

A philatelic and postal history of NEWFOUNDLAND

(a continuing series of articles by Brien C. Damien; part ten)

Two new innovations were made in September 1863 with the introduction of parcel post and letter carrier service in St. John's. Two carriers worked daily delivering letters for a charge of 2c each in addition to regular postage. Gradually, the carrier service expanded to its current level with many, many carriers touching at each residence in St. John's daily. In 1883, parcel service was initiated with Great Britain.

Pillar boxes — predecessors of the modern mail collection boxes of today — were introduced in 1863. Before that year, anyone wishing to mail a letter had to take it to the post office. Pillar boxes were erected at Stations along the later-constructed Newfoundland railway, where clerks could pick up mail for processing in the post office car of a train.

Railway post offices were used from the earliest railroading days in Newfoundland. Consisting of a separate car traveling in a train, the RPO was used for postmarking and processing mail while en route to its destination. The RPO had distinctive markings: Newf'd T.P.O., N'WFL'D. RY TPO, N.N. & W. Railway T.P.O., N. & N.W. RY TPO, St. J. & P.A.B. R.P.O., St. J's & P.A.B. R.P.O., St. J's & C. (Corner Brook) R.P.O., C.B. Railway T.P.O., Con. Bay Ry. P.O., Heart's Content Ry. T.P.O., Bay de Verde Ry. P.O., Hall's Bay R.T.P.O. After 70 years, two months, and six days, the last RPO ran from St. John's to Corner Brook and back again on September 30 and October 1, 1968.

The RPO has since been replaced by a containerized mail process. Where mail formerly was loaded into bags at St. John's, placed aboard an RPO, transported to Port aux Basques, removed from the mail car and loaded aboard a ferry, taken to North Sydney, and deposited from the ferry into the North Sydney mail processing center, it is now loaded into a container at the St. John's post office, trucked across the island, and then transported intact to the North Sydney centre. These containers are more easily handled than loose bags, and fit neatly onto a trailer rig or in the hold of

one of the Strait ferries, the William Carson, or Leif Eriksson. Containerization has cut nearly six hours off the old 30-hour St. John's-North Sydney run, in some cases cutting a full day off time between posting and delivery.

After the retirement of Postmaster-General William Lemon Solomon, John Delaney, a former Member of the House of Assembly who had looked after the post office while in the House, took over as the second PMG and the third chief executive of the post office. Delaney served until 1885, when he was succeeded by James O. Fraser, who served until 1902. H. J. B. Woods served from 1902 to 1917, and was followed by Newfoundland's last PMG, Dr. J. Alexander Robinson. The chief executive of the postal department became a cabinet minister in 1919, and the first Minister of Posts and Telegraphs was William Wesley Halfyard, a Liberal who held office from 1919 to 1923 and again from 1928 to 1932; he was responsible for the planning and design selection for the 1923 pictorial stamp issue. He was followed by Thomas Bonia, who served from 1923 to early 1924, and Matthew E. Hawco who also served for a few months in 1924. William J. Woodford was the next incumbent, holding the position from 1924 to 1928 and again from 1932-1934.

An important figure of this era who perhaps outshaded his superior officers was William Campbell, Deputy Minister of Posts and Telegraphs appointed in 1924. He planned a new parcel post system, wrote acts extending insurance and cash-on-delivery benefits, designed the publicity issue of postage stamps in 1928, negotiated a postal treaty with the United States Post Office whereby Newfoundland received \$10,000 annually for transport of American parcels (where no money was received before), and planned and initiated the North Sydney mail sorting office, which revolutionized mail distribution for Newfoundland.

Due to economic conditions and near bankruptcy of the colonial government, the House of Assembly voted to suspend re-

sponsible government in 1934, and allow a British Commission of Government to rule the island. Under the administration of the Commission, which lasted until 1949, there were five secretaries of posts and telegraphs, in the following order: P. J. O'Halleran, Major E. E. Harper, G. D. Fraser, Major J. Haig Smith, and William S. Roddis. The Commission was a caretaker government with small resources, and so little postal progress was made, although the Commission and World War II put Newfoundland on her feet economically.

During the Commission years there was

a significant use of airmail, in part due to the establishment of U.S. air bases at St. John's, Stephenville, Goose Bay, and Gander. Prior to this airmail was primarily of an experimental nature. Sidney Cotton, Newfoundland's foremost air pioneer made winter flights to northern Newfoundland points and Labrador. This of course continued through Confederation.

Newfoundlanders voted during the summer of 1948 to end the responsible government system as well as the Commission of Government.

(To be concluded)



Perfin Study Group

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The Easton convention is now a thing of the past and although the attendance was down and exhibits somewhat below the usual high standards of BNAPS I think both suffered from the closing dates of Philypia in London where BNAPS collections made an impressive showing.

The meeting did fortunately supply the material for this month's column. A good friend had saved a small lot of perfins for me, one of which was one of those rare items, a previously unlisted design, illustrated above.

The stamp is unusual in that it is another E1 recently mentioned in a column which listed four companies who had previously punched this stamp in the USA to prepay for special delivery of their mail after arrival at its destination in Canada.

This again is an example of the same usage and reference to the American Perfin Club catalogue identifies the user as their B120, the B. F. Goodrich Company and used from one of their offices either at Boston, Mass. or Akron, Ohio.

The stamp has a roller cancellation applied in Toronto.

This addition to our catalogue will be listed as:

No.	Description	Name of user	Issue	R.F.
B13	BFG/Co 2H5 1-2/4 1-2	B. F. Goodrich Co., Boston, Mass., Akron, Ohio	E1	100

Another item from this small lot of Perfins is a copy of the 2c Small Queen punched JH/S. This is the scarcest design to be found on this issue. The few copies of this design previously reported have been on the 1c yellow. The 2c has a roller cancellation with a legible MONTREAL QU. This suggests it may have been used for third class mail, as we think were the known copies on the 1c yellow.

Finally, two nice 3c Small Queen issue, late printings, both with nice town-dated cancels had been hopelessly spoiled by being perforated "PA" and "AID". The joker who produced the *Province of Alberta* perfin reported some time ago is either at it again or now has a pal with a *Paid* cancellor available for him to play with.

These new listings should be added to the handbook:

Cat.	Init.	Desc.	User	Issue	RF
N12	NS/C	2H5½-5	Nat. Supply Co., Detroit, Mich.	1912	100
W13a	WU	H5	West. Union Telegraph Co.	E1	100
			Portland, Ore.		