

Letters

JOINED PLATE PROOFS

May I draw your readers attention to a dastardly deed that is being perpetrated on the plate proof material that was unleashed when the American Bank Note Company's archives were sold. This sale by Christie's in 1990 placed into the market place enormous quantities of plate proof material. Many of these proofs are in sheet of 100 subject format with multiple sheets being offered. The countries featured were many and diverse but I am directing my comments about the BNA countries, specifically Canada and Newfoundland.

When a collector goes to exhibit at national and international exhibitions, the items shown must tell a story, oft-times in the absence of the written word. Thus, a featured cover should show the correct rate, the place name cancel where it was sent from, and hopefully the receiving cancel. This is especially important for the first flight airmail covers. With the basic stamp (mint or used), its perforations (if normally issued with them), are an important feature. To show a part-imperforate-between the area of the stamp having the perforations must be shown; to show a fully imperforate version of what is normally a perforated stamp a minimum of a pair is required.

This fully imperforate version can be caused by genuine printing error or it can be deliberately created for use by the printing company as plate proofs. This item may or may not be on stamp paper, but to prove it is imperforate, as it was made, a pair is required. The knowledgeable collector has always shunned imperforate singles.

However, in the stamp market place, dealer price lists and auction listings, there is an abundance of single stamps being imperforate on four sides. They are touted as being from the plate proof sheets with a very high price often asked.

Therefore a question that begs to be answered, is how do you tell the difference of this stated-to-be single plate proof from its much cheaper perforated version that has all the perforations trimmed? Also, bear in mind now, that the judges are viewing the item behind frame glass, protective mylar sheeting and inside a mount.

Consider another related matter: picture how

you can tell the difference when postcards are featured. As Newfoundland postcards were never issued in joined multiples, a real tragedy is occurring in that the few joined multiples of these cards are being cut into singles. The Newfoundland lot that was sold by Christie's had 36 one cent cards and 38 two cent cards. They were mostly in joined sheets of eight, but they were joined!

A joined pair would really show the plate proof version. Is it too late to save them from being turned into singles?

John M. Walsh
St. John's, NF

BNAPS NAME CHANGE

I have today mailed off my ballot on the proposed name change for BNAPS. I voted to keep the current name, not because I am an old fogey resisting change (I am 37 years old, support the metric system, etc.) but because the proposed alternatives were not adequate.

Canada and Colonies? Canada has never had colonies. Britain did. The titles with *stamp collector* in them are misleading, as many of us collect postal history which may not have been stamps. The variations of *Canada* and *Canadian* would, I think, create confusion with the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada.

I suppose the constructive thing for me to do would be to propose alternatives, but I see nothing wrong with the present name, which describes exactly the purpose of our little group. I disagree with the idea that the decline in membership is due to the name. Many clubs and societies, not just philatelic, are experiencing a decline. Some of it is due to economic conditions. Much of it is due to the far greater variety of hobbies available today than was the case thirty or fifty years ago, which dilutes the number of collectors over a larger number of hobbies. And, of course, we have television. Just wait until virtual reality becomes affordable for the average person! Then we'll *really* see a decline.

Notwithstanding the above, I think the measures taken elsewhere will have a better chance of improving the fortunes of BNAPS. Distributing business reply cards, for example. And I commend those who are starting up study groups for modern Canada, such as Elizabeth