

# Trail of the Caribou

By DAN MEYERSON (BNAPS L3)



THAT was a lovely cover that Robert Lyman (BNAPS 959), of Boston, Mass., showed us at the Herman Herst Picnic Auction. It was a combination cover from St. John's to Harbor Grace posted at St. John's on Nov. 22, 1871, and delivered at Harbor Grace the next day. The cover was franked with the 2c green codfish on white paper, Scott 24a, plus the 1c violet Prince of Wales, Scott 32, to make up the three cent inland postage rate in effect since May 9, 1870. It was strange to find both of these stamps on the same cover as they are among the scarcest to be found when used individually on separate covers as they were both used on drop letters and circulars; the first from Nov. 15, 1865, until sometime in November 1868, when the rate was changed and the second stamp came into use. We would be interested in learning if these two stamps are known on individual covers.

That was an interesting lot that John Fox, the auctioneer, offered for sale at the APS convention in St. Louis in September. It was a copy of the 5d orange brown, Scott 19a, tied on neat cover with red postmark and described as "fine, very rare". We wish we could have seen the cover as there were several things about it that we wanted to check. Unfortunately we were out of town at the time the lots were on exhibition and by the time we returned, Mr. Fox and the lots were in St. Louis.

We were especially interested in checking as to whether it was actually the 5d orange brown, Scott 19a, or the 5d reddish brown, Scott 19, as the Scott catalogue does not list a used price for the orange brown. Secondly, we wanted to check to see if the cover was used prior to Nov. 15, 1865, the time at which the decimal stamps made their appearance, and thirdly, we wanted to check if the rate was correct because the 5d stamp was only used on letters originating at St. John's and destined for Halifax and a few other spots on the North American continent; otherwise the rate was 6½d. If any

reader of this column bought the cover, I would be interested in a look at it so that I can check the few questions that just reading about it poses.

For some years we've been concerned about an imperforate copy of the 6c Guy issue, Scott 92. It is a left margin copy and the margins are tremendous on that side but very skimpy on the other three sides. We always felt that the stamp had been doctored as it was not the paper of the true imperforates of this issue; this was actual stamp paper, whereas the listed imperforates are really proofs and another kind of paper entirely. The other day, while going through the pile of philatelic mail that had accumulated while we were on vacation, we became interested in a photograph of Lot 1077 in the Billig & Rich sale scheduled for Sept. 27. It was a left margin copy of the 6c Scott 92, but this time it had perforations top and bottom and a very close margin on the right side, and the stamp was described as "imperforate vertically, very rare". This too, like the imperforate variety in my collection, was unlisted in any standard catalogue. Looking still further through the accumulated mail we were very pleased to find Jim Sissons' catalogue for his sale, also to be held on Sept. 27. Now, however, we got to the bottom of the varieties existing in Scott 92, imperforate left margin copies in the wrong type of paper, and imperforate vertically copies also with a large left margin, not previously recorded. This time Lot No. 909 was pictured and it was described as follows: "UL corner sheet margin block, variety stamps imperforate at left". Here then was the answer—in all probability the imperforate copy in my collection and the imperforate vertically stamp in the Billig & Rich sale all came out of the same sheet as the imperforate left margin block in the Sissons sale. We haven't seen the two lots to compare the paper, but we are just about 100 per cent sure that we are correct in our assumption. ★