

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter XI

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

Chapter XI.—The 20¢ and 50¢ Stamps of 1893.

The Postmaster-General's Report for 1892 states that "Postage stamps of the value of 20 cents and 50 cents are about to be issued. These will be useful in prepayment of parcel post." These high values were, of course, intended to be used in making



Sc. 46

Sc. 47

up relatively large amounts of postage. They were not issued to be used in prepayment of any specific rates though a study of the postal rates of the period show that the postage on a parcel weighing up to one pound sent to the United Kingdom would require a 20¢ stamp, while a two pound parcel sent to Japan would take the 50¢ denomination. The same rates show that the postage on one pound parcels sent to Newfoundland was 15¢, though no stamp of this value had been issued subsequent to the series of 1868 nor has one ever since been included in the regular series.

These new 20¢ and 50¢ labels were issued on February 17th, 1893, and while alike in design, except as regards the denotation of value, they are quite dissimilar from any of the previously issued postage stamps of the Dominion both as regards size and design. The portrait shows Queen Victoria in her widow's weeds and is similar to that shown on the Bill stamps which were first issued in 1868. Above the portrait CANADA POSTAGE is curved, and on straight labels at the foot is the value in words, while between this inscription and the lower part of the medallion are figures of value.

The stamps were, as usual, produced by the line-engraved process, and they were printed in sheets of 100 at the Ottawa establishment of the British American Bank Note Company. The manufacturer's imprint was shown twice on each sheet—in the centre of the upper and lower margins. This imprint consisted of the words "British American Bank Note Co. Ottawa," on a strip of solid color measuring 38 mm. in length and 2-1/2 mm. in height. This colored strip has square ends and is enclosed within a pearled border.

Both values were printed on the wove paper used for the other denominations then current and the perforation was the usual 12 made by single-line machines.

Evidently these values were but sparingly used, for Mr. Howes tells us:—

Both were ordered to the number of half a million copies in 1893, and in 1895 25,000 more of the 20 cent and 30,000 more of the 50 cent were delivered, with a final 200 copies in 1896. These quantities were sufficient to last until the 20 cent was superseded by the newer type in 1901, and the 50 cent by the King's head stamp in 1908. Some 1,500 of the 20 cent were returned for destruction and about 10,000 of the 50 cent.

It seems hardly possible that but 200 copies of each were supplied

in 1896—i.e. two sheets of each value—if they were the normal perforated stamps. Possibly this small supply consisted of the imperforates—both values being known in this condition—and if so they may have been printed to fill a special requisition. The imperforate 20¢ is on the normal shade but the 50¢ is, as Mr. Howes observes,



Imperf pairs of the 1893 20¢ and 50¢, Sc. 46a and 47a

in a "peculiar black blue" shade. There are no marked varieties in shade as can easily be understood from the few printings which took place.



1897 usages, the 50¢ on "The Halifax" corner card, the 20¢ on a registered cover, both addressed to Montreal,