

Trail of the Caribou

By DAN MEYERSON (BNAPS L3)



SEEK and ye shall find—those words are just as true now as they were thousands of years ago. About two years ago, Frank Campbell (BNAPS 143) asked us to stop by the Philatelic Foundation and try to go through the proof book of cancels supplied to Newfoundland by the firm of Pritchard & Andrews, Ottawa, Canada. One of the interesting discoveries was the first St. John's duplex supplied to the colony on May 9, 1888. This cancel was written up in the March 1959 issue of TOPICS, and there has been quite a search for an example since that date, but to no avail. On the occasion of a trip to Boston recently we stopped by to see our Boston favorites, Mr. and Mrs. Pollitz. We get up to Boston every two or three months and Bill usually has some things that he has put aside for us to look at. This time it was three covers franked with the 5c, Scott No. 54. Two of them didn't interest us at all but the third piqued our curiosity and when we got the cover home a careful check with the example taken from the proof book proved that they were one and the same. So now we have an example of the first Newfoundland duplex.

The cover was posted at St. John's on June 20, 1888, and addressed to Boston, Mass. The cancel is a closed 23 mm. circle even though our original photo measures 24 mm. We can only account for the difference by assuming that the photo in our possession is not the exact size of the example in the proof book. We have an example of a very similar duplex used on cover franked with the 5c Cabot, Scott No. 65, addressed to Hammond, Ind., the postmark, or rather the duplex, is dated Dec. 6, 1902, and the size of the cancel and the 9-bar circle are both 23 mm. The prime difference between the two duplex cancels is that the second has a period beneath the "T" of "ST." Furthermore, the distance between the "S" of "ST. JOHNS" and the "N" of "NEWFD" is 8 mm. in the first instance, and 10½ mm. in the case of the 1902 example. At the same time, while

in with Bill, we checked on the prices realized for the perforated gummed trade samples in his sale of February 6. Two examples, one in brown black and the other in yellow brown, sold for \$15 each. I see that we forgot to mention that these were the trade samples of the 10c, Scott No. 27, but when we tell you that they were bought by Arnold Banfield it would have been self-explanatory, as he passes up nothing in the way of Prince Consorts, Canada or Newfoundland.

One of the humbling facts about stamp collecting is the number of times that you can be wrong when you try and be fairly dogmatic. Last month, while discussing a cover we had seen at auction, we questioned the genuineness of the cover on three counts and one of the three was the fact that the abbreviation for the month July in the cancellation was "JL." Just recently we had occasion to recheck our copy of the Caspary B.N.A. auction sale and one of the covers photographed brought us up rather short, as Lot No. 348, a cover addressed to Tucker of Baltimore (a famous correspondence) and franked with a right vertical bisect of the 8d scarlet, Scott No. 8, is cancelled on July 4, 1860, and the month July is abbreviated "JL." It so happens that this is the exact date of the cancellation of the cover that we discussed last month, so it certainly seems as though the cancel was genuine enough, but we still can't account for the 5d rate. Sorry to have made that mistake but we were going on memory, as our collection was already on its way to South Africa for UNIPEX. We will try and be more careful next time. ★

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