

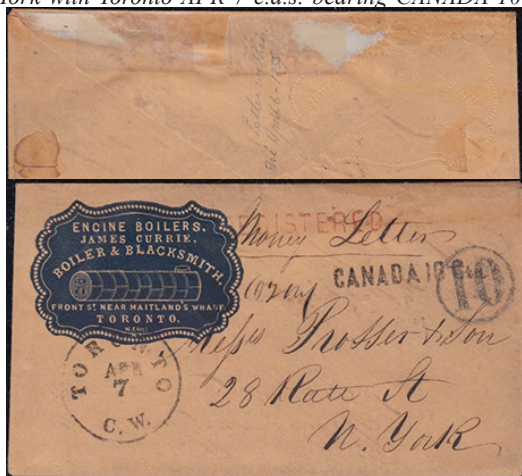
# The Stamps of Canada, Chapter 82

## The Registration Stamps

*Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added*

The convenience of the registry system was adopted in Canada in May, 1855, at which time the fee was the remarkably low one of one penny. In 1856 the system was extended to cover letters sent to the United States by mutual agreement between the post office departments of both countries, and while the domestic rate remained at one penny the fee for the registration of letters to the United States was three pence. Mr. Howes has discovered an interesting notice in the Canadian Directory for 1857-8 which gives further details as follows:—

*Cover to New York with Toronto APR 7 c.d.s. bearing CANADA 10 CT rate mark, endorsed MONEY LETTER in manuscript and hand stamped REGISTERED. Docketing on back "letter written Fri April 6 1855", suggests that this could be the earliest known registered cover. Registration replaced the Money Letter on 1 May 1855.*



*London, Canada 1857 stampless cover to Toronto with boxed REGISTERED handstamp, also with PAID handstamp, postmarked with LONDON*



*DE 16 1857 double split-ring, with next-day arrival backstamp.*

A rate of charge for Registration so low as, in no probable degree, to operate as a motive, with persons posting letters of value, to deny themselves the advantage of securing from the Post Office an acknowledgment of the receipt of the specific letter, has always been considered to be a cardinal point in the Canadian Registration System.

The Registration fee, or charge, has, therefore, under the influence of this consideration, been maintained at 2 cents, though it is doubtful whether such a rate of charge covers the actual cost of the process; the address of the Registered Letter having, in the course of transmission, to be entered on an average not less than six times, and forms of certificate or receipt, and Books in which to preserve permanent records at each Post Office, to be supplied.

*1859 1¢ Rose pair, 5¢ Vermilion (Sc. 14-15) tied by 1865 Montreal rimless grid duplex c.d.s. on yellow registered cover with merchant's corner card, the 2¢ paying the registry fee and the 5¢ for domestic postage, also with straightline "REGISTERED" handstamp.*



Persons transmitting letters, which they desire should pass through the post as "registered letters", must observe that no record is taken of any letter unless specially handed in for registration at the time of the posting. Upon all such letters, with the exception of those addressed to the United States, one penny must be prepaid as a registration charge. If addressed to the United States, the ordinary postage rate on the letters to that country must be prepaid, and in addition a registration charge of 3d per letter. The registry thus effected in Canada will be carried on by the United States Post Office until the letter arrives at its destination.

In like manner, letters addressed to Canada may be registered at the place of posting in the United States, and the registry made there will accompany the letter to the place of delivery in Canada.

A certificate of registration will be given by the postmaster if required.

The registration system can be applied to the letter portion of the mail only.

The registration system at that time made no provision for compensation in case of the loss of letters, the small extra fee charged simply indicating that extra care would be taken to secure proper delivery. Evidently at that time the fee was paid in money, and the letters then marked with a handstamp of some sort, for in the Postmaster-General's Report for 1858 we read, "It is also considered that it would be an improvement on the system if the charge for registration were made pre-payable by a stamp, instead of by money as at present."

It is probable that shortly after this the prepayment of the registry fee was indicated by the affixing of stamps of the required value. The report for 1860 refers to the system as follows:—

The postal officials were evidently strong believers in the Registration system and lost no opportunity of dwelling on its merits. In his Report for 1864 the Postmaster-General tells of its manifold advantages as follows:—When a letter is registered, that is to say, marked and recorded in the Post Office so as to individualise it from the bulk of ordinary letter correspondence, its presence in the Post Office can be identified and its course of transmission traced, and a registered letter is thus secured from the chance of abstraction by an unfaithful messenger employed to post it (as it is always open to proof whether the letter was posted for registration or not), from risk of loss by accidental mis-direction on the part of the sender, and from mistakes in the Post Office—such as mis-sending or delivery to a wrong party.

Against actual dishonesty on the part of the Post Office employes, a registered letter is incomparably more secure than an unregistered one, for an unregistered money-letter and the nature of its contents are, to any person accustomed to handle letters, as manifest as though the letter had been singled out and marked by the registered stamp.

Moreover, the safety of an unregistered letter is dependent on the integrity of a Post Office Clerk during the whole time that it remains in his custody, frequently for hours, or even days; whilst a registered letter will almost invariably have to be acknowledged at the moment of its passing into an officer's hands, and cannot thereafter be suppressed without leaving him individually accountable for its disposal.

At what date the registry system was extended to letters sent to other countries than the United States is not clear but Mr. Howes has succeeded in unearthing a document which shows the rates prevailing in 1865-6:—

The charge for Registration, in addition to the Postage, is as follows, viz.:—

On Letters to any other place in Canada or British North America, 2 cents

On Letters for the United States, 5 cents

On Letters for the United Kingdom, 12-1/2 cents

On Letters for British Colonies or Possession sent via England, 25 cents

On Letters for France and other Foreign Countries via England, an equal amount to the postage rate.

Both the postage charge and registration fee must in all cases be prepaid.

It was not until 1872 that the idea of issuing special stamps for the prepayment of the registration fee was mooted but in the Postmaster-General's Report for that year we read:—

It seems expedient to adopt some distinctive postage stamp to be used only in prepayment of the Registration charge, both to make it clear that this charge has been duly paid and accounted for in every

15¢ Registered cover to New Zealand, franked with a 15¢ Large Queen plus 2¢, 5¢ and 8¢ Registration stamps, mailed from Bradford Ont. June 26, 1880, to New Zealand via Toronto, Windsor and San Francisco (where it was delayed for 28 days), received at Nelson, New Zealand on Aug. 28, 1880.



case, and to diminish the risk which is occasionally felt at points of distribution of omitting to carry on the Registration in cases where the ordinary Registration postmark is not as distinct and calculated to arrest attention as it should be.

It has always been the policy of the Canadian Post Office to admit letters to Registration at a low rate of charge for the additional security thus given, so as to leave no adequate motive, on the score of cost, for sending valuable letters through the mails unregistered, and, doubtless, the very large proportion of such letters offered for registration demonstrates a gratifying measure of success in attaining the desired object.

*To Be Continued*



# The Stamps of Canada, Chapter 83

## The Official Stamps

*Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added*



*Unused Queen Victoria 1¢ postal stationery card with Hechler "Servicem" Crest & imprints all doubled.*



*1868-88 1/2¢ Large Queen and 1/2¢ and 3¢ Small Queen, 8¢ Blue Registered stamps (Sc. 21, 34, 41a, F3) on 1¢ Blue entire to Germany bearing unofficial Hechler overprints (Crest visible top center, "S" and "e" of Service visible just outside the 1¢ blue indicia), cover with "Halifax N.S., Canada FE 9, 1889" datestamp, London transit, Hamburg receiving backstamp, with 1985 Greene certificate which states that the usage is non-contemporary*

Canada has never issued special postage stamps for use on departmental correspondence but in November, 1884, a German paper—*Der Philatelist*—on the advice of a correspondent, chronicled a series for official use. These were said to consist of the ordinary adhesives, two envelopes and a post card surcharged with the word OFFICIAL in black. To quote from the *Philatelic Record*:—"It is alleged that they were prepared and issued in 1877, but after a short time were called in again. The surcharges are in some cases oblique, and in others perpendicular. It is at least strange that, considering our intercourse with Canada, our first knowledge of the issue of official stamps so far back as 1877 should reach us from Temesvar, wherever that may be".

Doubts were, naturally, expressed on all sides with regard to the authenticity of these labels and a letter addressed to Ottawa on the subject resulted in the following reply:—  
Post Office Department, Canada,  
Ottawa, 18th May, 1885.

Sir:—I am directed by the Postmaster-General to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th ult., enquiring whether postage stamps bearing the word "Official" on their face are in circulation in the Dominion of Canada, and beg, in reply, to say that no such stamp, card, newspaper wrapper, or envelope has ever been issued by this Department. I am, sir, your obedient servant,  
(Signed) Wm. White, Secretary.

Two years later, in April, 1887, after this canard had been satisfactorily disposed of another set of alleged official stamps was referred to in the *Philatelic Record* as follows:—

Mr. Hechler sent to the Transvaal correspondent of Major Evans a set of Canadian stamps surcharged SERVICE, and he certainly vouched for the authenticity of the Royal arms and supporters, with the word SERVICE on some Canadian envelopes, which he declared had been issued to the troops that were sent out in the Indian rebellion in 1885, and with whom Mr. Hechler was serving. This rebellion did not break out until April of that year,

and yet we find these envelopes described in the *Timbre-Poste* of February of the same year, on the authority of *Der Philatelist* of the previous January. This all seems to be very remarkable, especially as no one but Mr. Hechler appears ever to have had any of them.

A little delving into the history of these stamps and envelopes soon showed that they were nothing more than a private speculation on the part of their sponsor, Mr. Hechler. It appears that Hechler was a captain in a Volunteer regiment which was despatched to assist in putting down the rebellion. He had the words SERVICE printed on a number of envelopes, postcards, and probably stamps as well, which were used in sending notices of drill, etc., to his company. But they were never issued or recognised by the Government of Canada.



*Not yet released at the time of this 1907 article, Canada's first Official stamps were issued in 1912. Shown here is the front and back of the 1912 50¢, Sc. OAI20, with OHMS (On His Majesty's Service) 5-hole Perforated Initials (Perfins).*

# The Stamps of Canada, Chapter 84

## The Registration Stamps, Cont.

*Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added*



Sc. F1



Sc. F2



Sc/F3

In spite of this recommendation [to issue Registration stamps] it was not until three years later that special stamps for Registration purposes made their appearance. They were finally placed on sale on November 15th, 1875, and were referred to by the Postmaster-General in his Report for that



Canada F1 Plate Block with British American Bank Note Co./Montreal Imprint

reading up at the left and down at the right, and in the upper corners are large uncolored numerals plainly denoting the value. Like all other Canadian stamps they were printed from line-engraved plates on unwatermarked paper. They were at first printed in sheets of fifty in ten horizontal rows of five



5¢ yellow green, Sc. F2b



5¢ imperf vertically pair, Sc. F2c



5¢ imperf horizontally pair, Sc. F2c

year as follows:—

Registration stamps have been issued, to be used by the public in prepaying the registration charges on letters passing within the Dominion, or to the United Kingdom or United States, each destination being distinguished by a different color in the stamp, as well as by a variation in the amount of registration charge and corresponding value of the stamp.

There is a red stamp of the value of two cents for the prepayment of the registration charges on letters within the Dominion.

There is a green stamp of five cents value for registered letters addressed to the United States.

There is a blue stamp of eight cents value for registered letters addressed to the United Kingdom.

These stamps are to apply exclusively to the registration charges and the postage rates on registered letters are to be prepaid by the ordinary postage stamps.

It is believed that the use of these distinctive stamps for the registration charges will tend to give registered letters additional security against the risk which is sometimes felt of the registration escaping observation, when such letters are dealt with hurriedly or handled at night, whilst passing through the post.

These registration stamps were not only of distinctive design but also of distinctive shape so that they were readily recognised from ordinary postage stamps. They are long, narrow labels and the design is the same for each. On an engine-turned background the word "REGISTERED" in large uncolored Roman capitals is curved prominently across the centre. Below is "LETTER STAMP", also curved but in smaller letters, while above is "CANADA" on a straight label in still smaller lettering. At each end are tables containing the value in words

stamps each. Mr. Howes describes the marginal details as follows:—

The imprint was the same as the second type employed for the small "cents" issue—"British American Bank Note Co. Montreal" in a pearled frame—and likewise appeared four times on the sheet, as already fully described in the chapter dealing with that issue. The denomination of the stamp was also expressed as TWO CENTS, in the shaded Roman capitals which we found in the case of the postage stamps, over the first stamp in the top row of that value, but with the 5 cent the word FIVE alone appears. The 8 cent we have not seen. On the 2 cent there is also a large numeral 2, 7-1/2 mm. high, over the last stamp in the top row (number 5) but the 5 cent has none.

The stamps were ordinarily perforated 12, like the then current postage stamps, but the 2¢ in orange and the 5¢ in dark green are both known entirely imperforate.

The Postmaster-General's Report for 1877 stated that "the registration charge on registered letters between the United Kingdom and Canada has been reduced from 8 cents to 5 cents". This, naturally, largely reduced the demand for the 8 cents stamp though it is probable that the 8¢ rate still applied to foreign countries. Shortly afterwards (the exact date has not been traced) the registration fee on letters to all foreign countries was reduced to 5 cents so that the use of the 8¢ denomination was entirely abolished. The stamps in the hands of postmasters were called in and destroyed and by examining the official figures relating to the numbers originally issued and those destroyed Mr. Howes estimates that about 40,000 of these 8¢ registration stamps were used.



In 1889 a general revision of postal rates took place, as already explained in Chapter X, and one of these changes affected the registration fee. The domestic fee was raised from 2¢ to 5¢ so that the registration charge was uniform and was 5¢ on letters sent anywhere. This, of course, did away with the usefulness of the 2¢ registration stamps but, as indicated in the official circular, “for the present, and until further instructed, the registration fee maybe prepaid by using the 2 cent Registration stamps and postage stamps to make up the amount.”

The Postmaster-General’s Report for 1889, in referring to the advance in the registration charge, says:—

The charge for the registration of a letter, parcel, book or other articles of mail matter was also made uniform, and fixed at 5 cents for all classes of matter. The frequent delay consequent upon the prepayment of a wrong registration fee will no longer take place.

The removal of the printing establishment of the British American Bank Note Company from Montreal to Ottawa resulted in some marked changes in the shades of the then current postage stamps as we have already shown in a previous chapter. The registration stamps were also affected in some degree, the 2 cents value, in particular, appearing in a number of new and brighter tints. The 5¢ appeared in blue-green—a distinct contrast from the green and yellow-green shades previously current.

In 1892 some of the postage stamps, it will be remembered, appeared in sheets of 200 instead of 100 as formerly. About the same period new plates were made for the 5¢ registration stamp, these containing one hundred impressions in ten rows of ten, instead of fifty as before.

On August 1st, 1893, a regular postage stamp of the denomination of 8¢ was issued for the purpose of paying the postage and registration charge and the appearance of this sounded the death knell of the special registration stamps. The supplies in the hands of postmasters were used up and when exhausted no more were printed.

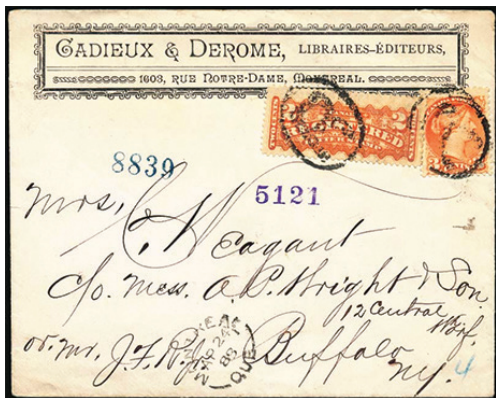
Much has been written regarding the 2¢ registration stamp printed in brown. These were originally found at the Miscou Light House Post Office in New Brunswick and though the stamps were in an unmistakably dark brown shade it has since been satisfactorily proved that the change was quite accidental and that immersion in peroxide would restore them to their original color. Although the Postmaster of the above named office is said to have stated that the stamps were in brown when he received them there is little doubt he must have been mistaken. Much the same thing happened in connection with the current six cents United States stamps at an office on the Pacific Coast (San Pedro). Some of these stamps were found in a distinct brown shade almost exactly matching that of the 4¢ value and though some local collectors had dreams of a rare error of color it was easily proved that they were simply oxidised.

#### Reference List.

- 1875-89. Engraved and printed by the British American Bank Note Co., Montreal or Ottawa. No wmk. Perf. 12.
- 104. 2¢ vermilion, Scott’s Nos. 151 or 152, now F1
- 105. 5¢ green, Scott’s No. 153, now F2
- 106. 8¢ blue, Scott’s No. 154, now F3

## A Sampling of Registered Covers

1888 5¢ registered U.S. letter rate cover, franked with a 3¢ orange red, plus 2¢ orange red Registered stamp, both tied by an R in oval cancel, paying the 3¢ letter rate to the United States plus 2¢ registration fee. Mailed from Montreal (April 24,



1888) to Buffalo, New York. This anomalous registration fee of 2¢, the result of an error in the Postal Guide, was only in effect for two months (from March 1 to April 30, 1888) after which it was restored to 5¢.



1880 8¢ U.S. registered letter rate cover, franked with 3¢ orange red and 5¢ deep green Registered stamp, both tied by fancy cross-roads cork cancels, paying the 3¢ letter rate to the U.S. plus 5¢ registration fee. Mailed from St. Catharines West, Ont. (May 4, 1880) to Rochester, N.Y.



□ 1877 13¢ registered letter rate cover to England, franked with a 5¢ olive green and an 8¢ blue Registered stamp, both tied by straightline REGISTRATION

handstamps, paying the pre-UPU 5¢ preferred rate plus 8¢ registration fee. Mailed from Goderich, Ont. (June 8, 1877) to London, England, also with a red crown Registered cancel on front (above the two cancels lower left).

8¢ blue Registered Letter Stamp single franking, paying the entire 3¢ postage and Registration fee. This was against regulations, as the postage fee



could not be paid using Registered Letter stamps), tied by cork cancels to advertising cover with oval “R” handstamp from Toronto 24 DE '90 to Flesherston, with Christmas Day receiver on back. The illegal use of the stamp appears to have been tolerated by the postal authorities, as there are no postage due markings or charges of any kind.

# The Stamps of Canada, Chapter 85

## The Officially Sealed Stamps

*Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added*

Although "officially sealed" labels cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered as postage stamps or, indeed, of having any philatelic significance, yet they are collected by many, in common with adhesive registered labels, as having an interest owing to the fact that they are visible evidence of one phase of the working of the post office.

The "officially sealed" labels used by the Canadian Post Office seem to have been first recorded in the latter part of 1879. The first type consists of a rectangular label, measuring about 25-1/2 by 38 mm. on which the words "OFFICIALLY SEALED" are shown straight across the centre. Above this, in a curve, is the inscription "POST OFFICE CANADA", while below, in a similar curve, is "DEAD LETTER OFFICE". The border consists of a handsome piece of engine-turned engraving. These labels were normally perforated 12 but they are also known entirely imperforate.



1879 Officially Sealed bottom margin block of six with full "British American Bank Note Co Montreal" Imprint

Much misconception existed as to the use of these labels until Major E. B. Evans, when visiting Canada in 1889, took the opportunity of finding out exactly for what they were used. The results of his investigations were published in the *Philatelic Record* for November, 1889, and as the article is full of interest we need make no apology for reproducing it in extenso:—

When I was in Canada last July I made special enquiries about these labels, as there appeared to be some mystery about their use. Everyone agreed that they were not placed upon all letters opened at the Dead Letter Office and returned to their senders, and no two persons seemed to have quite the same theory as to the rules for their employment or non-employment in any particular case. Even gentlemen connected with the Post Office at Halifax, such as Mr. King and others, could give me no definite information. I therefore determined to see what I could do at headquarters in Ottawa.

Fortunately, I was able, through a collector in an official position, to obtain an introduction to the Deputy Postmaster-General, who most kindly gave me the following particulars, which show that the employment of the officially sealed labels is very restricted, thus accounting for their rarity.

Letters in Canada, as in the United States, very frequently have on the outside the well-known notice containing the address of the sender,

and a request that the letter may be returned if not delivered within a certain time. These, of course, are not opened at the Dead Letter Office, and in fact, I think, are ordered not to be sent there, but are returned direct from the office to which they were originally addressed or from the head office of the district. On the other hand, those that have no indication of the address of the sender on the outside are sent to the Dead Letter Office, and there necessarily opened; but neither of these classes thus properly dealt with is considered to require the officially-sealed label.

It is only if one of the former class, having the sender's name and address on the outside, is sent to the Dead Letter Office and there opened in error that the officially-sealed label is applied, to show that such letter has been opened officially, and not by any unauthorized person. Whether these pieces of gummed paper ever had a more extended use or not I cannot say, but I was assured that the above was the substance of the regulations as to their employment.

The Deputy Postmaster-General further stated that there had been so many requests for specimens of these labels that the Department had been obliged to make it a rule to turn a deaf ear to all of them. In any case they are not postage stamps, properly speaking, at all. They indicate neither postage paid nor postage due, but simply that the letters to which they are attached have been opened by proper authority, and they at the same time afford a means of reclosing them.



Left, 1902 Officially Sealed, Dead Letter Office (Sc. OX2a); right, 1897 Law stamp.



1902 Officially Sealed, Dead Letter Office, Imperforate Pair (Sc. OX2a) without gum as issued.

About 1902 a label of new design was introduced, this, of course, being the work of the American Bank Note Company. These are larger than their predecessors and are very handsome labels. In the centre is an excellent portrait of Queen Victoria, adapted from the "Law

Stamps" of 1897, with "CANADA" in heavy uncolored Roman capitals curved above, and, at the top, the words "OFFICIALLY SEALED" in letters so graded that the tops form a straight line, while the bottoms follow the curve of "CANADA". Under the portrait the words "DEAD LETTER" are shown on a straight label which extends right across





1913, Brown Black, Official Seal, Plate Proof on India (Unitrade OX4P)



1913 Officially Sealed (Sc. OX4). Top "Ottawa-No. 1" plate no. block of ten

the stamp, while below this is the word "OFFICE" on a curved tablet. The spaces at the sides and the bottom are filled with elaborate foliate ornaments and engine-turned work. These labels are also perforated 12 and exist on two kinds of paper. Until about 1907 the paper was of a pale blue color while subsequent printings have been on ordinary white paper. Reference List.

1879. Engraved and printed by the British American Bank Note Co. (No value) deep brown, Sc. OX1

1905-7. Engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Co. (No value) black on blue paper, Sc. OX2  
(No value) black on white paper, Sc. OX3

Not discussed in this article:

1913. Engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Co. (No value) dark brown, Sc. OX4



1913 Officially Sealed Issue, Sc. OX4, three copies sealing top side of Censored Union Bank of Australia envelope originally mailed from New Zealand to SYRIA, with Censor handstamp on front and manuscript notation "not transmissible" applied when received at Vancouver 20 NOV 1914, sent to the local Dead Letter Office next day and forwarded to Ottawa Dead Letter Office on 16 March (where it was opened and Officially re-sealed) and returned to New Zealand and received at the Wellington Dead Letter Office on 24 AP.