

## WILLIAM EDWARD LEA

The death of William Edward Lea on January 31 of this year was a serious loss to philately throughout the world. His interest in stamps was begun by his father, a serious collector who was an expert in the classics.

Soon after World War I William Lea moved to London after breaking up a partnership with his brother. Like his father, he specialized in the classics. His business flourished and eventually he became known to every collector who appreciated fine quality, wherever they lived. He visited international exhibitions in order to study collections which he might otherwise never have seen, and formed a magnificent collection of Canadian stamps.

At the time of his death he was chairman of the Expert Committee of the British Philatelic Association, a member of BPA Council, and one of two PTA representatives on the committee of Philymphia 1970. He was a member of the Postal History Society, the Society of Postal Historians, The Great Britain Philatelic Society, and many others.

An associate of his has said, "Working with him on the expert committee one was able to appreciate the great development of his senses; it was always a pleasure to argue debatable points, for his reasoning was sound, and his mental integrity such that he gave full attention to the reasoning of others."

## ***A philatelic and postal history of NEWFOUNDLAND***

a continuing series by Brien C. Damien; part four

Rowland Hill, a reformer and student of economics, published several pamphlets during the 1830s advocating the then revolutionary ideas of compulsory prepayment of postage, postage stamps, and the elimination of the free mailing privilege given to newspapers and many government officials. He argued, "Reduce the postage rates and more people will use the service, bringing in more money." The reverse can be seen working whenever Christmas card rates are raised! Parliament passed a postal reform bill written by Rowland Hill and Scottish MP Robert Wallace in the late summer of 1839. The Act's effects included an entirely new arrangement for Newfoundland. (Rowland Hill, later knighted, was famous at the time but is remembered chiefly now, however, for the invention of the postage stamp.) Effected also were needed reforms in the packet posts; several previous attempts to bring packets to St. John's were unsuccessful. St. John's was granted regular communication by sail with Halifax, as steam replaced sail on the Halifax-Britain

route. James Tobin, a St. John's merchant, entered into contract with the government to run a vessel between St. John's and Halifax for £1450 annually. On July 14, 1840, the first trip was made, incorporating Newfoundland into the General Post Office system.

The first Imperial postmarking device appeared in St. John's on 20 July 1840, consisting of the legend "St. John's Newfoundland" within a circular form, and the date. Another device handmade by William Solomon was used as a prepaid letter marking from 1843 onward, but in red instead of the earlier device's black. A black version of this imprint, reading simply "Newfoundland", was used as a postmark from 1845, as a new, machine-made, brass handstamp reading "PAID AT ST. JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND" brought a new prepaid marking. This device arrived at the post office accompanied by this warning:

*"You will herewith receive a dated stamp and seal and the usual supply of shifting figures with which you will in*

future legally and distinctly stamp every letter put into your office, discontinuing the use of your present stamp. You will not fail to change the date day by day, and you will be especially careful to stamp every letter correctly according to the date that it is deposited in your office, so that in case of any question you may be able to certify the same—any neglect of this material duty will inevitably be attended with serious consequence. You will take good care of the stamp and figures as you will be held responsible for their safe custody and preservation. Common ink must not be used with this stamp, but printer's ink or some material mixed with oil, any ink or composition mixed with water will have the effect of corroding the stamp, which should be cleaned from time to time with a hard brush and a little spirit of turpentine. The following is the recipe for the composition at present in use in the Inland department here, which is found to answer better than any other: one pound of printer's ink, well mixed with one quart of linseed oil. I am, your obedient servant, W. L. Maberly, Secretary."

In 1844 Solomon moved from the old structure on Water Street to a stone building on Garrison Hill. The rent here was £30 per annum higher than in the former building, and increased mail volume forced him to hire an assistant. Because of the additional charges, he asked the colonial House of Assembly to appropriate the difference; he received a grant of £25. It's likely that Solomon moved because of the risk of fire—the general neighbourhood of the Freemason's Tavern was particu-

larly squalid at this time, surrounded by wooden shanties compressed in a small area having an extremely dense population. With the lack of fire protection, fire was a factor not to be ignored in such a quarter. This appeared to be a good move, for 1846 saw another "Great Fire"—but this conflagration was so large-scaled that it took the Freemason's Tavern area, plus the interior of the new stone post office.

The exact location of the post office from then until the 1860s is unknown; three different sources have three different versions. The most likely of the three is that the new building was located on an alley later named 'Solomon's Lane'. Official records in St. John's confirm the existence of this street.

Solomon married, "on Tuesday evening last, by the Rev. Mr. Schofield, . . . Eliza R., second daughter of the late Edmund Ward, Esq., of Halifax, N.S." They apparently had no children; at least, there are no descendants of the Solomons in Newfoundland today.

William Solomon retired in 1860, having become the first Postmaster-General upon the introduction of Inland Posts in 1851, and having introduced postage stamps to the people of Newfoundland in 1857. He died at age 50 on October 10, 1861. With his death ended the association between the Post Office of Newfoundland and its founding family. A line of Wordsworth which I feel is topical to the Solomons reads,

*"Enough, if something from our hands  
have power  
To live, and act, and serve the future  
hour."*

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## Auction News

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J. N. Sisson's Spring Sale, on June 3 and 4, features some interesting stamps; 145 lots of Canada Pence, 60 lots of 1897 Jubilees, and many items from the Alonzo F. Kenyon estate.

William Maresch's next auction will carry a great many oddities from recent issues, including a wide-gutter pair caused by the full sheet having been folded over before being cut into separate panes.

The eighth sale of the Dale-Lichtenstein collection (Mauritius) realized \$54,380 on H. R. Harmer's March 16 sale. The final BNA sale in the series runs December 7 and 8 of this year.