

Printing difficulties, some weather related, produced varieties of the 4¢ Red Cross stamp

Canada's 1952 multicolor stamp was issued to commemorate the 18th Red Cross Conference held in Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1. Canada issued this 4¢ Red Cross stamp (Scott 317) on July 26, 1952, to commemorate the 18th International Red Cross Conference, held in Toronto, Ontario.



The 18th International Red Cross Conference was held in Toronto, Ontario, in July and August 1952. It was the first time the Red Cross met in the Western Hemisphere since 1912, when it had gathered in Washington, D.C.

A Red Cross International Conference is the only event that brings together delegations from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the National Red Cross Societies and representatives from states party to the Geneva Conventions.

According to the International Commit-

tee of the Red Cross, it is also a forum to exchange information on issues of mutual interest, and for dialogue on the development and implementation of international humanitarian law.

"Through its resolutions, the Conference has often been able to exert effective pressure in order to restore respect for international humanitarian law and put an end to violations it has denounced," the committee notes.

At the height of the Korean War, the main task of the 18th International Conference in Toronto was to revise the International Red Cross statutes that were found in need of updating after World War II.

A single 4¢ commemorative stamp (Scott 317), shown in Figure 1, was issued for the conference on July 26.

At the time it was one of the very few Canadian multicolor stamps; earlier examples were the 1898 Imperial Penny postage issue (Scott 85-86) and the three bicolor issues of the 1939 Royal Visit set (246-48).

The Red Cross stamp used two different printing methods. The main portion of the design in light blue was line engraved and intaglio printed. The red cross was added by offset lithography after the light blue color had dried.

Fifty million stamps, perforated gauge 12, were printed in sheets of 200, which were then cut into post office panes of 50. Two plates (No. 1 and 2) were used to print the light blue and one unnumbered plate was used to print the red ink.

The Canadian Bank Note Co. printed the stamps. The design selected was drawn by Herman Herbert Schwartz (1885-1952) based on a calendar image, shown in Figure 2, provided by the Canadian Red Cross. The design depicts the Red Cross symbol superimposed on the sun whose rays spread out to warm the earth.

Essays were prepared in vertical and horizontal formats on Dec. 5, 1951, shown in Figure 3, and the final horizontal design was approved on Jan. 16, 1952.

During the spring, dies were prepared and proofs were pulled. Many trials were

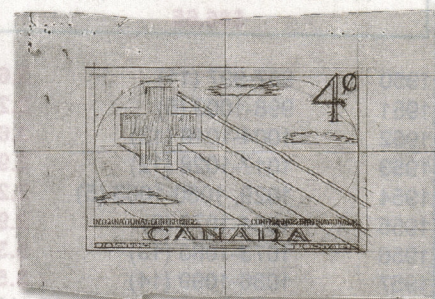


Figure 3. Vertical and horizontal essays of the stamp design prepared in 1951.



Figure 2. The calendar image of the Red Cross emblem on which Herman Herbert Schwartz based the stamp design.

made as it became quickly apparent that the centering of the red cross in the sun was more easily envisioned than done.

There are two blue shades recorded — one for each plate — and the scarlet-red color of the cross comes in three shades: light, medium and dark.

Canadian Bank Note Co. had very little experience using the lithography process and therefore had problems printing the red color. To make sure that the red would be properly printed, guidelines and guide dots were applied to both the blue printing plates. In large measure, this printing problem was caused by daily humidity and temperature changes. Apparently by mid-June, very few of the stamps had been printed.

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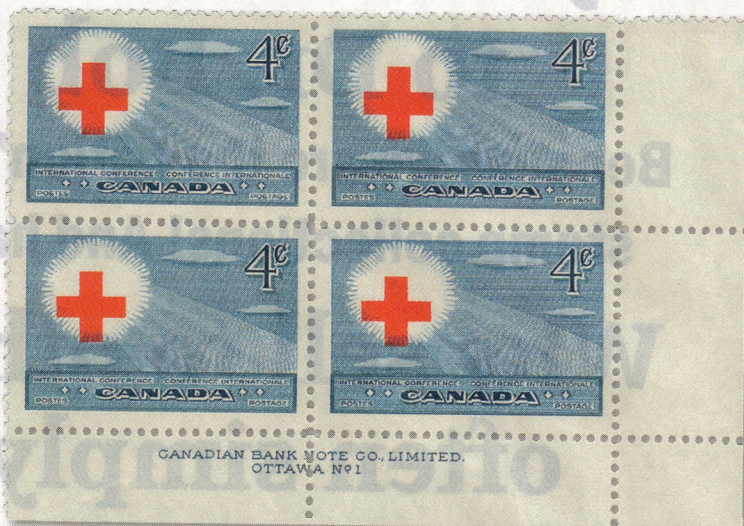


Figure 4. A bottom right margin block of four from plate No. 1 with the printer's imprint in the selvage. On all four of these stamps, the cross is centered low and to the left.

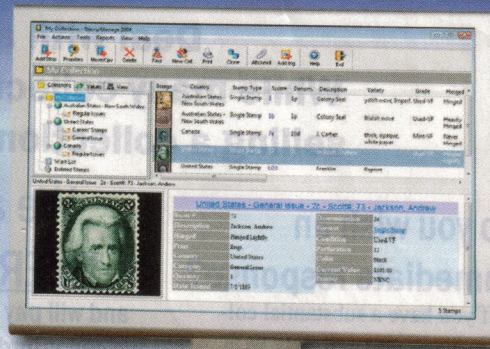
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The precision of setting the cross was likely dropped as a requirement because, in the issued stamps, the cross can be found centered, to the top, to the right, to the bottom and to the left. Shown in Figure 4 is a bot-

tom right margin block of four from plate No. 1 with the printer's imprint in the selvage. On all four stamps, the cross is centered low and to the left.

Problems printing the blue ink were also weather related. The printers discovered that with a

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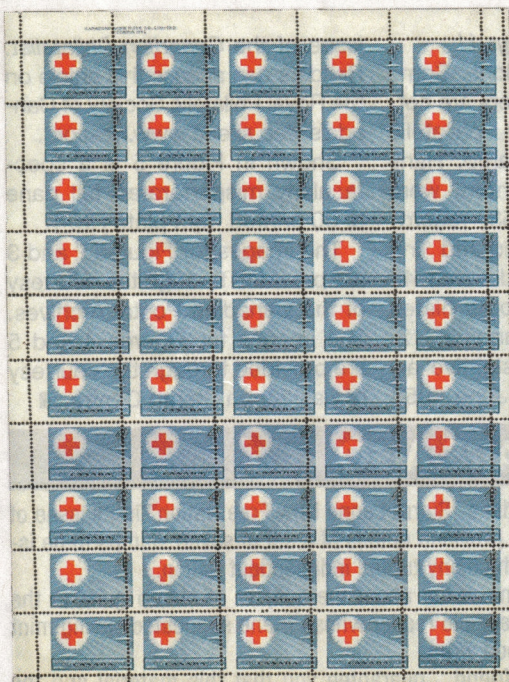


Figure 5. A spectacularly misperforated full pane of 50 stamps printed from plate No. 1.

humid day, the stamp paper contained more moisture and therefore made the ink run and smear.

Horizontal and vertical hairlines exist and are uncommon considering the blurring and smearing of the blue ink. The blue line-engraved printing started from the bottom of the sheet.

Red dots and red lines are frequently found on the stamps. They are caused by red ink splashing across the sheet. The fact that many of these dots are found in the selvage of the top two panes (upper left and upper right) perhaps indicates that the red color was printed from the top to the bottom of the sheet. The red dots are of different sizes and can be found in

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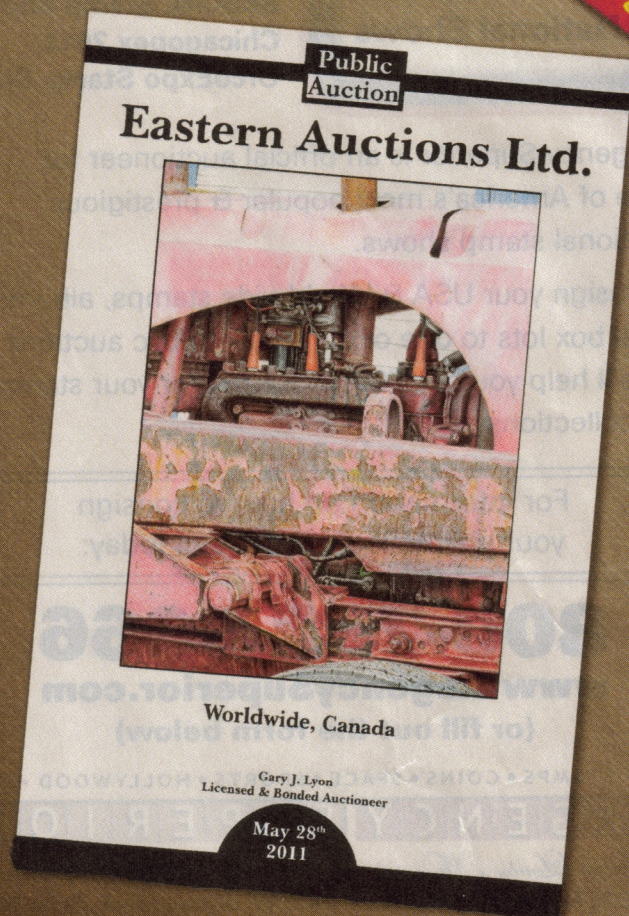


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several different positions. Some are constant while others are not.

Two contemporary philatelic researchers of the stamp, Hans Reiche and Eric Rushton, were very active in 1952-53, recording these red dot and red line varieties. Reiche listed some 46 separate varieties on both plates and Rushton added another 12. Rushton wrote a substantive article published in the June 1953

issue of the *Canadian Philatelist*. Readers can access this article on the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's web site at www.rpsc.org.

Shown in Figure 5 is a spectacularly misperforated full pane of 50 printed from plate No. 1.

The images for Figures 2 and 3 are provided through the courtesy of the Canadian Postal Archives. The images for Figures 4 and 5 are provided through the courtesy of Saskatoon Stamp Centre. ■

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Linn's carried the headline "Sierra Leone Now Free Nation" in its issue of April 17, 1961. The story provided details of a set of seven stamps to be issued by the former British colony turned independent nation.

Founder George W. Linn wrote about the subject of stamp gum, in the form of a letter to a 14-year-old reader whose friend suggested saving mint stamps in clear plastic food wrap.

"However, does your friend... guarantee you that this material and the method of wrapping you use will not injure the gum on your stamps?" Linn asked, pointing out that no air would circulate between the stamp gum and the plastic wrap, a potential hazard.

H.E. Harris and Co. of Boston, Mass., advertised uncut used singles of United States Scott R509, the \$500 carmine J.A. Dix documentary revenue stamp of 1948, for \$39.75. Today, an uncut used example catalogs at \$160.

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175-7 U..... 25 ea	246 H..... .80	27 H..... 2.50	221-6 NH..... 1.25	416 NH..... .65
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179-182 U..... 25 ea	248 H..... 1.75	42 H..... 3.00	233-6,C12-15 NH..... 4.50	422-6 NH..... 5.75
182-3 NH..... 70 ea	249 H..... 1.25	52 H..... 2.75	233-6 U..... 3.25	427-9 NH..... 3.00
183 H..... .25	250-2 H..... 4.75	61-6 NH..... 40.00	237-42 NH..... 1.50	433 NH..... 4.00
184 U..... .25	251-5 H..... 1.75	73 H..... 3.50	243-7 NH..... .90	437-41 NH..... 1.25
185 NH..... 1.25	253 H..... .80	78 NH..... 7.00	248-53 NH..... 1.25	442-4 NH..... 1.50
185 U..... .35	253 U..... .50	84 H..... .200	248-53 H..... .85	445-6 NH..... 12.00
186 U..... .45	254-5 NH..... 1.25 ea	85 H..... 4.00	254-58 U..... 4.25	448-9 NH..... 6.00
187 H..... .50	257-8 H..... 40 ea	86 H..... 1.75	264-7 NH..... 2.50	451-8 NH..... 2.50
190-2 H/U..... 25 ea	257-8 U..... 25 ea	91 NH..... .80	268-72 NH..... .75	459-63 NH..... 1.10
193 NH..... .50	260 NH..... 1.25	94 NH..... 1.25	268-72 H..... .55	464 NH..... 2.00
193 H..... .35	260 H..... .90	98-100 NH..... 9.00	273-6 NH..... .65	465-7 NH..... 2.85
194 NH..... .60	261 NH..... .85	98-100 H..... 3.50	277-82 NH..... 1.25	471-3 NH..... 1.80
194 H..... .45	261 H..... .65	109-11 H..... .40	284-6 NH..... 5.00	474-8 NH..... 1.40
194-6 U..... 25 ea	262 NH..... 70	109-11 U..... .35	285 NH..... 1.25	479 NH..... 2.00
195 NH..... .65	262 H..... .55	112 NH..... 9.50	287-9 NH..... 3.00	480-2 NH..... 3.85
195 H..... .50	263 H..... .95	115 H..... .40	290 NH..... 3.00	483-5 NH..... 1.20
197 NH..... .40	263 U..... .50	127-30 NH..... 1.85	292-6 NH..... 1.00	503-5 NH..... 1.40
197-8, 201 H..... 25 ea	264 NH..... 1.40	127-30 H..... 1.40	302-4 NH..... 1.30	506-9 NH..... 1.20
199 NH..... 1.25	264 NH BLK OF 4..... 10.00	131 H..... .25	305-9 NH..... .65	510-3 NH..... 2.25
199 H..... .50	264 H..... 1.10	132 H..... 2.00	305-9 H..... .50	514-6 NH..... 3.75
199-209 U..... 25 ea	265 H..... .40	133 H..... 1.25	310-4 NH..... 1.50	529-31 NH..... 1.40
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