

QUEBEC POST OFFICE INSPECTOR MARKINGS

by *Christiane Faucher & Jacques Poitras*

The office of Post Office Inspector is one of long standing. The *Canadian Postal Guide* of 1863 lists inspectors in Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and London. According to the *Guide* of 1901, the Province of Quebec was divided into three Postal Divisions: Quebec City, Montreal, and Sherbrooke, each having a Postal Inspector as its head. The Quebec City Postal Division was responsible for all of the province east of Trois Rivières except for the Magdalen Islands, which were under Halifax Division supervision. In the early 20th century, the Quebec Postal Division Inspectors were Archelas Bolduc until 1908, J. B. Caouette in 1909 and 1910, and S. Tanner Green from 1911 to 1918.

Post Office Inspectors were responsible for all operational aspects of the postal service: making

changes in existing services and post office conditions, choosing substitutes for postmasters and mail contractors, ensuring good relations with the public, and dealing with users' complaints.

Many markings were prepared for mail sent to or from the Quebec Post Office Inspector. We have assembled a collection of letters and covers bearing some of these marks, mostly from the early part of the 20th century. Since the letters involved were "problem" mail, most have other markings, such as LATE, UNCLAIMED, NOT CALLED FOR, MISSENT TO, and so on, in addition to the Quebec Post Office Inspector handstamp. Markings from the Montreal Branch of the Dead Letter Office are also quite common in this group.

Examples of these Quebec Post Office Inspector's handstamps are illustrated below.



Oval, 24 mm × 30 mm, always in blue. It has been observed in use from 1887 to 1919. It was used both as a receiving mark (with the signature of A. Bolduc) and as a despatch mark.



Incomplete 33 mm circle in red. It probably reads BUREAU DE L'INSPECTEUR DES POSTES / QUEBEC. It was found on a 1905 letter to S. T. Green, Assistant Post Office Inspector, with no other postmarks.



Oval 30 mm × 50 mm in blue. This handstamp appeared over a seal which reads, "Received in damaged condition and resealed by".



Oval 30 mm × 49 mm in violet. This was a receiving mark, and was likely the personal handstamp of the Assistant Post Office Inspector.

25 mm × 43 mm. The signature of Archelas Bolduc, Inspecteur des Postes, used as a despatch marking. He was entitled to a franking privilege.

**Veillez transmettre cette
enveloppe à l'Inspecteur
des Postes, QUEBEC.**

**Please return envelope to
P. O. Inspector. QUEBEC.**

Rectangular, 26 mm × 58 mm. This stamp was probably delivered to most post offices in the Quebec Postal Division. It comes in either blue or black, and was struck on letters which were late, lost, or damaged. Unclaimed mail was first sent to the Montreal Branch of the Dead Letter Office. Its period of observed use is from 1917 to 1919.

We thank Mr. Ken R. Johnson, archivist at the National Archives of Canada, for information he provided us on the Post Office Inspectors' names and their duties.

PHSC

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