

Printing the \$1 and \$2

1972 Landscape definitives

Leopold Beaudet

THIS article pieces together the story behind the printing of the \$1 and \$2 1972 Landscape definitives from Post Office records preserved at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). Larry Margetish used these same records and printing proofs to write a three-part article on the Caricature and Landscape definitives [1-3]. In Part 3 of his article, he states that “the contract [for the \$1 and \$2] originally went to Ashton-Potter to do four colour lithography with the steel engraving to be completed by CBN.” This article presents a different narrative.

While planning the replacement to the 1967 Centennial definitives, the Post Office identified the need for a \$2 stamp and decided to separate the definitives into two distinct sets, the medium values (10¢ to 50¢) and the high values (\$1 and \$2). The medium values were printed by British American Bank Note Co (BABN), using photogravure and engraving on its Goebel web-fed press. The Post Office decided that the high values would be twice as big and would be printed by a combination of lithography and steel engraving. The design themes and dates of issue accentuated the distinction between them. The \$1 and \$2 depict city rather than rural scenes. The date of issue was 17 March 1972 as opposed to 8 September 1972 for the medium values (Figure A).

The choice of printing method turned out to be a major challenge, one that had the Post Office and printers scrambling to meet the 17 March issue date. The LAC records suggest that initially the Post Office awarded the entire printing of both stamps to the Canadian Bank Note Co (CBN) sometime in 1971. CBN had demonstrated success with the combination of lithography and engraving, notably with the Provincial Flowers and Coat of Arms commemoratives issued between 1964 and 1966.

Under the terms of their contracts, the stamp printers were to provide the Post Office with an itemized list of all the die and plate proofs that they produce. In a letter to M Lysack, Director of Accounting, dated 5 April 1972, CBN listed all the items produced from 31 October 1971 to 1 April 1972 [4]. The list included:

- \$1 and \$2: Four /on colour transparencies
- \$1 and \$2: negative, 1½ times stamp size
- \$1: 200/on positive, four items
- \$1: 50/on negative, four items
- \$2: 50/on positive, four items

These items were required to produce lithographic plates. Each of the four lithographic colours (magenta, yellow, cyan, and black) required a separate plate, hence the four 50/on and 200/on positives and negatives. I would argue that CBN would not have produced these items had it been responsible for printing only the steel engraving.

Keywords & phrases: Landscape Definitives, Canadian Bank Note Co., plating

Figure A. PS 14, Announcement of First Day of Issue.

Postage Stamp Division

3-10-13

11 January 1972

Marketing Branch

ATTENTION: R. BORGAN, MANAGER
PROMOTIONS DIVISION

INFORMATION FOR P.S. 14 ANNOUNCEMENT DATA PANEL

\$1.00 - \$2.00 DEFINITIVES

Date of Issue : 17 March 1972

Design : Eberhard Berreth, Vancouver

Printer : Canadian Bank Note Company, Ottawa

Size : 48 mm x 30 mm

Quantity : Continuous Printing

Plate Number : 1

Printing Process: These stamps are printed in multicolour by a combination of four colour lithography and one colour steel. Marginal inscriptions will appear on the four corners of each pane of 50 stamps available from the Philatelic Service.

Collectors' Own First Day Covers: Collectors should address their own covers and forward them to the "First Day Cover Service", Canada Post Office, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5 to arrive not later than 17 March 1972. NOTE: Cover service fee, not applicable.

Official First Day Covers: The Department's specially designed official first day covers may be purchased by completing the order form for official first day covers attached to this announcement and forwarding along with your remittance to the address indicated at the top of the form.

.. 2

In a letter dated 17 December 1971, CBN submitted a series of "preliminary proving trials" to the Post Office [5]. These 2/on proofs included:

- \$1 and \$2, lithographic printing only on uncoated paper
- Same as above on coated paper
- Same as above with the engraved denomination on uncoated and coated paper plus a \$2 design showing "a solid denomination \$1."

The litho-only proofs were trials that showed different strengths of the lithographic colours. Again, I would argue that CBN would not have produced such proofs had it not been responsible for also printing the lithography.

Letters to the Post Office dated 3 February 1972 and 6 March 1972 show that CBN was still working on its contract as late as 4 February 1972 [6]. In the letters, CBN listed the dies, transfer rolls, and plates it had produced during the months of January and February 1972. They included:

- \$1 copper master plate, 50/on, engraved on 26 January
- \$1 nickel printing plate, 200/on, engraved on 4 February
- \$2 copper master plate, 50/on, engraved on 24 January
- \$2 nickel printing plate, 200/on, engraved on 31 January

These plates were for the engraved colour. The production of 50/on copper master plates and 200/on nickel printing plates reveals that CBN was using its plastic mould process to produce the plates [7].

In December 1971, the Post Office asked BABN to submit a quote for the entire printing of the \$1 and \$2 stamps. BABN submitted its quote on 20 December 1971 [8]. Its estimated delivery was 1 May 1972, well beyond the targeted date of issue, 17 March 1972. At some point, CBN informed the Post Office that it was unable to complete the printing contract. Neither the date this happened nor the nature of CBN's difficulties is revealed in the LAC files. One might assume that the date was early February except for the quote submitted by BABN on 20 December. In any event, a Post Office memo dated 15 March 1972 from M Lysack to AC Boughner, Assistant Deputy Postmaster General (ADPMG), Finance and Administration, states the following [9]:

“Due to production difficulties, the Canadian Bank Note Company relinquished our order to supply the new \$1.00 and \$2.00 definitive stamps, therefore, it was necessary to arrange, on an urgent basis with Ashton-Potter Limited and the British American Bank Note Company to produce these stamps in time to meet the announced date of issue.”

At the time the Caricatures and Landscape definitives were current, the Post Office published a brochure for each new issue to inform collectors about forthcoming stamps. These PS14 brochures routinely identified the stamps' printer(s). A memo from the Postage Stamp Division to the Marketing Branch dated 11 January 1972 provided PS14 data for the \$1 and \$2 definitives [10]. It identified CBN as the printer. Ashton-Potter was not mentioned. This implies that CBN was responsible for the entire printing, for both lithography and steel engraving. No printer was mentioned in the issued version of the PS14. Given the turmoil that erupted in January or February 1971, it is doubtful that the printer was known with certainty when the brochure was finalized.

Figure 18 in Part 1 of Margetish's article [1] shows a progressive plate proof of the \$2 value with the four lithographic colours but no steel engraving. The proof has the annotation “CBN production at point of cut-off” with the initials FGF (Frank G Flatters, Chief, Postage Stamp Division, Canada Post Office at the time). When Part 1 of Margetish's article was written, it was thought that this proof had been printed by Ashton-Potter; however, given the sequence of events described above, CBN's difficulties, and the wording of the annotation, it seems likely that the proof was produced by CBN.

To meet the pre-announced date of issue of 17 March, the Post Office turned to BABN and Ashton-Potter. In addition to printing the steel engraving, BABN was asked to perforate the sheets of two hundred, cut them into panes of fifty, and package them for distribution to post offices across the country. BABN confirmed the Post Office's requirements on 4 February, but it was unable to provide a quote for the work [11]. The date is interesting because it is the date when CBN produced the nickel printing plate for the \$1 value. CBN must have informed the Post Office of its difficulties sometime before this date. The Post Office gave BABN approval to proceed without a formal quote.

Ashton-Potter provided a quote on 18 February [11]. This quote would not have been required had Ashton-Potter been awarded the original contract. In another letter dated 10 March, BABN informed the Post Office that it was still unable to estimate the cost of the work involved, although much of that work had been done [11]. The situation was certainly unique—two printers collaborating to print stamps using different processes under a very tight deadline.

The Post Office authorized Ashton-Potter to produce 13 million stamps, or 65,000 sheets of two hundred stamps of each value [11] (The authorization was dated 7 March, but Ashton-Potter had already completed the printing.). Ashton-Potter's printing plant was in Toronto, and BABN's was in Ottawa. This meant that after printing the litho colours, Ashton-Potter had to package the 130,000 uncut sheets and ship them by armoured truck to BABN to meet the date-of-issue deadline. In its 4 February confirmation of the Post Office's requirements, BABN specified that the sheets from Ashton-Potter had to arrive by 21 February. The Post Office contracted with BABN to deliver a total of ten million stamps of each denomination, three million fewer than Ashton-Potter actually delivered to allow for "spoilage in the steel engraving operation." BABN committed to an initial delivery of 3.5 million of each stamp by 10 March. The remainder would be delivered around the end of the month. About 15 percent of the total printing was set aside for philatelic stock.

Ashton-Potter used a sheet-fed press, so BABN could not use its Goebel web-fed press to finish the printing. Instead, BABN used a sheet-fed press to print the steel engraving and a line perforator (what BABN referred to as "MacAdams random rotary perforation") to perforate the stamps. Fortunately, the printers met their deadlines and the two stamps were issued on the announced date, just a month after Ashton-Potter submitted its quote. However, a problem occurred during the printing, as revealed in the following Post Office memo, dated 20 April 1972, from M Lysack to AC Boughner. [11]:

\$1.00 AND \$2.00 DEFINITIVE STAMP

It was necessary, on an urgent basis, to arrange with Ashton-Potter Limited and the British American Bank Note Co. Ltd. to produce the \$1.00 and \$2.00 definitive stamps in time to meet the announced date of issue. The British American Bank Note Co. could not submit a price until their part of the production was completed, as certain problems had to be solved. We have now received their quotation. The cost of the production of these stamps are:

\$1.00 Definitive

<i>Ashton-Potter Ltd</i>	<i>\$14,324.00</i>
<i>British American Bank Note Co.</i>	<i>\$14,291.20</i>
	<i>Total \$28,615.20</i>

Quantity 5,900,000 stamps

This quantity is below our original order of 10 million stamps. The British American Bank Note Co. made an error due to the inevitable haste, in the preparation of the steel plate. The time required to correct the error by making a new plate (one week) could not be allowed without missing the date of issue. Therefore only 50 per cent of the finished work is acceptable. The circumstances were essentially beyond the control of the suppliers.

\$2.00 Definitive

Ashton-Potter Ltd. [sic] \$14,324.00

British American Bank Note Co. \$14,884.80

Total \$29,208.80

Quantity 9,225,000 stamps

The accounts from British American Bank Note Co. are enclosed herewith for your approval.

The following was handwritten by M Lysack at the bottom of the memo:

P.S. Going to Ashton-Potter—B.A.B.N. Co resulted from CBN. Co not being able to proceed with printing at a very late date in relation to the date of issue. The BABN Co. could not quote a price to us under such emergency conditions.

This memo explains why fewer \$1 than \$2 stamps were printed even though the postal demand for the \$1 was greater. A letter dated 29 March 1972 from KS Sargent, Executive Vice President, BABN, to FG Flatters elaborates on the shortfall [11]:

You will recall that only one-half of the litho-printed stock for the One Dollar issue was considered usable because of a registration problem with the engraved printing on Plate Number One.

No details are available about the “registration problem”; however, given that only half the printing order was delivered, it is likely that the impression of two adjacent panes on the engraved plate was out of register with their counterparts on the lithographic plates. The final quantities delivered are listed in a letter from BABN to the Post Office dated 21 April 1972: 5,950,000 \$1 stamps and 10,800,000 \$2 stamps [11]. Of these, 750,000 \$1 and 1.2 million \$2 stamps were allocated to philatelic stock.

Being definitives, both stamps were eventually reprinted. Given the larger postal demand and the shortfall in the initial quantity delivered, it is not surprising that the \$1 was the first to be reprinted. What is surprising is that the Post Office contemplated reprinting the stamp using the same method as the initial printing. On 1 May 1973, the Post Office contracted Ashton-Potter to produce a test printing of the litho portion of the \$1 on a specially coated paper and BABN to print the steel-engraved portion using the existing plate [12]. The purpose of the test was to evaluate the quality of the printing. Two papers were used in the test [12]: Abitibi super-calendered paper and Wiggins Teape gummed paper.

Separately, the Post Office also asked BABN in April 1973 to prepare photogravure cylinders to determine the feasibility of printing the \$1 design by two-colour photogravure and one-colour steel engraving on the Goebel web-fed press [12]. The Post Office chose the Goebel press option. A new, engraved cylinder was prepared, cylinder 2, and the new printing was released on 24 October 1973.

In contrast, the \$2 Quebec reprint from plate 2 released several years later on 28 March 1978 was produced using the same printing methods as plate 1. In a 19 April 1978 memo to the Treasury Board, with the subject line “Authority to Ratify Contracts,” the Post Office explained its decision to stick with Ashton-Potter and BABN [11]:

It is necessary, on an urgent basis, to reproduce the \$2.00 (Quebec) definitive stamps in the same manner as the production of the first printing, namely lithography by Ashton-Potter Limited and steel by British American Bank Note Co. The British American Bank Note could not obtain a successful essay of the stamp by means of gravure and steel. The Canadian Bank Note was unable to supply a satisfactory proof of this stamp.

On 6 September 1977, Ashton-Potter submitted a quote to print 16 million stamps by four-colour lithography at \$1.60 per thousand stamps (total \$25,600) [11]. On 1 September 1977, BABN submitted a quote to print 12 million stamps (subsequently increased to 13 million) by one-colour engraving and perforate them at \$2.04 per thousand (total \$24,480) [11]. Ashton-Potter printed the litho colours and shipped the sheets to BABN on 12 October 1977. The difference in quantities between Ashton-Potter and BABN was to allow for spoilage while setting up the press to print the engraved colour. The interval between the quotes and the issue of the reprint was about seven months. Contrast that with the one to two months BABN and Ashton-Potter were given to produce the initial printing.

The plates consisted of two hundred stamps like the first printing, but the spacing between panes was different. Figure 20 in Part 1 of Margetish's article [1] shows a plate proof produced by Ashton-Potter. Individual stamps from the two printings were virtually identical; it is not possible to identify from which printing a stamp comes.

The postal requirement for \$1 was much greater than the \$2. According to *The Charlton Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Postage Stamps* [13], 68 million \$1 stamps were printed from cylinder 2 as compared with 14 million \$2 stamps.

References

- [1] Larry Margetish, "Researching the Caricature and Landscape Issues at Library and Archives Canada, Part 1," *BNA Topics*, Vol 72, No 2, April–June 2015, pp 5-12.
- [2] Larry Margetish, "Researching the Caricature and Landscape Issues at Library and Archives Canada, Part 2," *BNA Topics*, Vol 72, No 3, July–September 2015; pp 8-14.
- [3] Larry Margetish, "Researching the Caricature and Landscape Issues at Library and Archives Canada, Part 3," *BNA Topics*, Vol 72, No 4, October–December 2015, pp 42-49.
- [4] LAC, RG 3, Vol 3825, File 13-1-45, Vol 3.
- [5] LAC, RG 3, Accession 1991-91/257, Vol 86, File 208-6-60-04.
- [6] LAC, RG 3, Accession 86-87/396, Vol 38, File 13-1-48, Part 3.
- [7] Leopold Beaudet, "Centennial Stamp Production" in *Centennial Definitive Series 1967–1973*, D Robin Harris, Ed., Adminware Corporation, 2000.
- [8] LAC, RG 3, Vol. 3860, File 13-32-4, Part 1.
- [9] LAC, RG 3, Vol. 3476, File 13-34-1.
- [10] LAC, RG 3, Vol. 3799, File 3-10-13, Part 2.
- [11] LAC, RG 3, Vol. 3474, File 3/3474/4.
- [12] LAC, RG 3, Accession 1990-91/257, File 208-6-60-03, Part 3.
- [13] George Papaspyrou, editor, Ron Richards, contributing editor, *The Charlton Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Postage Stamps*, Vol 3, Elizabethan Era, Charlton Press, 1982.