

Second, Shaw indicates that mail from Montreal to Portland travelled entirely by train beginning in 1853. At some time was Portland Maine or Island Pond established as an exchange office with Montreal? I have found no reference to this in Boggs or Robson Lowe Vol. V, both of which list earlier establishment of exchange offices.

Jeff Switt

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Sir;

Recently the Calgary Regional Group of BNAPS had a tour of the printing plant of Unicom Graphics in lieu of its regular monthly meeting. Unicom is the successor of Universal Engraving Ltd, whose FDC cachets, done by Hubert Larle, are familiar to collectors of 1950s and 1960s Canada.

Printing technology has advanced incredibly in the past decade, and as I toured the plant with the Calgary group, I got to wondering if philatelists realize just how much it has changed. Unicom doesn't print postage stamps, but the security printers who do are just as advanced. Printing plates are no longer prepared by labourious hand makeup; they are assembled on a computer screen, transmitted directly to another machine, and thence directly to the press as a polished product that was never once touched by human hands. Retouches and re-entries are a thing of the past~ Our tour guide mentioned that if a scratch or flaw was spotted on a plate, it would be faster and easier just to run off a corrected plate.

Specialists in modern issues might be well advised to brush up on Apple computers (the standard of the graphics industry) rather than dies-and step-and-repeat cameras. Interestingly, our tour guide mentioned that while older problems have been eliminated, newer ones arise, such as incompatible computer formats or corrupted files. Proofreaders are still needed, as spellcheckers can't catch wrong colours or incorrect numbers.

Years from now, we may see learned articles in philatelic journals about how a stamp must have been prepared in such-and-such a way on PhotoShop software via Apple and Acer computers, via a Linotype-Hell central processor.

Dale Speirs

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Sir ,

This is in response to Dr. Arnell's letter in the Oct/Dec issue of *Topics*, Vol. 54, #4. This letter referred to his article "Stories Behind My Covers 29" which appeared in the April/June issue, Vol, 54 #2, and specifically to the cover shown in Figure 1 of that article.

I can understand why Dr. Arnell believes that Newfoundland was covered by Article 34 when a number of covers are known from there with the Great Britain accountancy mark G.B.1F60c. Dr. Arnell's cover was posted in Newfoundland and carried by Cunard steamer *via* Halifax to England. This route and service comes under Article 35 for the British North America provinces and for Newfoundland. It is so listed in a letter bill, pattern M, that is included in the tables annexed to the Articles of Execution of the January 1, 1857 Anglo-French Convention. I have sent a copy of this page to Dr. Arnell. Letters from Newfoundland sent under

other conditions may have been subject to Article 34. Nevertheless there seem to be some covers from British North America and Newfoundland that were inappropriately marked.

Since the latter part of 1856 Great Britain had been negotiating with the British North America provinces and Newfoundland for a reduction in the Colonial inland postage from 8d per 30 grams to 4d . Because communication moved slowly in those days, and because of glitches that arose along the way, this took considerable time. During this time the accountancy marks G.B.3F02c and G.B.2F40c are seen on covers, reflecting the 8d per 30 grams rate. By January 1, 1858 the reduction to 4d resulted in these marks being changed to G.B.2F62c and G.B.2F-. This is confirmed in correspondence from the G.P.O. Post 48/136, pp. 714-715. I have sent a copy of this information to Dr. Arnell and hope it helps to clarify the issue.

Maggie Toms

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Sir:

Perforation pin bending is a myth.

Let us perform a simple experiment. Take an ordinary sewing needle between your thumb and forefinger of each hand and try to bend it. It takes considerable force to cause it to bend appreciably, and then it bends only with a large radius of curvature.

Now let us perform a mental experiment. We will remove all but 10 consecutive pins from each of say 10 perforation wheels. We now reassemble the "Benrose" machine but leave out the set screws that hold the pin wheels in angular alignment. Align the pin wheels on top of the hole wheels and turn the shafts until the pins on the 10 wheels first start to attempt to enter their respective holes. Now tighten the set screws.

If we now try and cause the wheels to rotate by operating the treadle we are of course trying to bend those 10 pins simultaneously. If we are strong enough, maybe we can cause the next 10 pins to engage. We are now bending 20 pins. The force required is now very large. This is of course disregarding the frictional forces as the pins try and slide into the holes.

The "Benrose" machine was operated by a woman merely pressing on a treadle(sewing machine). There is no way she could exert enough pressure to bend even 20 pins let alone 30, 40 etc. Even if she were an amazon the belt drive, which is shown in the "Benrose" patent, would merely slip.

Surely this simple analysis will dispel forever the bending pin concept.

I welcome any comments on this letter or my previous article.

Bob Tomlinson

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Sir;

I read Bill Bailey's excellent article on Military Postal Rates in *BNA Topics* (Vol. 54, No. 3, p 35-52) again recently and it reminded me of some interesting covers