

From Philatelic Journal of America.

### Prince Edward Island Stamps.

A paper read at a meeting of the Philatelic Society and printed in the London Philatelist.

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I feel that some apology is perhaps due for troubling you with a paper on the stamps of this island, which, I am aware, most collectors regard with little interest. This, no doubt, arises from the fact that the issues are limited in number, that their workmanship is poor, and when the Province became incorporated with the Dominion of Canada there was a large stock of remainders which was disposed of and distributed in such a manner that even at the present day, unused copies of most of the stamps are obtainable at small prices. At the same time, in the case of the philatelic history of most countries, there are generally some points on which further light can be thrown, and as we now claim that the pursuit of our hobby has become a science, it is desirable that all collectors should impart any facts which they may ascertain in regard to the issues of any country, so that the published information on the subject may be as complete as possible. For this reason—although I do not claim to be able to add much to the somewhat limited subject of the stamps of Prince Edward Island—I have thought it well to record a few facts recently brought before my notice, which may tend to dispose of some of the questions remaining to be solved.

So far as I have been able to ascertain, very little information in regard to these stamps appeared in the English or Colonial journals, prior to the publication of the society's work on the stamps of the North American Colonies of Great Britain. One of the principal contributions before that date was the interesting paper by Mr. D. Laing, in the Halifax Philatelist, for September, 1888, reproduced in the society's work, while the most important addition since 1889 has been the more comprehensive article by Mr. A. A. Bartlett in the Stamp News Annual, 1892.

The remarks of each of these writers are directed chiefly to the numerous varieties or errors, if such they can be called, to be found in the stamps under consideration, and to Mr. Bartlett in particular are we indebted for a long list of these varieties, the discovery of which shows an amount of untiring patience and energy which certainly does him great credit, and shows the minute care with which he has studied the subject. Both writers refer to the poor workmanship of design and printing of the stamps of this island, and agreeing entirely with Mr. Bartlett that most of the varieties are due to poor workmanship, one is almost tempted to ask, in reference to the compilation of such a list as he has given us, *oui bono*, were it not that we all know, it is only by the exercise of the greatest accuracy of the observation in minute details that we can

expect to learn many of the material facts as to the stamps we study.

The principal point of importance for which I can claim novelty is that the stamps of Prince Edward Island were surface printed and not lithographed as has generally been supposed. In the society's work on the subject, the stamps of the issues printed in England are all described as lithographed, and, although a query as to the exact process is added in that work, it is a common thing to see in philatelic publications reference to the "poorly lithographed stamp of Prince Edward Island," and other similar descriptions. The mistake hitherto made in this respect is doubtless owing to the inferior appearance of the stamps, which one transatlantic journal characterizes as probably "the rough production of some native artist," and "a disgrace to any country," but a more careful examination of the stamps themselves would probably have resulted in the error as to their mode of production being avoided. I have recently had an opportunity of looking over a large number of specimens of the "remainders," and in many of them I could plainly see—although I admit my examination was made *ex post facto*, and in the light of the knowledge I had then obtained—the marks which indicate the difference between stamps which are lithographed and those printed from raised plates. In confirmation of this I may add that I substituted the specimens to a practical printer who had no difficulty in satisfying himself, without much hesitation, that they were not lithographs.

Some months ago, Mr. A. W. Tuer, a gentleman man well known in the city in connection with the Leadenhall press, but who is not a stamp collector, was introduced to me with the view of obtaining information as to some of house assays, which had come into his possession. (It appears that, being a student and collector of all objects pertaining to the art of printing, he had attended the auction sale of the effects of the successors in business of Mr. Charles Whiting, of Beaufort House, Strand—sold on the winding up of the business—and he had there acquired the essays referred to. He told me that, among other items purchased by him, there were some dies and electrotypes of stamps, which he had kindly offered for my inspection. These proved to be the original dies, and the electro type plates, of some of the stamps of Prince Edward Island. They consisted of the complete dies of the 1d, 2d, 3d and 9d and of the 1c, 3c, 4c and 6c stamps. With them were found an engraving on wood of the head employed for the cents issue, and a reproduction on copper of the same, and also a metal plate of the head used for the pence stamps. In addition to these there was an engraving on brass of a stamp, finished with the exception of the inscription, in form similar to the 3d stamps, although the details of the background are not the same. As this head also varies in several small particulars, I should imagine this was probably prepared before the stamp as issued was finally decided upon, and was not adopted.

The electro type plates were those of the 2d, 4d, 3c and 12c, and, in the case of the 3c, there were parts of impressions in red and in black pasted on the back of the wooden block. The 2d plate measures 6x8 1-4 inches and consists of sixty stamps in six horizontal rows of ten, the 4d plate measuring 6x4 1-2 inches, and having thirty stamps in six horizontal rows of five. The 3c plates measures 10x4 5-16 inches, and contains ten vertical rows of five stamps, while that of the 12c measures 5x8 3-4 inches, and has five horizontal rows of ten.

In addition to the reasons given above, I think the fact that the electro types had evidently been used, conclusively sets at rest the question as to the nature of the process employed for the production of the stamps of island. From the description given it will be seen that, in the case of the pence issue, the whole sheet of stamps consisted of but one impression from the plate, while, in the case of the cents issue, where the sheet consists of one hundred labels, the stamps were printed either from two plates clamped together or by twice printing from the same plate.

It will be observed that the description of the arrangement of the stamps on sheets as published by the society, and verified by Mr. Bartlett from examination of entire sheets, is correct. The latter, in noting the curious error of Mr. Laing in reference to the sheets of the 2d stamps, is, I think, unnecessary severe in imputing blame to the London society for giving "to the world under the sanctions of their authority any such erroneous statement" as that the sheets of this value consisted of one hundred stamps. The critic can hardly have failed to observe that the society in their description have given the correct information as to the sheets, the paper of Mr. Laing being only afterwards inserted in its entirety, as containing valuable information in regard to the varieties noted by him.

A question naturally arises as to how it was that the dies and electrotypes remained in the possession of the printer and in reply to an enquiry I have made in this respect I am informed, on the authority of the successor of Mr. Whiting, that the latter never charged for engraving plates, which accordingly remained his property.

In the hopes of obtaining information as to the date of issue, I caused some enquiries to be made on the subject. Unfortunately I found that most of the books of the business had already been destroyed, and those remaining were in course of destruction. I was unable to obtain personal access to any of the papers, but the person who was supervising their destruction was kind enough to look for such particulars as the remaining books could afford. The ledgers of the business prior to 1872 had gone, but a search was made through those for 1872 and 1873 with the result that the only one which could be found bearing upon the subject was one dated 4th, 1872.

(To be continued.)