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Introducing Newfoundland

Sidney J. Harris

One of the world's leading collectors of Newfoundland stamps gives G.S.M. readers some advice on his favourite country

Most people know that Newfoundland was Britain's oldest colony and consequently her oldest dominion. This is certainly known to practically every philatelist. It is also well known that Newfoundland joined the Confederation of Canada on April 1st, 1949, and since that date has used the postage stamps of Canada. What perhaps is not so well known amongst collectors in general is the vast interest to be obtained in collecting the stamps of this particular country.

Many people may be fearful of starting a Newfoundland collection when they look at the beginning of the Gibbons Catalogue and see the prices required for the very rare scarlet-vermilion and orange-vermilion issues of 1857 and 1860. Fortunately for collectors in general, however, the rose-lake issues of 1861 to 1862 provide us with the same designs, and as most of these stamps were remaindered by the Newfoundland Post Office many years ago they are still obtainable at very reasonable prices and make a very interesting study. The small attractive sheets of twenty stamps are still available, although of course the prices are not quite what they were some ten years or more ago, but they are still within reach of the average collector.

Going on to look through the catalogue there are plenty of reasonably priced commemoratives of all descriptions, the first real commemorative being printed by the American Bank Note Company in 1897 and issued as the

famous "Cabot" issue which goes from the 1 cent green with the head of Queen Victoria, to the 60 cents black depicting a portrait of Henry VII. Continuing in the catalogue we have the portrait issue of 1897 to 1918, followed by numerous commemorative issues including the 1911 Coronation issue with pictures of all the Royal Family. The issue of 1932 is particularly mentioned as it contains the first portrait of our present Queen Elizabeth II when she was Princess, now a very well-known stamp: the 6 cents light blue, S.G. 214. The next set is the very attractive Humphrey Gilbert issue of 1933, followed by the long Coronation set of 1937, both printed by Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co. and both containing many intriguing varieties.

In the country as a whole there are very few difficult overprints and the lack of a multitude of these makes this country even more interesting to collectors who are afraid of the difficulties of overprinted stamps.

There are many perforation varieties in practically all the issues and many imperforates and imperf. between varieties which are today of outstanding interest. The emission of so many commemorative sets caused a great deal of adverse comment in philatelic circles at the time when the stamps were produced, but it can be said that today it has greatly added to the interest in collecting these fine issues which can still be obtained at very reasonable prices.

To those philatelists looking for

research there is much to be done, particularly amongst the cheaper stamps. I refer to the one example, the 2 cents green with the head of King George V (S.G. 223) which was printed in two dies and is annotated in the catalogue as such. The used stamp is still only catalogued at 3d. and in mint state at 9d. The investigation of this particular stamp can be very rewarding, and there are many more of similar stature in various commemoratives and other issues of this country.

The earlier stamps and first cents issues contain a variety of unusual postmarks. There is one particular postmark of the capital, St. Johns, which is an oval strike containing the figures 235. As this cancel was in use from approximately 1865 to 1895 a great many used stamps exist with this particular form of cancel. There are not very many so-called "fancy cancels" but it is interesting to try and find these various cancellations with their attractive-sounding names on covers.

Then we come, of course, to the famous Trans-Atlantic airmails, all with their first flights which commenced round about 1919. A great many of these will be outside the scope of the average collector, but do not let this deter you, as Newfoundland became a base for first flights of all kinds and these are still available and form a most interesting study.

Then there are most attractive sets of permanent issues, the first being printed by the American Bank Note Co. of New York in 1866. The later issues were practically all printed by Perkins Bacon & Co., although De La Rue printed the 1911 Coronation issue and the issue of the small stamps in 1923, S.G. 149, etc., and the permanent issue of 1928, S.G. 164, etc. There is an interesting study to be made here on the later issue when Perkins Bacon took over from De La Rue and produced the same stamps from different dies in 1929-31, S.G. 180, etc.

There are, of course, no stamps issued by Newfoundland since 1949 when the Dominion joined Canada, but the catalogue contains 294 S.G. numbers without taking into account varieties, "a" numbers, etc., so there are plenty of stamps to interest everybody. There is still much research to be done on the cheaper stamps as well as the more expensive ones outside the reach of most people's pockets, and although Newfoundland is a popular country with a lot of collectors, if its general interest could be tackled by more collectors we would have more and more information which would add to the joys of philately.



Short List

Michael T. Aker

Every Secretary of every Philatelic Society I have ever met (and after many sinful years I know quite a few) has an annual and ulcer-forming problem: who is to be asked to give displays at the forthcoming meetings of the Society?

At first glance, this appears to be a problem of little magnitude and easy solution: simply go through all the previous seasons' programmes and choose the requisite number of speakers who have not yet visited your Society.

To aid this laudable effort, there have been, in the past, lists published in good faith by certain philatelic papers of those who are prepared (at considerable expense and inconvenience) to visit other Societies.

Having been, during an unaccountable lapse from sanity, one of these hard-worked and under-appreciated Secretaries, let me tell you that it is not as easy as all this; if it were, there would not be the annual turnover of secretaries that there is!

First of all, the thing to do is to call a meeting of the Committee. This is normally composed of the Officers of the Society plus a certain number, depending on the strength overall of the membership, of ordinary members. These latter are usually selected from those who have been disappointed in their attempts to attain office in the Society, plus those who make the most noise at meetings.

Mind you, it is not the purpose of the Committee meeting actually to choose the Guest-speaker(s); this would be asking far too much. The wise Secretary (i.e., ALL Secretaries) will already have a list of suitable speakers in his pocket, but this he will not produce until a suitable time.

This time will depend on various factors, but will normally be after everybody else has produced his (or her) own ideas which will then be thrashed out by the other members until everyone (bar the Secy.) sinks exhausted into his chair, and the member in whose house the meeting is being held, breaks for much-needed refreshments.

It is a sad reflection on the state of the human race, that in practically all the committee meetings I have attended as a Secretary, the one dominant idea of every member of the Committee is to see that by hook or by crook, usually the latter, the country he collects is represented that season by a speaker from afar.