

CANADIAN POSTAGE STAMPS

In 1928 the Post Office Department decided to use the higher denominations of its regular postage stamp issues to show characteristic phases of Canadian life and industry. This was a significant event in the development of Canadian postage stamps as a medium of information about Canada. Prior to this year, the subjects of Canadian postage stamps had been confined, with few exceptions, to portraits of the Royal Family.

The first Canadian postage stamp, however, the well-known "Three Penny Beaver" of April, 1851, was a pictorial stamp of first rate geographical and general significance. The beaver is so thoroughly native to Canada that it is hard to think of a more suitable subject for this initial issue.

Canada's stamp designs were subsequently confined to Royal portraiture, and to portraits of Jacques Cartier, until the famous and much criticized "Map Stamp" of 1898 made its appearance. This stamp was issued to commemorate the establishment of Imperial Penny Postage and was Canada's first venture in the reproduction of multi-coloured stamps. The subject was an outline map of the world printed in black, upon which were lithographed the seven seas in blue, and the British Empire in red. Some critics suggested that the "Imperialists" had reddened certain portions of the world which were not at that time British possessions.

Somewhat chastened by criticism of this venture, the Post Office Department returned, until 1908, to Royal portraiture. In that year the Department commemorated the 300th Anniversary of the foundation of Quebec by Champlain in 1608, and issued seven stamps depicting scenes from the early history of New France, and portraits of historical figures. The 15-cent stamp is typical of this series, and is entitled "Partement Pour L'Ouest". The scene was reconstructed by the engravers from a description of this incident in Champlain's narrative of his Third Voyage, and shows high officers of the Militia, Church and State honouring the departure of Champlain and his party in two canoes manned by Indians.

Confederation Commemoratives

The Fiftieth and Sixtieth Anniversaries of Confederation were recognized by postage stamp issues in 1917 and 1927. In the latter year a series of six special pictorial stamps were issued, including the 20-cent orange Special Delivery Stamp. Of this stamp a writer in the New York "World Telegram" expressed the opinion that "of all the stamps issued throughout the world since 1840, there is no single adhesive more interesting or instructive."

Through a gothic window casement, symbolizing European culture, five different methods of mail transportation are shown against a background which reveals something of Canada's vastness and diversity. Dominating the scene is a lofty peak, typical of Canada's great mountain ranges. In the foreground is a railway line along which a trans-continental train is speeding, and between the mountains and the foreground is an arm of the sea down which steams an ocean liner. In the foreground there is a stretch of ground suggestive of the prairies with a "pony express" rider carrying a mail bag on which appears a philatelic *tour de force*: the smallest engraving ever attempted on a postage