

Canada's Arch and Maple Leaf issue of 1930-31

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In 1929, the British American Bank Note Co. (BABN) was successful in wresting away the printing contract for Canadian stamps from the American Bank Note Co., which had held it since 1897.

The BABN had printed Canada's stamps from 1868 to 1897, with the Small Queen stamps of 1870-93 (Scott 34-47) being their most well-known product. The 5¢ Small Queens stamp, Scott 38, is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The 5¢ Small Queens stamp of 1876, Canada Scott 38, was an early product of the British American Bank Note Co.

The new 1929 five-year contract meant a new series of stamps, even if the previous one had only been in circulation for little more than a year. The new stamps would come to be known as the Arch and Maple Leaf issue.

The preparation of the new stamps started in mid-June 1929, but the first stamp in the series, the 2¢ dull green (Die I, Scott 164), was not issued until June 6, 1930. The remainder of the set was issued at intervals until the last

stamps of the original set — the high values — were put on sale Dec. 4, 1930.

The 10 original sheet stamps from 1930 are shown together in Figure 2.

Later, when the rates of postage were changed, new colors were produced for the 1¢, 2¢, 5¢ and 8¢ stamps to match the colors specified by the Universal Postal Union for various rates (Figure 3). The 1931 domestic letter rate changes once again required the 2¢ stamp to change color.

The 1931 domestic letter rate changes once again required the 2¢ stamp to change color and a new 3¢ stamp to pay the new domestic rate was made available (Figure 4).

On Sept. 30, 1931, a new 10¢ stamp was introduced. The last stamp in the series was a surcharged 3¢-on-2¢ provisional issued June 21, 1932 (Scott 191) to help meet the demand for 3¢ stamps and reduce the large stock of 2¢ stamps on hand.

The portrait of King George V on the lower-denomination stamps was engraved by Carl Theodore Ault. The high values are larger stamps that show different pictorial scenes of Canada, with the 50¢ stamp showing the church at Grand-Pré. Grand-Pré is the home of Evangéline, heroine of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem of the same name.

The essays of the originally proposed designs showed the word "POST" in the right side of the arch and colorless pearls before and after the word "CANADA" (Figure 5). In the final approved design the word "POSTAGE" replaced "POST." This was a more appropriate word denoting a fee for postage, as "POST" could



Figure 3. To satisfy Universal Postal Union regulations, the colors of the 1¢, 2¢, 5¢ and 8¢ stamps were changed late in 1930.



Figure 4. New 2¢ and 3¢ stamps were created when domestic mailing rates changed in 1931.

Figure 5. The unadopted essay of the lower value King George V designs showing the word "POST" instead of "POSTAGE" in the arch at right.

be construed as a synonym for the Post Office Department. It was also felt that the word "POSTAGE" was a more artistically pleasing balance to the French equivalent, "POSTES," which appears along the left side.

In addition, small crescent-shaped bars were introduced into the pearls on each side of the word "CANADA."

Die proofs of the essays exist for every original denomination in the series and for a 7¢ value that was later dropped. Die proofs of the accepted designs also exist and are available on the market, including a set marked as approved and bearing the initials of the approver. The example in Figure 6 of the 2¢ dull green issue was offered in the June 2003 auction of the James W. Goss collection by Charles G. Firby auctions.

The printing plates for the new stamps were made of hardened steel, and for the first time Stickney rotary presses were used to print Canadian stamps (the 1¢, 2¢ and 3¢ issues). The 4¢ stamp, and the 8¢ to \$1 stamps, were printed from flat plates.

The 5¢ stamp was the only one from the set printed from both presses. Sheets of the 1¢ to 10¢ stamps contained 400 subjects, while the 12¢ to \$1 stamps were printed in sheets of 200 divided into panes of 50.

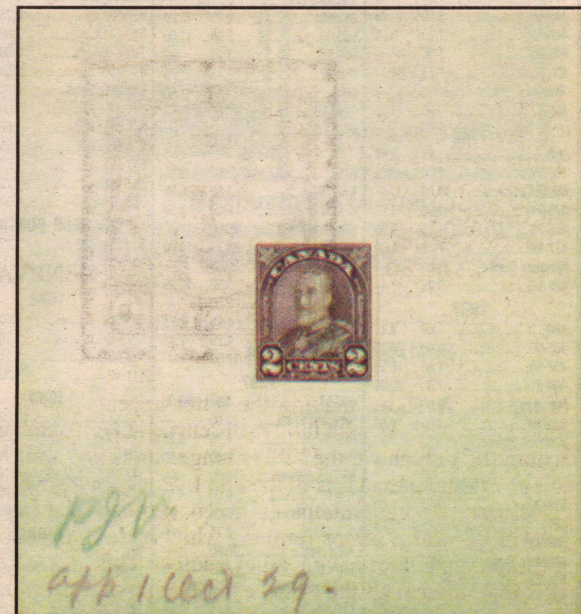


Figure 6. The 2¢ green die proof, with the initials of the approval authority. Courtesy of Charles G. Firby Auctions.

The coil stamps, Scott 178-183, were printed from plates of 384 subjects (24×16) on rotary presses, eliminating "paste-up" pairs.

To create the coils, two rotary press plates were curved in a semicircle and locked together to form a complete cylinder. A line

of color was left on the printed coils where the joint between the two plates met between stamps 24 and 25. The resulting stamps from each side are called a line pair.

Two different dies were used for the 1¢ green, the 2¢ red and the 2¢ brown. The diagram in Figure 7, reproduced with permission from the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*, illustrates the differences.

Die I for the 1¢ stamp shows three thick colored lines and one thin line above the "P" of "POSTAGE." Die II has four thick colored lines, and the curved line in the ball above the "P" is longer than in Die I.

The differences in the dies of the 2¢ can be seen in the top part of the letter "P" of "POSTES" from the left side. A small center dot of color is visible on the Die I variety. The Die II stamp has a larger dot, and the stem



Figure 2. The 10 original sheet stamps of Canada's King George V Arch set, all issued in 1930: Scott 162 (1¢ orange), 164 (2¢ dull green), 168 (4¢ yellow bistre), 169 (5¢ dull violet), 171 (8¢ dark blue), 173 (10¢ olive green), 174 (12¢ gray black), 175 (20¢ brown red), 176 (50¢ dull blue) and 177 (\$1 dark olive green).

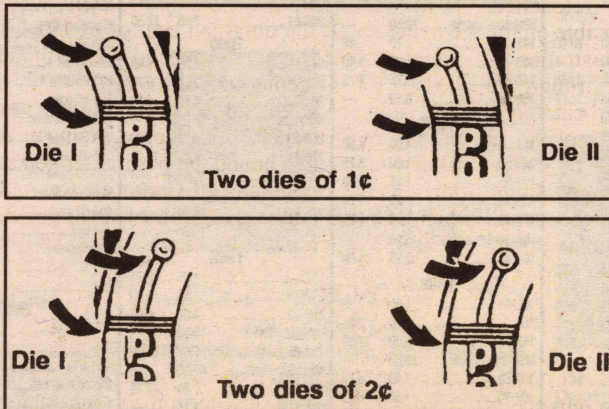


Figure 7. Top, the two dies of the 1¢ stamp are distinguished by the lines above the letter "P" in "POSTAGE." Die I has three thick colored lines and one thin line; Die II has four thick colored lines. The curved line within the ball is longer in Die II than in Die I. Bottom, the two dies of the 2¢ stamp. The color spot within the upper part of the letter "P" in "POSTES" is smaller in Die I and larger in Die II. The curved line within the ball is longer in Die II than in Die I. From the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*, reprinted with permission.



Figure 8. A retouch of the engraved portrait created the "Cockeyed King" variety, visible on the second stamp in this coil strip of four.

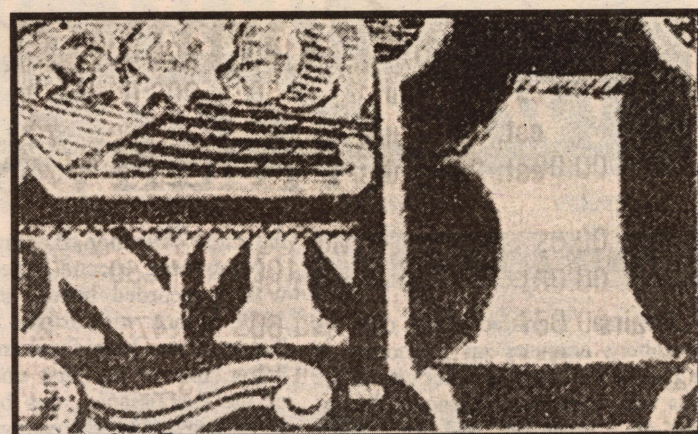


Figure 9. A re-entry in position 96UL2 on the 1¢ value is visible despite retouching efforts. From the Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, reprinted with permission.

Figure 10. The "missing spire" variety of the 10¢ Library of Parliament stamp. Courtesy of Charles G. Firby Auctions.

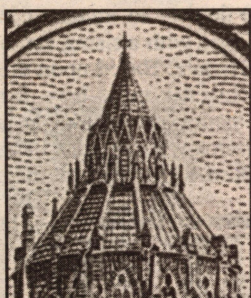


Figure 11. Canada Scott 190 is a 10¢ stamp honoring Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier, issued Sept. 30, 1931.



Figure 12. To reduce existing stocks and create needed 3¢ stamps, the 2¢ red was surcharged in 1932 (above). Misplaced surcharges (center and right) exist. Courtesy of Charles G. Firby Auctions.



of the "P" is short, making the letter appear more like a "D." As with the 1¢, the curved line within the ball above the "P" is longer on the Die II 2¢ stamp than it is in the Die I variety.

All three 2¢ coil stamps — green, red and brown — have a major retouch, which gives the king the look of having an eye defect. This is commonly called the "Cockeyed King" variety, and it is found on the left-hand stamp of certain line pairs. Only one roll in 16 on the plate could have this variety. It therefore cannot occur more than 11 times in any counter roll of 500 coil stamps.

Figure 8 shows a strip of four 2¢ coil stamps, with the line pair in the center. The "Cockeyed King" variety occurs on the second stamp from left on this strip.

A major variety exists on the 1¢ orange and the 1¢ green sheet stamps in position 96 of the upper left pane of Plate 2 (96UL2). The re-entry was so evident that it was retouched, but traces of the re-entry are still visible on the retouched stamps. The enlarged illustration of the re-entry in Figure 9 is shown through the courtesy of the Unitrade specialized catalog.*

Another striking variety is the "broken" or "missing" spire on the 10¢ Library of Parliament stamp. The variety has four stages. In the first, the spire is thinner than usual, in the second the thin spire is broken at a different place along the shaft showing gaps between the pieces, in the third only a small piece of the spire is left over the "oval" supporting the spire while in the fourth there is no trace of the spire.

The image of the missing spire variety in Figure 10 is shown through the courtesy of Charles G. Firby auctions.

A large number of stamp booklets exist for this series as a result of the change in colors of many of the lower denominations, and the fact that the booklets were available with either English or French text on the covers. Those bearing French text command a major premium — usually 50 percent — over the English-language booklets. The only booklet variety of note happens on the booklet containing two panes of six of the 2¢ green (Scott 164a), where partially or

completely albino impressions of the plate and number inscriptions are found.

The paper used for this series is a thick white wove. The 10¢ Parliamentary Library stamp is known on double paper as a result of a paper overlap when paper rolls were joined together.


All of the sheet stamps were perforated 11 and all of the coils have an 8½ perforation. The gum varies from colorless to a brown tint. There is little significance in these variations. Some of the rotary press printings show a ridge gum effect that results from the ridged steel rollers that "broke up" the gum when the web of paper was cut into sheets and perforated. This action was necessary to flatten the paper before the sheets were stacked.

In 1931, the 10¢ Library of Parliament stamp was replaced by one showing Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier, a father of Canadian Confederation. Readers may recall my article in the June 2002 *Scott Stamp Monthly*, where I wrote about the unissued stamps of 1914, in which one of the sets proposed was to honor Cartier for the centennial of his birth.

Proponents of this subject never forgot — and never forgave the post office for not issuing them. They continued to hound the postmaster general for a postal recognition of Cartier. It was only when a Conservative government was in power (1930-35) — a party to which Cartier had belonged — did he get his stamp (Figure 11).

A commemorative was not good enough for the backers of this stamp, so they convinced the postmaster general to have the Cartier stamp replace the existing definitive starting on Sept. 30, 1931.

In 1932, about 25 million 2¢ red stamps were still available and had no useful rate purpose. They were surcharged with obliterating bars over the "2," and a slightly raised "3" was centered on the stamp (Figure 12, left). An electrotype plate was used to do the printing on both Die I and Die II stamps.

The Die II is the most common. There are some misplaced surcharges (Figure 12, center and right, both from the June 2003 Firby auction) but no doubled or inverted surcharges. 

Canada's King George V Arch and Maple Leaf issue

Denomination	Color	Subject	Date of issue	Scott #
<u>Original Set</u>				
1¢	orange	King George V	July 17, 1930	162
2¢ (Die I)	dull green	King George V	June 6, 1930	164
4¢	yellow bistre	King George V	Nov. 5, 1930	168
5¢	dull violet	King George V	June 18, 1930	169
8¢	dark blue	King George V	Aug. 13, 1930	171
10¢	olive green	Parliamentary Library	Sept. 15, 1930	173
12¢	gray black	Quebec Citadel	Dec. 4, 1930	174
20¢	brown red	Harvesting Wheat	Dec. 4, 1930	175
50¢	dull blue	Grand-Pré	Dec. 4, 1930	176
\$1	dark olive green	Mt. Edith Cavell	Dec. 4, 1930	177
<u>Coil stamps</u>				
1¢	orange	King George V	Sept. 18, 1930	178
1¢	deep green	King George V	Feb. 4, 1931	179
2¢	dull green	King George V	June 27, 1930	180
2¢	deep red	King George V	Nov. 19, 1930	181
2¢	dark brown	King George V	July 4, 1931	182
3¢	deep red	King George V	July 13, 1931	183
<u>UPU changes</u>				
1¢ (Die I)	green	King George V	Dec. 6, 1930	163b
2¢ (Die I)	deep red	King George V	Nov. 17, 1930	165
5¢	dull blue	King George V	Nov. 13, 1930	170
8¢	red orange	King George V	Nov. 5, 1930	172
<u>Domestic changes</u>				
2¢ (Die I)	dark brown	King George V	July 4, 1931	166b
3¢	deep red	King George V	July 13, 1931	167
<u>New additions</u>				
10¢	olive green	Georges-Étienne Cartier	Sept. 30, 1931	190
3¢/2¢ (Dies I and II)	deep red	King George V	June 21, 1932	191, 191a