

# The 5¢ D'Arcy McGee Stamp

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

During the 1920s pressure had been put on the Canadian government to issue stamps showing famous Canadian statesmen. New designs had been prepared as early as 1924 but the stamps were not printed until 1927. These were the designs for the stamps that would become the Historical Series of 1927 (Figure 1). The three stamps (Canada Scott 146-148) were issued on June 29, 1927, at the same time as the five-stamp set (Canada Scott 141-145) issued for the 60th anniversary of Confederation (Figure 2).

The story of the 5¢ Thomas D'Arcy

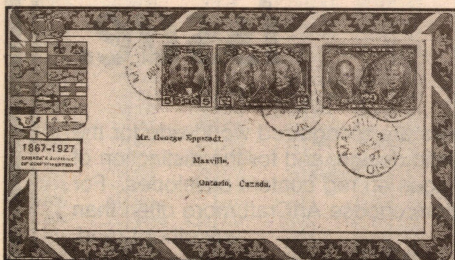


Figure 1: A George Eppstadt first day cover of the Historical Series: Thomas D'Arcy McGee (5¢); Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir John A. Macdonald (12¢); and Robert Baldwin and Sir Louis Hypolite Lafontaine (20¢). The Historical Series saw the first commercially produced first day covers.

McGee stamp of the Historical series starts in 1924 when Charles Murphy (1862-1935), Postmaster General of Canada (1921-26), raised the question of increasing postal revenues by a new issue of stamps.

The Post Office had not been favorable to long series of commemorative stamps since the last issue in 1908, The Quebec Tercentenary (Scott Canada 96-103), and they informed Murphy that the sale of lower values to philatelists would not compensate for the costs of their printing which was estimated at \$500 and up per stamp depending on the size and the complexity of the design.

As an example, Post Office officials indicated that they would have to sell 50,000 one-cent stamps to philatelists to break even; however, should the Postmaster General persist in his idea they recommended high

value stamps such as 10 cents and 20 cents (these values would pay the registration fees for up to \$25 (10 cents) and for up to \$50 value (20 cents)).

The choice of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Prime Minister of Canada, 1896-1911); Sir John A. Macdonald (Prime Minister of Canada, 1867-73 and 1878-91) and Robert Baldwin and Sir Louis Hypolite Lafontaine (joint prime ministers of Canada prior to Confederation) as subjects for the designs were proposed by postal officials because all of them "ranked among the foremost political and historical figures in Canada and represent both races."

They also ventured to write that "the selection of these men would avoid any trouble in connection with the bilingual question." Murphy readily concurred but also threw in

a 5¢ value showing Thomas D'Arcy McGee (Figure 3).

Models (now in the Canadian Postal Archives) were prepared by the Canadian Bank Note Co. but nothing else was done until Oct. 1, 1925, when the press was informed that the Post Office intended to issue the first of a series of Canadian historical stamps.



Figure 2: The 60th Anniversary of Confederation Series: Sir John A. Macdonald (1¢); Fathers of Confederation (2¢); Parliament Buildings in Ottawa (3¢); Sir Wilfrid Laurier (5¢); and the Map of Canada in 1867 and in 1927 (12¢).



Figure 3: Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825-1868), one of two Canadian politicians to be assassinated, the other being Pierre Laporte in 1970. Photo taken by Ellison of Quebec City about 1862.

The Ottawa Citizen remarked editorially on October 7, that "with all due respect to His Majesty (King George V) his temporary displacement on some Canadian stamps of historical interest" was to be welcomed and commended. As well, the editorial noted that McGee was to have a stamp by himself and the writer asked if "this was the last act of the genial and forceful Postmaster General (Murphy) before his retirement to the Senate in his efforts to secure due recognition for a compatriot whose profound admirer he has always been."

It definitely was close to his heart and on October 8, buoyed by the editorial, Murphy gave the order to print the stamps. The production of the high quality engraving took some months and die proofs for approval were not pulled before February 1926. On February 5, Murphy approved them (Figure 4). The Postmaster General was then asked for permission to change the value of the 10-cents Laurier-Macdonald stamp to one of 12 cents (the combined letter rate and registration fee) as the government intended to lower the domestic letter rate from three to two cents effective July 1, 1926.

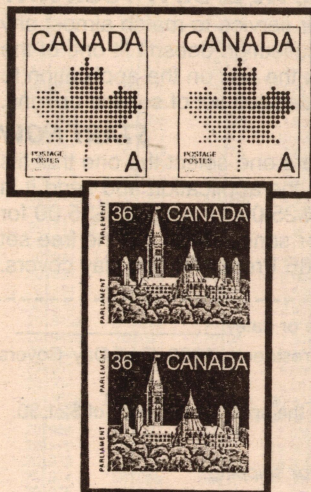
The middle months of 1926 were ones of constitutional crisis in Canada. After the dust settled there had been three governments in four months. During the few months of Dr. Robert James Manion's (1881-1943) tenure as Postmaster General (June 29, 1926-Sept. 24, 1926) he was apprized of the Historical series and gave his blessings to the die proofs previously approved by Charles Murphy. This is the only instance recorded in Canada where two different Postmasters General have approved the proofs for the same stamp (Figure 4).

Although approval was given, postal officials and Manion started having cold feet

Continued to page 42

## CANADA • BNA

Choice Early Classics to Modern Varieties



### Imperforate Coil Pairs

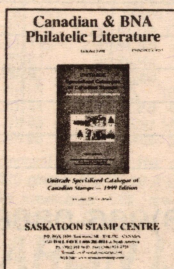
All are VF NH, prices in US\$

Cat#	Stamp	Pair	Cat#	Stamp	Pair
<b>30c-32c Leaf Series</b>			<b>39c-45c Flag</b>		
908a	A (30c)	315.00	1194Bf	39c	140.00†
950a	30c	275.00	1194Cg	40c	205.00
951a	32c	135.00	1394a	42c	135.00†
<b>34c-38c Parliament</b>			1395a	43c (dull)	135.00†
952a	34c	120.00†	1396a	45c (HB)	105.00†
953a	36c	210.00†	Starter Set Special!		
1194d	37c	135.00	6 imperf pairs identified†		
1194Ae	38c (strip of 3)	345.00	<b>Our price ... US\$675</b>		

Our current illustrated Canadian/BNA price list  
FREE on REQUEST

Internationally Recognized as a Leading Buyer of Canadian Errors and Varieties

### PHILATELIC LITERATURE



- We are the world's largest retail dealer in Canadian and BNA literature.
- Visit our web site for recently received titles and other book specials.
- Our 120-page Canadian/BNA Literature price list FREE on REQUEST.

### WANTED: CANADIAN ERRORS

- ♦ IMPERFORATES ♦ MISSING COLOURS ♦ INVERTED COLOURS ♦
- ♦ MISPERFS ♦ COLOUR SHIFTS ♦ PRINTED ON GUM ♦
- ♦ TAGGING ♦ BETTER VARIETIES ♦

### SASKATOON STAMP CENTRE

P.O. Box 1870, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3S2 CANADA  
Call TOLL FREE 1-800-205-8814 in North America  
Ph: (306) 931-6633 Fax: (306) 975-3728

E-mail: [ssc@saskatoonstamp.com](mailto:ssc@saskatoonstamp.com)  
Web site: [www.saskatoonstamp.com](http://www.saskatoonstamp.com)

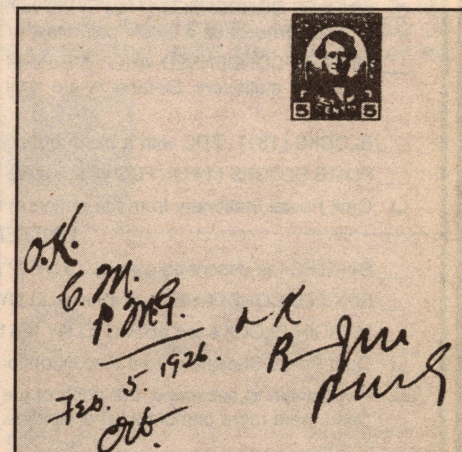


Figure 4: Die proof of the 5¢ McGee stamp approved by two Postmasters General of Canada, Senator Charles Murphy and Dr. Robert James Manion.



## BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

The following unused stamps are sound with fine or better centering and original gum after the year 1893. Earlier issues are average to fine and may not have gum.

CANADA	775	40	B7	30	45	BK484	2.40	104	.75
637	30	776	20	B8	2.65	BK488	3.50	105	.75
638	30	777	20	C1	12.75	BK494	2.00 <th>106</th> <th>12.00</th>	106	12.00
639	30	778	20	C2	1.90	BK499	5.60 <th>107</th> <th>9.60</th>	107	9.60
640	20	779	20	C4	4.00	BK499	2.50 <th>108</th> <th>4.00</th>	108	4.00
641	20	780	20	C4	1.00	BK51a	3.20 <th>109</th> <th>11.00</th>	109	11.00
642	20	781	05	C5	1.30	BK52d	20.00 <th>114</th> <th>13.50</th>	114	13.50
643	20	782	05	C8	1.50	BK52e	20.00 <th>115</th> <th>.75</th>	115	.75
644	25	782a	60	C7	30	BK53c	6.50 <th>116</th> <th>.60</th>	116	.60
645	25	785	10	C8	1.65	BK53e	4.00 <th>117</th> <th>.75</th>	117	.75
646	25	786	20	C9	1.50	BK59a	6.50 <th>118</th> <th>1.25</th>	118	1.25
647	25	787	20	C9a	1.65	BK59a	4.00 <th>119</th> <th>2.65</th>	119	2.65
648	20	789	25	CE1	1.50	BK66d	6.50 <th>119</th> <th>2.65</th>	119	2.65
649	60	790	25	CE2	1.65	BK72d	8.00 <th>120</th> <th>11.00</th>	120	11.00
650	15	791	40	CE3	3.00	BK76a	.75 <th>121</th> <th>11.00</th>	121	11.00
651	20	806	30	CO1	5.00	BK80a	.70 <th>122</th> <th>5.00</th>	122	5.00
652	25	813	30	E1	17.00	BK81a	5.90 <th>123</th> <th>23.00</th>	123	23.00
653	40	815	20	E2	22.00	BK82a	.80 <th>124</th> <th>18.00</th>	124	18.00
654	15	816	20	E3	3.20	BK84c	1.75 <th>125</th> <th>23.00</th>	125	23.00
655	20	817	25	E4	17.00	BK85b	11.00 <th>126</th> <th>18.00</th>	126	18.00
656	2.25	818	25	E5	12.50	BK88a	.127 <th>3.25</th> <th></th>	3.25	
656 sheet	819	50	E6	4.75	(10)	15.00	130	6.00	
(8)	22.00	821-32	2.75	E7	3.00	BK88b	131	1.45	
657	5.50	832a	2.85	E8	19.00	(10)	15.00	132	.90
657 sheet	833	30	E9	3.00	BK92a	133	1.45		
(8)	45.00	834	30	E10	1.50	(10)	12.00	134	1.15
658	20	835	25	E11	1.00	BK92b	135	1.70	
659	20	836	25	F1	23.00	(10)	12.00	137	1.90
660	20	837	25	F1a	27.00	BK96a	1.00	139	1.95
661	20	838	25	F1b	50.00	BK100a	.80	140	4.50
662	20	839	25	F2a	26.60	BK119	5.75	141	4.00
663	20	840	25	F3	190.00	BK123	.80	142	5.00
664	50	842	25	J1	2.40	BK143c	7.50	143	4.90
665	60	843	30	J2	2.50	BK144d	7.00	144	31.00
666	1.20	844	30	J4	2.75	OX1	40.00	145	.75
667	20	845	60	J6	2.25	OX3	65.00	146	.65
668	20	846	60	J7	2.00	OX4	25.00	147	.90
669	20	847	25	J8	3.00	CL11a	50.00	148	1.35
670	50	848	50	J11	3.00	CL44	5.00	149	3.50
671	50	849	30	J12	1.25	CL46	10.00	150	2.50
672	50	850	30	J13	3.00	CL46 BLK	152	4.50	
673	50	852	50	J14	5.50	NH	40.00	153	4.50
674	15	853	30	J15	.10	CL46a BLK	154	3.00	
675	15	854	30	J16	.10	NH	75.00	155	4.50
676	15	855	25	J16B	1.75	CL48	10.00	156	5.00
677	15	856	25	J17	.15	NEWFOUNDLAND	157	4.50	
678	15	857	25	J18	.25	1	27.00	158	12.00
679	35	857-8	25	J19	1.40	3	145.00	159	4.50
680	20	858	4.50	J20	20.5	85	85.00	160	2.15
681	15	858	25	J21	20.8	89	89.00	163	.70
684	1.00	859	25	J22	20.8	12A	22.50	164	.70
685	1.20	860	25	J23	20.13	135d	165	.85	
686	2.00	861	25	J25	1.40	15A	55.00	166	1.50
687	3.00	862	25	J27	30	15Ai	55.00	167	2.50
687 sheet	863	25	J28	40	17	46	169	3.00	
(8)	25.00	870	25	J28v	10	18	130	170	23.00
688	5.50	871	30	J30	20	19a	19	171	29.00
688 sheet	872	50	J31a	10	21	25 <th>174</th> <th>1.75</th> <th></th>	174	1.75	
(8)	45.00	873	30	J31v	10	23	150	175	2.50
691	25	874	30	J32	20	24	175	177	10.00
692	15	877	25	J33	20	24a	17	181	32.00
693	15	878	25	J34	20	25	180	182	22.00
694	50	880	30	J34a	25	26	95	183	.70
696	15	881	30	J35	20	27	72	184	.15
697	15	882	30	J35a	15	27a	39	185	.55
698	20	883	30	J35v	15	28	112	186	.55
699	35	885	25	J36	45	28a	11	187	.40
701	30	886	25	J36v	20	30	37	188	2.00
702	30	887	25	J37	30	31	12	189	.25
703	30	888	25	J38	30	32	13	190	2.25
704	60	889	50	J39	40	32A	14	191	.40
705	05	890	30	J40	80	33	95	191a	4.50
708	10	890-3	MR1	2.00	34	95	192	4.50	
709	10	891	MR2	2.00	35	4.00	193	.50	
710	10	891	MR4	1.40	36	7.00	194	1.15	
711	20	892	20	MR7a	30.00	40	55	196	1.10
712	15	893	25	O1	1.45	41	6.00	197	1.50
713	25	894	25	O2	10.00	42	6.90	198	12.00
715	25	895	25	O3	1.50	43	10.00	199	5.50
716	25	896	25	O4	2.75	44	3.90	208	.60
717	35	897	25	O6	3.75	45	4.90	209	.60
719	30	898	25	O9	115.00	46	5.00	210	1.80
721	60	899	25	O10	31.50	47	10.00	211	4.50
724	1.00	903	25	O12	25	48	3.60	212	.50
725	1.15	904	25	O13	60	49	6.90	213	.55
726	1.40	906	55	O14	65	51	4.50	214	.80
727	2.75	907	45	O15A	1.50	54	85.00	215	.80
729	25	909	45	O16	20	56	1.85	217	8.00
PR	50	910	45	O17	70	57	10.00	218	4.50
PR	50	911	55	O18	70	58	1.65	219	4.50
730	20	912	55	O19	80	59	17.00	221	11.00
732	20	913	1.05	O20	80	60a	4.25	222	9.00
733	20	913a	3.20	O21	1.80	60c	4.25	223	7.50
734	20	914-16	1.50	O22	5.50	60d	7.80	224	13.50
735	20	917-22	65	O23	12.00	61	.90	225	13.50
736	20	923	40	O24	6.75 <th>62</th> <th>1.00</th> <th>226</th> <th>.50</th>	62	1.00	226	.50
737	20	924	45	O25	60.00	63	1.35	227	.50
738	20	931	75	O26	40	64	2.90	229	3.00
739	20	934	1.75	O27	50.00	65	3.50	230	.25
740	50	935	2.25	O28	25	66	2.50	231	.25
741	20	945a	.80	O30	1.50	67	5.90	232	.40
742	20	945b	.70	O31	2.20	68	7.50	233	.25
744	20	950	.55	O32	9.50	69	6.00	234	1.00
745	20	951	.50	O33	20	70	8.00	234a	.90
746	20	954	.45	O34	20	71	8.00	235	1.10
747	20	966a	7.00	O35	20	72	25.00	236	1.00
748	20	967	.40	O36	40	73	41.00	237	1.90
749	20	968	.40	O37	40	74	5.00	238	1.60
750	20	970	.35	O38	3.70	75	12.00	239	1.50
751	20	973	.40	O38a	3.60	76	59.00	240	1.35
752	25	974	.50	O39	50	78	1.00	241	1.75
753	20	975	1.00	O39a	1.00	79	1.35	242	1.75
754	25	976	.50	O40	20	80	.80	243	1.85
755	45	977	5.00	O41	25	81	1.90	C2	125.00
756	1.55	994	.50	O43	.65	82	3.90	C2a	150.00
756a	1.75	1084	7.50	O44	.35	83	6.50	C3	85.00
757	20	1107b	2.00	O45	1.20	84	8.90	C6	5.75
759	45	1135-8	O45a	4.50	85	11.00	C8	35.00	
760	45	sheet	8.00	O46	.50	86	8.50	C9	3.50
762	40	1206-9	2.20	O47	.50	87	.65	C10	16.00
763	20	1334-7	2.50	O48	.55	87a <th>1.75</th> <th>C12</th> <th>165.00</th>	1.75	C12	165.00
764	20	1338	.60	O49	.35	87b <th>1.65</th> <th>C13</th> <th>6.00</th>	1.65	C13	6.00
765	20	1343	.60	COMPLETE BOOKLETS	90 <th>90<th>1.40</th><th>C16</th><th>29.00</th></th>	90 <th>1.40</th> <th>C16</th> <th>29.00</th>	1.40	C16	29.00
766	20	143a	.60	BK21b	\$100	91 <th>3.50</th> <th>C17</th> <th>25.00</th>	3.50	C17	25.00
767	20	1452-5	2.90	BK32d	6.50	91a <th>7.95</th> <th>J1</th> <th>1.75</th>	7.95	J1	1.75
769	20	B1	.30	BK34d	7.50	92	36.00	J1a	3.50
770	20	B2	.45	BK35d	.93 <th>93<th>27.00</th><th>J2a</th><th>3.50</th></th>	93 <th>27.00</th> <th>J2a</th> <th>3.50</th>	27.00	J2a	3.50
771	20	B3	.60	Tr	10.00	95 <th>27.00</th> <th>J3</th> <th>3.50</th>	27.00	J3	3.50
772	20	B4	.30	BK36d	4.80	96 <th>27.00</th> <th>J3a</th> <th>3.50</th>	27.00	J3a	3.50
773	20	B5	.45	BK39a	14.00	97 <th>33.00</th> <th>J4</th> <th>3.50</th>	33.00	J4	3.50
774	20	B6	.60	BK40b	5.60	100	17.50	J4a	4.25

TERMS: Payment with order. Five day return privilege. Minimum order of \$20 please. Add \$1.10 if you desire insurance. Alternate choices are appreciated. Calif. residents add sales tax. VISA & MasterCard accepted. Complete price list included or upon request.

**MARLIN LARSON**  
217 Country Garden Lane, San Marcos, CA 92069  
Phone (760) 744-1435 • Fax (760) 744-5119

Continued from page 40

with an election looming. Manion wondered if a McGee stamp was appropriate and if the lack of the King's portrait on the stamp would displease some voters. Despite the press announcements – the Post Office had announced on July 23 the sale of the new series on August 16 – the extensive preparations by the Post Office and the printers and the receipt from philatelists of \$6,000 in orders, the government decided to defer the issue on August 17.

The official reason came out some time later with the release of an exchange of correspondence between the President of the Cartier Centenary Celebrations of 1914 and Sir Henry Drayton, the then Minister of Finance. Simply said, the answer was political. During an election campaign it was better to retreat than to face unhappy voters.

What the Cartier Centenary Celebrations group wanted was Lafontaine to be replaced by Sir Georges-Etienne Cartier, another pre-Confederation Prime Minister and Father of Confederation. This also had its roots in the fact that a Cartier commemorative stamp series had been prepared in 1914 but never issued because of the war (Figure 5).



Figure 5: A large die proof of the two-cent value from the non-issued six stamp series commemorating the centenary of the birth of Sir Georges-Etienne Cartier. The proof shows Cartier's statue in Montreal.

The third Postmaster General in this story appeared after the Liberals won the September 14, election. Peter John Veniot (1863-1936), Postmaster General (1926-1930), did not do anything to accelerate the series. Senator Murphy was not pleased and he surreptitiously provided the press with images and technical information about the issue. This brought an unprecedented press release from Veniot. He wished it to be known that he had not in any way authorized these items and that whoever was providing this information did so entirely without consultation with the Postmaster General. Nothing was heard further about the stamps until they were put on sale with the 60th Anniversary of Confederation issue on June 29, 1927, with Lafontaine staying on the 20¢ stamp. It was not until 1931 that Cartier appeared on a Canadian stamp (Canada Scott 190).

The 5¢ McGee stamp was first approved Feb. 5, 1926, with die number XG-147 engraved by E.