.

Appearing in Linn's June 20 issue, this was one of the first of many letters in the philatelic press, about Scott's controversial 1989 Vol. 1 catalog.

LOOK FOR CHANGES

If you're concerned at all, about the unconscionable butchering of values and credibility in Scott's '89 Volume 1 catalog, look for possible changes in the next edition of the Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps. Perhaps it's only a slim chance -- that prices in this Canadian-published catalog could be affected so soon by the '89 Scott Vol. 1 fiasco -- but, a definite opportunity exists now for the Canadian catalog to lead the way, with values more appropriate and acceptable than those in the notorious Vol. 1 from Scott Publishing Co.

Prices in the "Fine" column of the Canadian catalog traditionally have been pegged to figures in Scott's Vol. 1. Can the publishers of the Canadian catalog reject the controversial Vol. 1 price cuts and establish their own values? We know Scott's numbering system is strictly protected by copyright. Are the catalog values protected as well? Must the Canadian pricing editors list figures in the "Fine" column of their catalog without varying from the Standard Catalogue?

Aside from the issue of questionable cuts in Vol. 1, the identical pricing doesn't seem to make sense anyway. The Vol. 1 lists prices in U.S. dollars and the Scott Canadian catalog gives prices in Canadian funds. There's no apparent reason for a stamp listed at \$100 (U.S.) in the Vol. 1 to be valued at \$100 in the Canadian catalog; a value of \$120 or 125 (Canadian) would be closer to 100 U.S. dollars, at the current rate of exchange.

One thing seems certain: There is room for improvement in both catalogs.

-R.W.M.

ACTIVE GROUP CREATES BACKLOG

Sincere thanks to all who sent information, comments and material, which can be featured to best advantage in future newsletters. Among those to thank in this respect are Haughton Sanguinetti, Frank Kendle, Mike Painter, Dick Malott, Dave York, Donald Cox, Murray Heifetz and Basil Burrell. Your participation (and patience) is sincerely appreciated!

SOME SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Suggestions for improving the semi-official air mail section of the <u>Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps</u> have been forwarded to the catalog's publisher, on behalf of our study group.

Members are invited to review these suggestions, listed herewith. Please send your comments and/or any additional data to study group chairman Bob Marcello.

A procedure has been set up, whereby your study group chairman will compile information received from members, re catalog errors and corrections; then he will forward appropriate data to John Jamieson. (John is an adviser to the editor of the Scott Canadian catalog, and has volunteered to help.) Ron Richards, the catalog's editor, will subsequently receive John's recommendations.

The suggested corrections. (Why not make notes in your catalog now, as we go along.) Let's begin on page 279 of the '88 edition ...

1918 Aero Club of Canada

The first illustration is CLP2. Delete the CLP1 identification under this photo. In the description for CLP1 enclose the value in parentheses (25 $\rlap/$), to indicate the stamp is without numerals of value. The denomination for CLP2 remains listed as 25 $\rlap/$, with numerals of value.

1927 London to London Flight

CLP6 should be pictured and described as green and yellow. "3 mint copies and 1 cover are known to exist" should be changed to "Four unused copies and one used on cover are known to exist."

Moose Jaw Flying Club Ltd.

CLP7 (\$1) red on white (It's white paper, not yellow.)

Laurentide Air Service Ltd.

The two illustrations under the heading, "PRIVATE COMMERCIAL AIRLINES," on page 280, are of CL2 and CL4, respectively. Delete CL1 and CL4 under the green stamp and delete CL3 under the red.

Some Suggested Improvements (cont'd)

Note: To avoid confusion and misidentification, each photo in the semi-official section of the catalog should be identified by only one catalog number (the correct number for the actual illustration), not two or three numbers listed under one design.

Other areas in need of revision ...

The Elliot-Fairchild stamp illustrated on page 281 as CL6, CL7, is actually CL8 (background of swastikas). The Jack V. Elliot stamp next to it, identified as CL8, is CL7 (swastikas). CL6 is not illustrated in this catalog. Delete all three numbers under these two illustrations and, in their place, add CL8 and CL7, respectively.

The red Elliot-Fairchild stamp is CL10. The photo should be identified as such (delete the CL11 here).

The deep blue Fairchild stamp is CLll, and the photo should be identified as such (delete both CLl2 and CLl3 from here).

Patricia Airways & Exploration Ltd.

The first stamp illustrated is CL13. Delete the identification CL14 under the "STYLE ONE" illustration.

The middle stamp in the illustrated trio is CL18. Delete the identification CL17 under the "STYLE TWO" illustration.

Yukon Airways & Exploration Co. Ltd.

CL42a, the "ARRWAYS" variety, should be designated in the catalog as "ArRWAYS" (note lower case "r"), since this is the way the variety appears on the stamp.

Commercial Airways Ltd.

Not a correction, but mentioned for clarification ...

The orange stamp is "AIR FEE"
The black stamps are both "AIR FEE" and "VIA AIR"
The purple stamp is "VIA AIR"

Thus, to be corrected ...

Some Suggested Improvements (cont'd)

The note on line 10 of page 287: "CL38 & CL40 inscribed 'VIA AIR'. CL39 & CL41 inscribed 'AIR FEE'." This is incorrect and utter nonsense; evidently, information left over from another catalog. (Try to find CL38 and CL39 in this catalog! And CL40 and CL41 are stamps of another airline -- Western Canada Airways.) Lines 9 and 10 should be deleted. A better listing would include "VIA AIR" on the lines describing CL47 and CL49, and "AIR FEE" on the lines describing CL48 and CL50. (Members can enter this in their catalogs.)

The suggestions concern mostly major numbers or examples of glaring misidentification. That about covers the situation for now. It's a beginning.

The Patricias are difficult. We've pointed out the obvious corrections, but haven't made a study of them. Can anyone offer other suggestions?

BNAPEX '88 AT VIRGINIA BEACH

Nineteen replies were received to the July 15 letter/questionnaire sent to each of our 26 members, in regard to plans for BNAPEX '88, the 40th annual convention of the British North America Philatelic Society. Only five of our members confirmed that they would be attending the convention (two of the five, dealers with booths at the bourse, indicated they probably would be too busy to attend the study group meeting). Twelve others said they were not planning to attend; two more were undecided. Seven members did not respond.

Despite somewhat disappointing responses and prospects, plans were made for the three members representing our study group to have a meeting at BNAPEX '88. A report of their "get together" will be included in one of the next newsletters.

A positive side of responses to the questionnaire was a clearer idea of what members want our study group to accomplish. Many expressed a desire to correct errors and misinformation in catalogs, particularly in the <u>Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps</u>. You indicated that this was a major area of interest and concern. (See "Letters and Comments" section of this newsletter, pages 8 through 12.)

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Jim Miller says that he would like to see "...a major concerted effort to get Scott to properly list the semi-officials." He asks, "What procedure must we follow to accomplish this goal?"

We have just begun, with the procedure specified on page five of this newsletter. Additional input and comments are needed and welcomed.

Jim also inquires, "Could it be possible for our study group to put our own catalog, as a regular on-going part of the newsletter? Maybe one airline each newsletter, done on a separate page, so that when it's all done, we could all have a proper listing!"

He's made a good suggestion. Producing our own catalog may be a possibility, though it might be difficult to come up with all the answers and definitive information for a different airline and its stamps every couple of months. (Consider: The 1985 Report of the BNAPS semi-official air mail study group -- some 65 pages -- was the result of a 20-year study.)

The 1985 Report provides an excellent base from which to work. Each airline is covered. But perhaps a review of the report and an update in some form would be preferable to starting all over again in an attempt to produce a new catalog.

What do our members think about this?

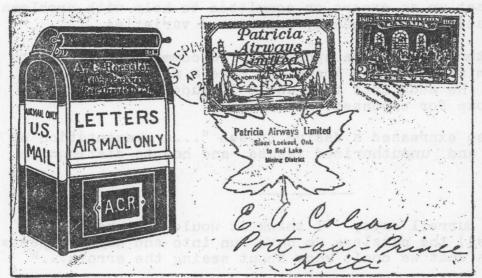
By the way, does anyone in the study group need a working copy of the '85 Report? Copies can be made for \$6.50 U.S., plus about \$1.50 to cover mailing costs.

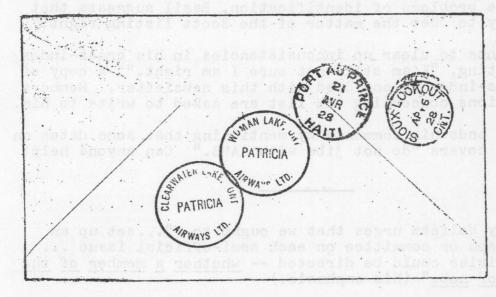
Joseph Berkovits writes, "We have seen many catalogues, reference books and articles in philatelic and historical journals ... but yet we haven't got a combined encyclopedia of Canada's semi-official air mail as a philatelic bible, like Robert H. Pratt has done on Newfoundland as such." He suggests, "What has not yet been published should be published."

Mr. Berkovits adds, he would like to see an exchange of information with those who have elusive material but do not exhibit. He likens this to keeping valuable items hidden away in "the closet safe," where no one can see or appreciate them.

Letters and Comments (cont'd)

Ed Christman sent us the photocopy shown below, of a 1928 Patricia Airways Ltd. cover and its backstamps. The cover was





mailed from Gold Pines, Ont. to Portau - Prince, Haiti.

Ed says, "Note cachets (or company cancellers) on the back, showing the route of the flight from Gold Pines, Clearto water Lake. Woman Lake (which became or was already Jackson Manion), and on to Sioux Lake, then put into regular mail facilities and on to Haiti.

"Long-worth-Dames on page 80 shows Woman Lake cachet and notes that on later flights of

Patricia Airways it was used in Red to cancel the company's stamp on some covers between Sioux Lookout and Jackson Manion. The two on the back of this cover are in Purple.

"Has anyone seen this cachet No. C47 before? Does anyone have a cover with this type Clearwater Lake cachet? Or any other town of the Patricia Airways Ltd. route from Gold Pines to Narrow Lake and return?

"Any other ideas (or facts!) as to how this cancel came into being and when and how it was used?"

Letters and Comments (cont'd)

Haughton Sanguinetti, Basil Burrell and Murray Heifetz all brought up the same subject: They would like to see the study group set up an expert or committee to help with problems of identification, genuineness, errors and varieties ...

Haughton suggests we appoint "...a committee of experts who will examine submitted items and make a report as to genuineness..." He adds that this would include a fee to go to our study group for expenses.

He also expressed a desire to see "...a presentation of counterfeits and unauthorized issues and how to distinquish them."

Basil Burrell says, "I think it would be a help if we could (discuss) the puzzlers we have run into and have 'experts' tell us babes what we don't know about seeing the errors..."

Re the problems of identification, Basil suggests that the group try to "Get the matter of the Scott listing right."

He wants to clear up inconsistencies in his cross-index as well, stating, "I am still not sure I am right." A copy of Basil's cross-index is enclosed with this newsletter. Members with suggestions concerning the list are asked to write to him.

Basil ends his comments by mentioning that some dates on First Flight covers "do not jibe with AAMS." Can anyone help?

Murray Heifetz urges that we ought to "...set up an 'expert' person or committee on each semi-official issue ... to whom enquiries could be directed -- whether a member of the study group or not." (His emphasis.)

The first step in setting up a committee of experts, as discussed by Messrs. Sanguinetti, Burrell and Heifetz, is to find some likely prospects among our members.

Are there any volunteers?

Letters and Comments (cont'd) (5/3000) signmon box and del

We can think of several logical choices of people with some expertise. Among the 26 members, the study group has at least two specialists in the Patricias, and another for Northern Air Service. Many of the others have special knowledge or interest in various areas.

Your chairman will gladly volunteer to help wherever needed. His main interest is with the special flight and aero club stamps, Scott CLP1-CLP7.

We don't want anyone to be scared off or to feel overawed by the term, "expert." The study group is just looking for a few people with enough knowledge in their special areas of interest to offer judgment and opinion on submitted items. This will be a big help to members looking for answers.

Maurice Hewitt writes, "I am always seeking information ... mainly, the story or ... history behind the pilot, the plane, the flying conditions, the companies, their stamps and the part they played in early Canadian aviation ... I don't believe Canada has given enough recognition to these men and women; some (are) war heroes, some (gave) their lives in opening up the hinterland of Canada."

Asked what they would like to see our study group provide and/or accomplish, these members responded as follows ...

John Jamieson: "Correct all the errors in the Scott Specialized Catalogue."

The study group is tackling the problem of errors in the Scott Specialized catalog. This is the group's number one priority right now.

Mike Painter: "Identify plate flaws which would plate semi-officials. I suspect virtually every one could be plated."

Gordon Waldie: "Produce something on W.R. Patton and/or O.W.R. Smith, both of whom seem to have produced a lot of the early covers."

Bob Jamieson seeks input from members in regard to proofs, dates, and related information.

Letters and Comments (cont'd)

Dick Malott: "Provide a list of areas for future study on semi-official issues and flights ... Comment on international and national judging."

Your chairman will try to work out a list of areas for future study, as Major Malott suggested. Pinpointing specific areas and topics for study in depth, one at a time, seems preferable to the "shotgun" approach of trying to cover a wide field of topics, all at one time.

Comments and input are welcomed.

CSDA SHOWS IN CANADA

The first Canadian Stamp Dealers' Association stamp show and exhibition, in Toronto on June 17-19, appeared to be a real success for everyone involved. The event was well-organized and publicized, with fine attendance and lots of activity.

It was good to chat with study group members Murray Heifetz, John Jamieson and Erling S.J. van Dam, to meet former member Jim Allen, and to renew contacts with other dealers and friends. Especially appreciated was the gracious hospitality of genial John Jamieson and his lovely wife, Susan.

A complimentary show pass for the CSDA's November 11-13 "Ottawa National" stamp show and exhibition is enclosed with this newsletter. The pass is valid for all three days.

An additional benefit: While in Ottawa, you have the opportunity to visit Canada's newly opened National Aviation Museum.

The enclosed blue card provides information on the CSDA's November 25-27 stamp show and exhibition in Montreal. (Admission is free for this event.)

THE NORTHERN AIR SERVICE STAMP -- A PLATING PUZZLE

By Murray Heifetz

Although several articles have been written on the Northern Air Service semi-official air mail stamp, there seems to have been little success to date identifying either the number of printings or the layout of the printing sheet. This is understandable, in view of the scarcity of either sheets or booklet panes.

Although I do not know how many sheets and panes there may really be, only two sheets and one booklet pane have been reported to date in any available literature. Examining the sheet most photographed (the one from Ed Richardson's collection), we have a pane of 20 which, if held with the wide perforated selvage at the left, shows a top row of five stamps with the dot variety, then two rows of five without dot but tete-beche, and then a bottom row of five without dot. The right side is imperforate but all other sides and all internal stamps are perforated.

Examining the only booklet pane reported from photographs (also from the Richardson collection and now owned by John Young), we find two stamps in the top row imperf at the side and perf on the other three sides, and two stamps in the bottom row with bottom and one side imperf. It should be noted that, from the sheet of 20, no position shows any position with top or bottom imperf, let alone both a side and top or bottom. A write-up of this stamp by the previous semi-official study group states that the known booklet pane had the dot variety in the upper pair of stamps.

I recently obtained a pair with both sides imperf, suggesting it is from the top pair of a booklet pane. This pair has no dot variety. Is this a different printing or layout, if the Young pane actually has the dot variety in this position? It is quite possible that someone shaved the side of a normal pair to create this pair of mine. However, a count of full perfs across the width of the pair, as well as a measurement from edge of perfs and comparison with about 50 other stamps, lends belief that this was not forged. In addition, it was found buried among a large lot of cheap semi-officials and unidentified. If someone went to the trouble of trying to create a booklet pair, it shouldn't be in a junk pile.

The Northern Air Service Stamp -- A Plating Puzzle (cont'd)

Now we come to the most confusing of all. We can assume that any stamp with imperf bottom and one side came from a booklet pane (Figure 1). These are quite scarce. I have only one -- on cover. It has no dot variety. What do we do, however, with the fairly common covers that have



Figure 1. A portion of a cover, showing a Northern Air Service stamp from a booklet pane, tied over both imperf edges by an August 31, 1925 c.d.s.

the top alone imperf. or the top and either left or right side imperf. Neither the known booklet pane nor the sheet gives any clue that such a plate position belongs to them. Where do they come from? I have on cover with both no dot and with dot variety -imperf top alone, imperf top and right side, imperf top and left side. Out of 16 covers in my collection, nine have one of the combinations with

top imperf -- certainly no indication of rarity. Even if one could speculate on the booklet origin of those that are imperf top and side, what do we do with those imperf top only? And finally, if my grouping is any barometer of frequency, why are there a number of stamps imperf top only, but none imperf bottom only?

Can anyone provide a clue as to the plating origin of these various stamps? Does anyone have unreported sheets or booklet panes that may shed some light on the puzzle?

WRITERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE

It's gratifying to see published articles, in the stamp society journals, written by some of our knowledgeable study group members. This year we've read stories by Allan Steinhart, Trelle Morrow, Mike Painter, Major Dick Malott and Bert Warr, Jr. They appear to be prolific writers.

Speaking of prolific writers, it was a pleasure to meet Hans Reiche in Toronto this June. He encourages others to write for the journals, adding that he enjoys seeing articles written by someone other than himself.

MAJOR MALOTT NOMINATED TO HEAD AEROPHILATELIC COMMISSION

It's a pleasure to report that Major R.K. Malott was nominated to stand for election as president of the International Federation of Philately (F.I.P.) Commission for Aerophilately. Major Malott's credentials are outstanding. He shows a deep, continuing commitment to the advancement and appreciation of aerophilately, astrophilately, and to all aspects of aviation. If he is elected, Major Malott's presidency will surely strengthen the Aerophilatelic Commission and further the development of world aerophilately and astrophilately.

The high lights of his platform of suggested activities for the F.I.P. Commission for Aerophilately are:

- A) Continue to improve special regulations and guidelines for aerophilately and astrophilately, and continue their dissemination and explanation via newsletter; allow with an exhibit an accompanying statement to which the jury could refer for amplification of the purpose of the exhibit; ensure F.I.P. rules are understood and applied on smaller national and regional levels.
- B) Continue to improve relationships and understanding with all national aerophilatelic commissions; urge those arranging world and international exhibitions to include one day specifically for aerophilately and astrophilately.
- C) Request all members of F.I.P. to nominate delegates and appoint representatives to the F.I.P. Commission for Aerophilately.
- D) Spread the word to youth of the world about the fun, knowledge and adventure to be gained from aerophilately and astrophilately.
- E) Develop F.I.P. judges for aerophilately and astrophilately; provide specific, unequivocal explanations for rating exhibits; ensure that exhibits rating 96 or more points obtain a large gold in lieu of a continual small gold with felicitations, or special prizes, because one or two major items are missing from an exhibited collection. (Major Malott points out that he was advanced to the F.I.P. Championship Class, although he is still missing four Canadian flight covers of which there is only one of each known -- and each is presently held by separate, non-exhibiting Canadian collectors.)
- F) Further friendly relations between European aerophilatelists and others of different continents.
- G) Encourage aerophilatelists and astrophilatelists to write and have their works published; organize a world-wide policy to ensure all statements are correct re aerophilatelic material for sale at auction, and discourage unethical practices.

MAJOR MAHOTT WOMINATED TO HEAD ASPERTLATELIG COMMISSION

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