



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP  
OF THE  
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 53

August 1996

REGISTRATION

Some months ago I suggested that we continue to collate information on aspects of trans-Atlantic mails under subject headings, in the manner once used for freight letters. With this edition, I have started to cover registration.

I hope to gather what has been written in the past, including examples from your collections. I would ask only that comments be accompanied by references. These notes are not arranged in order, more as illustrations fitted the pages!

Figure 1: Fredericton, New Brunswick, to London, England, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1867.

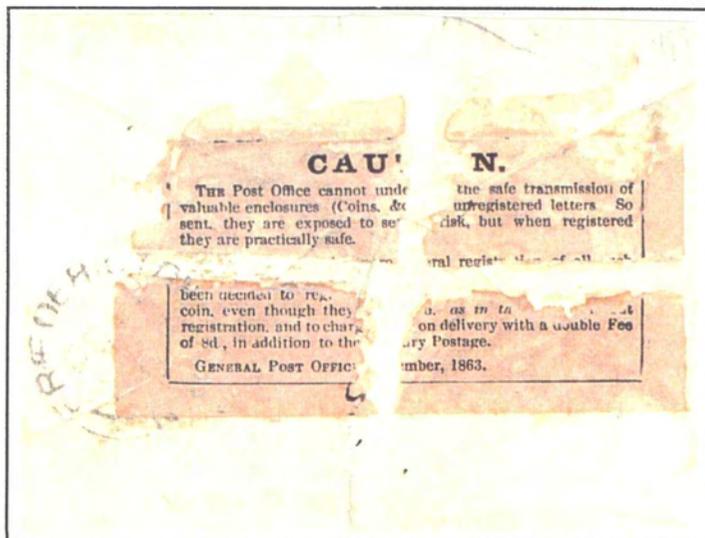


Figure 2: The label reads:

'CAUTION. The Post Office cannot undertake the safe transmission of valuable enclosures (Coins, &c) in unregistered letters. So sent they are exposed to serious risk, but when registered they are practically safe. As a step towards the more general registration of all such letters, the Fee has been reduced from 6d. to 4d., and it has been decided to register all letters unquestionably containing coin, even though they be posted, as in this case, without registration, and to charge them on delivery with a double Fee of 8d., in addition to the ordinary postage. General Post Office, August 1867.

## COMPULSORY REGISTRATION

The cover illustrated on the front page was loaned by Art Leggett - I promised him at the time that I would do the necessary research and produce an article for one of the society journals.

I did the research (mainly in the Post Office Archives at Mount Pleasant), and started drafting the article, only to find that Dr Michael Russell had provided a very comprehensive explanation for the Canadian Postal Society of Great Britain Journal 'Maple Leaves', from notes provided by George Searles. I shall not repeat Michael's article here, it may be found in Volume 23, #5 and 6 (245 and 246).

Art Leggett's cover is special, in a number of respects: it was posted in New Brunswick, prepaid seventeen cents for the British Packet out of New York, this in itself is unusual, and the seventeen cent stamp is rarely seen on cover. It was probably carried on the Cunard Line 'Persia', out of New York on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1867, arriving Queenstown 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1867, thence to London.

Posted on 4<sup>th</sup>(?) December 1867 (the Fredericton mark is not absolutely clear on my copy), the letter was compulsorily registered at the London Southern District Office on 26<sup>th</sup> December, and charged eightpence, twice the fourpence fee - Happy Christmas for the addressee!

From the tears in the label it would appear that string or tape was used to ensure that the letter could not be opened without detection, in transit through the British postal system.

Compulsory registration had been introduced in the United Kingdom, for internal letters, in 1862; this was extended to correspondence with other countries with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1867 (Treasury Warrant, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1867). The registration fee had been reduced from sixpence to fourpence on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1866 (Post Office Instruction #3, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1866). The proposal of dividing the excess charge between the two nations involved dates from the same period, but I have not seen any evidence as to how the sums were to be remitted.

Included in the schedule of the Treasury Warrant were Canada, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island; the Pacific Coast is not mentioned.

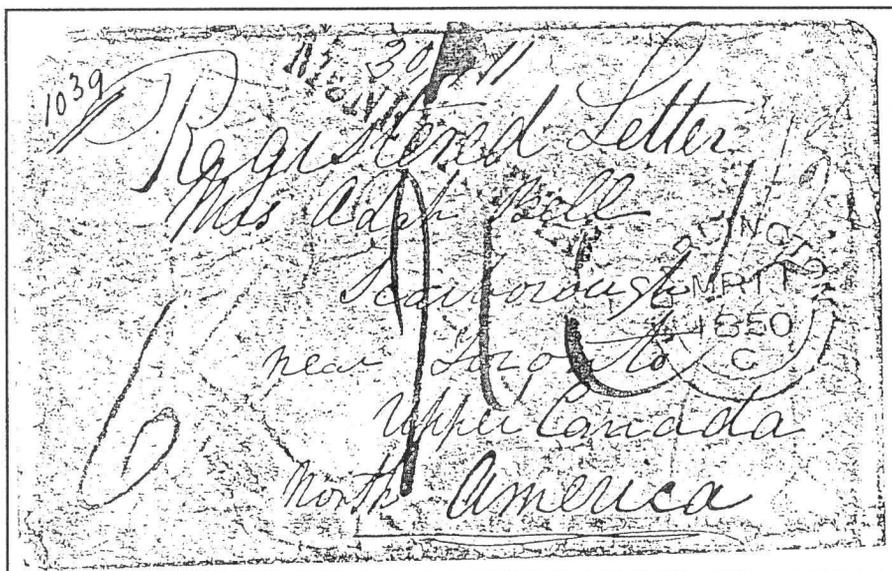
The Post Office Department in Canada concurred with the proposals in a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1867, and letters were sent to the Canadian offices of exchange (Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton) advising that the new regulations should come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1867. I have no information on the reaction of the other British North American offices.

## REGISTERED/MONEY LETTERS

There follow a couple of registered/money letters (the second supplied by Allan Steinhart) which show the British rates in the 1840s.

Again, for space reasons, they are out of sequence; *Figure 3* dates from 1850, *Figure 4*, is earlier, 1844.

*Figure 3:* Darlington, England to Scarborough, U.C., 11<sup>th</sup> March 1850.



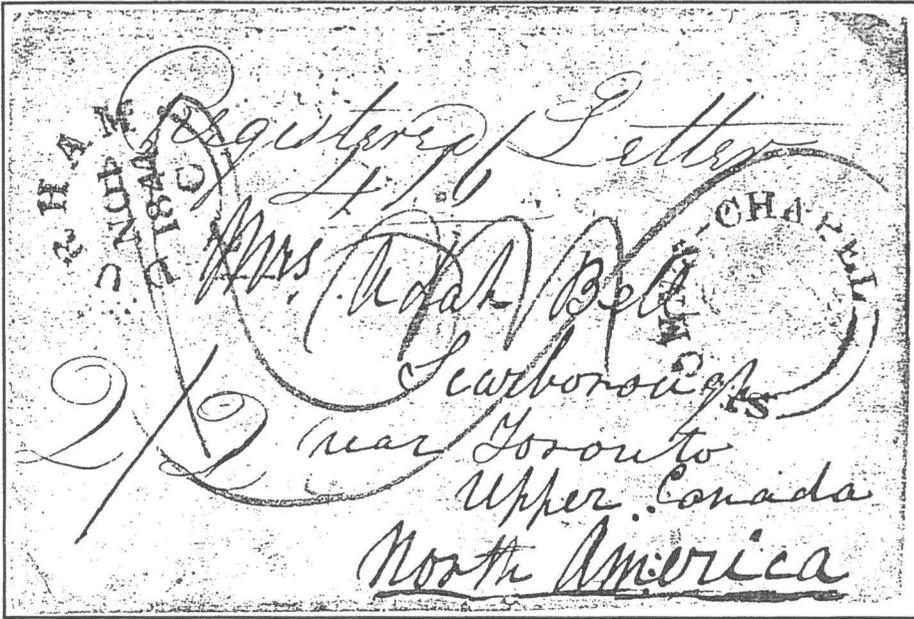


Figure 4: Tidehead, England to Scarborough, U.C., 30<sup>th</sup> October 1844.

The earlier letter shows the British registration fee of a shilling, plus the British Packet rate of one shilling and twopence, in all prepaid two shillings and twopence. Indicated as 'Registered' in England, it was marked 'M' (Money Letter) in Canada; Allan states that there was no additional charge in Canada for a money letter at this time.

The second letter, from the same correspondence, was posted after 28<sup>th</sup> March 1848, and was charged a British fee of sixpence. It is understood that the British Packet postage of one shilling and twopence was also prepaid (not clear from the marks). This letter also has an 'M', augmented by a handstruck 'MONEY LETTER'.

TO NOVA SCOTIA



Figure 5: Plymouth, England to Truro, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1849.

A small mourning cover, posted in Plymouth on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1849. It has a red crayon 'Registered' and '6', showing the registration fee, and a small manuscript 'Paid' in the lower left corner. There is, what I believe to be, a London 'PAID' transit for 13<sup>th</sup> December 1849.

The one shilling postage to Nova Scotia is not shown, presumably because postage had to be fully prepaid on registered letters. The Nova Scotia Post Office has not given any indication that the letter received special attention on arrival in the Colony.

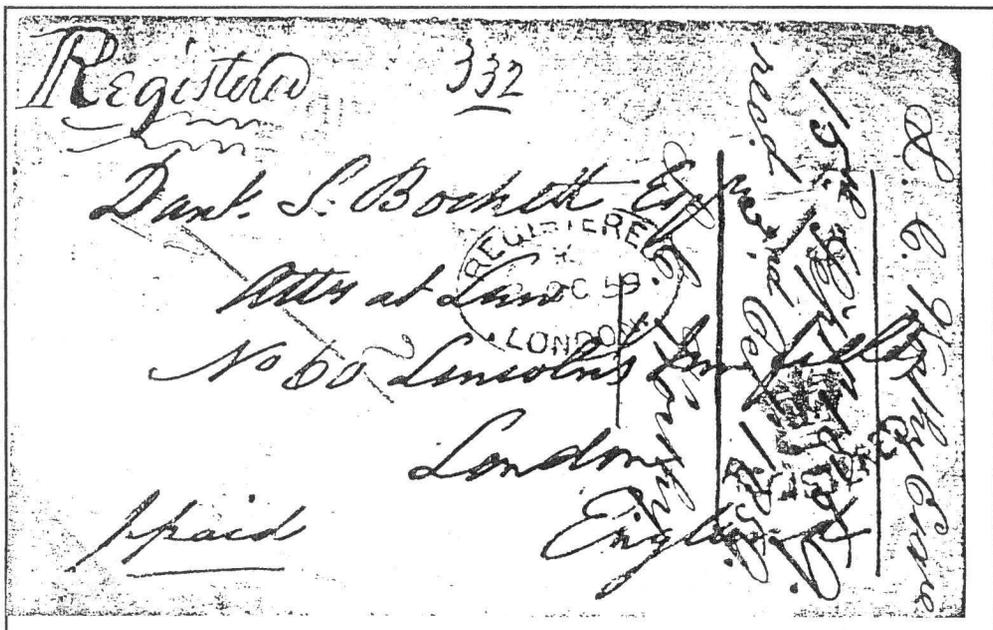


Figure 4: Charlottetown to London, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1859.

My thanks to Captain Douglas Campbell RN (Retd) for the photocopy of the only registered letter I have seen from Prince Edward's Island. J.C Lehr records one, of 1859, but does not illustrate it or give details in his book; since he was in correspondence with Douglas Campbell at the time, this may be the one mentioned.

The letter was prepaid at Charlottetown on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1859 (a faint cds at top left), and has Prince Edward's Island and London E.C., handstamps on the reverse. It is marked 'Registered' in manuscript, and has two registered handstamps, one for London, and an interesting 'crown registered', which I would like to attribute to Halifax, Nova Scotia, or to a ship. It arrived in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1859, which suggests that it was carried on the Cunard Line 'Europa' (Europa left Boston on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1859, called at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and made Liverpool on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1859).

The rate marks are in red crayon, and are faint: 6, 4, and 10 (paid). These could cause confusion, and I offer the hypothesis that they are Sterling rates: sixpence, the rate by British Packet from Prince Edward's Island to the United Kingdom, viâ Halifax (from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1854), and fourpence, the registration fee.

The latter is troublesome, for it is well known that the registration fee for British mails from most British North American Provinces was sixpence Sterling, and I would be grateful for

*primary source* information that the Prince Edward's Island Post Office saw things differently. However, J.C. Lehr in his book quotes a Post Office Regulation (unfortunately the extract is among a number of similar extracts, and the date and source are not clearly stated), which shows the registration fee on the island to be sixpence *Currency*. Since sixpence *Currency* was the equivalent of fourpence Sterling, I am content that the post office was in error with the rating, and charged the local registration fee, rather than that required for British letters.

Douglas Campbell has a similar cover, dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1860, from the Treasurer's Office at Charlottetown to Georgetown, marked 'On Service', and 'Money Letter'. It too has been charged fourpence and sixpence; this is somewhat ambiguous, but could be double twopence *Currency* postage and sixpence *Currency* registration.

More information would be most helpful, in particular giving the date of the Prince Edward's Island regulation (which I believe is 1858). It would also be interesting to discover whether the mother country attempted to recover any of the deficient registration fee (if, indeed, there was a deficiency. The cover bears one other mark, which may be nothing, but looks like an oblique inverted '7' - unfortunately the photocopy is not clear enough to show whether this is a recognisable marking, and, if so, its significance.

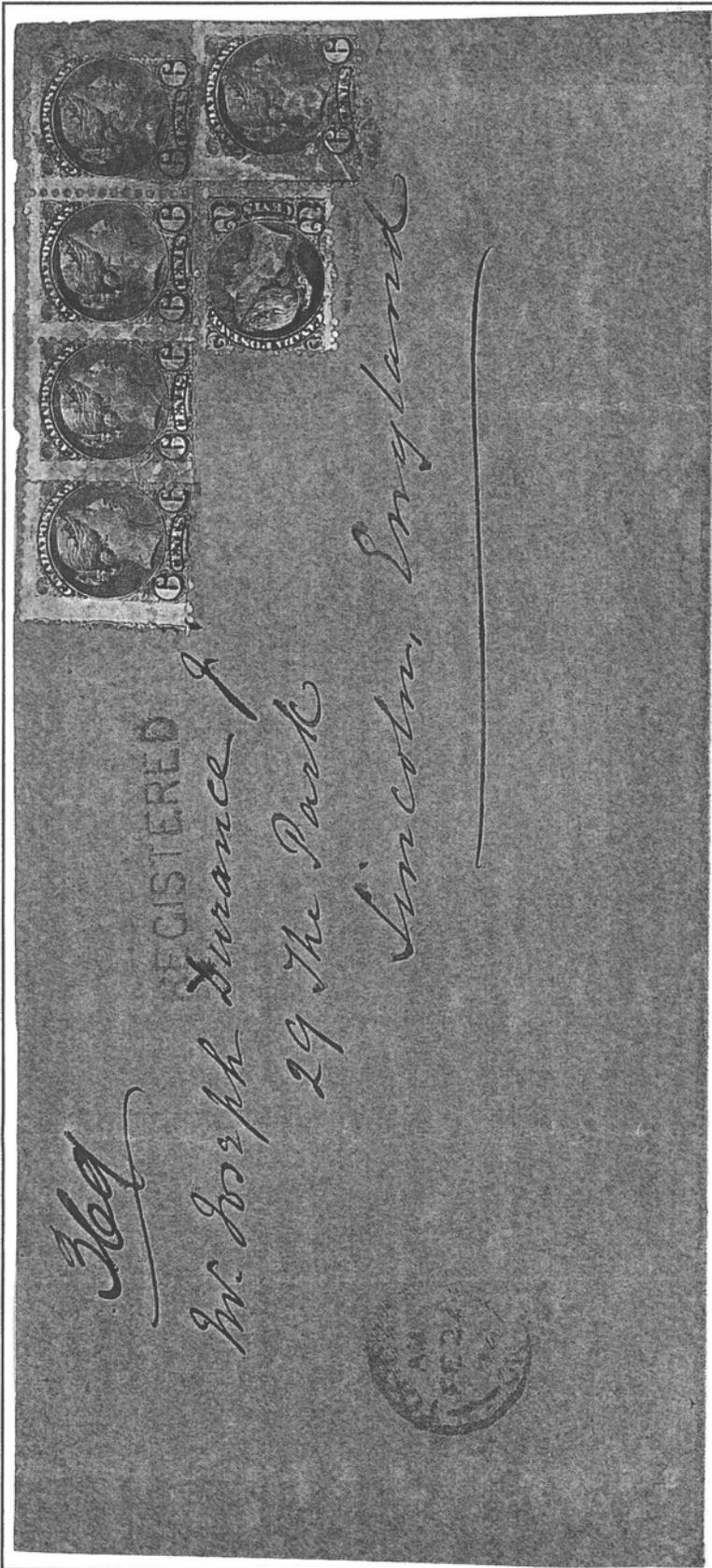
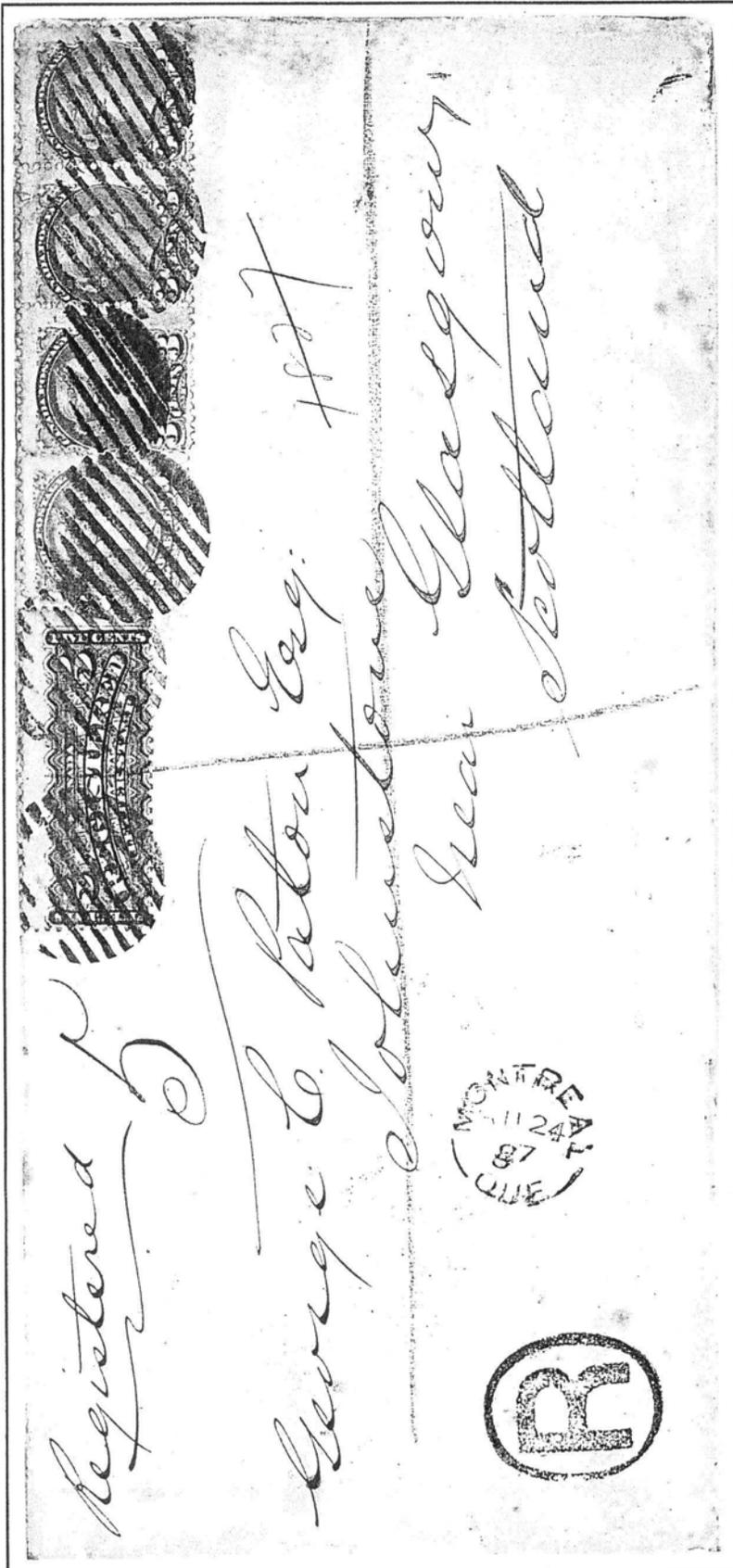


Figure 6: An example of the eight cents registration rate on a cover from Toronto, Ontario to Lincoln, England. Posted on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1872, it was prepaid thirty-two cents: twenty-four cents, the triple (1-1½ ounces) rate by British Packet via the United States, and the registration fee.



*Figure 7:* A cover in the period after the introduction of the Universal Postal Union rates. Posted in Montreal on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1887, it was prepaid the one ounce rate, ten cents, plus five cents registration fee, paid by means of the registration stamp. The cover shows an 'R' handstamp which is likely to be of Canadian use - but further comment would be appreciated.

TABLE 1: BRITISH NORTH AMERICA AND UNITED STATES

Serial	Date	Country	Fee	Routes/Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1.	November 1837	All British Colonies	N/K	British registered letters addressed inland or overseas to be handled as money letters.
2.	6 <sup>th</sup> January 1841	Worldwide (except France, see 'Europe')	1s	Only to port of departure, fee and postage had to be prepaid.
3.	1845	VI		Mentioned in Mowbray <sup>[1]</sup> , but no reference given.
4.	28 <sup>th</sup> March 1848	As above	6d	British fee reduced, still only to port of departure.
5.	30 <sup>th</sup> January 1849	To Chagres		Details not known, via Colon or Panama.
6.	14 <sup>th</sup> April 1849	Canada, NB, PEI	6d	To port of departure, Br Pkt via Halifax, NS, US.
7.	April 1850	California and Oregon		Via United States, details not known.
8.	October 1850	Canada	6d	To port of departure, US Pkt.
9.	19 <sup>th</sup> April 1853	Canada	6d	To port of departure, Canadian Packet.
10.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1854	BC & VI	6d	To port of departure, via Southampton (West Indian Packet).
11.	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1854	NB, NF	6d	To port of departure, Br Pkt via Halifax.
12.	1 <sup>st</sup> August 1854	NS	6d	To port of departure, Br Pkt via Halifax.
13.	1 <sup>st</sup> May 1855	Canada	N/A	End of money letter system in Canada, introduction of registration system.
14.	11 <sup>th</sup> March 1856	VI	6d	Via US, to port of departure.
15.	1 <sup>st</sup> May 1856	US	6d	Any route.
16.	1 <sup>st</sup> May 1856	California, Oregon and the Sandwich Is.	6d	UK closed mail to San Francisco, via Panama or Colon. Through registration, via US.
17.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1856	Canada, US.	3d/5c	Registration agreement between Canada and US. Prior to this, 1d had paid fee only within Canada.
18.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1858	Canada, NB, PEI, NS	6d	Through registration, by Br, Cdn or US Pkt.
19.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1858	NF	6d	Br Pkt via Halifax, Nova Scotia.
20.	January 1859	NF	6d	Via Galway.
21.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1862	UK	1s	Compulsory registration introduced in UK.
22.	1 <sup>st</sup> February 1866	BC & VI, Canada, NB, NF, NS, PEI	4d	Any route. BS & VI via US, to port of departure.
23.	1 <sup>st</sup> February 1866	US	4d	Any route.
24.	1 <sup>st</sup> February 1866	California, Oregon and Sandwich Is.	4d	Closed mail to San Francisco, via Panama or Colon (route withdrawn 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1868).
25.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1868	BC & VI	4d	Through registration via US.
26.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1868	All Br Colonies, etc.	8d	Introduction of compulsory registration.
27.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1875	Dominion of Canada	5c + 8c	Mandatory pre-payment of all postage (5c to UK), and registry fees (8c to UK), by stamps.
28.	15 <sup>th</sup> November 1875	Dominion of Canada	N/A	Registration stamps on sale.
29.	31 <sup>st</sup> December 1877	Dominion of Canada	8c	Considered last date of legitimate use of 8c registration stamp.
30.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1878	Dominion of Canada	2d	Newfoundland date not known.
31.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1878	US	2d	Any route.
32.	1 <sup>st</sup> July 1878	Dominion of Canada	N/A	(Or shortly thereafter) 8c registration stamp withdrawn from sale.
33.	8 <sup>th</sup> May 1889	Dominion of Canada	5c	Registration fee for all classes of mail.
34.	1 <sup>st</sup> August 1893	Dominion of Canada	N/A	Introduction of 8c postage stamp; commencement of withdrawal of registration stamps.

I have run out of space - there is more to come on this subject. In Newsletter #52, I forecast the imminent publication of a new book on the trans-Atlantic Mails from Jack Arnell - he has since sent me a copy, and I recommend it to anyone interested in this subject. I have had neither the time nor the space in this journal to review the book, which deserves a thorough review; suffice to say that the book covers its areas forecast very comprehensively, and, of particular value to the historian, provides a wealth of references which will repay further examination.

The next Newsletter will consist largely of items provided by Allan Steinhart - who continues to provide regular contributions; of late he has been somewhat neglected. I will concentrate on ships, and will also be able to provide more details of the 'Guadalquivir Steamer', thanks to Captain Dick Winter USN. For the following newsletter, I would like to open the discussion on soldiers'/seamens' (and officers) letters - and would welcome photocopies. You may be surprised to discover, if you believe such letters consist of penny rates only, this is a complex subject.

\* \* \* \* \*

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