

W.G. Robinson
5830 Cartier St.
Vancouver, B.C.
V6M 3A7

THE R.P.O. NEWSLETTER

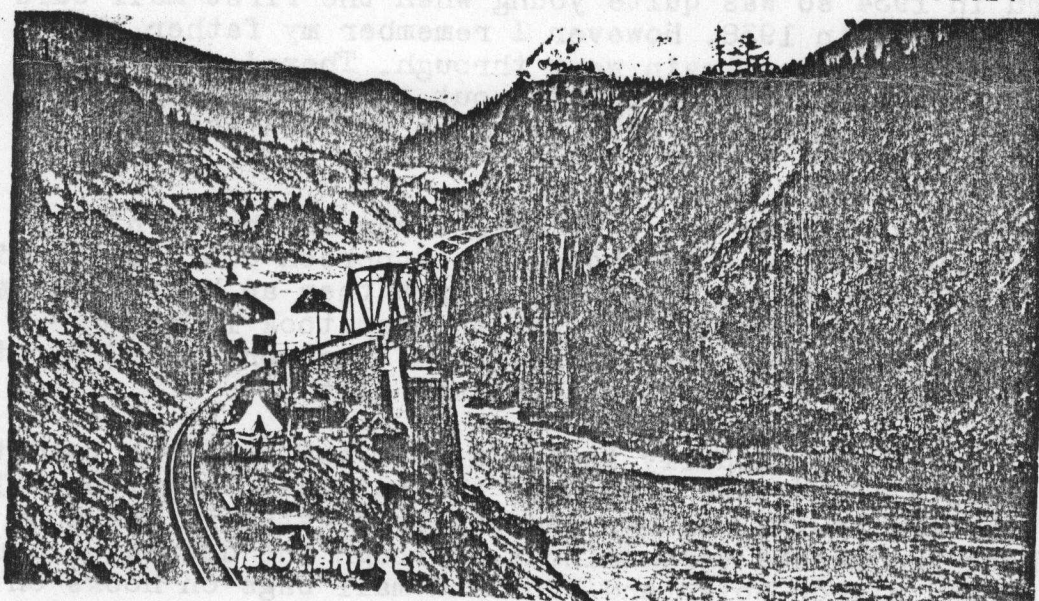
OF THE CANADIAN R.P.O. STUDY GROUP (B.N.A.P.S.)

Volume 20 - No.4

Whole No.98

July, 1992

PRAIRIE BEAVER REGIONAL GROUP, B.N.A.P.S. - This Newsletter is being prepared for distribution at the August 1, 1992 meeting of the Prairie Beaver Regional Group at College Station, Texas. Your Editor and President will be attending to give a talk on the Canadian Military Postal History of the Boer War, another on the state of BNAPS, and also will show some RPO oddities.



A World War I postcard from Jim Felton showing the tent of a bridge guard at Cisco in the Fraser Canyon, east of Vancouver

NEW MEMBERS - We welcome two new members -

Kevin O'Reilly
Box 444
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2N3

Michael Rixon
749 Agnes
Montreal, QC
H4C 2P4

FROM THE MEMBERS - David Harding reports that his van was stolen in Vancouver while they were returning from Arizona to Victoria. It was recovered, and nothing was missing, but it was a mess. David also reports that he obtained several items from the first Ludlow sale and notes errors in the Catalogue listings. Corrections will appear in Annex XI, but here they are for the Study Group -
W-87B M.J. & Cal. RPO/ J.F. Webster - No periods in RPO.
W-1010 N.BAT. & ST.WAL - R.P.O./No. - No period, but a dash after WAL
W-102H N.PORTAL & M.JAW, RPO./G.W.HARVEY - comma after JAW, only period after O of RPO.
W112Gb P.G. & P.R., R.P.O./E.M.LUGRIN - Comma after P.R.

David has also done an identification of W-155 hammers - the VIC. & WELL. R.P.O./B.C. which will appear in the next issue.

B.N.A.P.S.
member # 4279

Irvine N. Rosborough,
708 Victoria Ave., West,
Winnipeg, Man.
R2C 1T5

June 16, 1992

Mr. W.G. Robinson,
5830 Cartier St.,
Vancouver, B.C.
V6M 3A7

Dear Bill;

In your last news letter whole no. 97 you mentioned at the end you would like to see some items.

So here attached is an item you might find interesting. I lived in Armstrong as my father was a carman on the C.N.R. I was born in 1934 so was quite young when the first mail cars began on that run in 1938. However I remember my father always saying when a passenger train went through. There's Number 4 see it has the mail car. and pointed out to me the difference between a baggage car and a mail car. The windows and door on one end of the car.

The trains from the west were early in the morning. #2... then an hour later #4. In those days a person could set their watch by them. from the east #3 came first then an hour later #1 I suppose #1 from Montreal which was further took longer. There was about 100 miles difference from Armstrong. So I'm not sure why I imagined they left at the same time.

I was never actually inside a mail car as I was told they were off limits. But I saw many from the outside. They looked like a jail with bars in the windows and big iron gates in the door and the hook arm looked very ominous. Through the doorway I could see a desk and pigeon holes and bins and mail bags on hooks on the walls. I also heard many incidents about the mail cars.

Although I knew both Bill Mitchell and Bill Shail. I was unaware of their personal hammers. My father was a general stamp collector and I would get his duplicates. Neither of us was aware of postal history. (The postage stamp was the thing).

The information I've written on the attached pages are to the best of my knowledge fact. Much of it from Law Ludlows catalogue, "A History of Canadian R.P.O.'s by L.F. Gillam" (1967) published by A.P.S. 1967., American Airmail Catalogue reprinted 1963. Stories from my parents and uncle. who lived in Armstrong. After my parents were married in New Brunswick they travelled back to Armstrong via Quebec, City, and Kapuskasing. An old r.r. sectionman later postmaster in Huronian, Ont. from Finland who came to Canada in 1927 to work on the building of the link between Longlac and Nakina. My father started work in Armstrong in 1929. He told me of the large forest fire that was before that. He built a home and it was in the front yard that I found door hinges etc. from a building that had been burned. The foundation of the original station were still evident in the early 1940's.

On the old road there were rusted derelicts of wagons and a sleighs. and the remains of a narrow gauge track 1 mile west of Armstrong.

ARMSTRONG is on the main line of what was originally called the National Transcontinental Railway. Connecting Quebec City through Kapuskasing, Nakina, Armstrong, to Superior Junction. where it connected to the Canadian Northern Railway to Winnipeg.

During construction, material was hauled from Orient Bay across Lake Nipigon to Ombabika Bay and Armstrong. The Armstrong road still exists as the northern section of the Thunder Bay to Armstrong highway. The line was completed in 1913.

In 1923 mostly due to financial problems. This railway together with the Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk and others were amalgamated by the Canadian Government. Forming the Canadian National Railway.

About 1932 a link was completed from Nakina to Longlac (33 miles) connecting it to Capreol. This became the Canadian National Railway Main Line.

In the mid 1920's a huge forest fire burned for days south of town then swept through the town destroying most of the town including the original Armstrong station.

The present station was built just west of the original site about 500 feet. and was built of concrete and brick.

At the time of this picture Circa 1944 there were 24 hour Telegraph operators. 2 on each shift East and West. A Station Agent, an agents clerk, and several car checkers. A 24 hour restaurant in the far right door. (east side) The station is on the north side of the track.

On the station sign ARMSTRONG, miles to Winnipeg was marked to the left of the name (west) and the miles to Toronto and to Montreal were marked right of the name (east).

The train schedule board is located on the extreme right corner on the restaurant wall and just to its left the wall mounted mail box. Mail from this box had to be sorted by Eastward and Westward mail clerks.

About 1946 - 2 mail boxes were installed. marked East and West. Mail from these boxes received R.P.O. Cancellations.

Mail posted at the Armstrong Post Office didn't unless it was Registered Mail then received a backstamp marking.

The station was steam heated from the round house. The second floor included living quarters for the Station Agent. Also the Restaurant Manager.

Armstrong is the turn around terminal for train and engine crews. During the period 1938 to 1965 also the turn around for R.P.O. Mail Clerks. Trains #3 westward and #4 eastward carried the R.P.O. cars daily except sunday. Armstrong Stn. & Winnipeg R.P.O. (Ludlow 0-8) Capreol and Armstrong Station R.P.O. (Ludlow 056).

The Armstrong Stn. & Winnipeg R.P.O. was phased out in 1955.

The Capreol and Armstrong Stn. R.P.O. continued till 1965.

Trans Canada Airlines used the route through Armstrong from 1939 untill july 1, 1947 when it changed to the Port Arthur Route.

Armstrong probably has the unique distinction that the last R.P.O. in 1965 outlived the T.C.A. Airmail service by 18 years.

R.P.O. Mail clerks worked daily except Sunday. There were no R.P.O. cars despatched from Winnipeg or Toronto/Montreal on Saturday night. during busy periods, i.e. Christmas season there were 2 clerks crowded in these cars.

One of the R.P.O. Mail Clerks W.V. (Bill) Mitchell (Ludlow O-56D) pictured with his wife. They lived in Sudbury, Ont. Worked out of Capreol to Armstrong Stn, Circa 1943 - 1947.

He often had a lay over in Armstrong. In Saturday night, Out Monday morning. He became friends with my father a railroad man. Neither was a conversation person but both enjoyed fishing trips. Sometimes I would go along. I remember at least twice on a lake down the road that was used during the Railway Construction. Which was now used by lumber companies. Not yet a road to the outside world.

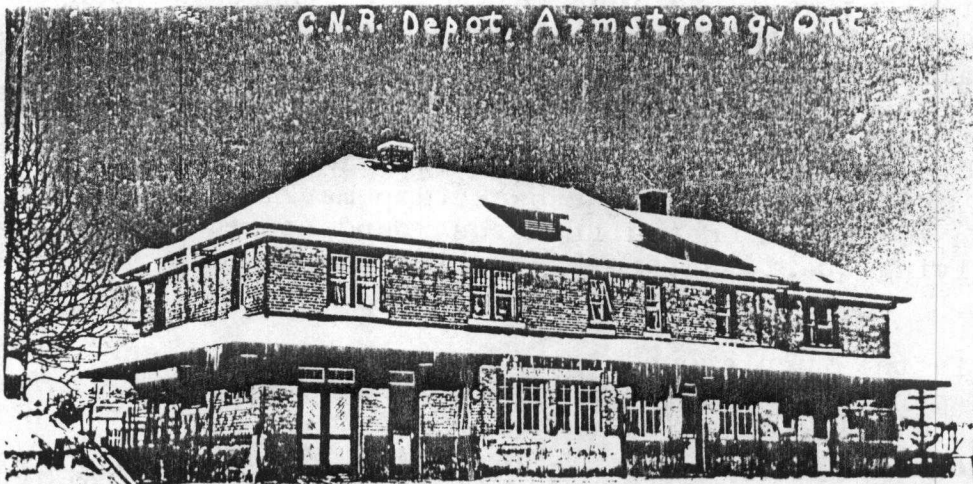
W.D. SHAIL (Ludlow O-56B was Bill Mitchell's cousin) I knew him as Bill also. He was on the run 2 or 3 years after we ~~knew~~ the former.
/first met/

The two covers shown are;

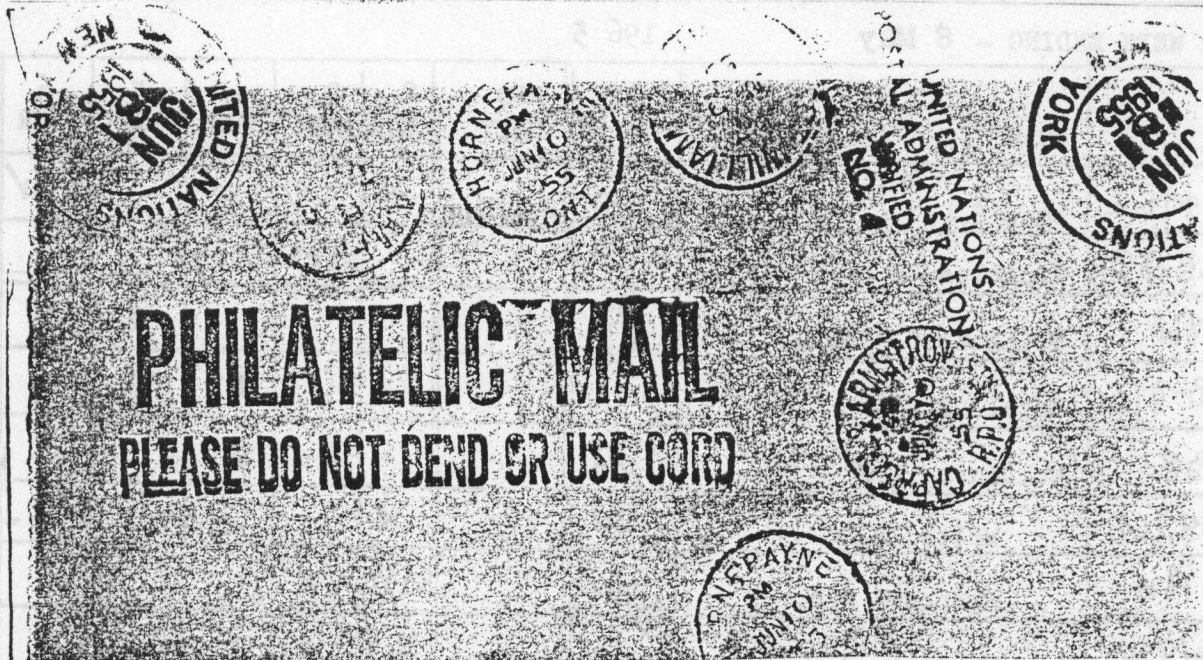
top - Registered cover via Airmail from Italy to Fort William then to Hornepayne by Capreol & Armstrong Stn. /R.P.O. / (train #) 4 / Jul 8 / 57.

bottom - Registered cover via Airmail from United Nations, N.Y. U.S.A. via Fort William then to Hornepayne by Capreol & Armstrong Stn./R.P.O. / (train #) 4 / Jun 10 / 55.

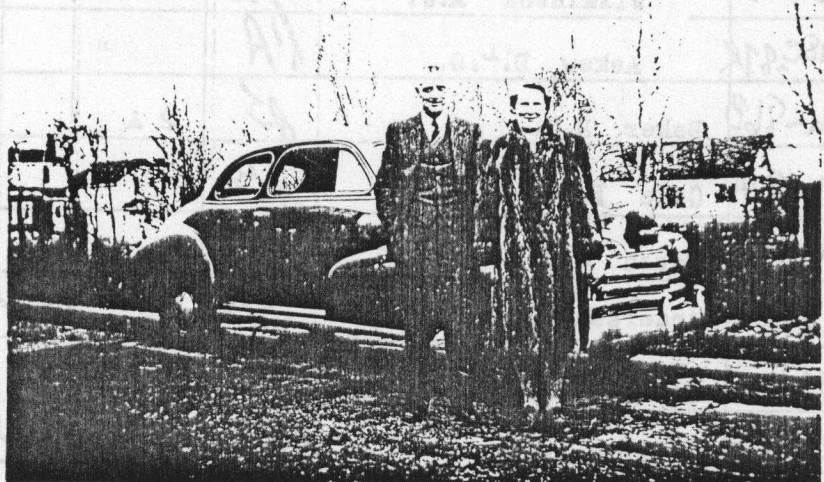
Irvine N. Rosborough B.N.A.P.S. member # Life 4279



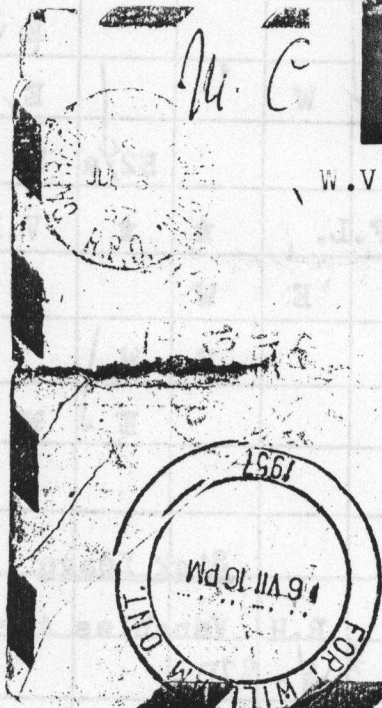
Circa 1944



Capreol & Armstrong Stn. / R.P.O. / (train #) 4 / JUN 10 / 55



W.V.(Bill) Mitchell, R.P.O. mail clerk and wife.



*(Cossura)
Italia*

Capreol & Armstrong Stn. / R.P.O. / (train #) 4 / JUL 8 / 55

Irvine N. Rosborough, B.N.A.P.S. member # Life 4279 /6

196 5

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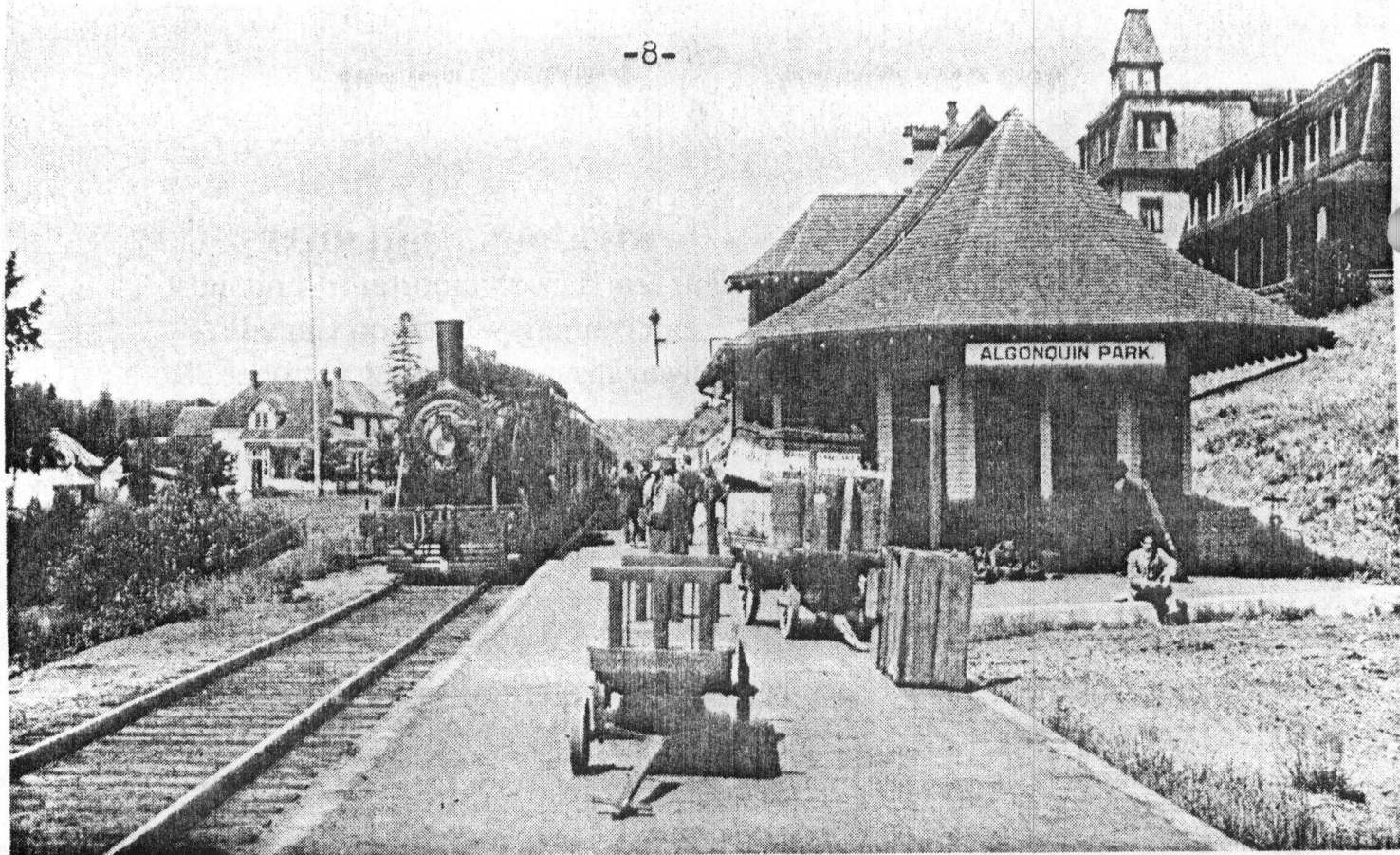
Ron Brown is the author of such successful books as *Ghost Towns of Ontario*, *Ghost Towns of Canada*, and *Backroads of Ontario*.

October 1991 11 X 8 1/2 cloth 200 pp \$29.95

See over for more detail.

from Dean W. Mario, Saskatoon

.... / 8



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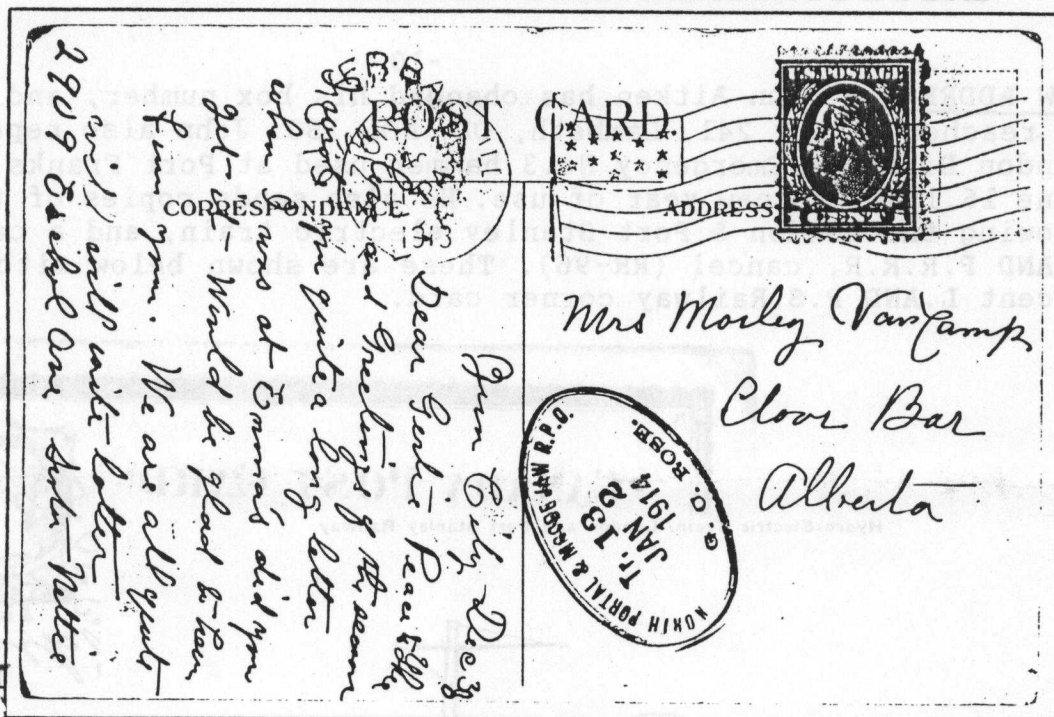
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From Ross Gray -

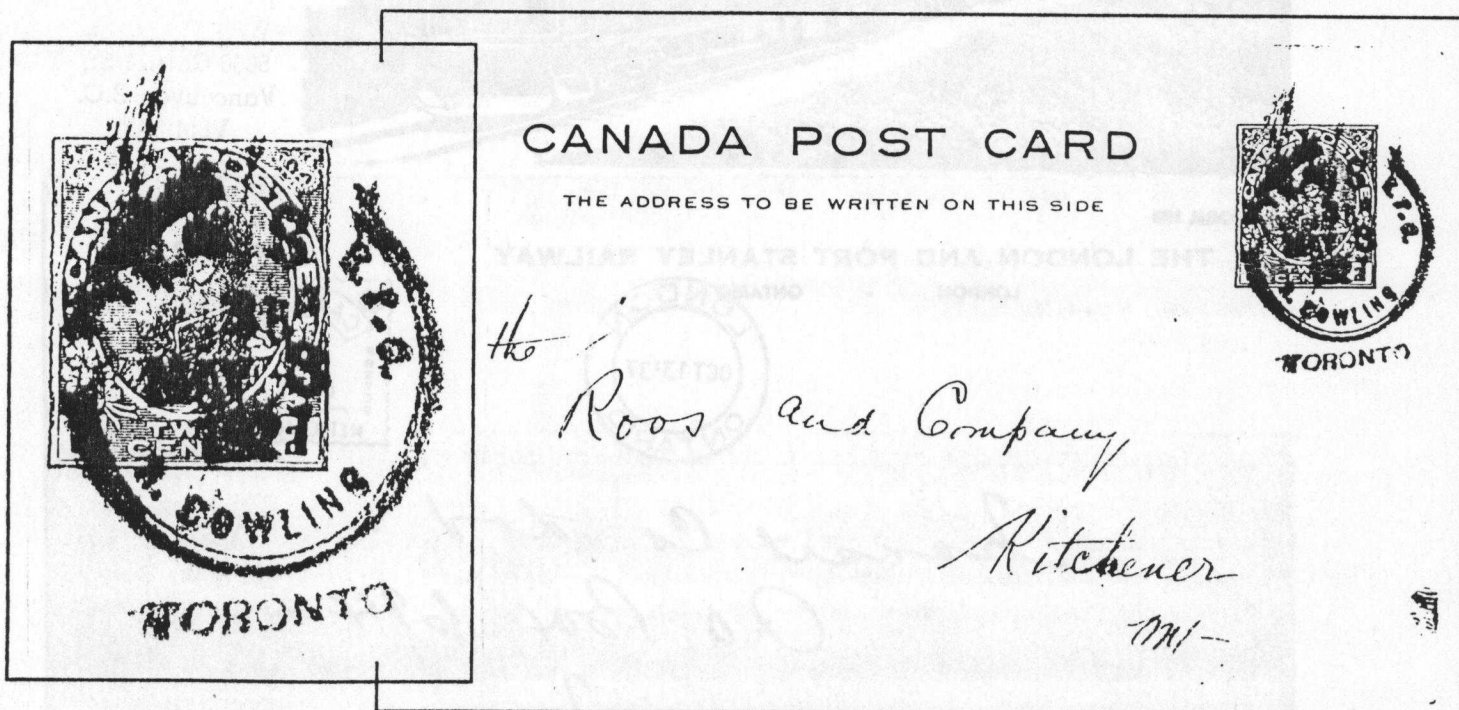
NEW CLERK CANCELLATIONS



NORTH PORTAL & MOOSE JAW R.P.O. / G. C. ROSE

Tr. 13, JAN 2, 1914

An unlisted private clerk's stamp, Type 3D, struck in blue, used as a transit marking on a greeting card, originating at ZION CITY, ILL. DEC 31, 1913, with CLOVER BAR, ALTA. JAN 5, 14 receiving cancellation.



O-401 T. & S. R.P.O. / N.(?) COWLING

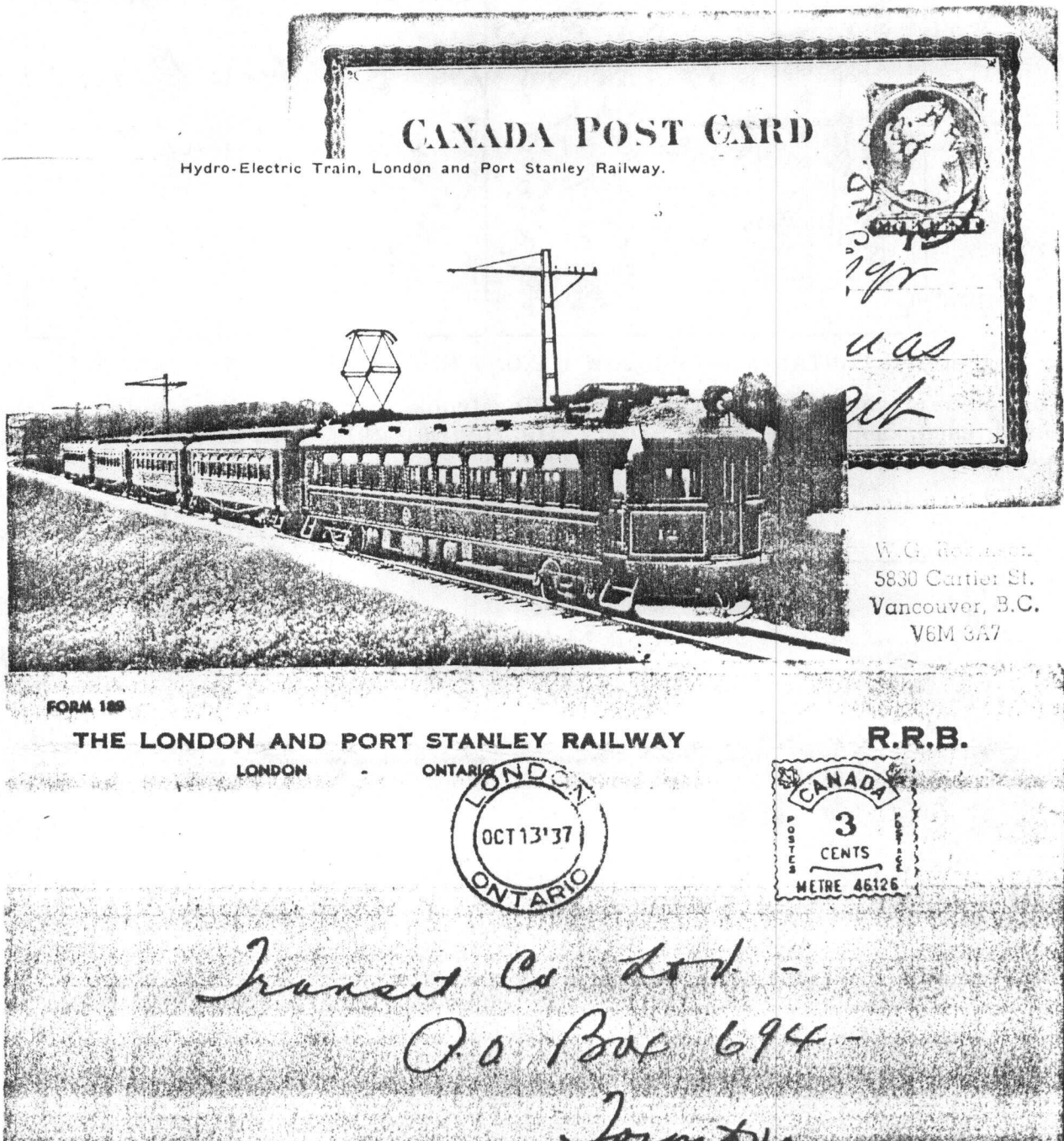
TORONTO

36, MAY 3, 1927

An unlisted private clerk's handstamp, Type 21M, struck in violet, cancelling a postcard from New Hamburg to Kitchener. The clerk apparently modified the device by removing a letter before the "T" and by replacing the last letter of the run with an oversized "S".

-10-

NEW ADDRESS - John Aitken has changed his box number, and can now be reached at Box 241, Lambeth, ON, NOL 1S0. John also reports the London District Emergency No.3 hammer used at Port Franks, ON, on June 16, 1970 - a new year of use. He also sends copies of the card showing the London & Port Stanley electric train, and a card with L.AND P.R.R.R. cancel (RR-96). These are shown below with a more recent L.AND P.S.Railway corner card.



All the best for the rest of the summer, and I hope to see you at St.Charles in September.

Bill