

Trail of the Caribou

By DAN MEYERSON (BNAPS L3)



I STRONGLY recommend that all Newfoundland collectors read an article that ran in the Dec. 8, 1956, issue of "Weekly Philatelic Gossip." The article, written by Patrick Hamilton, is titled, strangely enough, "Trail of the Caribou . . . and 1920 Provisionals" and is a complete and thorough resumé of the postal emissions from Jan. 1, 1919, until the last of the Caribou Issue, Scot Nos. 115-126, were finally sold out. It is a masterful article and belongs in every Newfoundland collector's library. There are a few minor points that I know to be wrong and a few statements that are at variance with what has been handed down in previous philatelic writings. I will list all of the contentious points here and send a copy to the editor of Gossip and ask him to forward it on to the author so that at a future time we may have more to say on the subject.

Mr. Hamilton states that it was immediately after the cessation of hostilities on Nov. 11, 1918, that Newfoundland decided to have a new series of postage stamps to commemorate the part played by Newfoundland in the Great War. Instructions are said to have been given to Messrs. Whitehead, Morris & Co., Ltd., the holders of the postage stamp contract, to supply a set of 12 stamps and that they were delivered to the colony the last day of the year and placed on sale Jan. 2, 1919. It seemed like quick work, preparing a complete set of stamps from scratch and delivering them in six to seven weeks, and both Harry E. Huber and Winthrop S. Boggs differ from Mr. Hamilton. In their writings, Huber being the first, both state that the issue was planned early in 1918, and two sketches by a local artist, J. H. Noonan, were sent to Whitehead, Morris & Co., Ltd., and that proofs were back in the Newfoundland postal authorities by May. In the closing days of the same month, the Legislative Assembly provided \$50,000 for the new series of stamps. It would thus seem that Mr. Hamilton erred when he said that they were first ordered late in November 1918.

Mr. Hamilton goes on to state that the 1, 2 and 5 cent stamps were printed in sheets of 200 containing two panes of 100 stamps each with a plate number "1" on the left hand pane and a number "2" on the right hand pane. All of the rest of the denominations were supposed to have been printed in sheets of 100 with no plate numbers on the plate. Both Huber and Boggs disagree, as both state that it was the 1, 2 and 3 cent stamps that were laid down in sheets of 200 with right and left panes of 100, and that the 5 cent stamps were printed in sheets of 100 subjects with no plate number. I find that I must agree with Huber and Boggs, as with all the research I have done I have never heard of a plate number existing on the 5 cent stamp, whereas in my collection I have a block of the 3 cent stamp, Scott No. 117, with the plate number "1" in the left margin opposite stamp No. 41.

In discussing the perforating of this issue, Mr. Hamilton states that the entire issue, with the exception of the 5 cent stamp, was done on a comb machine gauging 14, operating laterally from right to left. The 5 cent stamp was perforated on a single line machine gauging 14. I don't know the exact details, but I am certain that Marshall Kay (BNAPS 760) will differ from this statement, but I will leave this subject for him to cover at a future date.

In the case of the "TWO CENTS" surcharge on the 60c Cabot, Scott No. 74, Mr. Hamilton says that 100 were overprinted in red, and another 100 received a double surcharge in red. Mr. Boggs, on the other hand, believes that only 50 copies in all were surcharged in red, two panes of 25 (5 x 5), and that this includes the double surcharge.

Last but not least, Mr. Hamilton also lists the inverted surcharge as existing on the overprinted 35 cent stamp, Scott No. 130. While this stamp is listed by Scott and Gibbons and appears in the listings put out by Huber and Boggs, it is a fact that I have carefully examined thousands of auction

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