

The Arms Watermark of Newfoundland

By Stanley C. Calder

I have been asked more than once "Exactly what does the ARMS watermark of Newfoundland represent?" and a recent enquiry in an American philatelic journal prompted me to sit down and write out a description of it. I can well understand that those who use Scott's catalogue are a little dubious as the illustration of the watermark in that publication is very poor and very incorrect. There may be some readers of BNA TOPICS, therefore, who would like to have some fuller information about it.

This Watermark is a simplification of the registered design of the Arms of the Colony of Newfoundland which was granted by Royal Letters Patent dated January 1st, 1637, in the reign of King Charles I.

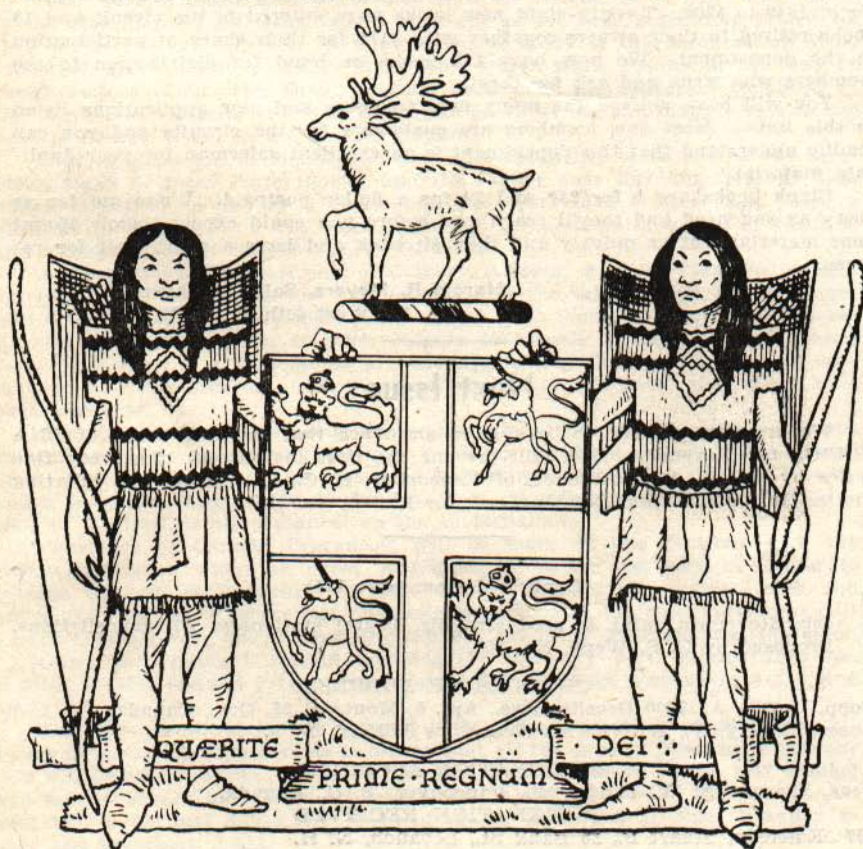
The official and correct heraldic description is:

Arms: Gules a cross Argent, in the first and fourth quarters a Lion passant Guardant crowned Or: in the second and third quarters, an Unicorn passant Argent, armed maned and unguled of the third, and gorged with a crown, thereto a chain affixed passing between the forelegs and reflected over his back also Or mantled Gules doubled Argent.

Crest: On a Wreath Or and Gules an Elk passant proper.

Supporters: Two Savages of the clime armed and apparelled according to their guise when they go to war.

Motto: "Quaerite prime regnum Dei" ("Seek first the Kingdom of God")



I have made a rough tracing from a copy of the original which was in the possession of the Trade Commissioner for Newfoundland in London and also a tracing of the watermark. From this you will see that the Watermark shows the heraldic shield with the two Savages supporting it, each having their wicker shields behind them and a bow in each outer hand. Above is the elk on the wreath. Below is the motto scroll, the shape of which has been altered from the original in order to simplify the design. The Lions and Unicorns on the shield and the motto have been omitted. It is interesting to note that the animal on the Crest is the Elk and not the Caribou or Moose.

The "bits" on the dandy roller which makes the watermark did not extend to the full width of the sheet and as the same paper was used for various different sizes and shapes of stamps from 1931 onwards it was not possible to synchronise the printing to the watermark so that it might show fully on each stamp. We find therefore that many of the printings show a strip of stamps at one side of the sheet without watermark, whilst the balance of the sheet shows the watermark as usual. This has given rise to the charging of greatly inflated prices for pairs, one with and one-without watermark. The variety is so common that this is not justified.

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Next Issue

We are very pleased to be able to announce that the next issue of BNA TOPICS for November, 1949, will present the first installment of a very fine series by Mr. H. A. MacMaster, of Vancouver, B. C., on the subject, "Plating the 'Ic Guy' of Newfoundland." Look for it next month!

(Continued from page 184)

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