

two years ago. The first foreign state to adopt them was the Canton of Zurich in Switzerland, in 1843. They were introduced into the United States in 1847. Throughout Europe they became common in 1849 and 1850. In Canada they were employed for the first time in 1851. Until that time the post office in the British American provinces had been controlled by officers appointed by the home government. On April 6th, 1851, the entire management was transferred from Imperial to Provincial authority and within the same year several important reforms were carried into effect. Previous to that date the charge for the carrying of letters was extremely high—inland postage averaged nine pence currency (15 cents) per letter. It was at once reduced to three pence (5 cents). For three years longer the charge on foreign letters remained at the old rates, viz., one shilling and fourpence currency (about 27 cents) on English, and sixpence (10 cents) on United States letters.

The first Post Master General for the Province of Canada was the Hon. James Morris, and it was under his administration that the reduction on the postal charge on inland letters was made, and adhesive stamps for their prepayment introduced. Canadian postage stamps, for the three penny rate, were first issued for public use on St. George's day, April 23rd, 1851.

It is with no desire to cast any reflection on Mr. Morris, under whose auspices great postal reforms were initiated, when I humbly point out that the stamps introduced by him were anything but faultless. Forty years, experience has established, that the designer whom Mr. Morris employed, failed to recognize the essential features which a postage stamp should possess; and strange as it may seem the worst features of the original faulty design still remain. From 1851 to the present date, the defective characteristics of the first stamp have in a greater or less degree been preserved in every successive issue.

Stamps of different values are necessary for the prepayment of letters and postal packets, varying in weight. Obviously, a postage stamp should on its face, plainly indicate its value, so that it should present no difficulty to the person using it. The three-penny stamp in 1851 had on each of its four corners a small figure "three" (3) to denote its value, its designer seemingly ignoring the fact that one large figure would be plainer than four or any number of small figures. We may trace to this source the crucial defect of every Canadian stamp since issued, for whatever changes have been made in those printed from year to year since their first introduction, the small figures to indicate their denomination have been constantly adhered to. When we examine the whole series there is a strong family likeness in this particular. Indeed the stamps in common use to-