

Victorian Canada—Pt. 9—Imperial Penny Postage

By Ed Richardson (From the Stamp Specialist Volume 12, The Maroon Book)

Imperial Penny Postage Issue

Commemorating the inauguration of the penny postage rate to most parts of the British Empire, on Christmas day, 1898, this stamp became the first postal multi-colored issue of Canada. It is also the only Canadian Postage stamp produced by the use of lithography. At least it is believed that this process was used in the printing of the red and lavender portions representing the British Empire and the ocean. The basic design was line engraved, and printed in black. The first day of issue was December 7th.

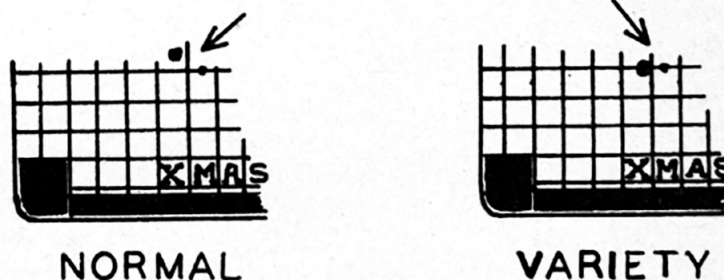


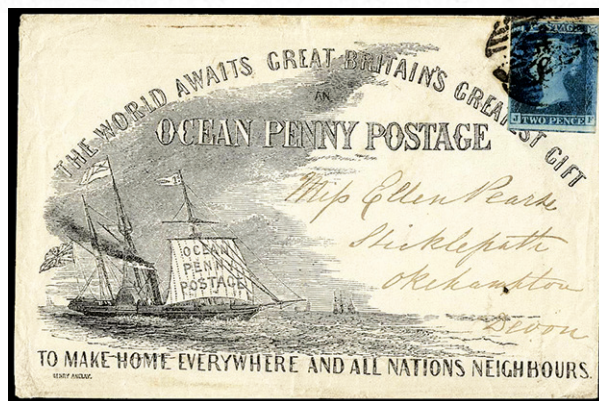
FIG. 41

The constant, "misplaced islands" variety, which occurs on stamp #46 of all plates.

Originally intended as lavender, but varying to a deep blue, the ocean color probably changed with each printing. Those with the "Carmine color omitted" are probably the result of severe fading.

At least four engraved plates were used, and numerous constant plate varieties have been recorded. One of the most interesting varieties is found in the lithographic portion of the stamp, the "misplaced island" variety, (Fig. 41). This is constant on all printings, indicating the probable use of but one lithograph stone.

This stamp holds an additional historical interest, as it reflects the Imperial feeling then so prevalent in Canada, and likewise manifested in the patriotic covers of that same period.



Indicative of the Imperial feeling of the era, a Great Britain patriotic declares "Ocean Penny Postage, The World Awaits Great Britain's Gift".

As with prior issues, given the brevity of this section of the original article, I am also including our relevant "Map Stamp" Classic Canada sections.

The Stamps of Canada, Part 49

The “Map” Stamp of 1898

Based on a 1915 Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

Shortly after Great Britain adopted penny postage for internal use in 1840, postal reformers began to dream of Ocean Penny Postage, and although universal penny postage is not yet an accomplished fact it is within reasonable distance of being so.



1851 J. Valentine Ocean Penny Postage propaganda cover, from New Brunswick to New York. On the front is a red “Fredericton, N.B./Paid” double arc handstamp and faint United States entry c.d.s. plus manuscript “7” rate marking. The campaign for penny postage started very early, as this cover testifies, but was not realized until nearly 50 years later. The center of the movement was in Great Britain, where this envelope was manufactured and nearly all the propaganda covers were used there; so a usage from Canada to the United States is extremely rare.

A great step in this direction was made in 1898 when at an Imperial Convention on Postal Rates held in London the mother country and various colonies agreed to adopt the rate of one penny per half ounce on letters sent to or from Britain or one another. The following extract from the *London Standard* for July 13th shows in an interesting manner how far the movement had then progressed:—

We are authorised by the Postmaster-General to state that, as the result of the Imperial Conference on Postal Rates, it has been agreed, on the proposal of the Representative of the Dominion of Canada, that letter postage of one penny per half-ounce should be established between the United Kingdom, Canada, Newfoundland, the Cape Colony, Natal, and such of the Crown Colonies as may, after communication with, and approval of, Her Majesty's Government, be willing to adopt it. The date on which the reduction will come into effect will be announced later on. The question of a uniform reduced rate for the whole Empire was carefully considered; but it was not found possible to fix upon a rate acceptable to all the Governments concerned. A resolution was therefore adopted, leaving it to those parts of the Empire which were prepared for penny postage to make the necessary arrangements among themselves.

“Since then other portions of the British Empire have fallen into line and the ties binding the English speaking peoples have been further strengthened by the adoption of penny postage between the United States and Great Britain as well as with many of her Colonies.”



Elihu Burritt

Elihu Burritt, the “learned blacksmith” of New Britain, Connecticut, was one of the earliest advocates of Ocean Penny Postage and late in 1848 he issued a pamphlet setting forth his views on the subject. Exactly fifty years later Imperial Penny Postage was inaugurated though it was on a much broader and more liberal basis than Burritt had dared to hope in his fondest imaginings.

Canada, as will be noted from the preceding extract, was the leader in the movement for Imperial Penny Postage and marked the culmination of its ambitious plans by issuing a special two cents stamp. Mr. Mulock, the then Postmaster-General of the Dominion, was responsible for the idea of issuing a special stamp as well as the sponsor for its design. The new stamp was first mentioned by the Ottawa correspondent of the *Outlook* as follows:—

Mr. Mulock, the Postmaster-General, has chosen the new inaugurating stamp. It is in the form of a miniature map of the world distinguishing British possessions and illustrating the relative vastness of the Empire, in which Canada, of course, plays a prominent part.

To Be Continued



2¢ blue Map stamp (Sc. 86) with signature of Sir William Mulock.

The Stamps of Canada, Part 50

The “Map” Stamp of 1898

Based on a 1915 Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added



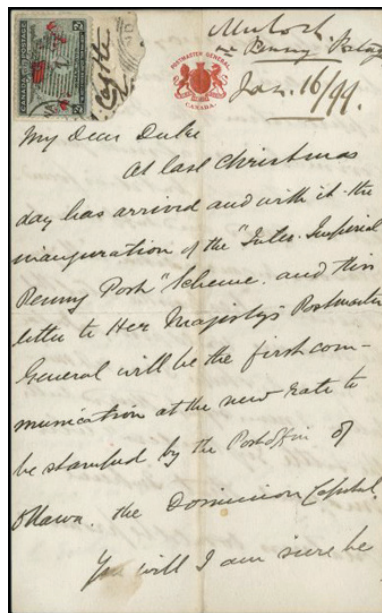
An original cabinet card photograph of the 3¢ design essay that Sir Sanford Fleming had submitted to Sir William Mulock, Postmaster General of Canada, inscribed below in the photograph “Design for a British Empire Postage Stamp/by S.F. Ottawa June 21, 1898”. Sir Fleming was a famous Canadian businessman and entrepreneur, inventor of Standard Time for which he was knighted by Queen Victoria, and designer of Canada’s first postage stamp, the 3p Beaver. This design was rejected in favor of the Map design.

In commenting on [the Map stamp design] the *Philatelic Record*, for December, 1898, stated “A poster stamp even of the large plaster type, which ‘distinguishes British possessions and illustrates the vastness of the Empire’, will indeed be a *multum in parvo* [much in little], and probably the less said the better in anticipation of the realisation of such an apparently absurd idea for a design on such a small engraving as a postage stamp needs to be.”

The *Ottawa Evening Journal* gave further particulars about the forthcoming stamp, viz.:—

The new Imperial Penny Postage Stamp, to be used between Great Britain and a number of her colonies after Christmas Day next, has been designed by the Postmaster-General and ready to be issued. It is not to be a special issue, but will take its place among the regular issues. When Mr. Mulock was in Britain he was surprised to notice that the great mass of the people did not appreciate the value or the greatness of the British possessions abroad. This was especially true of Canada. The idea, therefore, suggested itself to him when he was considering a new stamp, to prepare something that would show the dimensions of Great Britain compared with all other countries. Mr. Mulock asked for some designs from a few artists when he came back to Canada, but they did not meet with his views, and he roughly sketched out something himself and passed it over to an artist to have it touched up.

The feature of the new stamp is a neatly executed map in miniature of the world, showing the British possessions as compared with all other countries. The empire is distinguished from the possessions of the other powers by being in red. Surmounting this map is a representation of the crown, underneath which is a bunch of oak and maple leaves, symbolizing the unity of the Mother Country and Canada. At the upper edge of the stamp are the words “Canada Postage” in a neat letter. Underneath the map is placed “Xmas, 1898”, so that the date of the inauguration of Imperial Penny Postage shall be a matter of record. On the lower corners are the figures “2,” indicating the denomination of the stamp, and at the lower edge is this suggestive passage taken from the works of one of our patriotic poets: “We hold a vaster Empire than has been.” Mr. Mulock will be able to claim the credit of giving the public the cheapest map of the world ever issued. The size of the stamp is about the same as the Jubilee issue.



Autographed letter signed by Sir William Mulock, Postmaster General of Canada in relation to the Canadian 1898 2c Imperial Penny Postage stamp, datelined “Ottawa/Christmas 1898”, to the Duke of Norfolk, the British Postmaster General, congratulating the Duke on the inauguration of the new Imperial Penny Post throughout the Empire. The letter starts, “At last Christmas Day has arrived and with it the inauguration of the ‘Inter Imperial Penny Post’ Scheme, and this letter to Her Majesty’s Postmaster General will be the first communication at the new rate to be stamped by the Post Office of Ottawa, the Dominion Capital...”.

Attached to the letter is a 2¢ black, lavender and carmine tied to a piece by a portion of an Ottawa duplex, having been taken from the envelope used to send this letter on Christmas Day, making this the first of the first day sendings on the inauguration of the Empire Penny Post rate.

To Be Continued

The Stamps of Canada, Part 51

The “Map” Stamp of 1898

Based on a 1915 Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

The printing of the new stamps began on December 1st, both the Governor-General and Postmaster-General being present while the first sheets were run off the presses. Although it was originally intended to issue the stamp on Christmas Day it was actually placed on sale quite early in the month as explained in the following extract from the *Weekly*:

1898 2¢ black, lavender and carmine Imperial Penny Postage earliest documented usage on corner card envelope of the Confederation Life Association of Toronto, from the first printing, tied by “Toronto/Dec 2 1898” flag machine cancel, paying the 2¢ local drop letter rate within Toronto. The stamp was issued on December 2nd for sale to the public on that date, but with the intended first day of use being December 7.



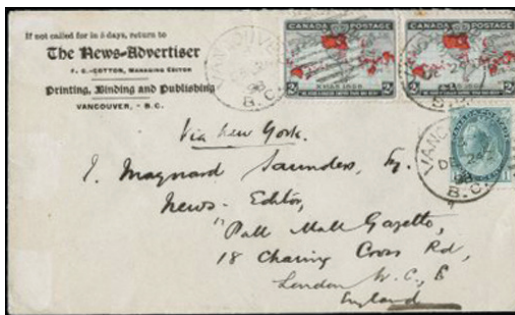
Ottawa, Dec. 5th.—It having been stated in some newspapers that the new two-cent Imperial stamp would not become available until Christmas Day, inquiry made at the Post Office Department today to ascertain the truth of this statement elicits the fact that, although it was the original intention of the department that the new stamp should not come into use until the 25th inst., the demand from the public for it has become so pressing that the department has decided to issue it at once, and permit its immediate use to the extent of its face value for all postage

1898 2¢ black, lavender and carmine Imperial Penny Postage posted on December 7, 1898, the date recognized as the first day of issuance, tied



along with 1¢ Green to a 2¢ Green postal entire (Unitrade #75, U7) by “Ottawa/DE 7 98” duplex with numeral “1”, posted to Liverpool, England paying the 5¢ U.P.U. rate, also with red “Paid/Liverpool/U S Packet/17 DE 98” receiving c.d.s. at bottom left indicating that it was carried by an American ship. An inscription written by the sender on the reverse reads, “The new 2¢ stamp on this letter is just out today, in Ottawa, Dec. 7th.” with “today” underlined establishing that the stamp did not go on sale in the capitol until this date, and this fact is quite likely the basis for recognizing this date as the date of issuance.

1898 2¢ black, blue and carmine Imperial Penny Postage, horizontal pair with pale blue oceans plus 1¢ Gray green Numeral issue tied to cover of



The News-Advertiser of Vancouver, stamps tied by “Vancouver/B.C./DE 24 98” c.d.s., this being the last day of the 5¢ U.P.U. rate that was still applicable to countries within the British Empire, backstamped London, England. This cover, if posted the next day, would only have required 2¢ and would then have been among the more common Christmas Day first day covers of the 2¢ rate—this instead being the only Map stamp example recorded that was posted on the last day of the 5¢ Empire rate.

purposes. In other words, as soon as it reaches the public it may, if preferred by the purchaser, be used instead of the ordinary two-cent stamp. The two-cent inter-Imperial rate does not, of course, come into effect until Christmas Day.

Under date of December 7th the Canadian correspondent of the *Weekly Philatelic Era* refers to the actual issue of the stamp, viz.:—

The new Imperial stamps referred to in past numbers of the *Era* were issued this morning, and although the new Imperial rate does not come into effect until Xmas-day, and they bear that inscription, they are receivable for ordinary postage now.

1898 2¢ black, blue and carmine on Mulready type cover to Dublin, Ireland, used on Christmas day, the first day of the 2¢ Imperial Penny Postage rate tied by “Peterboro/Ont./DE 25 98” duplex,



backstamped Dublin. An illustrated cover used exactly as it was intended, this design, which was inspired by the Mulready design of 1840 and produced by the Review Printing and Publishing Co. of Peterboro, Ontario, has a “Christmas Day 1898” inscription at the bottom making it clear that it was produced for the inauguration of the 2¢ Imperial Penny Postage on that day.

To Be Continued

The Stamps of Canada, Part 52

The “Map” Stamp of 1898

Based on a 1915 Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

The general design has already been described, but it may be well to say that the stamps are printed in three colors. The frame is in black with white letters, the seas are in a pale blue, or rather a lavender, and the British possessions are in a bright red. The map of the world is on Mercator's projection, which magnifies high latitudes; consequently the Dominion of Canada, which occupies the middle of the upper part of the stamp, looks bigger than all the other British possessions put together. The border of the stamp is of cable pattern and measures 32 mm. in width by 22-1/2 in height. The stamp is printed on medium, machine-wove, white paper, similar to that used for the Jubilee and subsequent Canadian issues, and is perforated 12.

The design is well-known to all our readers and as it has already been extensively dissected in the [previous installments], further comment is hardly necessary. The new stamps naturally caused lots of criticism on account of their somewhat bombastic legend “We hold a vaster Empire than has been”. This was taken from the jubilee ode written by Sir Lewis Morris on the occasion of Queen Victoria's

Diamond Jubilee, the last stanza of which reads as follows:—

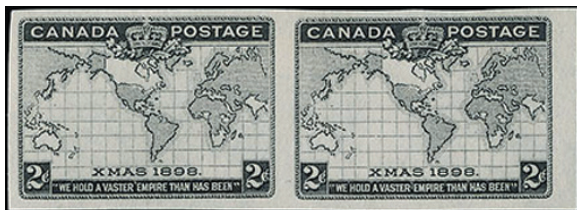
*We love not war, but only peace,
Yet never shall our England's power decrease!
Whoever guides our helm of state,
Let all men know it, England shall be great!
We hold a vaster empire than has been!
Nigh half the race of man is subject to our Queen!
Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours in fee!
And where her rule comes all are free.
And therefore 'tis, O Queen, than we,
Knit fast in bonds of temperate liberty,
Rejoice today, and make our solemn jubilee!*

The new stamps came in for much criticism, of which the following extract from the *Monthly Journal* for January, 1899, is a fair sample:—

It is not quite an occasion for captious criticism, and when we get a beautiful coloured map of the world for a penny perhaps we ought not to criticise; but we cannot think that the design is a very appropriate one for a postage stamp. The blobs of red are not always quite correctly placed; we have even heard of cases in which a little irregularity of “register” has resulted in the annexation of the greater part of the United States, while England invaded France, and the Cape of Good Hope went out to sea!

The Canadian newspapers are not quite happy about it, but that is natural, as they are to pay extra postage in future to make up any deficiency in the budget caused by the reduction in the Imperial rate; we hear that even a Ministerial organ at Ontario complains that the new stamp is too large to lick and too small for wall paper! Some people are never satisfied.

The color chosen for the sea portion of the map was lavender at first, but as this was not considered altogether appropriate it was soon afterwards changed to sea-green. In addition to these two tints it also comes in a very pronounced blue.



Progressive Plate Proof Imperforate pair on wove paper, printed with black color only.



Progressive Plate Proof Imperforate pair on gummed wove paper, printed with black color and blue background (red omitted).



Die proof of the accepted black engraved die F-139 1/2, printed directly on thin card, a stamp size example,



Die essay of the black portion with carmine and blue hand-colored, on thin bond paper. The black is similar to the issued design (die F-139 1/2) but differs slightly in small details. The only known example.



Vertical Imperf pairs on wove paper, no gum as issued; left, with grey oceans; right, with lavender oceans

To Be Continued

The Stamps of Canada, Part 53

The “Map” Stamp of 1898

Based on a 1915 Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

The stamps were printed in the usual sheet arrangement of one hundred, arranged in ten horizontal rows of ten. The black portion was printed from line-engraved plates but the colored portions were, apparently, printed by lithography. Consequently, three operations were necessary before the stamps were completed and, as may readily be understood, a three color process in such a small compass made exact register a matter of difficulty. Thus on many stamps portions of the Empire are found much out of place, sometimes wandering into the sea and sometimes encroaching in an altogether too familiar manner on their neighbours.

The line-engraved plates from which the black portion of the design was printed have four marginal imprints consisting of AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. OTTAWA in Roman capitals 1/2 mm. high, the whole inscription being 29 mm. long. These are placed above the third and eighth stamps of the top row and below the corresponding stamps of the bottom row. In addition a plate number, in hair-line figures about 4 mm. high, is shown above the division between the two central stamps of the top row, these figures being placed higher on the mar-



2¢ Map invert, Sc. 86ii, with full ABNC imprint, red color shifted to the right so that eastern Canada is under water; see color photo, front cover.



2¢ Map, Sc. 86, top plate 5 block of four



2¢ black, blue and carmine Map stamp, Sc. 85, without gum as issued, in an imperf center-cross block of four from plate 5 with crossed center lines, one of only two known plate 5 cross-line blocks, the other being in a block of 16.

gin than the imprints. Mr. Howes tells us that plates 1, 2, 3, and 5 are known but that plate 4 does not seem to have been recorded though, presumably, it exists. All four plates are known with the lavender sea and this is known to indicate the first printings, it would appear that all the plates were at press together.

The late Mr. H. L. Ewen wrote an exhaustive article on the numerous varieties of this stamp but as most of these were simply due to errors of register their philatelic importance is slight. One variety, however, which is constant is worthy of note. In this two small dots representing two islands in mid-Pacific are shown side by side instead of one above the other as on the normal stamps. Mr. Ewen also referred to a slight retouching of one of the plates, viz.:—

Readers will have noted that the stamps are each surrounded by what appears to be a rope. On the sheet of plate 3 before us, the outer edge of this rope on the stamps at the end of each row (right hand side of each sheet) has worn away and has been replaced by a straight line engraved on the plate, except on stamp No. 80, which still shows the very defective nature of the rope.

Mr. Howes states that the stamp, with all three colors for the sea, is known imperforate.

How many were issued is not known for certain as these Imperial stamps were reckoned together with the ordinary 2¢ in the postal accounts but according to the *London Philatelist* the total issue was about sixteen millions. In concluding this chapter we have only to add that the cost of manufacturing the stamps, on account of the three processes necessary, was the relatively high one of 45 cents per thousand.

Reference List. (#s 68-70 are the author's numbers in this study.)

Xmas, 1898. Engraved and Printed by the American Bank Note Co., Ottawa. Unwatermarked. Perf. 12.

68. 2c black, lavender and red [carmine, per Scott], (Scott 85)

69. 2c black, green and red [not listed in Scott].

70. 2c black, blue and red [carmine], (Scott 86)