

Small Queen plates of no further use to the printers and which, it should be remembered, belonged to the Post Office.

This would account for the fact that only two 6 cents plates are on the list, whereas there is clear evidence that there were four, and possibly five, made. The first, which is referred to as a "possibility" in Mr. Nixon's article is the reject plate, used briefly at the beginning of 1874, and like the second 6 cents Large Queen plate, and incidentally, the first Small Queen 5 cents, has its lower left guide dot positioned away from the corner, in this case below the left numeral "6". Since incised guide dots don't wander, there is no question that this is a distinct plate, which Bill Simpson first brought to my attention at the CPS of GB Ayr Convention ten years ago. Second, I have evidence in my collection that the first state of the "A" was *two dots*. I have a strip of three, 1st Ottawa perforation, i.e. approx 11.75 all round, which shows the classic signs of a springing sidepoint—a heavy locating guide dot with a fainter second dot caused by the sidepoint jumping out of position caused by the pressure exerted during the transfer process—an exact parallel with the 1859 12½ cents. There is no sign of re-entry on any of the three. I have another copy, same perf, on the very thin soft white paper in use c. 1872 showing considerable plate wear. Two dot examples with signs of repair don't appear until late—about midway through the Montreal period, and could well have been from what was originally a single dot plate, while the three, and occasionally four dot varieties are from repairs to the "A" plate. Interestingly, once ensconced in the final Ottawa premises, further repair, which certainly was done otherwise there would be no minor 5¢/6¢ varieties from it, did not cause even more dots so another transfer roller had to have been used for that. There is other evidence to show that the "A" plate is not the 1871 plate with a check letter added, quite apart from the contemporaneous use of stamps bearing both one and two dots.

On the Montreal plate of the 6 cents it should be noted that the plate was incised "BC", not "CB"—this means the "B" pane produced the right hand side of the printed sheet, not the left as once thought; it also means the counters were placed centrally on the plate. As far as the "guillotine" line is concerned, I believe this is a misnomer. Unless the operatives were cutting up sheets with their eyes shut, there is no way the line was used as a guillotine guide, indeed on some plates it is too close to the print area. My guess is that it was a reference line, that is the first mark to be inscribed on the plate—unless anyone has a better idea.

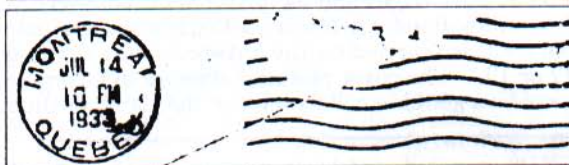
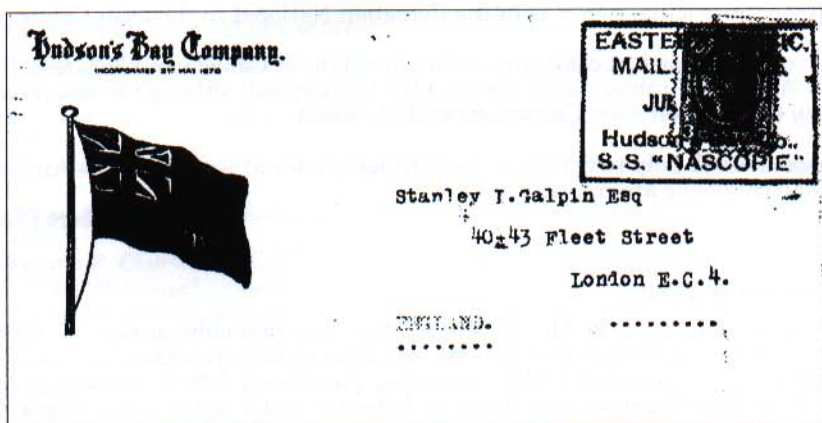
J. Hillson

Sir;

With much interest I have read Norris Dyers article (*BNA Topics*, Vol. 55, #4, pp. 34-46) on Italo Balbo, the Italian air hero, and his mass flight via Newfoundland to the World Exposition at Chicago in 1933.

The article is well done and the information supplied very readable. It appears however that Norris R. Dyer is not aware of the fact that Balbo carried a bundle of commercial mail from Cartwright in Labrador to Montreal at the request of the postmaster of the Eastern Arctic supply ship *S.S. Nascopie*. The *Nascopie* happened to be at Cartwright on the way north on its annual voyage to supply the Eastern Arctic out-posts. As you can see from portions of a copy of the report of the *Nascopie* postmaster for the 1933 voyage (below), Balbo accepted a packet of 96 letters to carry free as far as Montreal.

As shown, one such item in my collection has a July 11, 1933 Eastern Arctic Mail Service marking) and was back-stamped on arrival in Montreal on July 14. The Italian fliers did not add any kind of markings to the covers; probably the mail was in a sealed bag.



The information about this special mail carriage was unearthed by Rae Thompson, who published it in a privately produced pamphlet called "Thompson's Nascope File - Mail Years 1933-34" in the early 1980s. The report from the postmaster is dated October 16, 1933. The following relevant sections are reproduced from Thompson's publication.

"Duties as Postmaster - S.S. Nascope

1. I have the honour to report that on the Commissioner's instructions I acted as Postmaster on board the S.S. Nascope.
2. Mail was taken on board and put on shore at all the places visited, and in addition over 1700 letters were received from the Ship's Post Box and handled by me.
3. Mail was put on shore at: -

	Quebec 1 packet	93 letters
	Rimouski 1 packet	61 " "
x	Cartwright 1 packet	96 " "
	Charlton 1 bag (from Ship)	472 letters
	1 " (Lake Harbour)	? " "
	Churchill 1 "	197 " "
	Cartwright 1 packet	6 " "

...

- x This mail was carried to Montreal by the Italian Air Fleet, at no Government expense.

(SGD.) T.V. Sandys Wunch, Insp.
I/C Eastern Arctic Sub. Division

I assume the original report is in the Canadian National Archives in Ottawa.

The recently published catalogue on the Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland by the American Airmail Society does not list this airmail, although it was the first airmail carriage between Cartwright and Montreal.

Perhaps this will help to get the record straight as far as Balbo and the American Air Mail catalogue are concerned.

Robert Binner

Norris Dyer responds:

The cover mentioned in Mr. Binner's letter was probably carried by Balbo's squadron from Cartwright to Montreal. Mr. Binner is correct that this mail isn't mentioned in the recent A.A.M.S. catalogue. Another A.A.M.S. publication from 1996, "The Mass Flights of Italo Balbo" by Robert E. Lana states under Cartwright "No official mail was taken on at Cartwright and 21 letters were delivered." (pg. 51). C.H.C. Harmer, in his "Newfoundland Air Mails", 1953, is a bit less oblique, stating on page 162 "Unofficial mail also carried on the outward flight postmarked Cartwright, Labrador, July 12 or 13." The cover pictured appears to be one of the latter; as such it would appear to be a genuine collectable for the Balbo enthusiast.

Sir;

I offer the following comments on several of the covers shown in Marc Eisenberg's latest article in *BNA Topics*, Vol. 56, #1, pp. 15-19.

Figure 4: This is clearly a case of the postmaster (or the letter writer—it is difficult to compare handwriting on the picture as shown) initially writing "paid", then crossing it out. There was no additional charge—the letter was simply charged the single domestic rate.

Figure 5: There was an additional 3d domestic charge (on top of the 1d drop letter rate) arising from the redirection. The caption as written is misleading.

Figure 8: The letter is not short paid—it is unpaid. Regulations (concerning letters sent in either direction between Canada and the U.S.) at the time required that partial payment be ignored. So, the three cents stamp (it should have been 10 cents) was treated as being of no value, and the handstamp 6 represents 6d Cy. due in Canada—the entire fee, not the deficiency.

David Handelman

Editor's Note: Obviously the editor needs to be more careful with the interpretations provided for such items.