



The RPO Cowcatcher

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This time we are going to look at three most unusual railway strikes that have come down the track in the last year or so. Two of these are not rare in their own right, but are unique because of where they were found; one is the only known strike of a registered railway marking.

While visiting Scotland to attend the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain meeting in October 1986, John Parkin showed us a most extraordinary commercial cover which we are delighted to illustrate here. Its origin, *Yokohama, Japan*, is attested to by two company seals on the reverse of the cover. The back also carries a hooded LONDON E.C. receiving mark, dated 2 November 1899. The extraordinary thing is that the six 1d lilac British stamps on the front are cancelled with the ornament railway **W-30b, C. & V. R.P.O. / B.C.**, with a diagonal cross fore and aft of 'B.C.', Type 17G, Direction E, dated 18 October 1899.

Our thesis on the movement of this cover is that it was hand carried, perhaps by staff, from Yokohama to Vancouver. There it entered the Canadian Railway mail system, which honored the British stamps, on its way to England. We theorize that this routing may have been an effort to circumvent the long transit time by ship from Japan westward to England. It may have been successful; Vancouver to London was only fifteen days; with added time from Japan to Canada by ship, the whole transit was probably less than thirty days. Does anyone have a better theory for this cover?

Q-21, ISLd POND & MONTREAL R.P.O. / #, Type 17A, is quite common, with a Rarity Factor of only 55. But has anyone ever seen this — or any other Canadian R.P.O. — on a U.S. 2¢ Trans-Mississippi issue, as shown here? This extraordinary example was submitted by Doug Hannan, one of our new R.P.O. specialists from Kelowna. Usage is quite appropriately in period. The stamp was issued in June 1898, and Q-21 is also first known in 1898. The date of the strike is 2 January 1899, Direction DE, for Down East. For our hammer specialists, we can advise that Q-21 has at least four hammers, #1-4 at the bottom of the strike respectively. We have not yet studied Q-21 to see if any of these numbers have second duplicate hammers. A beautiful find, Doug! Wouldn't this be a knock-out if it was still on cover!!!

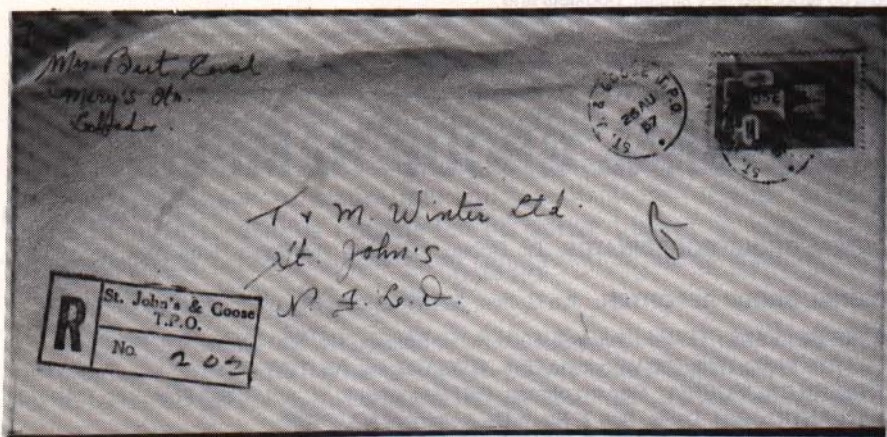
As recorded in Annex II in 1984, Don Wilson of St. John's reported our first strike of **RG-70, R / St. John's & Goose / T.P.O. / No.**, Type 30H. It is still the only recorded strike. It has taken a bit of time for me to get around to illustrating this marvellous cover, but here it is in all its glory! A truly commercial cover, from an individual in Mary's Harbour, Labrador to the firm of T. & M. Winter Ltd. in St. John's, it has the 25¢ red Paper & Chemical stamp paying the postage and registration and is cancelled with **N-92 ST. J. & GOOSE T.P.O. / .**, Type 17, dated 27 August 1957. The accompanying RG-70 confirms the registration. Goose Bay to St. John's was water service, so it is quite probable Mrs. Coish registered her



letter right on the vessel at the time of posting. It would be interesting to know which vessel was involved in this T.P.O. in 1957; we know that the KYLE was routed to Labrador in 1940 and the BONAVISTA and NONIA in 1971, but have not confirmed 1957.

In our next Cowcatcher Column we will publish the major highlights from Annex VI, the full

version of which will be presented in the RPO Study Group Newsletter in the near future. Those wishing to stay abreast of all of the most recent changes to the RPO Catalogue and who are not members of the RPO Study Group should contact Bill Robinson, our able Newsletter Editor, 5830 Cartier Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 3A7, for details on joining the Study Group.



ARE YOU GOING TO VIRGINIA BEACH?