Trail of the Caribou

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We know that Ed Richardson, BNAPS #168, LaMarque, Tex., won't like us for this column as it concerns revenues for the most part, but so much has accumulated on our desk of late that we think Ed will excuse us if we put it into Trail instead of sending it down for his Revenue column. Some years ago John Siverts, BNAPS #59, Wilmington, Del., advised me that some copies of the Edward VII and the early George V revenues were watermarked. I went through everything I had in the way of singles and duplicates but could find no watermarked copies, even though I looked rather carefully. As it happens my taste does not run to watermarked copies but from the fact that I couldn't find any I assumed that they were not too easy to come by. So John, who had a duplicate of his Edward VII copy sent one up to me with his compliments. With one stuck somewhere in my stockbook, I was satisfied and no one would have heard anymore about it from me if Ed Richardson hadn't bugged me about it recently. It seems as though Ray Avery, BNAPS #1558, Toronto, had just reported in with a watermarked copy of an Edward VII revenue and Ed wanted to know if I knew anything about it. It seems as though in the process of judging BNAPEX '63, Ed had passed over 1 page of Colin Makepeace's collection, BNAPS #107, Providence, R.I., as there was an entire page of watermarked copies and if memory does not play me false I believe Colin had deducted that the word in question was "COLUMBIA". So check your Edward VII's and George V revenues and see if you have a watermarked copy because it seems as though only part of the sheet is watermarked and watermarked copies do not seem easy to come by.

Then Ed asked me about another variety, it is the latest of the Newfoundland Caribou Revenue set in which the 25c, Holmes #NIR 38 had the value blocked out and it was then surcharged "5". We were on the point of telling Ed that we couldn't be less interested as this was a Canadian surcharge and not a Newfoundland surcharge, our interest in Newfoundland stops at Mar. 31, 1949, the date of Confederation. However within a day I had another letter on the same matter from Wilmer Rockett, BNAPS #249, Willow Grove, Pa., so I thought it might be best to ask for information in this column as it seems from this end as though Newfoundland may finally be running out of their last issue and they are surcharging values that they have in excess to take the place of those that they are short of. I want this understood that this is purely a guess and I would certainly appreciate information on this score.

So Ray Avery, who had first written to Ed about the watermarked Edward VII Newfoundland Revenue decided to write to me directly but along with that matter he also sent along his proof of the 50c Queen Victoria, NIR4. I just say proof because I'm not certain whether it is a die proof cut down or a plate proof. I'm inclined to go along with the former though because if it is a plate proof where are the other copies hiding. And then again for reasons I will subsequently reveal it may be a plate proof. Ray describes it as a proof in issued color on card but to our unpractised eye it looked as though it was probably printed on India GALLEY 4
and stuck to the card and if this is the case it is more apt to be a plate proof. The proof in question also has about a ⅜ inch circular hole punched right through the value. Does anyone have any of the other values or does anyone know of their existence.

Ray also wrote to ask about the Cigarette Excise stamps that I reported on back in Dec. '51 when I revealed that the letters and years stamped on them revealed the year and date of use. The word in question was "QUESTIONABLY" one letter for each day of the month and we have them in various completeness from 1944 to 1949. Now both Ray and I have copies of these same stamps just surcharged with the letters with no following numbers. Is it possible that these were the first issued in 1943 or what. Who knows?