

## The Dominion of Canada – 1868-1928

**1**

Good evening Mr. President and friends,

To begin with I must emphasize that I am only a general collector of the stamps Canada, perhaps because I am captivated by one subject after another and become reluctant to relinquish any. Therefore you will find **variety** in the display but few expensive rarities. My object, besides providing some historical information about the bank note companies is to explain one or two things about their methods which might be missed if left unsaid.

For reasons of time and space I have concentrated on the stamps issued for the Dominion, (as opposed to the Colony) and thus, with the exception of a few forerunners in Frames 1 and 12 we shall begin in **1868**. During the following sixty years there were six definitive issues and a few commemorative sets, as well as the stationery and a large variety of revenues, but first we shall look at the Companies involved.

**2**

In 1851 the first contract for Canadian pence stamps had been awarded to ***Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson*** of New York. Their staff were highly experienced and already well known as the engravers and printers of the first United States issue.

**3**

In **1859** Canada adopted decimal currency and the contract for the necessary stamps was won by ***The American Bank Note Company***, also of New York. This concern had been formed following the recession in **1856** and was an association of twenty-five individuals with interests in seven competing printing firms. ***Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson***, became the senior partners in this union and they employed several members of their own firm in the new enterprise. Again, the work was perfectly satisfactory.

Nevertheless in 1865, with the establishment of Dominion status close at hand it was desired that Canadian stamps, stationery, bonds and banknotes should be produced in Ottawa or Montreal by Canadian contractors. Two practically identical tenders were received, firstly from ***Matthews and Smillie*** of Ottawa and secondly ***Burland, L'Africaine and Co.*** of Montreal. The birth of the new contract proved far from painless. It was attended by political delay and, to put the best light on it, regrettable lapses of memory. Journalistic pressure in favour

of the Montreal group, which, incidentally, had no previous experience of line-engraving but did possess a fair knowledge of lithography and a certain amount of dubious ethics frustrated a swift outcome. After much twisting and turning the government felt that embarrassment would be caused by accepting one tender and refusing the other. Therefore, by its express wish, the two joined and *The British American Bank Note Company* was formed on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1866.

#### 4

Henceforth all Canadian stamps would be produced in Canada. The first contract was for ten years but could be terminated in six months by either party giving six months' notice. It was stipulated that printing should take place in Ottawa.

The President of the new enterprise was William Cumming Smillie, erstwhile of Mathews & Smillie. Born in Edinburgh in 1813 he had left for Quebec with his family and subsequently moved to New York where he became a script letter engraver for *Rawdon, Wright & Hatch*. He had fully expected to be awarded the new contract. George Bull Burland, the second contender, who had started life as a newspaper boy, became General Manager.

#### 5

The Vice President and Secretary was Alfred Jones, again British born in Liverpool and lately apprenticed to the same New York firm. As a portrait and pictorial engraver Alfred had few if any superiors in America or indeed anywhere else. The Treasurer was Henry Earle Jr. letter engraver and designer.

#### 6

The short-lived Large Queens are arguably the most beautiful productions in Canadian philatelic history. The plates were of unhardened steel and consisted of 100 subjects 10 x 10. The number used for each denomination has been studied extensively – lately by the Duckworths in the two editions of their work - and it is accepted that several were produced for the **1c, 2c and 3c, - two for the 6c and one each for the ½c the 12½c and the 15c.**

#### 7

The plates were laid down using a series of dots and guide lines. The lines were often burnished away but the dots remain in the left hand lower corner on stamps from all but those the left column of the sheet.

## 8

In the classification of all the early Canadian stamps the ability to detect the direction of the grain or mesh in the paper is considered a necessity and this slide shows the best illustration I can find.

The seven values appeared in 1868 on a variety of papers. Depending upon the denomination they can be found on thin paper, several types on stout wove, two of watermarked, and a laid. The early issues on the thin, rather transparent paper are much sought after but sometimes misclassified by the over-optimistic. Only two copies of the 2 cents on laid paper are known but the 3 cents on the same is obtainable.

## 9

Two watermarks can be sought. The Bothwell watermark, found on all values, can occur on 13 stamps from each sheet of 100 and is therefore scarce but the paper itself can be distinguished by its vertical mesh which has a diamond structure when seen from the back.

## 10

Pirie watermarked paper is extremely rare and only known on the 15 cents. Its mesh is distinctly horizontal. Both have been faked and certificates are advisable.

## 11

The 12½ cents blue is a lovely stamp with several very collectable varieties.

The 1 cent colour change from red-brown to yellow was to avoid confusion with the 3 cents.

## 12

The 15 Cents Large Queen was never replaced by the Small Queen (although I show an essay for it) and, as its life continued for thirty-one years its study is a never-ending occupation.

## 13

During the mid-nineteenth century as we all know, the volume of mail increased rapidly and the printers were under severe stress to fulfill orders. This was partly responsible for the wide variety of papers used but, even as early as 1868, it was seen that a greater number stamps could be produced from the same sized plate if it contained smaller images and so we have the change to the Small Queens.

This was a more complicated issue than its predecessor taking in changes of colour, paper and perforation as well as dates and location of production. Early printings are known as the “first Ottawa” and most were produced between 1870 and 1873 on good quality paper and perforated about 12. The single exception is a small number of the early 3c Copper or Indian reds, perforated 12½. The reason for the unusual perforation is unknown, numbers are in the low hundreds and it is one of the key items of the issue, usually to be found from the Maritime Provinces. The remaining first Ottawa 3 cents were predominately rose or rose-red shades.

Fairly early in the **1870s** printing was moved to Montreal. The reason is thought to have been a fire in the printing room in Ottawa some time during **1870** and the firm’s obvious preference for a Montreal premises.

I have not included many images of Small Queens on the screen because the shades are so numerous, and they do not reproduce too well. There are examples in the frames.

Those for the 3c Rose reds became Orange red and these stamps are perforated either 12 or a combination of 11½ and 12. The carmine-reds come from **1888** just before the move back to Ottawa and anyone in doubt should measure the vertical perforations which gauge about 12.25. There is no particular worry about classifying the **5c, 6c, and 10c** but I have found that the **2c** is not an easy task. Much depends on the paper and the positional dots engraved on the plate. Colour alone is little help – can anyone describe the catalogued 2<sup>nd</sup> Ottawa shade of “sea green” for me?

#### **14**

The 5 cents value of **1875** is an interesting stamp and causes more than a little confusion among collectors. There was no need for it in **1868** because the internal rate paid by the 5 cents beaver in the **1859** Colony became 3 cents in the Dominion. However, it is thought that the large 5 cents die was probably engraved at the same time as the rest and that the stamp was used purely as a provisional issue at the time of U.P.U. Although Canada did not sign until **August 1878**, Britain granted it special status. At any rate the **large 5 cents** had a very short life of just over four months before the appearance of the **small 5 cents** and there has been much debate over its several gauges of perforation. Its successor varies from the Montreal printings in shades of olive green to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ottawa of brownish grey).

15

16

Stationery was also an ingredient of the postal menu as were revenue stamps for the fiscal purposes. I have left the latter until last but two examples of postcard printing are included. For many years the Canadians used the line-engraved process for their overseas cards and typography for the inland.

17

Here also are examples of essays attributed to Canada, thought to have been submitted by *Bradbury Wilkinson & Co.* between 1875 and 1880 as samples of their work.

Relations between Smillie and Burland, were never particularly amicable, partly due to the circumstances surrounding their initial partnership and certainly there were disagreements in their later business arrangements. They were, after all two very different characters. By 1881, Smillie had grown tired of his participation in the **British American Bank Note Company** and he sold his interest to Burland. He left the firm and founded the ill-fated *Canada Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.*

18

This concern, (not be confused with the *Canadian Bank Note Co.*) tendered both in 1886 and 1891, and here are some submissions for its last effort which were unsuccessful. Through general bad management beyond Smillie's control the company went into liquidation in **1892**.

19

*The British American Bank Note Co.*, now with Burland as President, continued to fulfill its contract by producing the attractive and sought after Parcels stamps of **1893**.

Having bought the assets of the Smillie's defunct concern in **1894** the company failed to foresee impending disaster. Perhaps it had become complacent for, to its very considerable dismay in **1897** its contract was not to be renewed. When the news of the loss leaked through to Burland he made enormous efforts to reverse it - all in vain. Again, the dropping of the old contract and awarding of the new to the *American Bank Note Company* was attended by a great deal of duplicity, and contention.

**20**

During the winter of **1896** the prospective new holders built premises in Ottawa to conform with the required conditions and the fact that they were in Wellington Street, almost on top their rivals, must have added salt to Burland's wounds. Almost before his contract ran out in April **1897** *The American Bank Note Company* was committed to produce the beautiful but controversial Jubilees and these would be followed by the Maple Leaves, the Numerals, the Edwards, the Tercentenaries and the long lived and complicated Admiral series.

**21**

The Jubilee issue was the first commemorative to be issued for Canada and the first to have a denomination higher than 50 cents. Initial demand was extensive especially from the colonies, but criticism was not slow in coming. The Postmaster General had announced the print numbers before the issue date on **19<sup>th</sup> June 1897** and speculation became heavy in various values especially the ½ and the **6** cents. Beautiful as the stamps were, arguments continued for years as to whether they were all necessary. Policy was that the dollar values should be sold in sets only, but the face value of these was high and, although the low values could be used for postage, the dollar denominations had little postal use. Despite being reasonably easy to obtain they now have a high catalogue value.

**22**

I have a special affection for the Maple Leaf Issue of **1897**. The vignette was the work of Charles Skinner who had joined the company in **1864** and now, in his middle fifties was approaching the climax of his career. The portrait of the Queen was adapted from a photograph by Downey taken at the time of the Jubilee and, according to Winthrop Boggs, the leaves were taken from the Maple trees in Parliament Square, Ottawa.

**23**

**24**

The issue was not long lived and was shortly replaced by the Numerals because the French speaking population had difficulty in distinguishing the denominations and it was desired that Arabic numerals be used in the design. The proofs of both issues are lovely and strangely those of the Numerals are rarer than the Maple Leaves.

**25**

**26**

The so-called Map Stamp was issued on **7<sup>th</sup> December 1898** to commemorate Empire Penny Postage. Those who love this stamp have bestowed much attention on it and its extraordinary method of production justifies their efforts. The idea was conceived by the Postmaster General William Mulock and an essay by the President of the Company is accepted as the basis for the design. Four other artists were involved besides Skinner who engraved the black portions.

**27**

The continents and islands in red and the various shades of sea came from electrotype plates (thought to be 2 for the red and 1 for the blue). This was an innovation in printing. It was intended that the stamp should accompany the current issue, particularly on foreign letters.

**28**

The 1902 issue was designed by the Prince of Wales and our own John Tilleard. King Edward VII came to the throne on **22<sup>nd</sup> January 1901** but his stamps did not appear for nearly two and a half years and thus the Queen's stamps and stationery remained in use. The reason for the delay could have been that the Canadian Government intended that Sir William should discuss the issue with the Prince of Wales in June 1902 during his visit to England for the coronation but of course this was deferred because of the King's illness. The master die was engraved by Skinner using an essay prepared by J.A.C. Harrison for Perkins Bacon.

**29**

The Tercentenary Issue commemorates the **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Quebec** but it has not received the attention it deserves. It was designed by Machado, one of the American Bank Note Company's foremost designers and five engravers had a part in it.

(namely Edwin H Gunn (1/2 cent), Robert Savage ( 1c), Elie Timothée Loizeau (2c, 5c, 15c and 20c) , Charles Skinner ( 7c), and William J Brown (10c).

The last postal subjects in the display concern the Admirals. When I first became interested in Canada back in 1970 I joined the *Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain* and acquired a full run of its magazine *Maple Leaves*. After skimming through the pages I said to myself that I would never touch the 1911 issue. I was even heard to say, rather stuffily that, a) I preferred the classics and b) Admirals had been studied to death. I now thoroughly regret both these remarks. Classics have become expensive and difficult to obtain in nice condition. Yes, the Admirals have been well studied and can be incredibly complicated if taken too seriously but they are beautiful stamps and actually their

collection has become more than a little addictive. The postal history is outside my brief this evening but it is wholly absorbing, including as it does the War Tax, the early airmails, military mail and such oddities as Registered Drop Letters and Forms of Advice. The late, much respected, **Allan Steinhart** managed to cover 168 pages in his Rate Study. But I digress and shall return to the brief.

King George V came to the throne on **6<sup>th</sup> May 1910** and delay again took place. The existing contract still had some time to run and it took several months to choose a suitable likeness of the new king.

### **30**

The actual portrait chosen was a composite of two photographs and the engraver was Robert Savage. Savage was one of the foremost artists of the twentieth century. He had been born in Ireland and left with his family for New York at the tender age of one. He became a steel engraver, joined the American Bank Note Co. in **1891**, was appointed head of the Picture Engraving Department in **1907** and, even after retiring was asked to continue with occasional work.

### **31**

The issue can be divided into three distinct groups - the original values from **1911 to 1914**, the War Tax years from **1915** until **1926**, and the new dies, colours and values which were the result of the Madrid Conference in **1920**. When sheet stamps, booklets of four or six, coils, endwise and sideways are taken into consideration there is much to contemplate.

Until **December 1922** all Canadian stamps were printed on dampened paper, gummed and perforated in that order. Paper naturally expands slightly on damping and shrinks on drying. In the case of stamps printed on the vertical wove paper as most Admirals were, the shrinkage occurs across the grain and therefore the stamps become narrow. The backs appear smooth. From 1923 onwards the company gradually adopted the method of printing on dry, pre-gummed paper and little or no shrinkage took place. These stamps are therefore up to a millimetre wider than those of the damp printings. Additionally, the backs usually show the lines of printing due to the heavier pressure needed and the shades are often less intense.

### 32

Lathework or engine turning first made its appearance in the lower margin of most plates late in **1916**. There were four main and two sub types. Someone is bound to ask me what the purpose was and I shall say “I am not sure.

Some philatelists think it was to obtain a uniform wipe of the plate, some say it was to prevent plate wear, and others maintain it was used for hold down strips to prevent the paper lifting.

One thing is certain – lathework from the damp printings is often incomplete or faulty while that from dry printing is usually sharp and clear. It makes a good talking point anyway.

### 33

This slide illustrates the use of marginal inscriptions. Specialists have identified a number of different types worthy of study.

### 34 35 36 37 38

The Revenue work is a large and fascinating subject particularly as the varieties of printing, paper and perforation follow the course of the postal productions. Here are some examples and you will find others in frames **12** and **13**.

I should like to finish by mentioning the opportunities we have in the Society for study. Our main collection was bequeathed to us by **RWT Lees Jones** in 1936 and comprises late nineteenth and early twentieth century material in scope and condition virtually impossible to find nowadays. **Lees Jones** (who was actually “Jones” when he gave the collection) was a pioneer of **classic** stamps. He was better known for his plating studies of the **1859** issues of the Colony. **Geoffrey Whitworth** who wrote the book on this issue gave us the examples from each of the 10 cents orders which are excellent for comparison purposes. The library contains a wealth of books and pamphlets dealing with practically every facet you could wish for and there are in addition the specialist auction catalogues. Past LPs contain much admirable research.

The whereabouts of all these can be found in the digital catalogue which is quite invaluable and a work of distinction in itself. I am also grateful to *the Library and Archive Canada* website for its biographies and pictures. Finally I pay tribute to the large legion of collectors and dealers who have published many very erudite works, and it is not only the giants who deserve our thanks. Those who have made shorter but no less important contributions to society magazines such as *The Canadian Philatelist*, *Maple Leaves* and *BNA Topics* have all furthered the boundaries of knowledge and I feel particularly indebted to those who have

enabled past runs to be published on the internet making study at home such a convenient and agreeable possibility.

With that commendation Mr. President, I thank you for your very kind invitation to speak and close my case for the collection, study, and enjoyment of Canadian Philately.



## DISPLAY

- Frame 1**    **The Colony of Canada (Forerunners)**
- The Pence Issue: 1851 – 1858**  
    *(Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson)*
- The Cents Issue: 1859 – 1868**  
    *(American Bank Note Co. New York)*
- Frame 2**    **The Dominion of Canada**
- The Large Queen Issue: 1868-1870**  
    *(British American Bank Note Co. Ottawa)*  
    **1 to 6 Cent Values.**
- Frame 3**    **The Large Queens Issue continued.**  
    **12½ and 15 Cent Values.**
- Frame 4**    **The Small Queen Issue: 1870 – 1897**  
    *(British American Bank Note Co.)*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Ottawa printing: 1870 – 1873,  
    Montreal printing: 1873 – 1888,  
    2<sup>nd</sup> Ottawa printing: 1888 – 1897.
- Frame 5**    **The Small Queens continued.**
- Frame 6**    **Essays:**     *(Bradbury Wilkinson & Co.,*  
                  *Canadian B.N. Engraving & Printing Co.)*
- Parcels:    The Widowed Queen,**  
    **Maps:       Imperial Penny Postage,**  
    **Post Cards: Engraved for Overseas Postage.**  
                  *(British American Bank Note Co.)*
- Frame 7**    **The Diamond Jubilee Issue: 1897**  
    *(American Bank Note Co. Ottawa)*
- Frame 8**    **The Maple Leaf Issue: 1897 – 1898.**  
    *(American Bank Note Co. Ottawa)*
- Frame 9**    **The Numeral Issue: 1898 – 1902.**  
    **King Edward VII**  
    *(American Bank Note Co. Ottawa)*
- Frame 10**    **The Admiral Issue: 1911 – 1922 – Small**  
    **selection.**  
                  *(American Bank Note Co. Ottawa)*
- King George V stamps in the same colours as heretofore.  
    The War Tax Issues dating from April 1915 were replaced with the 3 Cent Brown combined Postage and War Tax stamp of 1918.
- Frame 11**    **Admirals: 1922 to 1931 – again a small**  
    **selection.**
- Following the Madrid Conference of 1920, colours and rates were adjusted to conform with those imposed by the U.P.U. Many changes of rate and colour were necessary.  
    War Tax was abolished in July 1926 and re-imposed in July 1931.
- Frame 12**    **Revenue Work**  
    *(Forerunners and British American Bank Note Co.)*
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bill Issues,  
    Supreme Court Issues.
- Frame 13**    **Revenue Work - Examples**  
    *(British American Bank Note Co. to 1896*  
    *(American Bank Note Co. from 1897)*
- Gas Inspection,  
    Weights and Measures,  
    Wine Strips,  
    Tobacco Stamps.