

# Province of Canada Domestic Letter Rates during the "Pence Era" (1851-1859) shown through the Québec City Post Office Window

**Purpose** - The purpose of this two-page collection is to show the variety and the evolution of domestic postal letter rates in the *Province of Canada* (then made up of Canada Est and Canada West, which correspond approximately to the actual provinces of Ontario and Quebec) during this important period for the postal and philatelic history of Canada. What is not presented in this exhibit: Non-letter mail (printed forms, newspapers, circulars, etc.) as well as, of course, all letters sent outside the Province (BNA Colonies & abroad).

**Historical & Postal Contexts** - On 10 August 1850 the Canadian Legislature passed *The Post Office Act, 130 & 140 Cap 17*. The subtitle was: *An Act to provide for the transfer of the management of the inland Post to the Provincial Government, and for the regulation of said Department*. The Act came in effect on April 6, 1851. Then, the postal system of the Province of Canada achieved significant advancements in services: **Uniform rate** despite of distance (1851), introduction of **Postage Stamps** (23 April 1851), **Registration** of domestic letters (1<sup>st</sup> May 1855), and more. Transportation and communication became faster, more reliable and much more widespread. During the Pence Era (6 April 1851 to 30 June 1859), the number of Post Offices in the Province (Canada East and Canada West) grow from 601 to 1638, and the number of treated letters double, passing from 4,3 million to 8,6 million<sup>2</sup>.

Date of issue	Pence	P.O. Official usages
April 23, 1851	3	Up to ½ oz. Domestic letter
May 12, 1851	6	½-1 oz. Double domestic letter Up to ½ oz. letter to USA
June 14, 1851	12	2 oz. (quadruple) Domestic letter
January 1855	10	Up to ½ oz. U.S. (Cunard) Packet
August 1, 1857	7½	Up to ½ oz. Canadian (Allan) Packet
August 1, 1857	½	Newspaper 1oz. circular/Printed Matter

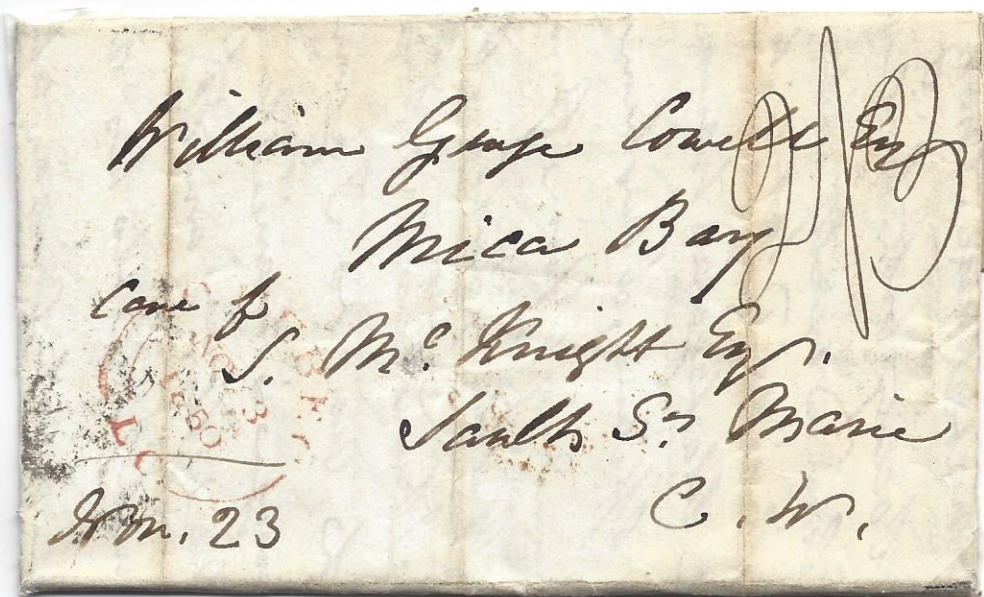
⇨ Although Province of Canada's first postage stamps were issued in 1851, the use of stamps to prepay postage was not compulsory until October 1875.

From 23 April 1851 to 1 October 1875, letters could be sent **paid** (with postage stamp(s) or cash) or **unpaid**.

## Plan of the Exhibit

1. Letter rates
  - 1.1 Drop Letters
  - 1.2 Soldier / Seaman Mail
  - 1.3 Adjacent Post Offices
  - 1.4 City Delivery
  - 1.5 Letter Rates by Weight
  - 1.6 Redirection
  - 1.7 Free Mail
  - 1.8 Money Letters
  - 1.9 Registered Letters

⇨ 23 Nov. 1850 letter rated by weight & Distance prior to 6 April 1851. ≤ ½ oz. for distance between 901-1000 miles, rated 2/2 manuscript (27 pence collect).



<sup>1</sup> Arfken, George B., Arthur W. Leggett, Charles G. Firby, Allan L. Steinhart, *Canada's Pence Era - The Pence Stamps and the Canadian Mail 1851-1859*, K. G. Scrimgeour editor, 1997, Vincent G. Green Philatelic Research Foundation, 1997, 421 p.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3