

Study of 20th Century Postcard Rates: Canada to the UK.

SYNOPSIS

A postal history study of postcard rates to the UK, during the 20th Century:
54 postcards show examples of all the rates in the 27 Rate Periods, by "RATE CHANGE", and
some 18 exceptional rates, rarely encountered, that are researched and explained.

Herewith some of the exceptional rates and *RATE ERRORS* within each of the exhibit divisions by **RATE PERIODS:**

A- 1900-1915: in the CONTINUING POSTAGE RATE PERIOD of 2¢

(2¢ rate set in 1873 continued into the 20th Century, the scope of this exhibit)

- divided back postcard accepted in the Americas in March, 1907; allowing address AND a message on the backside (U.K. had started this in 1902 !), and undivided examples.
- *opportune 1¢ rate:* the printed matter rate was reduced from 2¢ (= to postcard rate) to 1¢ in 1902.

B- 1915-1954: WAR TAX confusion

- War Tax +1¢ set till 1926, then reset from 1931 to 1943
- but during these +1¢ War Tax periods, the postcard postage rate was reduced to 1¢, thus keeping the mailing cost to 2¢ (1¢ postage + 1¢ War Tax). Confusion led to 3¢ *RATE ERRORS*, in both periods, not knowing that the postcard postage rate had been reduced to 1¢ (as letter rates were not reduced during these War Tax periods).
- 1943-1952 a 4¢ *RATE ERROR* (the UK seemail letter rate).
- *opportune 1¢ rate:* the printed matter rate was reduced from 2¢ (= to postcard rate) to 1¢ in 1930.

C- 1954-1976: SEAMAIL/AIRMAIL rates and erroneous use of letter rates for postcards (elusive)

- 1954 UK seemail postcard rate set at 4¢, so 5¢ is *RATE ERROR* (the UK seemail letter rate).
- 1968 to 1976: the three UK seemail postcard rates (6¢, 7¢, 8¢) were equal to UK/USA/Cda letter rates
so 1977-8 12¢ & 14¢ are *RATE ERRORS* as they are USA/Cda letter rate, as before, but no longer UK rates.
- while airmail postcard rate was 10¢, so 15¢ are *RATE ERRORS* (the airmail letter rate).

D- 1971-2000: Multiple "ALL-UP" (airmail) rate standardized in 1971, now postcard rate is merged with letter rate,

and in 17 changes to the century end, 9 only (elusive) lasted from 7 months to one year:

- 1971 15¢; 1976 20¢; 1977 25¢; 1978 30¢; 1979 35¢; 1982 60¢; 1983 64¢; 1985 68¢; 1987 72¢;
1988 74¢;
1989 76¢; 1990 78¢; 1991 80¢; 1992 84¢; 1993 86¢; 1994/Mar. 88¢; 1994/Oct. 90¢; 1999
95¢.

IMPORTANCE of POSTCARDS: It would be difficult to exaggerate the initial importance of postcards:

- a) they were the glue between family and friends, sending greetings for birthdays, Christmas, Easter, etc.

- b) before the sender had a telephone (initially expensive), postcards were used to announce births, marriages, sickness, deaths, and other important news to family and friends; even more so across the Atlantic Ocean.
- c) before the sender had a camera (initially expensive), postcards were used to send to family, friends, and even to themselves, pictures of places visited, and even artistic renditions of such, including tourist sites and pictures of art.

RARITY:

As the 15¢ airmail letter rate ('53/7/1), was set before the 10¢ postcard airmail rate ('54/4/1), the 1953 postcard sent by 15¢ airmail is exceptional, but legitimate, as there was no airmail postcard rate at the time.

Of the other rarely encountered 17 exceptional rates:

three were irregular legitimate rates, the *opportune 1¢ rates*, the printed matter rate 1¢, allowed on postcards only if the handwritten greeting was less than six words; thereby a way of sending a postcard for only 1¢;
this rate occurred in only two rate periods, both are represented in the exhibit.

The other 15 are *RATE ERRORS*, such as War Tax and UK letter rate errors instead of using the proper postcard rate.

These rarely encountered covers are *elusive*, difficult to find, as they were few to begin with, and even fewer now exist.

Also difficult to find are postcard rates that lasted only one year or less; fortunately, after years of searching, this exhibit displays them, now complete, with every postcard rate to the UK in the 20th Century.

CHALLENGE:

Many of these postcards are elusive, as many of the rates were short-lived, and are not listed by these criteria or stocked in this manner by dealers.

This exhibitor has finally found the postcards previously missing from this exhibit, so it now has a complete set of postcards for all the 20th Century rates, along with many irregular and unusual *RATE ERROR* postcards.