

MARSHALL KAY (BNAPS 760)

## On Comb Perforating Machines Used on Newfoundland Stamps

**T**HIS ARTICLE is written to encourage the gathering of information with regard to the perforating machines that were used to produce the comb perforate stamps of Newfoundland. The varieties in some issues have been summarized in articles in BNA TOPICS, particularly in December 1955, on which some corrections have been published in the January and current (July) issues of 1956. Briefly, perforations can be line, comb and harrow, of which only the first two are known in Newfoundland stamps. Line perforations are in single lines of holes made either by a rotary device, wherein the pins like spokes cut through the sheets into holes in the opposing drum, or by a stroke or guillotine device that projects the pins, a row at a time. It is the comb perforate devices that concern the present comments.

Thomas de la Rue and Co. of London exhibited a comb perforating head at the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition in New York in April and May this year—to some of us this was as interesting an exhibit as any in the show,

for we are not generally able to see such equipment. Essentially, the head has two heavy metal rods having flat faces with holes in the comb bar and teeth pattern of the perforations produced in a single impression on the sheet of stamps. Such a pattern is illustrated in the accompanying figure.

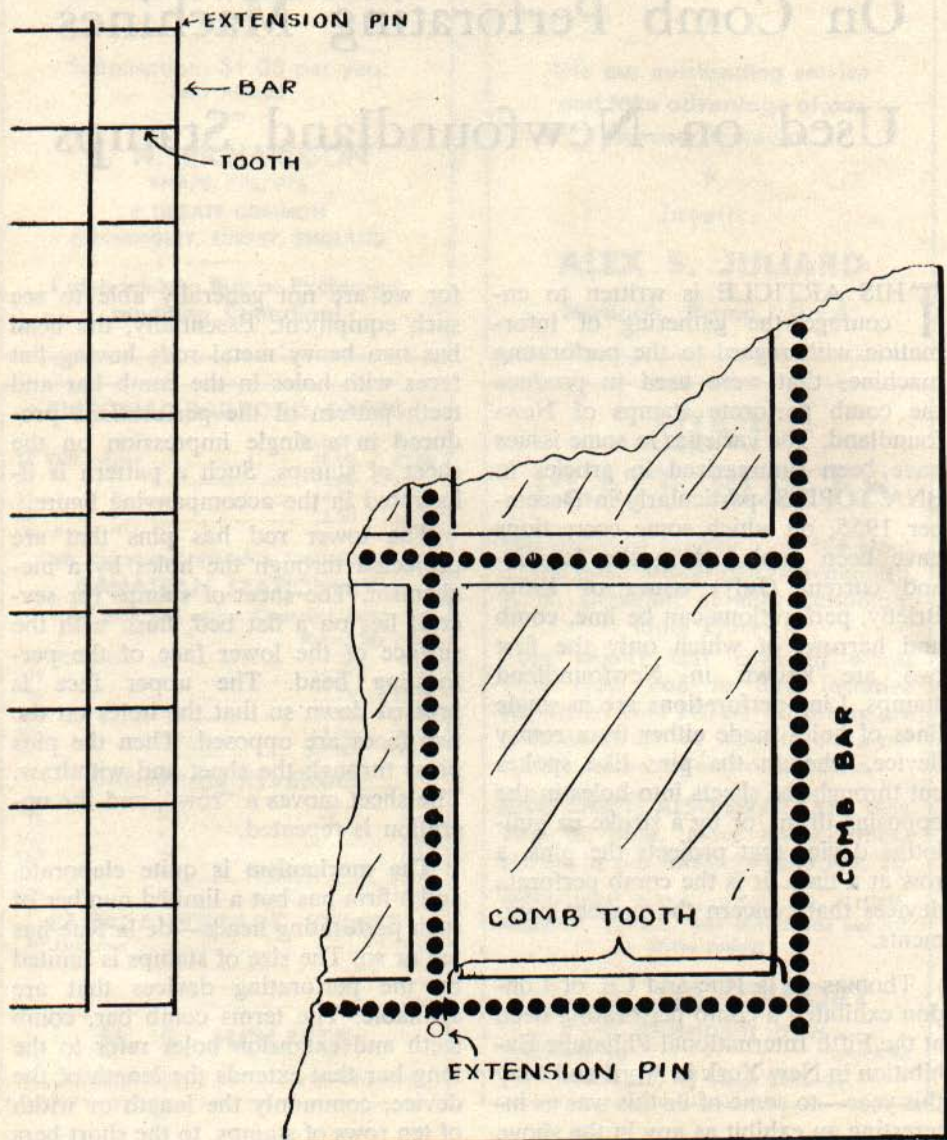
The lower rod has pins that are projected through the holes by a mechanism. The sheet of stamps (or several) lies on a flat bed, flush with the surface of the lower face of the perforating head. The upper face is pressed down so that the holes on the two faces are opposed. Then the pins press through the sheet and withdraw. The sheet moves a "row", and the operation is repeated.

**The mechanism** is quite elaborate, and a firm has but a limited number of such perforating heads—de la Rue has ten or so. The size of stamps is limited by the perforating devices that are available. The terms comb bar, comb teeth and extension holes refer to the long bar that extends the length of the device, commonly the length or width of ten rows of stamps, to the short bars

that extend one width or length of a stamp to one side of the bar, and to the one or two holes in those of the bar that extends beyond the perforations bounding the stamps; the terms will be better seen in the figures.

It will be noted that the gauge of perforations along the comb bar is de-

finitely related to the size of stamp and number of perforations, for there is an exact number of pins between the corner pins at the junction of the teeth and bar. Take, for example, the Caribou Issue, for which there is but one comb perforation type (No. 1), though that has the normal and reversed (No.



1a) varieties. The first stamp having this type is Scott No. 115 (Gibbons No. 130), the 1 cent green. The bar is normally on the right, with teeth projecting to the left; there are 20 pins between the corners on the bar side, so that there are 21 "nibs" on the long side of the stamp; there are 16 pins in each tooth; and there is one extension pin. These can be seen in Fig. 2, p. 348, of TOPICS of December 1955; the essential features are illustrated in the adjoining figure. The stamp is stated to be perforate 14.0 x 13.9 on short and long sides, the latter being the stated gauge on the bar side. The stamp is stated to be 3.0 cm. long; with 21 nibs, this would give 14.0 nibs in 2 cm., and the gauge should read 14.0, not 13.9 as measured. Someone having a sheet of these stamps can determine whether it measures 140 or 139 mm. But we cannot do the same for the breadth, for the perforations do not equally divide the 2.5 cm. breadth; the left nibs are very narrow. Thus one might describe the stamp as follows:

Scott 115 (Gibbons 130), Perf. type No. 1, comb bar right, teeth extending left, 20 perforations along the bar, 16 along the tooth, left nib narrow, 1 extension perforation, gauge 14.0 x 14.0.

The perforating head that was used on this stamp had 20 pins between the teeth, 16 along the tooth and one extension pin, with gauge 14.0 x 14.0.

The writer has made some progress in compiling information in the perforating heads, but lack of suitable material and of time for search has limited his results. He will be glad to compile information furnished by those who have good material on hand, particularly sheets and corner blocks which will show extension holes. There are at least the following comb perforate examples to be listed, with Scott and Gibbons numbers and type num-

ber: 115 (130) No. 1; 131 (149) No. 1; 145 (164) No. 2; 145 (164) No. 5; 146 (165) No. 1; 162 (180) No. 1; 164 (181) No. 2; 183 (209) No. 1; 193 (215) No. 1; 184 (222) No. 2; 212 (236) No. 1. For each, one should know the number and gauge of perforations along the comb bar, whether it is normally right, left, base or top of the stamp, number and gauge of perforation along comb teeth, whether they normally project left, right, up or down, the number of extension pins; the size of the stamp and comments on such matters as the size of perforations.

The firm that prints the stamps may also perforate them, but in some cases the perforating is assigned to a different firm. Perhaps a compilation of the data will give us more information on the history of the preparation of these issues. ★

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

• "Canadiana 1956" is a publication of the National Library of Canada, Ottawa, issued monthly, free to all Canadian libraries, and to others at \$2.00 per year. It contains lists of all books, periodicals and articles relating to Canadiana. Our Society has been listed in this publication three times during the past year, the latest being the following mention: "Yearbook and Membership Directory, 1955. (In BNA Topics, v. 12, no. 9, whole no. 128, Oct. 1955, p. 269-282.)" Previously listed was Dr. Whitehead's "The Squared Circle Postmarks of Canada" and the Perfin Group's "Canadian Stamps With Perforated Initials".

• The second 1956 edition of the H. E. Harris Catalogue of Stamps of the United States, U.S. Possessions and B.N.A., has been received. B.N.A. forms but a small part of this 144-page catalogue, and there seem to be few price changes in this section from the previous edition. However, at 25 cents, this book is a mine of information and interest. Obtainable from H. E. Harris & Co., Boston 17, Mass. ★