

Newfoundland - The Postage Stamps of 1897

A tale of two secretaries The Cabot and Royal Issues

by ROBERT H. PRATT

PART THREE (concluded)

News, Wednesday, January 3rd, 1900

STAMP DESTRUCTION ACT I

This lengthy editorial criticised the act of defacing the stamps before burning them and ridiculed the entire procedure. It also took the participants to task for watching the performance and could not see the need for so many high officials to be present. According to the Editor "Burning should be destruction enough". He likened defacing before burning to killing the man who had drowned. He pursued the matter further by observing that "those who are better acquainted with the frisky habits of obsolete stamps think otherwise and yesterday morning their pretty faces were 'smooched', today they will be burned". Could he have had some information concerning the "Capulet affair"?

Daily News, Thursday, January 4th, 1900

STAMP DESTRUCTION ACT II

The Editorial continued with more of the same now concentrating on the destruction itself and those in attendance. At the end it added these suggestions for bettering the post. The events leading up to the later blast by the *Evening Telegram* which precipitated the Investigation into the Post Office had been inaugurated.

- (1) Add a Post Office at the east end of town.
- (2) Clear out the Pillar Boxes and the Branch Offices at least three times a day.
- (3) Allow registration of letters at all offices.
- (4) Mail for Europe should be sent through New York during the winter months.
- (5) A uniform postal rate with Canada, the United States and Mexico should be established.
- (6) A slot in the door or an outside box

should be provided to facilitate home delivery.

The Evening Telegram,
Saturday, December 30th, 1899

THOSE POSTAGE STAMPS

We notice that our contemporary "*The News*" of this morning goes for the "*Evening Herald*" about the selling and disposing of THOSE stamps. Now why should our two contemporaries, *The Evening Herald* and the *Morning News* be fighting against themselves? We bet, Brothers *News* and *Herald*, that they wont find any fighting around our Department—not a bit of it. . . .
The Evening Telegram,

Tuesday, January 2nd, 1900

On this and subsequent days *The Telegram* agreed and sided with its rival *The News*. Later on January 23rd, it took up the assault and castigated the department causing the Governor to instigate the investigation of the Post Office.

ROYAL ISSUE OF 1897

Procurement Continued — 1901

Between early January 1900 and 1908 several interesting events took place. The first was the investigation of the Post Office which began on January 30th, 1900, after a clarion call by *The Evening Telegram* (The Liberals' Mouthpiece) for the Government to clean out corruption in the Post Office. The Investigation proceeded with J. Alexander Robinson, Colonial Secretary and Michael H. Carty, Queens Counsel appointed as investigating Commissioners. The inquiry ended March 20th, and with one exception was inconclusive.

While this was transpiring, the Government was going through another of its volcanic tremors. The Reid Contract to run the Railroad, the Telegraph and the Coastal Shipping pushed the Winter Government to

extinction. It was defeated on a vote of no confidence February 19th, 1900 and Winter resigned March 6th. Soon thereafter the old Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Robert Bond became Prime Minister and in addition took on the paid position of Colonial Secretary. Quite suddenly the positions were reversed. The affairs of the Post Office changed for the better. Fraser retired June 28th, 1901 and was replaced by William Smith, who was acquired from the Canada Post Office. His reforms in the Post Office were of great consequence and his temporary appointment was terminated after the successful introduction of them. A permanent Postmaster General, Mr. H. J. B. Woods assumed duties on April 26th, 1902, and they terminated when he died September 1st, 1916. While not part of this story it is interesting to note that J. Alex. Robinson returned to Government employ on November 1st, 1916, as the last Postmaster General. After this the job became a ministerial post with the title Minister Posts and Telegraphs. Robinson did not get this job and resigned December 6th, 1919. G. W. LeMessurier accepted the post of Deputy Minister in charge of the Post Office.

Bond assumed control of the Post Office at once. On August 31st, 1901 he informed the Bank Note Co.:

"Sirs,

"Colonial Secretary Robinson informed you in 1899 that a 4 cent stamp would probably be required. One should be prepared, similar to the 5 cent value which bears the likeness of the Duke of York, but having the head of the Duchess of York. The color should be as per the U.P.U. A state visit by the Duke and Duchess in October makes prompt completion desirable. We are ordering 500,000 stamps to be on hand by October 23rd — there is no time for proofs as the stamps **MUST BE HERE** by October 15th.

"Bond"

Evidently proofs were submitted, as examples remaining prove, and the following letter was dispatched on September 10th:

"Sirs,

"I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 5th. inst. respecting the preparation of the new four-cent stamp — Duchess of York. The color

that is preferred for this stamp is purple — the same shade as was used by you for the five-cent stamp of the Cabot issue. I presume you have a record of this and will be able to give us the same color. It seems to throw out the stamp pretty well. While the brown of the four-cent United States stamp submitted by you is a good color it has been thought in the present case the purple is preferable.

"I beg to thank you for your efforts to procure a good photograph of Her Royal Highness and I feel sure that the work will be satisfactory to the people of the colony as well as a credit to your own firm.

"Arthur Mews, deputy Colonial Secretary"

For once everything proceeded as it should, and Bond sent a congratulatory letter to the Company on October 16th.

"Sirs,

"Your October 4th shipment of a box of the 4 cent stamps arrived on October 14th. The stamps are well done and will be a pleasing feature with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. Enclosed please find a draft of \$422.96 to cover your invoice of October 3rd for the Dies and the stamps.

"Bond"

At the same time the Postmaster General (Wm. Smith) was advised that the stamps were to be issued without previous notice on Monday, October 21st. The Royal Party arrived on October 23rd but did not land until the 24th. At a reception on the night of the 24th, the Hon. Robert Bond was knighted and became Sir Robert Bond in recognition of his service to the Monarch and Newfoundland. Presumably the 'First Day of Issue' was the 21st. This was the only order for this value.

With Bond still in control of the Post Office, operations continued smoothly until a shipping accident upset the decorum. The Bank Note Co. evidently wrote to Newfoundland on March 12th and again on March 14th, 1908 regarding the shipment of the last order on the SYLVIA. The vessel was lost off Cuttyhunk on the Massachusetts shore on March 20th. On the 21st, confirming the loss of the ship and the fact that three boxes of stamps (2 and 5 cent values) were aboard, Bond advised the Com-

pany that "the Postmaster General will not re-order until he learns of the recovery of the stamps." A telegram followed on April 3rd and a letter on the 4th:

THE TELEGRAM — APRIL 3rd, 1908

"Public dispatch of this date from New Bedford, Mass. states that a box of the Postage Stamps shipped by you per 'SYLVIA' has been washed ashore at Cuttyhunk Island, that many sheets of the stamps have been sold — one woman is said to have possession of all the 5 cent denomination. That they were not listed on ships manifest but were shipped as cash in charge of the Purser of steamer. if this dispatch is correct then serious loss to Government must ensue and Government must look to your company to indemnify them against all loss, please advise what steps have been taken by your Company to recover said stamps and prevent same from passing into circulation. you will appreciate that prompt action is necessary. answer promptly as if dispatch referred to is correct all stamps of those denominations must be immediately cancelled by Postal Department."

THE LETTER — APRIL 4th, 1908

"Sirs,

"We have been advised that a box containing 5 cent stamps and some of the 2's washed ashore. The other two boxes were lost. Thus it will be necessary to cancel all stamps of these values and reissue them. As we need the 2 cent stamps immediately, prepare and forward 1 or 2 designs for such a new issue. Sir Robert Bond thinks that a good design would be a vignette of the Island showing the Railway Design, the Capitol and such other features as it would be well to insert. The color is to be in accord with the U.P.U., with the center white. He has suggested a square stamp but has requested that designs be sent. For the 5 cent stamp we shall need another design which can be arranged later on. If you have any suggestions send them along. Have the design for the 2 cent stamp prepared at once.

TELEGRAM — MAY 1st

"Referring your letter 24 April please

prepare and submit designs for 2 cent stamps as per diagram my letter April 4th. — Bond."

TELEGRAM — MAY 23rd

"Please prepare 5,000,000 each 2 cents and 1 Cent stamps per design now in use. forward by express to reach here June 1st such quantity as you can prepare."

The Bank Note Company responded on May 25th stating that they would ship the required 2 cent stamps on May 27th and the 1 cent the early part of the next week. The Colonial Secretary affirmed to the Bank Note Company on June 1st. that they were pleased with the dispatch of 500 sheets of 2 cent (Royal) stamps by National Express on May 26th. The next day Mews sent a further letter to the Company.

"Sirs,

"I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 14th inst. respecting the designs you have proposed for the new 2 cent stamp. I am returning the card upon which the designs are mounted. The upright model is preferred by the Premier. He feels that it is a pity that the U.P.U. does not permit the use of two colors. (an opinion he expressed during the design of the Cabot issue). Shading of the sea is desirable so as to bring out the white of the Island. Sir Robert Bond will be glad to have proofs of the stamp printed from the engraved plate before you proceed.

"Mews"

On June 15th the Colonial Secretary's office advised the Bank Note Co. of the receipt of a box of stamps shipped June 5th and on the same day sent the Postmaster General the invoices for the shipment sent by National Express and another for 10,000 sheets of an unknown value, probably the 2 cent. The problem of what to do with the salvaged SYLVIA stamps was decided on June 22nd. The Company was advised that they were to be "burned with witnesses" (?). July 15th saw this demand mitigated and the stamps and witnesses given a reprieve so that the Insurance Adjuster could view the mess and render a report. The new design became finalized when Mews wrote on June 30th:

"Sirs,

"This is to inform you that Sir Robert

Bond likes the work you have performed. Please ship 2,000,000 of the 2 cent stamps of the new design as soon as possible. We shall be out of supply in six weeks. All future orders will be of this design.

"It will not be necessary to prepare a new design for the 5 cent stamp as all were recovered. Therefore please send 500,000 of the last design as quickly as possible.

"Mews"

The 5 cent stamps were received on July 31st and the 2 cent (Map) on August 28th. September 1st, as stated by Boggs could well be the first day of issue. A certificate of destruction for the SYLVIA stamps, written October 7th was received on the 13th. Now the only remaining matter was what to do with the 2 cent stamps ordered and prepared during the shortage caused by the wrecking of the SYLVIA. On November 6th, Mews wrote:

Sirs,

I beg to inform you that with regard for the 2 cent stamps prepared at the time of the loss of the SYLVIA, the Government will accept 400,000 of those which have been finished. Of the remaining 590,000 which are still unfinished, the Government will allow half the cost of the stamps. These stamps are to be destroyed by burning with witnesses and a certificate furnished to the Government.

Mews

This was followed on November 23rd, by:

Sirs,

I beg to acknowledge your favor of the 18th instant covering account for two cent postage stamps; also Cremation Certificate with regard to the destruction of fifty-nine hundred sheets Two Cent stamps.

Mews

This assortment of letters shows that the introduction of the Map stamp, while it was initiated by the sinking of the SYLVIA, need not have been consummated. The watersoaked stamps were all recovered or thoroughly masticated by the ocean. The 2 cent and 5 cent stamps in original form were re-ordered, and used. Why then the new stamp? The letter of June 30th tells

the story. Sir Robert Bond "likes the work you have performed". He should — he designed the stamp and evidently preferred 'advertising' motifs to stereotyped pictures of Royalty.

1908 saw another convulsion in Government. An election was held which resulted in a tie. Both contestants thought they should be appointed to the Prime Ministerial post. Bond, finally recognizing the inevitable, broke the deadlock by resigning February 25th, 1909. Another election resulted in a Mr. Morris being selected on May 9th. He remained in power until a coalition Government was formed July 17th, 1917 and Morris resigned on November 19th.

During 1909, under a new Colonial Secretary (R. Watson) Whitehead Morris of London was contacted with regard to preparing stamps, postcards and other security paper for Newfoundland. The last order for postage stamps to American Bank Note was sent on January 21st, 1910 when 2,000,000 2-cent MAP stamps were ordered. The letter contained a petulant remark about the inclusion of wax paper interleaving in the last shipment and the Company was cautioned not to use it again. The Guy issue was ordered on April 4th from Whitehead Morris in London. Thus ended the second affair that Newfoundland had with the American Bank Note Company.

Was it all over? Authors Boggs, Poole and Huber and other authorities relate that another order for the 3-cent stamp was placed with the Company in 1918. I have not been able to document nor to find any other source for verifying this observation. There was a need for 3 cent stamps due to the sudden imposition of a 1 cent War Tax on May 17th, 1918, resulting in a standard 3 cent rate. There was a shortage of this value and the Caribou Issue was being prepared. Such an order could well have been given to the Company as fast shipments from wartime England were difficult to arrange. Let's hope that verification will some day come from a reliable source, hopefully from the files of the Company. The same authors touched upon the subject of how the 2-cent Map stamp originated. They mused about the loss of the SYLVIA but were not convinced that this was the real reason. Perhaps to protect Sir Robert Bond, the facts were not disclosed. The Map stamp belongs in the Royal Issue of 1897; it was designed by the originator of the issue, and

closed out his career the way it began, by selling the world on the virtues of Newfoundland with pictures on stamps.

THE ROYAL ISSUE QUANTITIES PRINTED

While the quantities printed of the Cabot Issue and the Provisional stamps are well

known, there has been no reliable information divulged regarding the ROYAL series. By searching the records in St. John's it has been possible to complete a detailed list for this set of stamps. Fortunately the records are intact and for once we shall know in detail just what was purchased.

½ CENT ROYAL STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
27 May 1898	1,000,000	19 August 1898	593.00
1 July 1904	200,000	30 July 1904	?
2 Dec. 1905	200,000	19 February 1906	?
23 August 1906	250,000	19 Oct. 1906	90.57
23 Oct. 1909	100,000	10 Dec. 1909	?
1,750,000			

1 CENT ROYAL STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
10 Sept. 1897	400,000	23 Nov. 1897	379.22 (1)
25 May 1898	1,000,000	9 May 1898	359.86 (2)
23 Jan. 1900	1,000,000	31 May 1900	359.47 (3)
19 June 1901	1,000,000	20 August 1901	358.59

ROYAL STAMP OF 1897

15 Oct. 1902	1,000,000	9 Dec. 1902	368.46
7 Nov. 1903	1,000,000	?	?
28 Dec. 1903	250,000	25 June 1904	?
16 June 1904	1,000,000	1 July 1904	? (4)
22 August 1905	1,000,000	?	?
27 June 1906	1,000,000	16 August 1906	361.96
23 August 1906	1,000,000	19 Oct. 1906	362.28
2 Oct. 1907	1,000,000	10 Feb. 1908	?
1 May 1908	500,000	15 June 1908	? (5)
24 Nov. 1908	1,500,000	18 Jan. 1909	? (5)
23 Oct. 1909	2,000,000	10 Dec. 1909	? (5)
14,650,000			
Red —	400,000	(Red)	
Green	14,250,000	(Green)	

- Notes: (1) These were the RED stamps.
 (2) The color was changed to GREEN
 (3) Color and design same as last, Green
 (4) Send 100M by express
 (5) Part of 5,000,000 order after SYLVIA sunk

2 CENT ROYAL STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
10 Sept. 1897	400,000	23 Nov. 1897	379.22 (1)
25 March 1898	500,000	9 May 1898	179.93 (2)
12 Oct. 1899	1,000,000	16 Dec. 1899	359.33
19 June 1901	1,000,000	20 August 1901	358.59
18 July 1904	1,000,000	9 Oct. 1904	347.60

2 Dec. 1905	1,000,000	19 February 1906	?
3 Feb. 1906	1,000,000	None	0.00 (3)
26 August 1906	1,000,000	19 Oct. 1906	362.28
18 Feb. 1907	2,000,000	9 May 1907	717.38
18 Jan. 1908	2,000,000	None	0.00 (4)
23 May 1908	1,000,000	5 June 1908	? (5)
6 Nov. 1908	400,000	24 Nov. 1908	? (6)
6 Nov. 1908	590,000	24 Nov. 1908	? (7)
	<hr/>		
	12,890,000		
	— 1,000,000	duplicate order, cancelled	
	— 590,000	Destroyed, incomplete	
	— 2,000,000	Lost with the SYLVIA	
	— 400,000	The ORANGE stamps	
	<hr/>	VERMILION stamps	
	9,900,000		

- Notes: (1) The ORANGE stamps
 (2) The color was changed to VERMILION
 (3) This order was a duplicate and was cancelled
 (4) These stamps lost on the SYLVIA or destroyed
 (5) Part of 5,000,000 order after SYLVIA sunk
 (6) When Map stamps ordered, overage was accepted
 (7) Unfinished overage burnt, half cost paid

3 CENT ROYAL STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
9 May 1898	500,000	27 May 1898	416.60
7 Dec. 1898	500,000	28 Feb. 1899	182.75 (1)
12 Oct. 1899	1,000,000	16 Dec. 1899	359.33
30 March 1901	1,000,000	18 June 1901	362.95
29 April 1902	1,000,000	17 July 1902	360.08
?	50,000	7 Dec. 1903	? (2)
18 July 1904	1,000,000	9 Oct. 1904	347.60
10 Nov. 1905	1,000,000	15 Jan. 1906	?
	<hr/>		
	6,050,000		

- Notes: (1) These are ORANGE color
 (2) Shipped by Express, order unknown

4 CENT ROYAL STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
31 Aug. 1901	500,000	4 Oct. 1901	422.96 (1)
	<hr/>		
	500,000		

- Notes: (1) A single order in purple color

5 CENT ROYAL STAMP

	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
9 May 1898	500,000	27 May 1898	416.60 (1)
29 April 1902	200,000	17 July 1902	72.02
28 Dec. 1903	200,000	25 June 1904	?
18 July 1904	250,000	8 Sept. 1904	86.90
13 June 1906	250,000	16 Aug. 1906	90.49
15 April 1907	250,000	31 May 1907	95.66

18 Jan. 1908	500,000	None	0.00 (2)
30 June 1980	500,000	31 July 1908	?
	<hr/>		
	2,650,000		
	— 500,000	Lost on SYLVIA and destroyed	
	<hr/>		
	2,150,000		

Notes: (1) Stamps not placed in use until 1899
 (2) Lost with SYLVIA, recovered and burned

2 CENT MAP STAMP

Date Ordered	Quantity	Invoiced	Cost & Notes
30 June 1908	2,000,000	28 Aug. 1908	?
6 March 1909	2,000,000	17 June 1909	?
21 Jan. 1910	2,000,000	12 April 1910	?
	<hr/>		
	6,000,000		

When considering invoice dates in relation to arrival of the stamps, one must add a week to 12 days for the stamps to get to St. John's. When they were placed in use is unimportant, after the first shipment, as numbers on hand are unknown. This completes the data except for a listing of the oddities and the proofs. As usual errors did creep into production and some of them were sold over the counter. Imperforates, part-perforates and poor attempts to create imperforates exist.

THE ODDITIES OF THE ROYAL ISSUE

- (1) Imperforates They exist for the
 - ½ cent on thick paper
 - ½ cent on stamp paper
 - 2 cent vermilion paper
 - 4 cent purple paper
- (2) Record Sheets — imperforate without gum (plate proofs)
 They exist on Proof Paper or card for all the values:
 - ½ cent issue color
 - 1 cent Red
 - 2 cent Orange
 - 3 cent issue color
 - 4 cent issue color
 - 4 cent bright purple
 - 5 cent issue color
- (3) Part-perforate stamps
 They exist imperforate horizontally for:
 - 1 cent — dark green
 - 1 cent — light green
 - 3 cent — orange

N.B. — It should be noted that some enterprising person(s) have attempted to create imperforate 1 cent stamps by trimming the

perforations from the left and right sides of the 1 cent part perforates. Comparison with a part perforate stamp will illustrate the narrow width of the resulting stamp. Be careful!

- (4) Non stamp paper
 These exist on .0045 inch thick white wove paper
 - ½ cent imperforate
 - 1 cent perforated (Red)
- (5) Plate numbers
 This series contained the first noted plate numbers to occur on Newfoundland stamps. They are known for:
 - 1 cent green, UR 2 reversed
 - 3 cent orange, UL 3 reversed
 - 3 cent orange, UR 4 reversed
 N.B. Plate 4 carries the production No. F-5610.
- (6) Die Proofs
 Large die proofs are known for:
 - ½ cent, color of issue
 - 3 cent, color of issue
 - 4 cent, color of issue
 - 4 cent, brown
 - 5 cent, color of issue. Die No. C-502
 - 2 cent MAP, color of issue, Die No. C-822
 Small die proofs are known for:
 - 1 cent, dark blue. Die No. C-894
 - 2 cent, dark green-grey
- (7) Specimen Overprints
 These exist for all values of:
 - The CABOT issue
 - The ROYAL issue

And so we come to the end of this essay. It abounds in new information which should

be of interest to collector and cataloguer as well. The "Tale of Two Secretary's illustrates one of the problems which beset the Newfoundland Post Office. No wonder that the aging Postmaster General lost interest in many of the details of his job. In spite of all the harassment the Mail was delivered, communication within and without expanded, and the Colony grew. This essay leaves some unanswered questions, which hopefully, one day, will be clarified.

N.B.—This article prepared and printed by computer. It has been saved on disk and is available thus.

R.H.P. — Aug. 80

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