

Canadian registration, 1911—1947

Introduction

This is a *pseudo-virtual* exhibit; *pseudo-* because it is intended to be printed (with real covers, not the scans) as an exhibit. I put it in this virtual form in order to expose it to criticism before I mount the pages, and also to see just what I have, what I need, and what I can dispose of.

There is so much material available that it was difficult deciding what to leave out. It is likely that the the organization could be improved, the story line might be obscure, Some of the material could be upgraded, too. I hope readers will send comments, criticisms, and suggestions (e-mail address below)—this is the main point of putting it on-line.

I am also interested in buying or trading for material that would fit in.

The scans are 300dpi, very low resolution, hence some of the images look a lot worse than the covers really are (and the appearance of some is considerably improved). This is another reason to call this *pseudo-virtual*. Had I intended to make this a real virtual (!) exhibit, I would have scanned at 300dpi. Many of the side images are in greyscale, as these are intended to be printed (as I intend to use a bw printer), and I will have to convert the coloured side images to greyscale as well. The images of the covers are within $\pm 5\%$ of their actual size, or so I hope.

The index lists page numbers starting with the title page (page 1).

This was prepared in the typesetting language T_EX (but *not* straitjacket L_AT_EX). The font family is ITC Elysium. When text overlaps an image, it means that the cover will be mounted to the left of where it is shown.

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Synopsis

This is a strictly postal history exhibit dealing with registration in, to, and through Canada in the period after the brief experiment in extra indemnity (1904–10) and introduction of the Admirals, to the post-war normalization of rates around 1946–47. This includes interaction with other services (such as COD, postage due, and airmail), as well as services elaborating on registration (such as extra indemnity, money packets, and AR).

The organization is roughly domestic, then international—thus domestic rates come first, then services that applied only domestically, such as extra indemnity, COD, and these are followed by a brief section on some of the fancier postmark intended for registered mail.

The international section is divided into surface rates (which more or less is itself divided into UPU, Empire, and preferred), and then airmail; whereas the former is fairly straightforward, the latter is almost chaotic, and we provide a representative sampling. Then we have a number of special sections: *registered through mail* (meaning mail from one country to another passing through Canada en route, with either Canadian censorship or postmarks), *postage due registered*, itself divided into domestic and international, *complimentary & compulsory registration*, the very difficult to find *registered wreck* combination, *money packets* (divided into domestic and international), *free registered* (also divided into domestic and international, which here means US), *registered returned from the DLO covering envelopes*, and finally, extensive coverage of AR (acknowledgment of receipt, *avis de réception*).

Aside from showing all the important aspects of Canadian registration in this period, one of the aims is to point out very unusual and unexpected combinations (such as postage due registered), and little known relationships between services (such as first, second, or third class mail sent COD was *automatically* registered). The emphasis tends to be on lesser studied aspects of registration (such as money packets and AR).

Organization The first division is domestic/international.

Domestic rates The nominal registration fee changed just once in the period, but domestic rates changed several times, as did the drop letter rate. We show the various rate combinations, with preference to multiple rates. The highlights include the diagonally overprinted WAR TAX 5¢ Admiral paying the registration fee (in the period of validity), and the massive duovigintuple (22 ×) rate.

Extra indemnity After the failed experiment offering extra indemnity on registered mail (1904–1910), it wasn't tried again until 1924; this time it took hold, the rates remaining unchanged for almost thirty years. This service was available only domestically. Since no registered mail was permitted to have any indication of value marked on it, we can only infer extra indemnity from the postage paid and the nature of the item.

Cash on delivery Although various delivery firms had been offering COD service on packages, the post office did not get into the act until 1922. It was available on all classes of mail, but on first, second, or third,

registration was compulsory (and included in the fee). Again it was available only domestically (unlike the situation in virtually all other countries in the world). Among the highlights is a third class COD envelope (survival of these things is problematic).

Then we have a few oddities—*registration with precancelled stamps* (not normally permitted, but here used to send medals and awards to WW I veterans) and letters intended to be registered (with appropriate postage) but *dropped* in a mail box, then registered by the post office (indicated by *ms drop*).

Fancy registration cancels We show a representative sampling of the unusual registered datestamps and handstamps used at Canadian post offices (these are mostly holdovers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but some persisted well into the 1940s). Some also appear in the rest of the exhibit. The tiny **St J** and the Birtle (Manitoba) are highlights, as is the *Cathcart* manuscript registration rectangle.

International (*surface*) There was one change in registry fees and several in each of UPU, Empire, and preferred rates. We show the rate changes with an extensive array of destinations or high multiple rates, or other interesting feature. A complete turned (reused) wrapper between Switzerland and Canada is one of the highlights.

(*Airmail*) Canada established its own airmail rates and services in 1930. We show two early and massive registered airmail letters to Belgium and Panama (twelve times rate, with \$1 Admiral), and then illustrate examples of subsequent rates, including the British Empire scheme. During and after World War II, rates varied tremendously. A highlight is the non-philatelic 1944 airmail registered cover to Grahamland (Operation Tabarin). Another is the 1946 cover to Manchuria wherein registration was cancelled.

Through mail Although a lot of mail passed through Canada en route to a third country, relatively few were postmarked or censored in Canada. We show examples Samoa–Switzerland (1916), Jamaica–Newfoundland (1916), China and Japan to US censored in Canada (WW I), Fiume–Costa Rica (1925), Hong Kong–UK (1935), US–US (!—1942), and two wartime examples to and from St Pierre & Miquelon.

Postage due registered Registered mail can be postage due for a variety of (improbable) reasons, although clerical error seems to be the most frequent explanation. Others include forwarding to a destination requiring more postage, or dropping the letter in the mailbox without checking the rates, or as a result of the very complicated early air mail rates; sometimes, destination offices charged for forwarding registered mail. These divide into domestic and international, and both are difficult to find.

Complimentary and compulsory registration Mail that was registered by the post office after it was received, either with no additional charge, or with postage due assessed for registration; typically this occurs when the envelopes are suspected to contain items of value. Examples of complimentary registration include one from the twelve-day civil censorship period in 1916 and three from the six-day civil censorship period in 1917. It is very difficult to decide whether compulsory registration has occurred (since it was a violation of the regulations to indicate value of the contents on the envelope), but we show a couple, including one where the postage due fee was withdrawn (1933).

Registered wreck covers This is a particularly unusual combination; shown are two incoming (one recovered from a ship sunk in the first world war, the other from an air wreck), and one outgoing (recovered from the *Eros*, damaged by the Nazis in 1940).

Money packets These are packets of bank notes or securities with value exceeding \$100 (so that extra indemnity, when available, could not cover it). Prior to the official adoption of this service (1922), these packets were sent as first class mail. When the service was introduced, much more expensive rates applied. It was available to several other countries, although even to the US, only a handful of examples are known.

Highlights include the tag for a presumed gold brick with \$20.10 in stamps applied (1931), and the few examples to the US and UK.

Free registered mail Here *free* refers to any portion of the postage (but usually applies to all fees), typically to or from government offices. Canadian free registered is relatively difficult to find. Examples are possible to the US (owing to an 1887 treaty, allowing free mail to continue), and we show a few of these as well, and a spectacular one forwarded (at no additional charge) to the UK and returned.

Returned from dead letter office If a registered letter could not be delivered and no return address were visible, it would be sent to the DLO, where the envelope would be opened, the address found, and returned to the sender in a covering envelope, by *registered* mail, with the standard DLO fee charged, but no charge for registration. Examples are few. We show an example of a covering envelope which could not be returned to sender, so *it* was returned to the DLO, and another, consisting of a large covering envelope, the original envelope it contained, and its contents, which was a cheque.

Avis de réception AR service (providing a form or card to be signed by the recipient of a registered letter, which would be returned to sender as evidence of delivery) was very unpopular in Canada. Nonetheless, we provided detailed coverage of the subject, arranged by AR forms, covering envelopes (for returning foreign AR forms), cards, and AR covers (registered covers for which AR service was required).

We show domestic and foreign AR forms (including one to Smyrna, then under Greek occupation), and two of the two dozen or so reported Canadian AR covering envelopes. AR cards to various destinations (including Turkey, Jamaica, Egypt) appear. *Duplicate* AR cards (created when an attached AR card was damaged or missing, or simply did not return to sender) are extremely difficult to find one, and we have one each domestic and international (the latter is the only known Canadian example). *Provisional* AR cards occur when the issuing office does not have the usual card available (a handful have been reported); two are shown.

After-the-fact AR forms and cards (the latter both domestic and international) appear next. A very strange pair of AR cards illustrates a second chance after-the-fact use. This is followed by an even weirder example, registered and charged postage due by the local postmaster.

AR covers conclude the exhibit. Among the highlights are a free AR cover, an example forwarded abroad and charged postage due, and the final cover, a clipper mail to China returned to sender owing to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Period discussed Canada's first attempt at extra indemnity (seldom-used) terminated around 1910, and with the introduction of the Admirals in 1911, this seemed a convenient point to begin. At the other end, post-War postal confusion was winding down and rates (especially airmail) had simplified considerably by 1948, so that 1947 was really the last "interesting" year.

There are four levels of headings (excluding the exhibit title)

Title

Subtitle

Subsubtitle

Subsubsubtitle (in-line) Practically all pages have a subsubtitle, and all descriptions of covers have a sub-subsubtitle.

Research & References There is a heavy research component in this exhibit; among the sources are Canada Postal Guides, and many articles (including a lot of mine) in *BNA Topics* (during the period when it was a good journal) and *PHSC Journal*. My book *AR—avis de réception* (*PHSC*) is *de rigueur* for understanding the AR section.

Basic rate information is provided on the next page.

Basic Canadian rates 1911–1947

dates →	<	15/4/15	20/7/15	21/10/1	25/10/1	26/7/1	28/8/24	30/7/1
registration	5	→	10	→	→ ⁱ	→	→	→
AR	5	→	→	10	→	→	→	→
AR, after the fact	5	→	→	20	→	→	→	→
money packet	NA	→	→	→	5/ + 11 ⁱⁱ	5/ + 10	→	→
domestic first class	2/	2/ + 1	→	→	→	2/	→	→
drop letter	1/	1/ + 1	→	→	→	→	→	→
domestic airmail	NA	→	→	→	→	→	10/ – 5	→
UPU first class*	3/ + 2	→	→	5/ + 5	4/ + 4	→	→	3/ + 2
British Empire	2/	2/ + 1	→	3/ + 1	→	3/	→	2/ ⁱⁱⁱ

dates →	31/7/1	31/10/23	43/4/1
registration	10	→	→
AR	10	→	→
AR, after the fact	20	→	→
money packet	5/ + 10	→	5/ + 12
domestic first class	2/ + 1	→	2/ + 2
drop letter	1/ + 1	1/ + 2	→
domestic airmail	10/ – 4	5/ + 1	5/ + 2
UPU first class*	3/ + 2	→	→
British Empire	2/ + 1	→	2/ + 2

All rates are in cents (¢). The notation **m/ + n** means m¢ per ounce plus n¢—in other words, (m+n)¢ for the first ounce, and m¢ for each additional (as occurs with some of the airmail rates, n can be negative). **m/** is an abbreviation for m¢ per ounce.

Dating system is **year/month/day**. Printed matter, special delivery, COD, international airmail, . . . not included. Parcel post could not be sent registered for almost all of the period, so is also not included here. Almost all of the rates were taken from Bob Smith's *Canadian postal rates*.

ⁱ Extra indemnity introduced 1924/8/1 for domestic registered mail only: 20¢ for up to \$50 indemnity, 30¢ to \$75 indemnity, and 40¢ to \$100 indemnity; these rates continued to 1951.

ⁱⁱ Money packet service introduced 1922/4/1; available domestically and to a few countries (same rates).

ⁱⁱⁱ Rate change occurred 1928/12/25.

* Domestic rates to US throughout. Preferred (that is, domestic) rates applied to most PUAS countries, most of the time.

NA = service not available.

Index

Virtual exhibits should have an index, and in any case, it will be helpful when I revise the exhibit. Omitted from the index are terms that occur so frequently that it would be moronic to include them—for example, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, airmail, registered, Page numbering begins at the title page.

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