

One collector's journey through bureaucracy

CHARLES J.G. VERGE

On Sept. 28, 1942, Herbert G. Teal, a Montreal collector, wrote to Canada's prime minister, the Right Honorable W.L. Mackenzie King.

King, who served as prime minister from 1921 to 1926, 1926 to 1930, and 1935 to 1948, is shown in Figure 1 on the 1951 4¢ stamp, Canada Scott 304.

"As a collector of Canadian postage stamps I have prepared the enclosed illustrated page for my album in connection with the new series of stamps issued 1st July pertaining to Canada's participation in the war," Teal stated in his letter.

"I am writing to ask you if you would be willing to grant me the favour of placing your signature in the space indicated on the album page, thereby increasing the historical interest of my collection."

He enclosed postage for the return of the album page, which is pictured in Figure 2.

Although Teal did not request it, it seems that the prime minister's office promptly

obtained the signatures of other prominent Canadians listed on Teal's album page:

— The Earl of Athlone, the governor-general of Canada (1940-46), whose wife was a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. The countess is shown on stamps in an omnibus series of 14 Caribbean colonial stamps issued in 1951 to commemorate the 1948 opening of University College of the West Indies in Jamaica, of which she was chancellor (Figure 3). The earl was also a brother to Queen Mary (the consort of King George V) and was therefore the uncle of King George VI as well.

— James L. Ralston (1881-1948), Minister of Defense.

— Angus L. MacDonald (1890-1954), Associate Minister of National Defense for Naval Services.

— Charles G. Power (1888-1968), Associate Minister of National Defense for Air Services.

— James G. Gardiner (1883-1962), Minister of Agriculture.



Figure 2. Herbert G. Teal's album page, which created the controversy. Courtesy of Canadian Postal Archives (POS 4428).



Figure 3. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone (1883-1981), the wife of the Earl of Athlone (1874-1957), depicted on British Guiana Scott 251.

The only one of these ministers to appear on a Canadian stamp is MacDonald, commemorated as premier of Nova Scotia in a 10-stamp souvenir sheet issued in 1998. The 45¢ stamp, Scott 1709f, is shown in Figure 4.

The only signature missing from Teal's album page was that of William P. Mulock (1897-1954), the postmaster general from 1940 to 1945. The name may be familiar, as Mulock was the grandson of the more famous postmaster general of Canada, Sir William Mulock (1844-1944). Sir William, shown in Figure 5 on the 45¢ Penny Post Centenary stamp, Canada Scott 1722, introduced many reforms to the Post Office during his tenure as postmaster general from 1896 to 1905.

On Oct. 15, the prime minister's office sent the album page to David Adamson, private secretary to the postmaster general, to obtain Mulock's signature. As any good ministerial staff member would do, Adamson asked the department's advice on the request. And that is when Teal's entire project started to unravel.

Continued on page 22

Figure 1. Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874-1950) on Canada Scott 304. Asked to sign a collector's album page in 1942, King complied.



Tis The Season!

Treat yourself to a gift of enduring value this holiday season.
Begin or add to your collection of U.S. Christmas stamps, or introduce a youngster to the joy of stamp collecting — a legacy of beauty, value and history.
Call, write, or visit our website today.

PLATE BLOCKS

1205 (4)	28
1240 (4)	30
1254-7 (4)	59
1276 (4)	29
1321 (4)	29
1336 (4)	29
1363 (10)	99
1384 (10)	1.09
1414 (8)	98
1414a (8)	1.35
1415-8 (8)	1.98
1415-8a (8)	2.29
1444 (12)	1.39
1445 (12)	1.39
1471 (12)	1.29
1472 (12)	1.39
1507 (12)	1.35
1508 (12)	1.35
1550 (10)	1.40
1551 (12)	1.54
1552 (12)	2.59
1552 (20)	3.79
1579 (12)	1.65
1580 (12)	1.55
1701 (12)	2.18

UNFOLDED BOOKLET PANES

2428 (4)	1.75
2514 (4)	1.95
2515 (4)	1.95
2578 (4)	2.19
2579 (4)	1.89
2710 (4)	2.19
2711-14 (4)	2.49
2789 (4)	1.89
2791-4 (4)	3.50
2871 (4)	1.89
2872 (4)	1.89
3003 (4)	2.00
3004-7 (4)	2.39
3107 (4)	2.09
3108-11 (4)	2.25
3249-52 (4)	2.75
3356-9 (4)	2.10
3537-40 (4)	2.17

PLATE NUMBER COILS

2874a (18)	9.95
3003b (10)	4.98
3007b (10)	5.25
3007c (10)	5.25
3011a (20)	9.50
3012a (20)	9.50
3013a (18)	9.95
3112a (20)	11.50
3116a (20)	11.98
3117a (18)	11.50
3176a (20)	8.98
3177a (20)	9.40
3244a (20)	9.25
3252b (20)	9.25
3355a (20)	8.98
3536 (20)	9.95
3540a (20)	9.59
3675a (20)	10.19

Visa/MasterCard/Discover
S&H: \$1.75 orders to \$30.00
\$2.75 orders over \$30.00

THE PLATE BLOCK STAMP COMPANY

Box 6417M, Leawood, Kansas 66206
800.829.6777
www.plateblockstamps.com

UNITED STATES

Price Lists

FREE

a. PRE-1940 USED

b. REVENUES

c. PRE-1940 MINT

d. BACK-of-BOOK

e. CUT SQUARES

Stamp orders filled on the day received.
Send us your request soon!
Satisfaction Guaranteed!

FREE PRICE LIST

For All Areas of

GERMANY

Other lists are available for:

CANADA, DENMARK, GREAT BRITAIN, NORWAY & SWEDEN

LAURENCE L. WINUM
P.O. Box 247, Dept. M, Walden, NY 12586
APS 51900 • ARA 1970 • Est. 1964

1-800-914-8090
Email: winum@frontier.net

Continued from page 20

A day later, A.S. Deaville, supervisor of the Postage Stamp Division, wrote to Adamson advising against Mulock's signing the album page. He gave three main reasons for this:

"(1) In fairness to other philatelists, many thousands of whom would wish, and have a right, to demand the same favour;

"(2) Because the signed sheet would be unique, and would possess considerable philatelic value, thus placing the owner at an unfair advantage over other philatelists and giving them cause for serious grievance; and

"(3) Because there has been a serious breach of postal practice and procedure in that the sheet has been impressed in an unauthorized manner with the Montreal, Station B, date-stamp."

Deaville continued, recommending, "the sheet of stamps ... should not be returned to Mr. Teal but should be confiscated by the Department and officially destroyed. ... Mint stamps to replace those destroyed could be sent to Mr. Teal so that he would not be out of pocket by this action."

Then Deaville set out a whole investigative process to look into the matter, particularly what he perceived to be the misuse of the cancellation device.

On the same day, Assistant Deputy Postmaster General P.T. Coolican wrote to Ludovic Germain, the Montreal district director of postal services, asking him to investigate the issue. In his Oct. 19 reply, Germain wrote to Coolican saying that he made a "thorough investigation" by having the staff at Station B questioned. He added, "that none recollect having acted in the manner described in your letter and all definitely stated that if such a request had been made, it would have been turned down as being contrary to regulations."

Based on this, Germain was at a loss to explain how Teal obtained the cancels. He recommended that Teal be interviewed. This recommendation was sent to the postmaster gen-



Figure 4. Angus L. MacDonald, Canada's Minister of National Defense for Naval Services during World War II, on Canada Scott 1709f.

eral's office, and on Oct. 22, Adamson gave the go-ahead for Teal's interview. Coolican's letter of Oct. 23 gave Germain the approval to question Teal, but cautioned that Teal should not be given "the impression that he is being regarded as something of a criminal."

Germain reported to Coolican on Oct. 26 that Teal was out of town and that the results of the interview would be forthcoming "at the beginning of next week." Between then and the next letter on Nov. 3, Teal, Principal Postal Clerk J.A. Longpré, and seven postal clerks gave statements under oath. The results seemed to be unsatisfactory to determine who was responsible for the breach of postal regulations.

The main reason was that there were four Station B handstamps in use at the time and Germain did not know which one had been used on Teal's album page. He sent strikes of all four hammers and requested a "photostat" from Coolican of the offending cancel. In his letter Germain described them as follows:

No. 1 handstamp for C.O.D. tags and insurance receipts (no hour indicated).

No. 2 handstamp for O.H.M.S. ("On His Majesty's Service") official government mail matter (no hour indicated but AM or PM added).

No. 3 and No. 4 handstamps for registered

mail, special delivery and airmail letters (hour in figures).

Coolican quickly replied on Nov. 5 that a photostat was not required since it was evident, based on the sample strikes provided, that handstamp No. 4 had been used on the album page. Unfortunately, the document showing the strikes was not included with the remainder of the documents on which this article is based, in the Canadian Postal Archives (Acc. 1993-141).

In a letter dated Nov. 10, Germain reports to Coolican "the responsibility was placed." He attached to the letter sworn statements of postal clerk Paul Forgues and Longpré. Although Forgues admits canceling the album page in his statement, Longpré accepted all responsibility even though "I have no particular recollection of the visit paid to me by Mr. ... Teal," but adding, "such action would not have been taken by any clerk of my office without my knowledge and permission."

Coolican was in no mood to close the issue without taking punitive action. In a handwritten note on Germain's letter he wrote, "At last the gentleman was smoked out. Please have



Figure 5. Sir William Mulock (1844-1944) is shown at right on the 45c Penny Post centenary issue of 1998, Scott 1722. His grandson William P. Mulock, Canada's postmaster general during World War II, was also asked to sign Teal's album page.

action taken recorded on his file in P.O.S. (Post Office Service)." That action was a severe letter of reprimand that was sent to Longpré.

Coolican then instructed Germain to issue an order to be circulated in the Montreal region explaining that "the Department will be obliged to take a most serious view to cases of this kind." He went on to say that under no circumstances should articles other than mail matter be canceled and that postmarks should not be antedated or postdated.

While all of this was going on, Teal wrote to the postmaster general on Nov. 14, 1942, asking Mulock to autograph the album page and return it to him. At the same time, he apologized for the problems he caused by his request to Station B in Montreal. Teal wrote again on Feb. 16, 1943, reiterating his request of Nov. 14. He did not receive a reply to either of these letters and wrote again on March 2.

David Adamson, the secretary in Mulock's office who started the whole thing by referring Teal's album page to departmental officials, drafted a letter to Teal for Mulock's signature and it was posted on March 29. In it the Minister said that he could not return the album page. The letter then used Deaville's arguments of Oct. 16, 1942, to justify the decision.

As there are no other documents in the file, it is likely that Teal never appealed the decision. The album page remains today in the Canadian Postal Archives. It is interesting that it has survived all these years, even though Deaville had recommended that it be destroyed.

How things have changed. Cancels are found on almost anything these days, and changing the date for a cancel is a frequent occurrence. Many postal services continue canceling material with the date of issue weeks or even months after the first day.

If you have an in with a retail franchise operator, it is not difficult to get the franchisee to give you any cancel date you wish. In rare occurrences when they trust you, they might even let you buy new issues before the official day of release.

S.S.M.

Choice Early Classics...

CANADA • BNA

...to Modern Varieties



CANADA 5 6d Slate Grey. A lovely unused single. Tiny closed tear in top margin just touches outer frameline at UR. A lovely example of this extremely rare mint classic. V.G. Greene Cert #7813. o/w VF Unused CS \$13,500.00

Our Price ... US\$ 3,845.00 (Interest-Free Monthly Terms Available)



CANADA 575b 8c 1975 Subarctic Indians IMPERFORATE BETWEEN, on both right margin pairs in block of 10 (5x2). Error caused by major 30mm shift in one strike of the H-comb perforator. A Rare Error. Fewer than 50 pairs recorded. Ex G.D.Mass. XF NH CS \$2,500.00

Our Price ... US\$ 1,920.00 (Or 5 monthly payments of US\$ 384.00 each)

Internationally Recognized as a Leading Dealer in Canadian Errors and Varieties

Visit us on the web at:

www.saskatoonstamp.com

Our web site now offers an on-line shopping cart so you can view and order from our large stock of Canadian and BNA stamps.

WANTED: CANADIAN ERRORS

❖ inverts ❖ misperfs ❖
❖ imperforates ❖ missing colours ❖
❖ colour shifts ❖ printed on gum ❖ better varieties ❖

Free on Request:

Our current private treaty catalogue of Canadian and BNA stamps.
Call, Fax, E-mail, or Write



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
Web site: www.saskatoonstamp.com



ROMANIA for beginner and specialist!

Extensive stock of Romania
includes all Scott-listed/unlisted
stamps, perforated and
imperforated souvenir sheets,
sheetlets, mint and used.

LOW PRICES • FAST SERVICE

OLD/NEW, YEAR/THEMATIC SETS,
FDC'S/CANCELS,
MAXIMUM/POSTCARDS.

NEW ISSUE SERVICE

YEAR SETS

1998	\$30.25
1999	\$38.57
2000	\$34.57
2001	\$36.81
2002	\$65.21
2003	\$67.79

"I AM AT THE SOURCE"

**GEORGE B. ARGHIR
PHILATELISTS**

DETUNATA 17-27, P.O. BOX 521
RO-400434 CLUJ-NAPOCA 9, ROMANIA
TEL/FAX: +40-264-414036
Email: georgearghir@hotmail.com