

Trudeau Issue Continues Commemorative Tradition

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

The website for The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada <www.rpsc.org> enables visitors to leave questions related to stamps and stamp collecting. Usually the questions are simple, such as, "What is portrayed on such-and-such a stamp?" or they may ask for information on stamp values or how to dispose of an inherited collection.

From time to time, however, a question is asked that requires a little more research to answer. The query that prompted this month's O Canada column asked "... whether the speed with which Canada Post is putting out a commemorative Trudeau stamp for 1 July amounts to rushing things according to their formal policy or conventional behavior, or not?"

Since many readers of this column may ask themselves the same question, I thought I would share with you some of the research that went into replying to that question.

First of all, there was no haste on Canada Post's part or anything unusual about the issuance of a stamp to honor the life and career of The Right Honorable Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1919-2000), Canada's 15th prime minister. The design of the forthcoming Trudeau stamp is illustrated here in Figure 1.

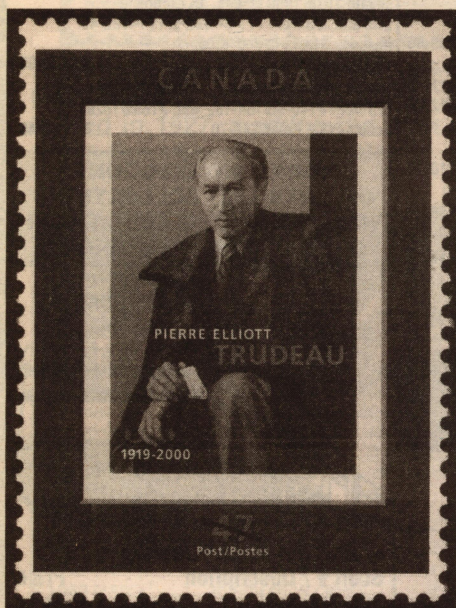


Figure 1: Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1919-2000), the 15th prime minister of Canada, will be featured on a new commemorative stamp July 1.

The rule is that former governors general and prime ministers can be honored on stamps within a year after their death. The honoree's families usually choose to have the stamp issued on the next birth anniversary. Since Trudeau died Sept. 28, 2000, a stamp prepared for release July 1, 2001, is not inappropriate.

Because of the personal nature of this kind of stamp, Canada Post consults with the family of the deceased governor general or prime minister. In this case, Trudeau's sons, Justin and Alexandre (Sacha), recommended the use of their father's official portrait, which hangs in the Centre Block of Canada's Parliament, and asked if the stamp could be issued on Canada Day. Many officials at Canada Post and many members of its Stamp Advisory Committee also favored the official portrait as the design for the commemorative stamp.

Canada Post agreed to the family's selection of the July 1 date, as it falls within the usual time frame and is more than appropriate for such a staunch defender of Canada.

Myfanwy Spencer Pavelic painted the official portrait of Trudeau. Pavelic was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1916, and was greatly influenced by Emily Carr, one of Canada's most eminent painters of the first



Figure 2: The souvenir sheet of four stamps shows the rose, a Trudeau trademark.

half of the 20th century. In the autumn of 1990, Pavelic was approached by her Montreal agent about adding her name to a short list of painters to be considered for the commission of an official portrait of Trudeau. Pavelic, who had been turning down requests for official portraits in favor of more relaxed and naturalistic works, consented, because she had not forgotten her active desire to paint this man 20 years earlier when his imposing presence and image dominated the media.

The stamp, based on her painting, was designed by Tom Yakobina, whose previous stamp designs include the 47¢ Three-Penny Beaver stamp issued April 6 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada's independent postal service. In addition, a souvenir sheet of four of Yakobina's stamps was also issued, featuring in the margin photographs by Roger Galbraith, Canadian Press photographer Chuck Mitchell and a rose image by François Leclerc. The sheet of four is shown in Figure 2.

Canada's policy of issuing a stamp for deceased governors general and prime ministers within a year has been in place since the early 1950s. The rules are not cast in stone, and the waiting period may be longer if technical (production) or family reasons arise.

Appearing with this article is a list of the former governors general (GG) and prime ministers (PM) who have been so honored on Canadian stamps since the policy began. Provided are the date of death, the date of the stamp issue, the time lapse between death and the stamp issue, and the Scott catalog number for each.

The average time between date of death and date of stamp issue is approximately 10.5 months. The shortest wait for a new stamp was for the 1967 Vanier stamp, and the longest was for the 1982 Léger stamp. The previous 10 issues are shown together in Figure 3.

All deceased prime ministers of Canada have been honored by a stamp, as have all

deceased Canadian-born governors general. Before 1951 only two prime ministers, John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier, had appeared on Canadian stamps (Scott 141, 144 and 147). Those stamps were issued in 1927 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of confederation and are shown here in Figure 4.

In 1951, when a stamp commemorating Mackenzie King was being planned, the Post Office Department decided to honor all deceased Prime Ministers who had not previously appeared on stamps. Robert L. Borden was commemorated on a 3¢ stamp in 1951, Scott 303; stamps for John Abbott (3¢) and Alexander Mackenzie (4¢) appeared in 1952 (Scott 318 and 319); John Thompson (4¢) and Mackenzie Bowell (5¢) were honored in 1954 on Scott 349 and 350; and Richard Bennett (4¢) and Charles Tupper (5¢)

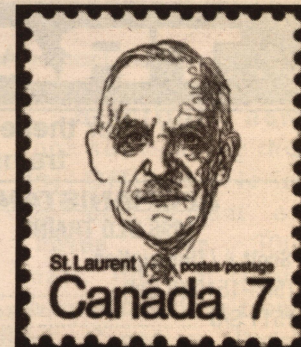
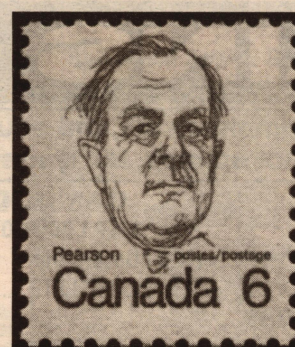
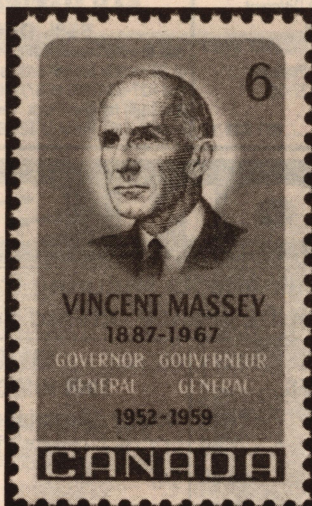
were featured in 1955 on Scott 357 and 358. These stamps are all pictured together in Figure 5.

As to the format of the new Trudeau stamps — a pane of 16 and souvenir sheet of four — again this is usual, given the times.

Prior to the 1991 Michener stamp, all former governors general and prime ministers had been honored with a single commemorative stamp, with the exception of Pearson and St. Laurent, who had been pictured on definitive stamps because, at the times of their deaths, the current regular series of stamps featured prime ministers.

The last three to be honored — Michener,

Sauvé and now Trudeau — have appeared in more attractive packaging. Each stamp is a single commemorative showing the honored official. What distinguishes these stamps from their predecessors is the format in which the stamps are issued. This is, of course, no reflection on the past governors general or prime ministers, but a



Scott	Name	Date of Death	Date of Issue	Time Lapse
304	4¢ W.L. Mackenzie King (PM)	July 22, 1950	June 25, 1951	11 months
393	5¢ Arthur Meighen (PM)	Aug. 5, 1960	April 19, 1961	8.5 months
474	5¢ George P. Vanier (GG)	March 5, 1967	Sept. 15, 1967	6.5 months
491	6¢ Vincent Massey (GG)	Dec. 30, 1967	Feb. 20, 1969	14 months
591	6¢ Lester B. Pearson (PM)	Dec. 27, 1972	Oct. 17, 1973	9.5 months
592	7¢ Louis St. Laurent (PM)	July 25, 1973	April 8, 1974	8.5 months
859	17¢ John G. Diefenbaker (PM)	Aug. 16, 1979	June 20, 1980	10 months
914	30¢ Jules Léger (GG)	Nov. 22, 1980	April 2, 1982	16 months
1447	42¢ Roland Michener (GG)	Aug. 6, 1991	Oct. 21, 1992	15 months
1509	43¢ Jeanne Sauvé (GG)	June 26, 1993	March 8, 1994	9 months
to come	47¢ Pierre Elliott Trudeau (PM)	Sept. 28, 2000	July 1, 2001	9 months



Figure 3: Stamps featuring former governors general and prime ministers that were issued by Canada since the policy for honoring these dignitaries was introduced in 1951.

result of the more advanced printing technology and demand for innovative stamp formats.

Nine identical Michener stamps were issued in a pane of 25 stamps. The block of Michener stamps in the center of the pane is surrounded by 16 identical stamps commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Order of Canada, of which Michener was the first recipient.

Sauvé's stamps were issued in panes of 20 with each stamp separated by one of four different perforated tabs. The four tabs are shown in the block of four stamps in Figure 6. The first tab mentions her role as a journalist (1952-72), the second her role as member of Parliament (1972-84), the third her role as speaker of the House of Commons (1980-84) and the fourth her role as governor general (1984-90).

Having a souvenir sheet of four Trudeau stamps that are exactly the same as the Trudeau stamps in the sheet of 16 is just another way of putting a special cachet to the commemoratives Canada Post issues for the country's departed

leaders. If you look at the formats in which Canadian stamps have been issued over the last five years, you will see many other occasions where varied and different presentation formats have been used.

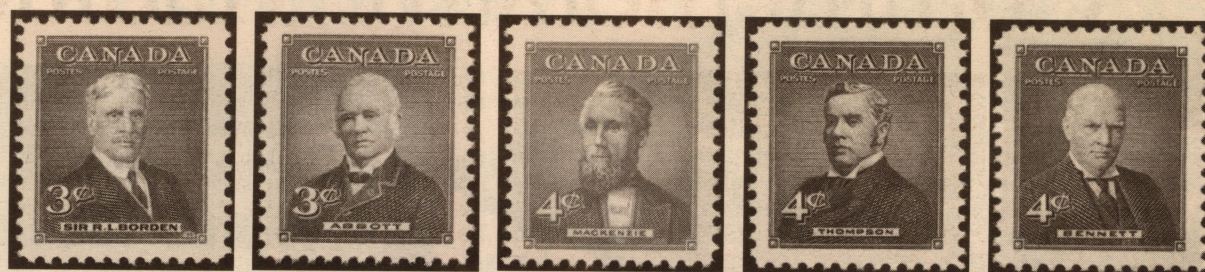


Figure 5: The "catch up" stamps (issued 1951-55) feature all deceased Prime Ministers prior to 1951.



Figure 4: Stamps honoring John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier were issued in 1927, marking the 60th year of the Canadian Confederation.



Figure 6: The block of four of the Jeanne Sauvé stamp showing the four different tabs that summarize her accomplishments.

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1962 (40%)	30.25																
1963 (45%)	30.50																
1964 (40%)	31.70																
1965 (45%)	32.55																
1966 (45%)	38.65																
1967 (45%)	30.20																
1968 (40%)	28.95																
1969 (35%)	22.85																
1970 (35%)	19.60																
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1972 (30%)	18.45																
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1974 (35%)	20.25																
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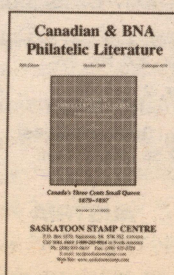


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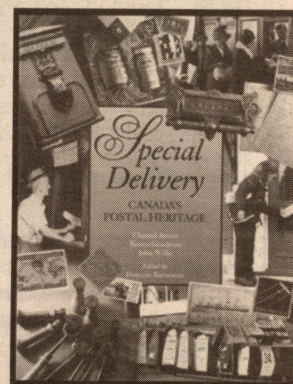
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