

MAFEKING BESIEGED

By J.J. Charron

The late Baden-Powell allowed his portrait to be placed on a stamp, which incident gave rise to consequences, which, though not of lasting effect to his career, were certainly unpleasant enough at the time.

As commanding officer of the small British garrison which was then besieged in Mafeking, Baden-Powell sought to sustain the morale of the inhabitants of the beleaguered town by doing everything possible to avoid their acquiring a "siege mentality". With inexhaustible energy, Baden-Powell strove to keep the people of Mafeking busy the day long by continuing the everyday life of the town.

We are concerned here only with the fact that among the everyday things of life in the town that this fine administrator sought and contrived to preserve, was the postal system.

At first, stamps of the Cape of Good Hope, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and British Bechuanaland, all overprinted "MAFEKING BESIEGED", were used to frank the letters which, in many ingenious ways, were smuggled out of the town through the Boer patrols.

When the stock of these stamps was exhausted, Baden-Powell commissioned two local artists and a printer to prepare some others. They appeared in two values, 1d. and 3d. (Cape of Good Hope 178-9). The lower value showed Sergeant-Major Good-year (who managed the local post), on his bicycle. The higher value had a bust of Baden-Powell himself. The designers of these two stamps were Dr. W.A. Hayes (1d.) and Capt. Greener (3d.), and the printer D. Taylor. They were produced by a photographic process on horizontally laid paper, perf. 12. The 3d. stamp is known in two widths, 18 mm and 21½ mm.

The design of these two stamps deserves some attention. On the Goodyear design, there is and ornamental scroll above the Sergeant-Major's picture, bearing the legend SIEGE OF V.R.-MAFEKING, with a crown placed above the "V.R.". Underneath the figure of the cycling NCO is written LOCAL POST, and beneath that again, ONE PENNY. It is hardly necessary to say that this penny stamp was intended for the franking of local letters only.

The 3d. stamp, on the other hand, has a label above the bust of the then Colonel Baden-Powell, bearing only the words MAFKING 1900 SIEGE, without the letters "V.R.", and with no crown above. Beneath the bust is the inscription POSTAGE THREE-PENCE.

All Britain (and the Empire) went mad on the night of the 17th May, 1900, when posters, printed in red, black and blue with the magic words MAFKING RELIEVED! were carried through the streets of London by yelling newsboys. That frenzied act of homage to a brave man added a new word to the English language, but the "mafficking" of the crowds found no response in the old Queen's heart. When Baden-Powell returned home, his Sovereign refused to receive him and but for the accession of a monarch of more liberal views a year later, the career of Baden-Powell might not have been as brilliant as it became.

For the true measure of the greatness of Baden-Powell's career, philatelists have only to look through their catalogues and count the number of stamps, including those of Germany, Hungary and Russia, which have been issued in honour of Baden-Powell, the founder of the great Scout movement which has since spread all over the world.

The Mail Bag ... *Continued from Page 59*

Date of issue: Early November of each year
 Size of stamps: 2c as Scott A102 (Canada)
 Other values as A100.
 Subjects: Featuring each year one of
 the provinces.
 2c - Provincial Parliament
 4c - Emblem of Province
 5c - Map of Province
 7c - Some important industrial achievement in
 the Province.
 15c - One of the best scenic views of the province.

Place of Issue
 for First Day : Capital of the province
 featured.

This would account for a total of ten years. Who knows, at the end of that time we may have the provinces of Yukon and Athabasca instead of the present Yukon and North-West Territories.

I hope that this letter may give a few points to discuss at Club meetings and if the idea it presents obtains general approval, perhaps the Board of Directors of the Society might be asked to present the idea to the Postmaster General.

C. Neill Beek
 DAUPHIN STAMP CLUB