

Trail of the Caribou

By Freres Meyerson



More and more it becomes apparent that things cannot be taken at face value. In the November '51 issue of TOPICS, in the course of our discussion of the outstanding Newfoundland items that we saw displayed at CAPEX, we made mention of a straight line "St. JOHN'S," the only one we had ever seen. It was on the back of a letter sheet and showed no other markings. The collector had it recorded as St. John's, Newfoundland, and evidently the Jury went along with the collector as the exhibit was awarded a Silver-Gilt tray. We assumed that the marking was from Newfoundland although we had no opportunity to examine the face of the letter sheet or the contents of the sheet. Frank Campbell, however, has evidently been tried by fire and takes nothing for granted. He made a tracing of the strike and went back to his home in Royal Oak, Mich. Evidently the snows must have been rather deep in December and Frank had time to do some browsing about, as I received a note from him asking if I could get some further information about the strike as he believed it was St. John's, Quebec. I commun-

icated with Bill Lea, who knew the owner of the strike, and on further examination Bill also began to doubt that the cover was of Newfoundland origin. The next step was easy, we got a photograph of Frank's Quebec strike and sent it on to Bill Lea for comparison with the strike that was exhibited. The answer came back the other day and Frank Campbell was vindicated. It was not a Newfoundland cancellation, but a Quebec one. Therefore, we must report that to this day we have never seen a straight line St. John's, Newfoundland, even though both Robson Lowe and Boggs record the item. We have a feeling they both may have been working from the same subject as the letter sheet was dated 1821, the same year that Boggs and Lowe date their example of the strike. In the future we shall attempt to be more exact before reporting a new item or confirmation of an old one.

Last month in discussing plate numbers we got as far as the Pictorial Issue. This month we will start with the Newfoundland-Labrador Issue first sold in 1928. There are no plate numbers recorded in this print-



ing, but when John Dickinson and Co., took over the contract in 1929 and had Perkins, Bacon and Co., prepare the plates, plate numbers were found. We have thus far recorded "2" in the lower left corner of the 2¢ re-engraved, #164. This particular block is comb perforated 13.5x13.8. This same "2" is found again in the lower left corner on the 2¢ value but this time the stamp is line perforated 14 x 14. In the case of the 3¢ value, Scott

#165, two different numbers have been recorded in the comb perf. 13.5 x 13.8. One lower left corner block is known with a "2", and an upper right corner block is known with a "3". The same plates were used for the watermarked issue of the re-engraved stamps in 1931 and thus far only one number has been recorded. This is a "2" found in the lower left corner of the 2¢ value, Scott #173, in the comb perf 13.5 x 13.8.

THE HUMAN SIDE

Early this year some ten or a dozen friends gathered at the home of Bill Kennedy. It was not a meeting of any stamp club. In fact, in the accepted sense, it was not a "stamp meeting" at all—it was more in the nature of a social evening. True, all being "stampers," more or less, we talked about stamps and we did look over parts of Bill's collection. However, the conversation was very general indeed; even politics were discussed.

Bill had asked Carl Jennings to give a short talk, to say "a few words." In a quiet, almost conversational way, he spoke; not so much of stamps but what he got out of and through stamp collecting. I was greatly impressed by it, and came away from the gathering lifted by the evening.

Carl spoke not so much of, did not stress, the money value; not of finds, the value of his collection or the value of this or that. He spoke of what I choose to call "The Human Side" of stamp collecting. I wish I could repeat word for word what he said. He told of the pleasure he got out of a large world-wide correspondence based on the collection of stamps. He spoke of the friends he had made, the pleasure in their company. He told of a trip he had taken a short time ago when he had looked up some of his "pen pals" and, irrespective of color, race, wealth or creed, how good they had been to him and the pleasure he had in making their personal acquaintance.

His talk brought forcibly to me my

own similar happy experiences. All of us must have had them more or less. Perhaps if they are less it is our own fault. I look back and count the many happy, long friendships I have made. I couldn't put mine down, for the list would be too long. Not too long ago my niece was making a rather lengthy trip to the U. K. and Europe. I gave her letters of introduction to some of my stamp pals. Their kindness to her, money could never repay. What a dividend I have had from my stamp collecting in this one incident alone.

I feel often we do not fully appreciate, at least openly enough, the greatest thing in stamp collecting. The greatest thing we get out of stamp collecting is fellowship—friendship. Mind you we know we get it, we know we have it. It is more valuable, does more good for us than all our stamps. Stamp collectors are fortunate people in the choice of their hobby. No other hobby pays quite so many dividends or such big ones.

The pleasure we get from the newly acquired cover, the stamp we needed to fill that vacant spot—the thrill, the pleasure is great. They may have cost little or a goodly sum. They are worth it. They may give you the feeling your collection is really getting somewhere now. Along with them, if we wish, we can collect that which is priceless, yet has no money value. It can't be measured in dollars and cents but is the greatest treasure of all in our collection—fellowship—