

THE R. P. O. NEWSLETTER  
OF THE CANADIAN R. P. O. STUDY GROUP (BNAPS)

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Holiday Greetings

Most important at this time of the year is to wish everyone a very happy holiday season and a happy rewarding new year. 1980 should be a great year for our Study Group, with much activity underway on new publications and studies. Start planning now to attend the BNAPS convention next year in Texas, where we plan to have another great annual meeting of the study group. While you are there (only a few miles from the border) plan a trip to Mexico at the same time.

Ferd Belanger Comes Through!

Ferd sent a copy of his talk at Quebec on Emergency Runs, which was received shortly after the previous Newsletter issued. Although he suggested that it be published in parts because of the length, I felt it would be much more useful, particularly with the coming new handbook edition, if run in full at one time. Hopefully Ferd will continue to update this study as new uses and discoveries occur. Many thanks to him for a great job.

1980 Dues Now In Order

As indicated in the previous issue, it was decided at the Annual Meeting to continue the annual dues at \$5 U.S. for 1980. Thus payment is now due from everyone except 1) those who already paid me during the meeting in Quebec and 2) new members who joined during September 1979 or later. The annual report on finances and membership will appear in the first issue of the year as always. Assuming that I get sufficient material, we will plan to have six issues of the Newsletter in 1980.

Letter From Hugh Aitkin

Got a nice letter from Hugh, always one of the first to respond to any request for help or information. He plans to send Jack Wallace some information for his B.C. train number study and commented as follows:

"Bill Robinson is correct as Hope is on the CNR line. I have travelled on the main line CNR many times and passed through Hope and Chilliwack on the way to Vancouver. Hope is on the south side of the Fraser River at that point and the CPR is on the north side of river.

I have an old map of CNR from coast to coast. I enclose Xerox of part of it which I sent to Mr. Gillam re errors on his maps: Plate N shows Munson as SW of Drumheller whereas Munson is north of Drumheller. Plate O shows Flin Flan NE of The Pas (it is NW, on the Alta.-Sask. border). It should have been Flin Flon Junction.

No CPR branch line goes into Hope. The main CNR line goes through Jasper and a branch of it goes from Jasper to Prince Rupert... The old map of CNR I have is scarce and if Jack Wallace wants a Xerox copy of all BC from it I will be glad to supply him with one. If any of the members want a Xerox of the complete map I can probably make such copies on request."

Hugh found later that he couldn't find a way to make a copy of the map and sent the entire map to me to have copies made. It was necessary to photograph the map and then make copies to show the entire CNR system complete with all town names on a 16" x 32" strip. They won't be easy to mail but I'll find a way for anyone sending \$1 U.S. to cover part of our costs.

Joe Purcell and Lionel Gillam also sent comment on the Hope being a CNR run. Incidentally both Lionel and Lew shot down my R4 as a partial of R85 or R85A, obvious once it was pointed out. They both think R4 should be delisted.

*John John*



## THE EMERGENCY HAMMERS

by  
*Fernand Belanger*

## Introduction:

I would like to talk to you about the emergency hammers. As most of you know these instruments were and are still used on specific occasions only.

To show these uses I will refer, when it is available, to some of the official postal correspondence which have already been published in RPO Newsletter Vol. 6 No. 1. I obtained that information through the courtesy of Mr. Kraemer, curator of the Postal Museum in Ottawa.

I would like to give more information concerning that official correspondence. The file to which I had access contained only a few letters regarding the emergency uses and the rest was an accumulation of survey strikes, which were requested in 1941 and in 1956. Also, in light of what I have found this summer in Ottawa, this file seems to be the only material that the Post Office Department kept through the years, all the rest has been destroyed.

To begin the discussion of the uses of the emergency hammers, I will talk about the regular emergencies, then follow with the emergency RPO's. The use of an emergency hammer was necessary when a new post office opened and the regular hammer was not ready, the District Director concerned sent the emergency hammer which was used during the waiting period. The same also applied when the instrument was lost due to fire in the post office. For example in the file, there is a letter mentioning the N-87E emergency hammer which was used during Apr 1959 by the Postmaster of Savage Cove because the equipment there was completely destroyed by fire on the 8th Apr of the same year. Sometimes regular hammers were also lost due to stolen hammers. Finally the use of an emergency hammer was necessitated

when the regular hammer broke or was badly worn, in that case the Postmaster ordered the emergency instrument from his Postal District Director.

Now, regarding the emergency RPO's, the official correspondence contains also some information.

The emergency RPO's were used on trains when the hammer was lost due to theft or train wreck. There is a letter dated 30 May 1949 stating " Due to the loss of the regular date stamp, an emergency hammer was in use on this RPO from 18 Ja 49 to Feb 2nd 49 ". The instrument was lost because the train 320 on the Moose Jaw & Shaunavan derailed and a visitor to the scene of the accident picked up the stamp as a souvenir. The instrument was recovered when the Inspector of Moose Jaw found out about it. Also, the emergency instrument was necessary when the regular stamp was lost due to fire damage in the mail car. These special instruments were also used when the regular train was stuck in a snow storm and no date stamp was on hand to furnish RPO leaving next morning. So, the railway mail clerk in charge asked his Postal District Director for the use of an emergency hammer. N-87E was used during few weeks in 1960 on the S.S. Baccalieu and on the S.S. Burgess due to the fact that these coastal Steamers were making special trips calling at all regular ports of the Saint John & Corner Brook route. I hope these few examples will help you to understand the use of the emergency hammers and I am sure that there still exist other conditions which have not been described here.

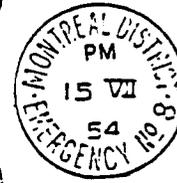
The types:

Concerning the emergency hammers on a total of 34 different runs, there are 29 major types, which is close to 85%, and 4 different minor types.

The major type is called type 15E. In Shaw's Handbook this type is defined by: Province or town, with or without District, top or bottom.

Following the description of type 15E, I would like to give an example in each section, where they exist...

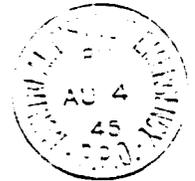
- N-87E St John's District / Emergency No 1
- M-46B Halifax, N.S. RPO / Emergency
- Q-65G Montreal District / Emergency No 8
- O-337A Toronto District / Emergency No 1
- W-160M Vancouver District / Emergency No 6



I would like to point out that the runs illustrated have been reported to be used on stamps or on covers.

Now, let's talk about the 4 minor types, which are also illustrated on your sheets. The first minor type is the type 17H. This type is known for two different runs, these emergency hammers display RPO at the bottom.

We have a run listed as Q65B which reads Montreal District Emergency/RPO. This hammer has been proofed the 4 Au, 1945. It has been reported used only in De 1958.



The other run with type 17H is W-43F reading Edm. Dist. Emergency/RPO. The hammer has been proofed the 15 Jy, 1938 and it has been reported to be used in Jy - Au 1952 and also in Sp 1953.



The following type is the type 17I. This type is known only for one run which is listed in the Railroad Section. It is listed as R-38A and it reads Emergency/RPO No. Here we have 2 different hammers, one with No 5 and the other with No 6. Both have been proofed the 29 Mr, 1952. Only the hammer with No 6 has been reported used, on the 24 Ap, 1971.



The third minor type is the type 21C. The run is listed as O-186D and reads North Bay - RMS/Emergency /3. The characteristic of this hammer is the number 3 external to ring, at the bottom.



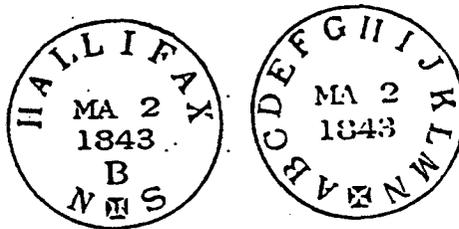
The hammer was proofed the 10 Fe, 1955 and no copies have been reported yet. Mr. Allan Steinhart was the first to report the existence of this emergency hammer, from the P & A Proof Books.

Finally the last minor type is the 5B. This type is characterized by a diameter of 28 mm. or larger while the steel stamps have a size of 24 mm. the run with this type is listed as W-160AS and reads Vancouver District/ Emergency No 3. We have no proof date and the only 2 reported copies show 5 My, 1978. They have been reported by Mr. Ludlow and Mr. Robinson.



The chronology of the emergency hammers:

The use of the emergency hammers in the Canadian Postal History started in the XX<sup>e</sup> century. Although an emergency datestamp was used in the XIX<sup>e</sup> century. I would like to give more details about this particular datestamp. Recently, in the No 17 of the Journal of the Postal History Society of Canada I read an article written by Dr. J.J. MacDonald concerning this emergency stamp. This hammer which I am calling it a " precursor " was used before and after the Confederation. I will pursue by using some of Dr. J.J. MacDonald's text. " In March 1843, 2 hammers were proofed in the London Proof Book. The notation beside the marks reads Halifax, N.S. Two shifting stamps with two completed alphabets, one extra set of vowels and double set of figures.



*Proof record, most likely impressed on the date the instrument was received.*

from Dr.J.J. MacDonald's article

The need of a such instrument was necessary when a new post office was opened and that the regular hammer had not been received yet from the General Post Office in London. Also, the emergency datestamp was used when a regular post office was destroyed by fire. For example, when the Amherst post office was destroyed by fire on the 6 January 1845, the postmaster used this emergency hammer during a period of 11 weeks.

Now, concerning the XX<sup>e</sup> century, the first proof date known to us is the 23rd August 1924. On that date hammers for 8 different Postal District were proofed.

So, to study, the chronology of the XX<sup>e</sup> century emergency hammers, I will proceed by giving a detailed list of all the proof date hammers which were issued for each Postal District Division. The first Postal District Division to examine will be St John's, Newfoundland and we will move westward after.

St John's District:

has 2 hammers proofed on the 17 of April 1957 showing numbers 1 and 2, listed as N-87E. Only the hammer with No 1 is known to have been used and the date is the 15 April 1965.

Prince Edward Island District:

one hammer proofed on the 20th August 1930 and listed as R-109I, no copies has been reported yet.

Halifax District:

We have two hammers proofed on the 23 of August 1924 which are listed as M-46A.

The stamp No 1 is known to have been used on the 31st July 1946 while the stamp No 2 is known to have been used on the 10th July 1961. For the Postal District of Halifax there is an emergency RPO hammer which is listed as M-46B.

The proof date is the 29th Mr 1952 for there the earliest date is the year 1965 and the latest date on the 27th May 1970.

St John District:

has 2 hammers proofed on the 23rd August 1924 showing numbers 1 and 2, and listed as M-102B. Both hammers have been reported used

No 1 known used on the 21st August 1942

No 2 known used on the 13th March 1948.

Montreal District:

This Postal District is more complicated due to the large quantity of hammers proofed. The first 2 hammers were proofed on the 23 August 1924. There is one listed as Q-65F. The earliest date is the 10th Fe, 1945 and the latest date is the 12 Dec. 53. On the same date a second hammer with the same wording but in french was proofed. It is listed as G-65E and his usage is unknown.

Following this, we have an emergency hammer proofed on the 6 October 1927. It is listed as Q-65C for which the earliest date is the 10 December 1927 and the latest date is the 6 October 1952.

18 years later, on the 9th March 45 an other hammer has been proofed. It is listed as G-65D our earliest date is the 22 Sep 47 and the latest date is the 8 My 51.

An emergency RPO hammer was proofed on the 4 August 1945, the only known date of use is the 12 December 1958, and it is listed as G-65B. The following 6 emergency hammers listed as G-65H were all proofed in Jy, 54;

the first hammer was proofed on the 15 Jy, 1954. 20 th October 1958 is the only date of use recorded so far.

The timbre temporaire No 2 was also proofed on the 15 Jy, 1954. No copies have been reported yet.

The No 3 stamp was proofed on the 8 July, 1954. Our earliest date is the 10 March 1958, and the latest date is in August 1960.

The 4th hammer was proofed on the 8 July 1954. No copies have been reported yet.

The 5th hammer was proofed on the 8 July 1954. The dates of use so far reported are on the 27 November 1958.

The last hammer for Q-65H which shows No 6 was proofed on the 8 July 1954. The earliest date is the 11 March 1968 while the latest is the 5 May 1969.

Also at the same period, 2 other stamps have been proofed on the 15 July 1954. They are listed as Q-65G, and they have respectively No 7 and 8 at the bottom.

The No 7 hammer has not been reported to be use as of yet while the No 8 stamp is known used on the 10th March 1971.

#### Quebec District:

For this District the earliest proof date is the 26 August 1924. The concerned hammer is list as Q-204E, and has not been recorded to be use as of yet.

Also at the same date, on the 26 August, there is a proofed date for an hammer listed as Q-204C which hammer shows the same wording than the Q-204E but in english instead of french. For this stamp the earliest date is the 29 October 1926, and the latest date is in March 1948. For the Q-204C there is a second proof date which is the 5 December 1953. For this hammer the only known date is in December 1957.

Now for the Province of Ontario we will begin with the

#### Ottawa District:

for this district 5 emergency hammers have been proofed. They are listed as O-218A. The numbered No 1 and No 2 hammers have been proofed the 21st August 1924.

The No 1 hammer has for earliest date the 1st Sp 42 (this date has to be verified), and the latest date is 5 No 51.

The No 2 hammer has an earliest date of 23 Au 63, and a latest date of 1 Fe 69.

The proof date of No 3 hammer is the 29 Fe 28. It has not been reported to be use as yet.

The proof date of No 4 and 5 hammers is the 16 Ja 30. Both stamps have not been reported to be use as yet.

Toronto District:

The first 2 hammers for this District have been proofed the 23 August 24. They are listed as O-337A. The hammer with No 1 is known used the 22 No 40.

An other hammer with a No 1 have been proofed the 5 My 54. The only date is the 31 Au 67.

The earliest date for the hammer No 2 is the 21 Ja 47 while the latest is the 18 Au 58.

The hammer No 3 was proofed the 19 Ja 46. The earliest date is the 10 Jun 57, and the latest date is the 29 Au 59.

The hammer No 4 was also proofed the 19 Ja 46. The only known date is the 26 Au 47.

Finally the emergency/RPO No 5 and 6 have been proofed the 29 Mr 52. these are listed as R-38A.

Only the No 6 hammer is known used the 24 Ap 71. I presume it was a favor cancel.

North Bay District:

The 2 first hammers have been proofed the 26 Au 24. They are listed as O-186C. Only the No 1 hammer has been reported to be as yet. The date is the 2nd My 42.

The No 3 hammer was proofed the 16 Ap 29. The only known reported copy is dated the 27 Jun 64.

The 2 hammers No 4 have been proofed on the 28 My 32 and on the 3rd Mr 48 respectively. Only the first hammer have been reported to be use as of yet. The date is the 18 De 42.

Here, also we have an emergency RPO hammer. It is listed as O-186D and it has been proofed on the 10 Fe 55. It has not been reported to be use as of yet.

London District:

Also for this district the first 2 hammers have been proofed on the 26 August 1924. These are listed as O-139A. The third hammer has been proofed on the 31st December 1942. The third hammer has not been recorded to be use as of yet. For the first hammer, the earliest date is the 29 July 1930 and the latest date is the 12 May 1963.

The 19 December 1947 is the only date reported so far for the second hammer.

After the Province of Ontario we are now reaching the Western Provinces.

We will start with the

Winnipeg District:

This district has 2 emergency hammers proofed on the 23rd August 1924. These are listed as W-179G. Only the No 1 stamp have been reported to be use. The earliest date is the 10th December 1953 and the latest date is the 18 September 1969.

Moose Jaw District:

Also the Moose Jaw District has 2 emergency stamps which have been proofed on the 26th August 1924. In the catalogue they are listed as W-91I. The 10 December 1952 is the only reported date of use while the No 2 hammer has not been reported to be used as of yet.

## Saskatoon District:

Two emergency hammers have been proofed on the 26 August 1924. They are listed as W-146W. Both hammers have been reported to be use.

The 30 July 1929 is the earliest date while the 29 September 1939 is the latest date.

The second stamp has been reported to be use in May 1937.

## Calgary District:

The hammers No 1 and No 2 have been proofed also on the 26 August 1924. These stamps are listed as W-23L.

Concerning these hammers only the second stamp has been reported to be use. The date is the 15 December 1954.

2 hammers with No 3 and also 2 hammers with No 4 have been proofed.

Their proof dates are the following: the first No 3 and No 4 hammers have been proofed on the 16 March 1927, while the second No 3 and No 4 stamps were proofed on the 23rd December 1954.

All these emergency hammers have not been reported to be use as of yet.

On a total of 6 different stamps only one copy has been so far reported.

It seems to be the most difficult District to find concerning the emergency strikes.

## Edmonton District:

Two hammers have been proofed on the 2 No 1925. They were numbered No 1 and No 2. They are listed as W-43I.

Surprising, a second set of No 1 and No 2 hammers were proofed on the 12 Fe 1926. In the records, we have the 9 July 1952 as reported date for the first hammer and we have the 30 December 1941 as reported date for the second hammer. At this stage I can't tell to which set of proof they refer.

We also have a set of proof with No 3 and No 4 proofed on the 28

July 1954. These have not been reported to be use as of yet.

This district also received an emergency RPO hammer. It has been proofed on the 15 July 1938.

The 26 July 1952 is the earliest reported date while the 7 September 1953 is the latest date.

#### Vancouver District:

This is our last district to study and it is well represented by 8 different proofed hammers.

All these are listed as W-160M. The first two hammers were proofed on the 26 August 1924. The earliest date for the No 1 stamp is the 16 De 1925 while the latest date is the 1st March 1968. For the stamp No 2 the earliest date is the 15 De 1925 and the latest date is the 28 September 1974.

On the 19 January 1946 a No 3, No 4, No 5 and No 6 hammer have been proofed.

For the No 3 stamp the earliest date is the 30 April 1953 and the latest date is the 15 May 78. The earliest date of the No 4 stamp is the 18 June 1950 and the latest date is the 25 Mr 1964.

For the No 5 hammer the 3 May 1948 is our earliest date while the 8 July 1951 is our latest date. Finally the No 6 stamp has not been reported to be use as of yet.

A second set of hammers showing No 5 and No 6 were proofed in the 50'. The No 5 stamp has been proofed on the 15 No 59 and has been reported used on the 15 Sp 71 while the No 6 hammer has been proofed on the 15 Fe 56 and has the 2 May 1959 for earliest date and the 12 June 1972 for latest date.

To complete our review of the chronology and dates of use I will give some details concerning the emergency stamps for which we have no proof records.

In the Province of Quebec, we have 2 stamps with no proof dates. One is listed as Q-204D (District de Quebec/Timbre temporaire) for which the earliest date is the 19 Fe 1941 and the latest date is the 10 April 1948. The other stamp is listed as Q-24G (Timbre temporaire/Quebec Ouest) and the only reported date is the 27 Fe 1975.

For the Province of Ontario, we have only one hammer listed as O-64B (Eastern District Emergency No 2/Ont). The earliest date is the 23 Jan 74 and the latest date is the 6 Fe 74.

In the Western Provinces, we have an emergency stamp listed as W-179S (Emergency No 3/Winnipeg, Man). The only reported date is the 28 No 1962.

For the Vancouver District we have 4 hammers for which there is also no proof date.

The first two stamps listed as W-160AQ (Vancouver/District/Emergency No ) and showing a No 1 and a No 3 in the hammer were used in the 60's.

The only reported date for the No 1 hammer is the 9 May 1965 while the No 3 stamp has the 29 July 1969 as earliest date and the 18 August 1969 as latest date.

The third stamp listed as W-160AR (Vancouver District/Emergency) has been reported to be use on the 20 Oc 1973.

The last stamp which seems to be a recent one, with is type 58 is listed as W-160AS. It has been reported to be use the 5 May 1978.

This terminates my talk on the emergency hammers. Hope the given information will help some of you to understand these special hammers.

I would like to thank Mr. Larry Walker who provided some of the emergency proofed strikes. Also many thanks to Mr. Ludlow for providing most of the proof dates including the earliest and the latest dates. Finally, I would like to thank all the collectors who help me in the study of these emergency hammers.