

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

Volume 28 - No.6

Whole No.149

August 2000

BNAPLEX 2000 - Schaumburg, Illinois - 31 August to 2 September - The annual Study Group meeting will be held from 3:30 to 5:00 PM on Friday, 1 September. After a little business, there will be a round-table discussion of the proposed new R.P.O. Catalogue.

MEMBERSHIP - Please note a change to Lionel Gillam's address as reported in the previous issue. His Postal Code is S60 3N1. Dr. John McCrea reports that he was recently robbed and lost much of his identification, financial records, and philatelic material. A new member is Bruce R. Cobb, 4773 Highway 22A, Addison, Vermont, 05491-8907. Bruce is interested in cross-border RPOs and is active in the Mobile Post Office Society. We have lost Greg Ioannou of Toronto and Joseph W. Nolan of Florence, Oregon, by default. Your Editor is still getting settled into the new apartment, and some files and material haven't surfaced yet. Please be patient.



Horace Harrison has sent this cover with the note - "If you don't know what this is, run it in the R.P.O. Newsletter and see if anyone in the Group can tell us the story behind G.T.R.s SPECIAL WATCH. One cent unsealed circular rate. Then sell it via the Newsletter for the benefit of the Study Group." Thanks Horace !

Any comments from anyone ? Bids will be accepted until midnight PST on 31 October 2000, and the cover will go to the highest.

LOST IN THE YARDS - Does anyone have any information about Eldon Godfrey, Cliff Guile, or James Jenkins ? They still haven't shown up this year, and we miss them.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF AN R.P.O. CANCELLATION ? - A correspondent has recently written - "I purchased the book of Ludlow on RPO Cancels and find it quite informative. The only thing, it gives you no guide as to the value of a cover or stamp with cancels. Is there a book on this ? Is there a guide line that can be used to determine a fair value ?" I have answered as follows -

"There are no guides to the dollar value of an R.P.O. cancel except dealers' prices or lists. It is not simple to price these, as there are so many variables, such as -

1. The age of the marking - classic material is more popular and commands a higher price, even though modern material may be scarcer than classic items.
2. Whether it is on a cover, a facing slip, a piece, or a stamp.
3. Is the marking clear and complete, or partial ?
Is a cover marking on the front or a backstamp ?
4. Is it on a special stamp such as a Jubilee, Map, or Quebec ?
5. Is it a regular marking, or a Clerk's private stamp ?

All these items can radically affect what a dealer asks for a specific item, so it just isn't possible to give a specific dollar value until all the factors are considered. For this reason, there is no catalog, such as Scott, to give a finite value for each marking."

A NEW STEAMER REPORT - From Bill Topping -



S-219B S.S. CHESLAKEE Type 22 3/27/11 RF 500 Reporter 97

CANADA POST HERITAGE CLUB - Vancouver, B.C. - Fred Danells, President of this Club advises that they are - "restoring a Railway Mail Car that was built in January 1949 for the CPR, with an appropriate exhibit featuring the history of RMC service." He asks if we would perhaps share information on the project. I replied that we were definitely interested, and might be able to help.

THE QUALITY OF REPRODUCTIONS - Member Albert Govier write to ask if there is any way in which the reproduction of views, stamps, etc. can be improved ? He realizes that finance may well be a stumbling block, "but perhaps members of the Group might be agreeable to fork up if the end product is improved" ? For example, one colour page per issue would approximately double our printing cost. What do you think ? We certainly want to improve the illustrations.

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A PEACEFUL INVASION

by Lionel F. Gillam

In Whole No.142 of the R.P.O. Newsletter Ken Ellison's illustration of the first timetable of the Nelson & Fort Sheppard Railway sparked my immediate interest. That it was a Canadian railway there was no doubt, and Nelson in B.C. is well enough known to railway postmark collectors to need no comment. As for Fort Sheppard, it had a Hudson's Bay ring about it, which I quickly found to be so. Long abandoned, Fort Sheppard was situated more or less on the Province line and a stone's throw from Washington state. Here it connected with the American line of the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway. Both lines were built (and owned) by a go-getting American, Daniel Chase Corbin, who combined entrepreneurial skill with a somewhat devious character - qualities which were essential in Canadian and American railroading days in the nineteenth century.

In plainer language, Corbin had an eye for the main chance, and in this case his eye was on the vast deposits of silver (and other minerals) that were to be found in the South Kootenay district of B.C. Now, in the normal course of events both the Provincial and Federal Governments of Canada would never have entertained the idea of an "invasion" of Canadian territory by an American line that was obviously designed to syphon off the riches of the Kootenays and thus deny them to the Dominion in general and B.C. in particular.

Indeed, there were many in Victoria and Ottawa who, in the beginning, (if not in the end) opposed the granting of a charter to Corbin whose designs were so obviously at variance with Canadian interests. Now, by calling Corbin "devious" I may be doing him an injustice. I should perhaps lay the charge at his attorney who assured the B.C. Government that the real aim of his client was to build from the south end of Kootenay Lake to the coast (with a short detour into American territory, rendered necessary by the difficulties of penetrating the chain of mountains on the west bank of the Columbia River).

Here then was an American railway tycoon promising to fulfil a British Columbian "impossible dream", a Coast to Kootenay railway that had obsessed Canadians on the Pacific coast before Vancouver was even thought of (it was called Coal Harbour), and at least since the early 1860s when during the U.S. Civil War some footloose Americans strolled over the imaginary 49th parallel and struck it rich. There was truly "gold in them there hills" at Wild Horse Creek in the East Kootenays, and at Rock Creek. Within weeks of their "lucky strike" thousands of their fellow Americans poured over the border. In terms of the earlier California and later Klondyke gold rushes, this was a comparatively minor affair. But many Americans returned home very rich men indeed - even richer than they might have been if they had paid the gold royalties which the British government demanded (in a very weak voice).

A PEACEFUL INVASION (Continued) - by L.F.Gillam

The rush was over by 1866, and in 1871 the Province of British Columbia came into being. As everyone knows, the fledgling province confederated with the Dominion of Canada on the promise of a railway connection with the Atlantic coast. The rest, as they say, is history.

But, if mainland British Columbians threw their hats in the air when the C.P.R. was completed, Victorians on Vancouver Island looked sour. They never did get their bridge to the mainland across the Seymour Narrows that Van Horne had promised them. Nor did British Columbians get their coast to Kootenay railway until 1915.

That Van Horne was instrumental in initiating the construction of this longed-for railway is often forgotten. That Sandford Fleming laughed his socks off at the very idea of a railway through the Crow's Nest Pass and over (or through) the Rockies, the Selkirks, and the Monashees is on record; nor was he by any means alone. The cost of such a line was unthinkable and the difficulties mind-boggling in the 1870s.

Now what has this to do with Canadian Railway postmark collectors? Well, nothing much. The Nelson & Midway R.P.O. is well enough known not to need comment. If anyone wonders why there was no R.P.O. service between Midway and say, Hope or Vancouver, as I did once, the answer lies in the 300 miles of virtual mountain wilderness between Midway and the Pacific coast.

There was a baggage car service, of course; and at Nelson both the Medicine Hat & Nelson and the Nelson & Midway R.P.O.s dispatched U.S. mail to the Spokane Falls & Northern Branch of the Great Northern Railway for onward transmission by the American postal authorities. Don't forget that the Canadian portion of this line was originally the Nelson & Fort Sheppard Railway.

One last question: did Corbin really intend to build from Nelson to Hope or Vancouver? If so, why did his attorney not say so? The latter said that his client intended to "build to the coast". Could that have meant Seattle or Tacoma for instance? Van Horne certainly feared that might be so. He was well versed in American railway jiggery pokery, and was not above practising a bit of it himself. After all, he was an American too. As someone once famously said, "the only difference between Canadian and American railroaders is that the Canadians do their cheating before they sign on the dotted line."

THOUGHTS ON THE PROPOSED NEW CATALOGUE - Seceral members have sent thoughts about this, which we would like to share with you in advance of the round table discussion proposed for the Annual General Meeting. The following come from Lionel Gillam and Peter McCarthy. Anyone else like to join in? /5

THOUGHTS ON THE PROPOSED NEW CATALOGUE by Lionel Gillam -

My thoughts on this matter are that it is too much for one person and too time consuming. A better idea would be to farm sections out to various "volunteers". I would also like to see some sections "pruned", and especially the clerks' handstamps separated from the official ones. My reason for this is that since (I think) 1923 all clerks were required to provide themselves with their own personal handstamps for use on forms, facing slips, etc. but not, of course, on stamps.

Bearing in mind the number of clerks involved, especially during the post-war period of the 1950s there are obviously many of their "postmarks" yet to be discovered. Some of course never will be found in the foreseeable future; but some will inevitably turn up over the years. This fact alone makes a separate section eminently desirable.

Moreover, if we must have a separate steamers section then we must include the earliest Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton official postmarks dating from 1847. See Boggs' appendix about these.

Straight line postmarks are something else that I have often wondered about. You will know that apart from the NORTHERN RAILWAY type 22 these are rarely seen or known. Yet, either Tanner Green or Fred Jarrett or some other early fan listed dozens of type 22. My theory is that they were intended to be used on newspapers, or bundles thereof; consequently they are truly "ephemeral". Of course we know that rollers were used on the Jubilee high values (curse them!), but by this time the straight line cancellers were probably lost or fallen out of favour. Surely it is a reasonable conclusion that if the Ontario postal inspector ordered a straight line type 22 for the Northern he would have done so for other lines. Or, perhaps he ordered some and was then superseded by another who didn't bother or think them necessary. The ifs and buts are mind-boggling.

I would be prepared to do the RR section. The big sections Q and O might possibly be split up among two or three members. The W is small enough for one man. Other than basic principles it would be impossible to do the revision personally at BNAPS meetings or even more impossible at CPS conventions.

A time scale would have to be considered and a line drawn after which no new findings would be acceptable for incorporation in the catalogue, but reserved for a later addendum.

Obviously, therefore, the bulk of the work would have to be done by correspondence. I do not know about computers, the internet, etc. Maybe they would solve the problem, but to wait upon the availability of technological aids would only delay matters, I think.

I would aim for a publication say in 2005 by which time it will almost certainly only have my spectral blessing!

THOUGHTS ON THE PROPOSED NEW CATALOGUE by Peter McCarthy

To begin with, enough new discoveries have been made since Ludlow's 1982 version of the catalogue was published to realistically justify a complete revamp. My suggestion is to begin in Newfoundland and work west designating each province a set of numbers preceded by the Canada Post abbreviation for the province - NF, PE, NB, NS, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC. These are the most important to sort out. The western provinces are a mess. W-138T doesn't in any way resemble W-138. What does W-101Q have in common with W-101 ? It just goes on and on and on.

I realize that this is a transportation related study group that incorporates steamers and some airlines. We shouldn't be quick to give these up but now there is a Waterways Study Group, it may be wise to help them set up a catalogue and thereby think of some day eliminating that section.

Another thing that needs to be considered is the ticket stamp. Many of the users were station agents and/or operators. They had absolutely nothing to do with the post office. We list these markings if they have cancelled a stamp. Yet if they are used as a receiver marking we don't consider them. I have two such unlisted items. One is a double-ring or cartwheel that reads - + STORES DEPARTMENT + / G.T.R., indicia FUEL / JAN11/1889/MONTREAL. This one ties a one-cent postal stationery card. The other example is a Canadian Pacific Railway Montreal Mail Room stamp. One day we will have to have a gathering and debate what is legitimate and what isn't about this section.

There was a time when a station agent was an important member of the company. Each station was like a separate branch and handled all business in the particular area. The Agent handled huge amounts of money. Some even lived in quarters on the second floor of the station. They became very possessive of their space, and also, in many cases very self important. Consequently they felt that anything which passed through their hands had to receive their marking. That included mail for which they were not responsible, nor were they paid to handle except to hand it to the Railway Mail Clerk or Baggage man.

The idea of separate hammer analysis listings is excellent. In fact I believe that Ross Gray could probably publish a separate volume incorporating the analyses done by Lew Ludlow that would prove to be invaluable.

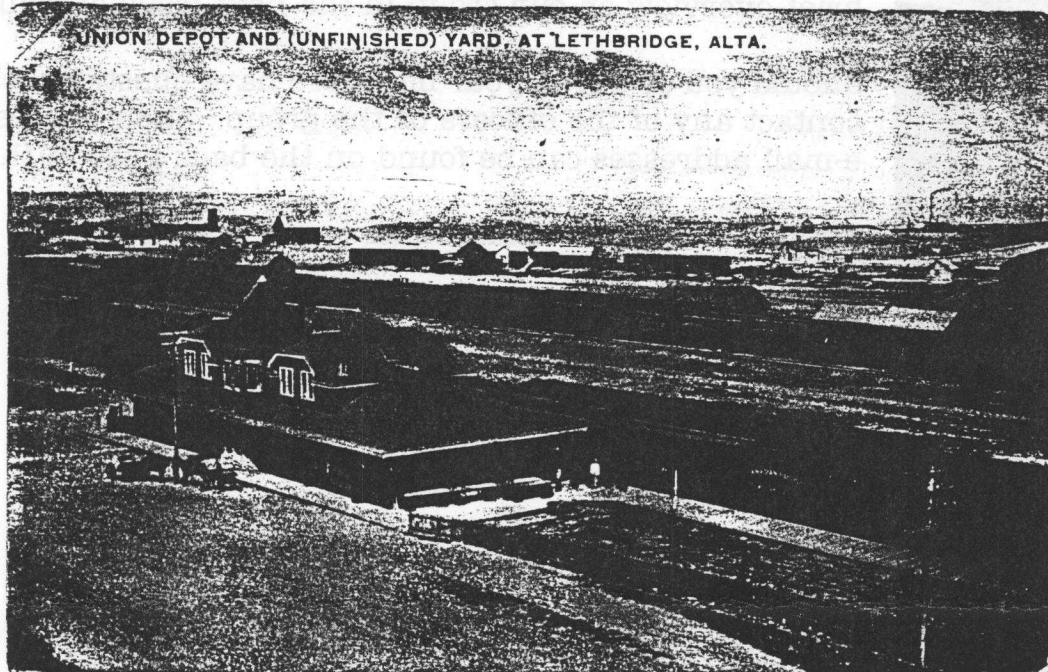
I fully realize the effect which revising the catalogue will have on collectors' numbering system, but it won't be the first time such revisions on catalogues have been made. I don't know what Chris is doing or how far he has got. I haven't heard for some time. I laid out a format as a suggestion. Whether he uses part of it or not is another matter. I'm thinking of doing a separate catalogue for my own use.

If a major revision were done now and put on computer, adding to or republishing revisions every five years or so would be a minor effort. We need to work with other study groups. I become frustrated with every Annex as I see the alphabet being added to the numbers. I can't see why the membership wouldn't want a better system than we have now.

.... /7

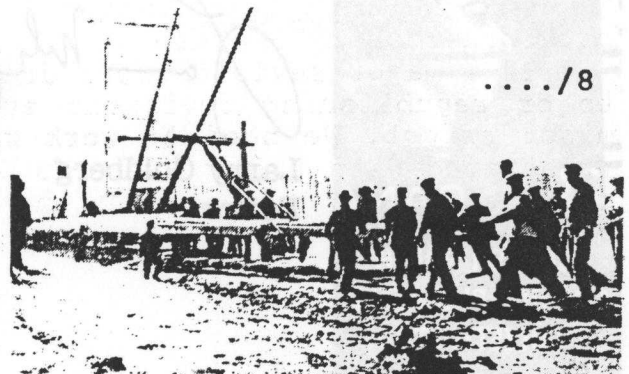
E & N POSTAL CAR - Issue 148, Pages 8 to 10 - Alex Price identified E & N combination baggage and mail car No.19 as sold to the E & N by the CPR in 1913, and said "The car is believed to have been built by the firm of Patten and Son, Bath, Maine in 1876 or 77". Lionel Gillam has now commented - I think "the belief is erroneous. In no way in 1876 or 1877 would a mail and baggage car have the appearance of the one that is illustrated. Two by four bogie (swivelling trucks) mail cars were very much in the future in 1877. Not so by 1913, however. No doubt this is a CPR mail car of a much later date. Like everything else about the CPR as much attention was given to the construction of mail cars as any other item of rolling stock (a precedent set by Van Horne and faithfully followed).

I am not suggesting that the original QM&O mail cars were as ramshackle as those on the Intercolonial and GTR, but they were of 1870 vintage, not 1900. If I am wrong I will eat my straw hat - but not my best Panama." Any comments, Alex ?



UNION DEPOT AND (UNFINISHED) YARD AT LETHBRIDGE, ALTA.
A 1909 Warwick Bros. & Rutter colour postcard showing the Union Depot and unfinished Yard at Lethbridge, Alberta.

MISSION LEBRET - Photos from a centennial book, courtesy of Hugh Delaney. Lebreton is east of Regina, on the CNR line to Melville.



Laying ties and rails in town by old convent for G.T.P.R.

**THE CANADA
PRECANCEL STUDY
GROUP**



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18 December 1999

Dear BNAPS Study Group Chairperson,

We are pleased to announce the formation of the newest BNAPS Study Group, the Canadian Precancel Study Group and the publication of the first issue of our newsletter, *PRECANCELS/CANADA*.

A copy of the publication is enclosed for your personal use. We would sincerely appreciate your passing this information along to the members of your group. Perhaps, the editor of your newsletter would include a brief overview on our group in the next issue of your newsletter.

Should you or any of your members have questions, please have them contact any of the officers of the group. Their names, addresses and e-mail addresses can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andy Ellwood
Chairperson

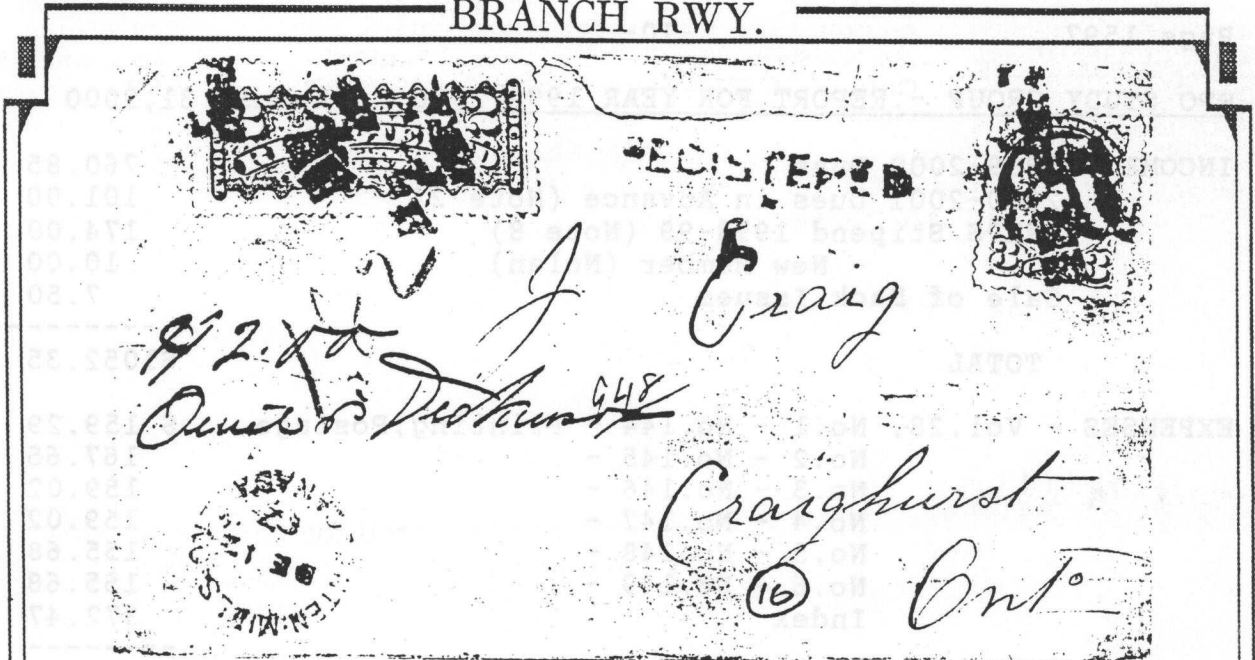
Duncan MacDonald
Secretary-Treasurer

Larry Goldberg
Editor

From Colin Campbell

NORTH SIMCOE

BRANCH RWY.

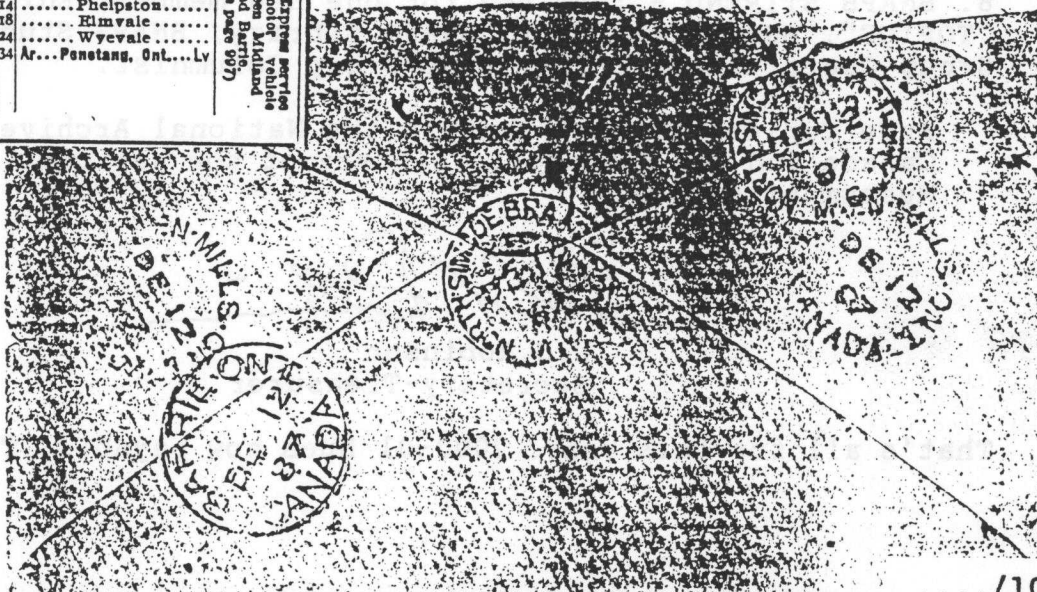


This railway line opened 1 December 1878 from Allandale (Barrie) Ontario north to Penetanguishene, Ontario a distance of 34 miles. Ten years later it was absorbed by the Grand Trunk Railway.

These examples are catalogued as RR-113 and are dated DE 12 87. RF is 315. Presently reported span of operation is 1881 to 1891.

Being a REGISTERED cover it likely contained cash. Anten Mills to Craighurst is about 8 miles by road however by road and rail the distance was about 29 miles. Interesting cover.

COLWELL and PENETANG			
	M	Table No. 488 Eastern Time	
.....	0	Lv.....Colwell.....Ar	C.N. Express service between Midland and Barrie. (See page 997)
.....	8Minessing.....	
.....	11Hendrie.....	
.....	14Phelpston.....	
.....	18Elmvale.....	
.....	24Wyevale.....	
.....	34	Ar...Penetang, Ont....Lv	



RPO STUDY GROUP - REPORT FOR YEAR 1999-2000

August 31, 2000

INCOME - 1999-2000 Dues	760.85
2000-2001 Dues in Advance (Note 2)	101.00
BNAPS Stipend 1998-99 (Note 8)	174.00
- New Member (Nolan)	10.00
Sale of Back Issues	7.50

TOTAL	\$1052.35
EXPENSES - Vol.28, No.1 - No.144 - Printing, Postage	\$ 159.29
No.2 - No.145 -	167.65
No.3 - No.146 -	159.02
No.4 - No.147 -	159.02
No.5 - No.148 -	155.68
No.6 - No.149 -	155.68
Index	372.47

TOTAL	\$1328.81
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES	\$(276.46)
Balance from 1998-99	613.34

Total on hand, August 31, 2000	\$ 336.88

- NOTES: 1. All accounts in Canadian Funds.
2. 2000-2001 dues in advance paid by - Boubelik, Curtis, Delaney, Hiscock, Keenlyside, Lee, Longley, MacKenzie, Mowat, Joe Smith
3. Dropped for Non-Payment of 1999-2000 Dues - Godfrey, Guile, Ioannu, Jenkins, Nolan.
4. Resigned - Kembel.
5. Deceased - Unwin, Walburn, White
6. New Members - Cobb.
7. Life Members - Lionel Gillam, Jim Lehr.
8. BNAPS STIPEND - received for one new member, Editor, "TOPICS", BNAPS President, BNAPS Library, BNAPS Study Group Coordinator, BNAPS Study Group Columnist.

Free Copies are also sent to the National Archives of Canada and the Philatelic Library of the National Postal Museum of Canada.



W.G. Robinson
Secretary-Treasurer

That's all for this year. 2000-01 Dues now payable. Thanks.