

Canada's Third National Philatelic Exhibition, 1925

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

The Third Canadian Philatelic Exhibition was held Oct. 5-9, 1925, in La Salle Dorée of the Mount Royal Hotel in downtown Montreal (Figure 1). Its predecessors were the First Exhibition held in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in 1923 and the Second Exhibition in Winnipeg, Alberta, in 1924. The Prairie Provinces and Montreal were, in the 1920s, the hubs of philately in Canada.

There is no Fourth Exhibition recorded and Canada-wide philatelic exhibitions were not officially reintroduced until 1949 when they were combined with the Conventions of the then-Canadian Philatelic Society (CPS) and

were numbered by following the Convention number.

The 73rd Convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, the successor to the CPS, will be held in the Montreal suburb of Dorval, April 6-8 and is in fact the 53rd of the new series of exhibitions. The opening date of the 73rd exhibition coincides to the day with the 150th anniversary of Canada's independent post office.

What makes the 1925 exhibition remarkable is not only the fact that it was widely publicized and reported upon, but because so much historical material has survived. These include philatelic items, photographs, a medal from the exhibition and, more importantly, a 160-page scrapbook kept for many years by

the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation and discovered by me in 1997 in the safe of the foundation. It has now been transferred to the Canadian Postal Archives for permanent safekeeping.

It is not clear who compiled the scrapbook. More research will need to be done to identify the person, but based on the material in the scrapbook it is likely to have been Geoffrey M. Le Hain, chairman of the exhibition's publicity committee. Unfortunately, the business archives and correspondence of the organizing committee have yet to surface or have been destroyed a long time ago.

The first public record of the exhibition is found in a short news entry in *The Montreal Gazette* of Oct. 13, 1924, where it is reported that "Members of the St-Lawrence Stamp Club will hold their opening meeting of the 1924-25 season...Among the many important items to be discussed will be the holding of the third Philatelic Convention and Exhibition in Montreal during the month of September 1925."

Although September dates were bandied about, no specific dates were chosen. In early February 1925, the organizing committee chose the October 5-9 dates instead. The committee was composed of some of the premier philatelists of the day including Senator J.A. Calder, Lewis L. Reford, M.D., Professor R. DeL. French and C.H. Goulden.

Also on the committee were Col. E.F. Wurtele, J.O. Labrecque and N.S. Oughtred who had all started their philatelic careers in the early 1890s. The governor-general, the Lord Byng of Vimy, the postmaster general, the honorable Charles Murphy, and the mayor

of Montreal, his honor Charles Duquette, were among the patrons of the exhibition.

By mid-February 1925 a prospectus had been issued and canvassing was under way for exhibits, ads for the catalogue and financial support. Exhibitors could enter their collections in 19 classes and 58 subclasses. Entry fees were \$1 for each entry and there were no fees for entries in the junior classes. Entrants were told how to ship their exhibits.

The prospectus also explains on what criteria the judges would be asked to give out the awards. These were "consideration of philatelic knowledge and research displayed in the exhibits, completeness, condition, arrangement, neatness and rarity in the order named."

Nothing much has changed in these criteria in the intervening 75 years. Today we use the same criteria and use the same nomenclature except for arrangement, which is treatment; completeness, which is importance; and neatness, which is presentation.

To entice exhibitors, the committee had already convinced some very important exhibitors to send in their entries prior to soliciting exhibits. The prospectus reflected this by naming Charles Lathrop Pack, Alfred Lichtenstein, C.J. Phillips, Senator Calder, Isaac Pitblado and Dr. Reford as promising "several very valuable exhibits from their important collections."

By mid-June the organizing of the exhibition was well under way. The Montreal press reported regularly and the philatelic press in the United States, England and Canada was very supportive. On June 16, the committee issued a two-page additional information pamphlet that provided details about awards received to date, including cups and trophies donated by the Canadian Philatelic Society, the Collectors' Club, New York, and Robson Lowe (Figure 2).

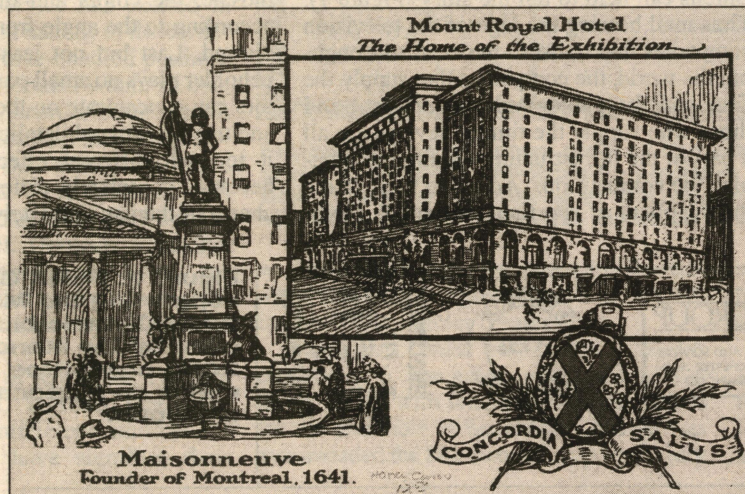
The pamphlet also indicated that the committee would allow any exhibit to be entered into as many classes as it qualified for on the condition that a \$1 entry fee be paid for each class the exhibit was entered in.

A commemorative envelope was prepared and sent out on July 3, the first day of use of the exhibition slogan cancel. The cancel was used regularly in Montreal until November 1925 (Figure 3).

The July 27 *Meekel's* reported at length about the exhibition's medal. It indicated that the medal, to be struck in gold, silver and bronze, was designed by Professor W.E. Careless of the Department of Architecture of McGill University.

Montreal jewelers Geo. F. Hemsley Co. were entrusted with sinking the die and producing the medals. Careless was able to

Figure 1: Picture side of a postcard probably issued in August 1925 showing the Mount Royal Hotel where the Third Canadian Philatelic Exhibition was to be held in the La Salle Dorée.



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Figure 2: A display of some of the awards. The photo was taken prior to the exhibition so it could be published in the exhibition's handbook.

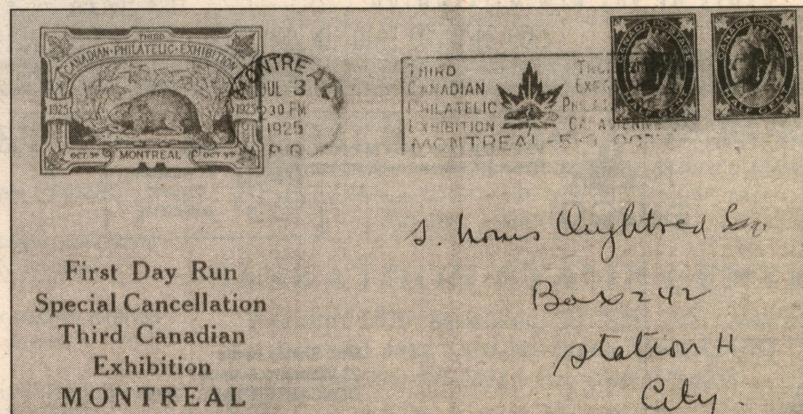


Figure 3: An example of the special commemorative envelope used in conjunction with the first day of the exhibition's slogan cancel, July 3, 1925. The first envelope to pass through the canceling machine was addressed to King George V "whose collection of Postage Stamps is one of the most famous in existence."



Figure 4: Obverse and reverse of the silver medal designed by Professor W.E. Careless and won by Homfray Clifford of Toronto, Ontario, for his collection of 20th century issues in the under 16 junior class.

incorporate the symbolism of philately in his medal (Figure 4).

The medal's obverse shows the caduceus of Mercury, the messenger of the Gods superimposed on the sun and the sea showing the widespread character of the hobby. The chain border is supposed to represent the "influence efficient mail service has exerted in binding the peoples and nations of the earth." On the reverse is the time-honored posthorn and the civic seal of Montreal within its coil; the civic motto *In Concordia Salus*; and a spray of the typical Canadian maple leaves.

The judges for the exhibition were announced in August. They included well known Canadian philatelists Fred Jarrett, H.W. Purvis and C.H. Goulden, Canadian dealers L.A. Davenport, G.A. Lowe and Donald A. King as well as Americans A.F. Lichtenstein, Theodore Steinway, C.J. Phillips and Eugene Klein.

The Stamp Herald of Kitchener, Ontario, in its August editorial, "regretted that, up to the present, an insufficient number of Canadian collectors have signified their intention to exhibit."

This may be the reason for the issuance of the Figure 5 poster and the special exhibition postcard. Although the card was used for other purposes, a mailing of it was made to collectors giving them a "Last Call (Figure 6).

Reporting in the philatelic and nonphilatelic press increased considerably as the exhibition approached. *The Montreal Star* even went as far as predicting "philatelic warfare" at the exhibition when the lead to its September 18 article read in part, "Keen Interest Among Stamp Collectors in Coming Exhibition - Many Clashes..." It then goes on to list the different classes of exhibits.

The exhibition was opened by Senator Calder on behalf of Mayor Duquette in the presence of many exhibitors, collectors and the grandniece of Sir Rowland Hill, Mrs. J. Powell-Davies, who wrote a two-page article about her famous uncle for the exhibition's handbook.

There were 348 competitive entries of which more than 70 came from the Montreal area (Figure 7). Many of Canada's then and now famous rarities were on view, including the "Paton" 12-pence black cover, then owned by Lichtenstein and subsequently in the collections of Dr. Geldert, Sam Nickle and currently residing with John Robertson.

Security was tight and ribbons were provided to show officials (Figure 8). The exhibition was under the protection of Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers. The attendance at current international stamp shows of these officers is therefore not a recent phenomenon. The Post Office's display was, to say the least, rather curious. It took the form of a maple leaf worked out in unused stamps of the Admiral series. The use of a variety of these stamps, from one-cent to \$1, was arranged so that the maple leaf was shown in all the glories of autumn colors.

The 150-page exhibition handbook was the most detailed show catalogue ever published in Canada up to that time. In addition

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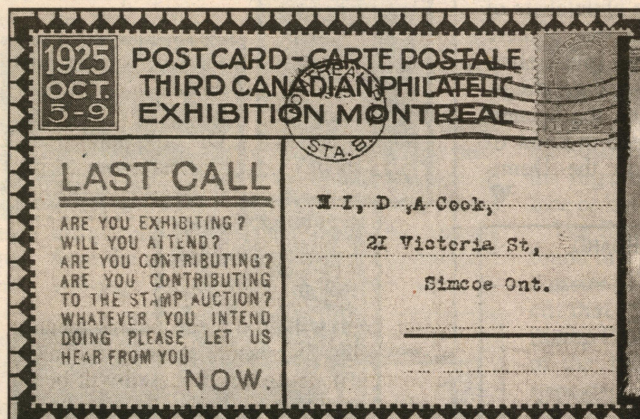


Figure 6: The address side of the postcard used to solicit collectors to support the exhibition either by exhibiting or contributing. The obverse of the card can be seen in Figure 1.

to the usual listing of entries and dealers' ads it was replete with original and interesting philatelic articles (Figure 9).

The judging results were posted at midday on October 6. The judges awarded a "Grand Gold" medal with felicitations to Dr. Reford for the ensemble of his exhibits and he was also awarded the St-Lawrence Cup by the jury

who wrote in their report that "as he would have won the greatest number of points had his exhibits been separately judged."

For his study of the 15-cent Large Queen, Dr. Reford was also awarded the Sefi-Pemberton Cup given for a "Canadian collector's entry showing the greatest philatelic knowledge and research."

Figure 5: Colorful red and black poster used to recruit exhibitors and to promote the exhibition.

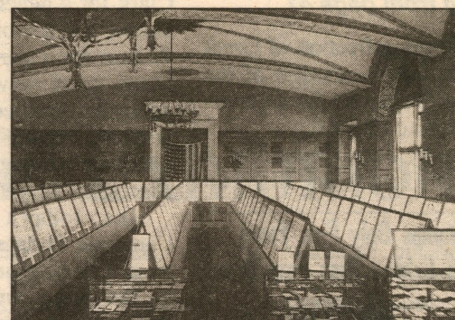


Figure 7: A view of La Salle Dorée after the exhibits were mounted. H.P. Atherthon, in an Oct. 26, 1925, article in *Meekel's*, wrote that some U.S. show-goers called the exhibition room the "Sallie Daw" in atrocious U.S. French.

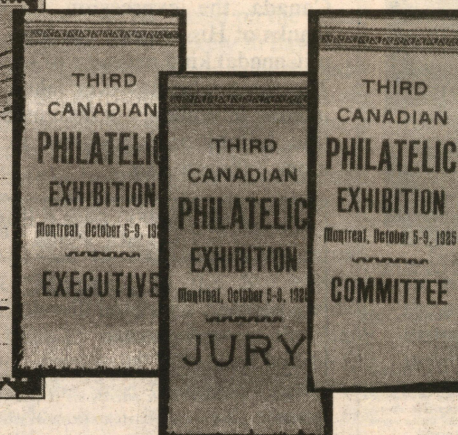


Figure 8: Examples of ribbons worn by different officials of the exhibition.



Figure 9: The cover of the exhibition's handbook edited by Geoffrey Le Hain and Alfred Newman.

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There were more than 150 medals, cups and other awards handed out. Among these was a series of Scott Stamp & Coin Co. Ltd. medals. Gold Scott medals went to Dr. A.E.

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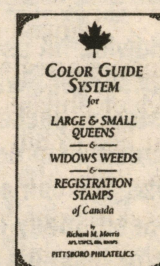
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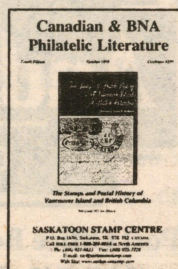
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Whitehead for a general collection of Great Britain (with special commendation of the jury) and Major J.A. Steinmetz for a general collection of the United States.

Silvers were won by John Perse for a general collection of Canada and E. Fenn

Collecting Stamps Only Five Years, Albanian's Exhibit Wins First Prize



Theodore Horton, Jr., Albany stamp collector, who won first prize at the International Stamp exhibition at Montreal last week, with his special collection of United States stamps. Insert shows a few of the first issue of three-cent stamps in 1851.

Theodore Horton, Jr., Awarded Honors at International Exhibition at Montreal, Vieing With Noted Collectors.

Although he has been collecting stamps only five years, Theodore Horton, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Horton of 246 State street, was awarded a first prize for his specialized collection at the International Exhibition at the Royal Hotel, Montreal, last week. More than 150 collectors from England, France, Holland, Canada and the United States competed. Many had been collecting stamps for twenty years.

Mr. Horton, who is twenty-one, was the youngest exhibitor. His collection is a study of the first three-cent stamp issue which was put out by the United States government in 1851. Mr. Horton catalogued more than twenty-eight varieties of this stamp; detected the plate defects that distinguished them and arranged them in sequence.

"I enjoy my collecting intensely and recommend it as a hobby that is bound to be satisfying," says Mr. Horton. "My collection holds more than ten thousand stamps. My United States stamps number six thousand. And I have a specimen of practically every stamp that has ever been issued by the United States government."

He does not own many really rare stamps, because they cost many thousands of dollars. But to be a stamp enthusiast one does not need to spend large sums of money for rare and expensive stamps. It is just as much fun to study the more ordinary kinds.

Clark for a general collection of the United States; and a bronze was earned by Geo. H. Wilson for a general collection of Canada. Many local newspapers throughout North America reported on the exhibition and its winners. Figure 10 shows a report from an unknown Albany, N.Y., newspaper about the success of 21 year old Theodore Horton Jr.

Like today's exhibitions, the Third Canadian Philatelic Exhibition closed with an awards banquet. During the dinner a toast to the King was made after which Dr. Reford read a telegram from King George V's private secretary, Lord Stamfordham, to Senator Calder which read in part: "I am commanded to convey to the philatelists of Canada...the expression of the sincere thanks of His Majesty for their (philatelists of Canada) kind message of loyal greetings. The King who has ever taken the keenest interest in philately is delighted to know of (the Exhibition's) progress in the Dominion..." (Figure 11).

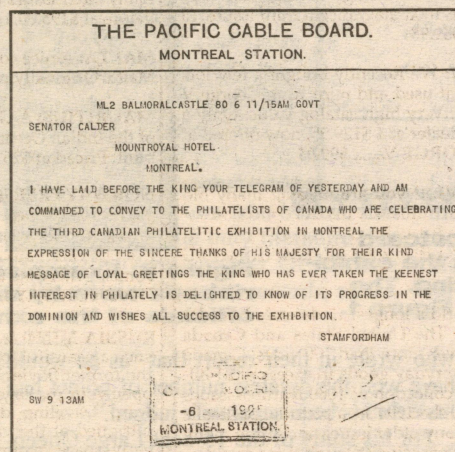


Figure 11: A copy of the telegram sent on behalf of King George V to the organizers of the exhibition.

Figure 10: Newspaper article reporting the success of an Albany, N.Y., resident.

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