

*The following article was published in 'The Canadian Philatelist' (Journal of the Royal P.S. of Canada) in its original French. Your Editor felt it was sufficiently important to warrant translation and publication in 'Maple Leaves'. Our thanks go to author Richard Gratton and the Royal P.S. of Canada for permission to reproduce the article and to Ken Campbell for kindly translating it for us.*

*The author, a chemist with Rolland Inc paper mill in Canada, is French editor of 'The Canadian Philatelist' and one of his specialities is the forgeries of Canada and the Provinces. Since the story broke, in January 1987, Richard has been interviewed on radio and has been assisting the RCMP in their enquiries. The faker has had all his stock seized by the police, but an appreciable amount has gone into circulation, with the result that several dealers have been visited by the RCMP. Anyone who has purchased such material is advised to try to return it to the dealer concerned and seek reimbursement. If this fails and you are satisfied that the material is faked then Canadian members are recommended to advise the police (commercial fraud section).*

*Richard Gratton (CP2078, Sainte Adele, Quebec, Canada, J0R 1LO) has kindly offered to give advice on any doubtful stamps, free of charge, but please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.*

## **THE QUEBEC CITY FAKES**

**By Richard Gratton (Académie Québécoise d'Etudes Philatéliques) with the assistance of Claude Beaulac**

The story which follow is authentic, the authors have kept quiet the names of those implicated in order not to soil their reputations.

### **The discovery of a major philatelic fraud in the Quebec City Area**

About mid-April, 1986, I received a telephone call and the caller asked me to give my advice on a group of stamps which seemed rather bizarre. This collector, well known in the Quebec area, proposed that he would send some items by courier in a few days. About a week later I received the lot and with a very quick examination concluded that they were genuine stamps which had been altered chemically.

I contacted my caller in Quebec and gave him my opinion, he asked me to meet with him personally to give him an explanation of my opinion and to return the lot. We agreed to meet at the Quoflex '86 philatelic show which was to be held a few days later in Montreal.

During the interval I recalled that my good friend Claude Beaulac had already mentioned that he had seen similar items, and this some

time ago. I called him and he agreed to visit at my home the next day. Claude confirmed that they were falsified and that he had seen similar items at the EXUP XV philatelic show in Montreal in 1983. It appears that there was a forger active and that he had been practising his art for almost three years.

A few days later I met my caller and he told me that these pieces had been bought by a Quebec area philatelist who preferred to remain anonymous. The stamp dealer who had sold these items possessed a certificate of authenticity for similar items of which the famous "CANADA 7" from the four seasons Maple Leaf series (Scott 537) was one. These certificates had been issued by a well known Canadian expertising firm and he showed me photocopies of these certificates.

I do not wish to throw doubt on the judgement of the expertising firm, actually it is always most important to be certain that the item photographed on the authenticity certificate is the same item as that offered to you and particularly if it is a photocopy of the certificate.

I then told him the tests I had made on these stamps and showed him why they were forgeries, he quickly understood and agreed with my conclusions. He asked me to keep quiet about the whole thing and to write him a letter explaining my tests and observations.

Many other collectors could be victims of this forger! He then explained to me that the philatelist in question wanted to see if he should or should not advise the RCMP, the police or his lawyer, because he could have the intention of taking legal action against the merchant who sold him the lot. He also wanted to contact the Royal P.S. of Canada's anti-theft committee in Ottawa to ask their assistance and advice. I then gave him my agreement to keep the story to myself . . . five months passed and I heard nothing.

Towards the end of September Claude Beaulac told me that someone had arranged a meeting with him in Montreal, to ask his opinion on a group of Canadian stamps which had a strange appearance. He asked me to attend at the Complex Desjardins, for expert assistance. It did not surprise us at all when we saw the same type of items, chemically altered, as we had seen some five months earlier.

We attempted to obtain details of the source of these items, but our young visitor, accompanied by a friend, was reluctant to give us any more information.

After much discussion we finally came to the conclusion that it was he who was the Quebec area dealer who had purchased one of the first lots of these stamps. He agreed that he did not know how to distinguish a genuine item from a falsified one because he was just starting in

business and he was seeking our expertise on these stamps and our advice as to what he should do in a similar case.

Many similar items, he told us, had been sold through auction sales in the USA and throughout Canada by well known firms and several of these were with certificates of authenticity. He also knew that several other dealers had purchased similar items and had sold them at a very good profit.

We advised him to try to recover all that he had already sold, explaining the whole affair to his clients, and asking their indulgence. He was good enough to say that he would do so and also attempt to be reimbursed by the person who had sold the items to him. We also asked him if we might publish the story so that no one else might be caught by this fraud. He agreed but asked for a delay of two months so that he could straighten things out with his clients and the one who had sold them to him.

He seemed to be an honest dealer who had paid to learn and was humble enough to permit us to write this and so warn other potential buyers of this type of thing.

*To be continued*

## **NEW BRUNSWICK POSTAL RATE TO UNITED KINGDOM VIA U.S.A. 1860-1868**

**By Eric Quinn**

The publication by Messrs Duckworth of "THE LARGE QUEEN STAMPS OF CANADA" has revealed a hitherto unknown source concerning the above postal rate. On page 129 we read of a document in the Public Archives of Canada which throws new light on postal rates just prior to Confederation. It seems that in the three provinces various mail matter rates differed and were not unified until the coming into operation of the POST OFFICE ACT passed 21 December 1867 and coming into force 1 April 1868.

According to this document ½ oz letters for the UK via Portland were charged 5 cents in addition to the Canadian rate. This means a rate of 17½ cents and presumably this applies to letters via New York, where the Canadian letters were charged via Cunard 17 cents. Argenti says the New Brunswick rate was 17 cents and, of course, there was a stamp issued for that purpose. Argenti mentions a specific letter routed via St John and St Stephen via Portland in 1864 at 17 cents, paid 10, 5, and 2 cents for that purpose. So how is it that 12½ cents plus 5 cents is stated to be the rate in this archive document?

## THE QUEBEC CITY FAKES (Part 2)

By Richard Gratton (Académie Québécoise d'Études Philatéliques) with the assistance of Claude Beaulac

### The items which were falsified

We reproduce in this second part, several typical items which have been sold as there is not sufficient space in this magazine to illustrate them all. One must understand that all Canadian stamps printed by lithography (offset) can be altered. In all cases it consists of the removal of all or part of the lithographic image.

We have classified the items in four major categories:

- I) Complete removal of the lithographic image
  - a) on stamps produced entirely by lithography
  - b) on stamps produced by both steel engraving and lithography.
- II) Partial removal of the lithographic image
  - a) on stamps produced entirely by lithography
  - b) on stamps produced by both steel engraving and lithography.

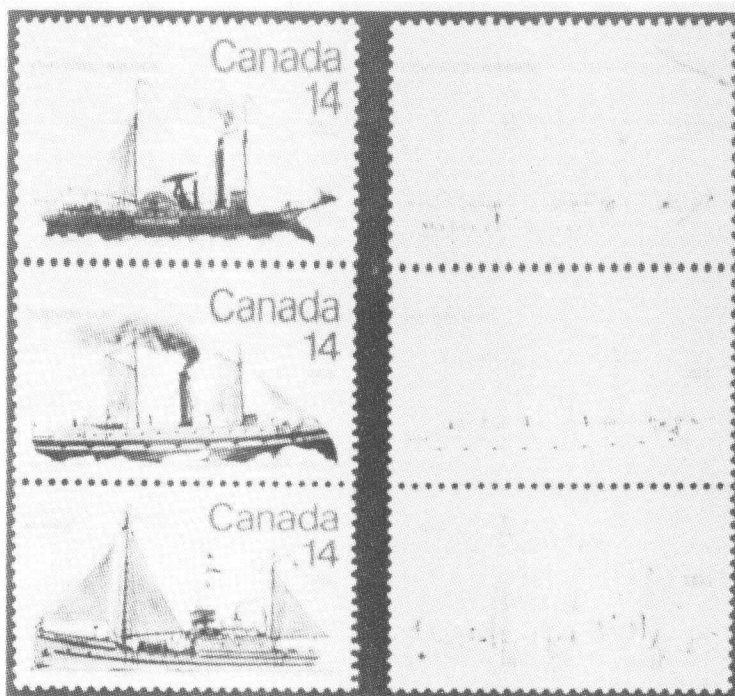
*1a. Complete removal of the lithographic (offset) image on stamps printed solely by the lithographic process. The total removal may be only on a part of the stamp.*



*Marconi (1974)*

It is only the stamps which are printed by lithography which fall victim to the forger, the inks used in the other printing processes such as gravure or photogravure are not affected by the chemical products used by the forger.

*Ib. Total removal of the lithography on stamps printed by lithography (offset) and by gravure. This type is the most spectacular.*



*14 cent Boat (1978)*

**The tests which enabled us to confirm that these items were falsified**

Many collectors buy items for their strange attraction without really knowing the nature of what they acquire.

There is an old Latin expression: "caveat emptor" which can be translated "buyer beware". It is not only nowadays that some purchasers are fooled by wily villains. Sound knowledge will protect us against philatelic fakers of this type.

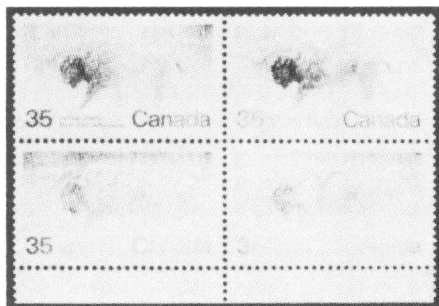
In the cases mentioned here, one must say that one does not often see this kind of item and buyers are very impulsive and snatch them up as they appear unique and rare. It is also true that little information is available regarding this type of falsification. That is why we have decided to give some rudimentary dodges at the end of this article so that the reader may himself test items which are offered to him or may already be in his collection.

The only tools necessary are a good glass (7 to 10 x magnification) aided by a good light and a long wave ultraviolet lamp. One must first have some idea of the basic paper, colours and some idea of the printing of a postage stamp.

These days, the paper whether coated or not, arrives at the printer pre-gummed. This is then printed by lithography and then, if necessary, by gravure. The luminescent bands usually are applied after the printing and then the stamps are perforated and the press sheet is cut into smaller sheets.

When one examines an item such as described here one can see that the luminescent bands are partially affected. That is to say that under the UV lamp these are either fainter than normal and often almost absent. This shows that the falsification has been done after it has come from the printing plant.

When one examines the surface of the paper of a coated paper stamp with the glass one sees that part of the lustre of the paper has gone which confirms that a mechanical action has aided the falsification.



*Ila. Partial removal of the lithographic image on stamps printed only by the lithographic process.*

*Buffalo (1981)*

*Ilb. Partial removal of the lithographic image on stamps which have been printed by lithography and gravure.*



*The current series \$1.00 (1984)*

*Note: The photographs were taken by Mr Marcel LaPorte of Le Cercle Philatelique Castor Laurentien*