

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION CONFERENCES IN CANADA



Official Emblem of the U.P.U.

Canada was first admitted as a full member of the Universal Postal Union on July 1, 1878, some four years after its foundation. Most meetings of the Congress were held in Europe, and it was not until 1897 that a meeting was convened in North America, in Washington, D.C.

The second meeting of the full Union to be held outside of Europe was the XIV Congress in Ottawa from August 14 to October 3, 1957. Previous to this, a meeting of a Preparatory Commission, or Executive Committee, was held in Ottawa from May 18 to June 28, 1933, in order to make preparations for the 1934 meeting of the full Congress in Cairo, Egypt. On the occasions of both of the Ottawa meetings, Canada issued special commemorative postage stamps on the first day of the conference, these being a 5¢ stamp on May 18, 1933, and 5¢ and 15¢ stamps on August 14, 1957.



Issued May 18, 1933



Issued August 14, 1957

These two conferences had special post offices set up specifically for the use of the delegates. These post offices each used special daters on the mail posted there; two different types of datestamps (circular and oval daters) are known from the 1933 conference, while four different types are known from that of 1957 (a circular dater, a machine canceller, a MOON dater, and a roller cancel; in addition, a meter device was demonstrated to the delegates outside the actual premises of the conference). Examples of some of these daters are shown in this exhibit, as are copies of the stamps issued.

Preparatory Commission, 1933

On May 18, 1933, the Universal Postal Union's Preparatory Commission meeting opened in Ottawa. This was an Executive Committee of the U.P.U., and the Ottawa meeting was called to make preparations for the Tenth Universal Postal Congress in Cairo in February 1934. This was only the second time that a U.P.U. meeting had been held outside Europe. Meetings were held from May 18 to June 28, 1933, including 24 plenary sessions which passed upon approximately sixteen hundred proposals, as well as some 44 meetings of sub-committees.

On the first day of the Preparatory Commission's meeting, Canada's Post Office Department issued a 5¢ commemorative stamp, showing Parliament Hill from across the Ottawa River. Printed by the British American Bank Note Company, this stamp paid the foreign U.P.U. rate on a letter weighing up to one ounce. A total of 5,100,000 of these stamps were issued.



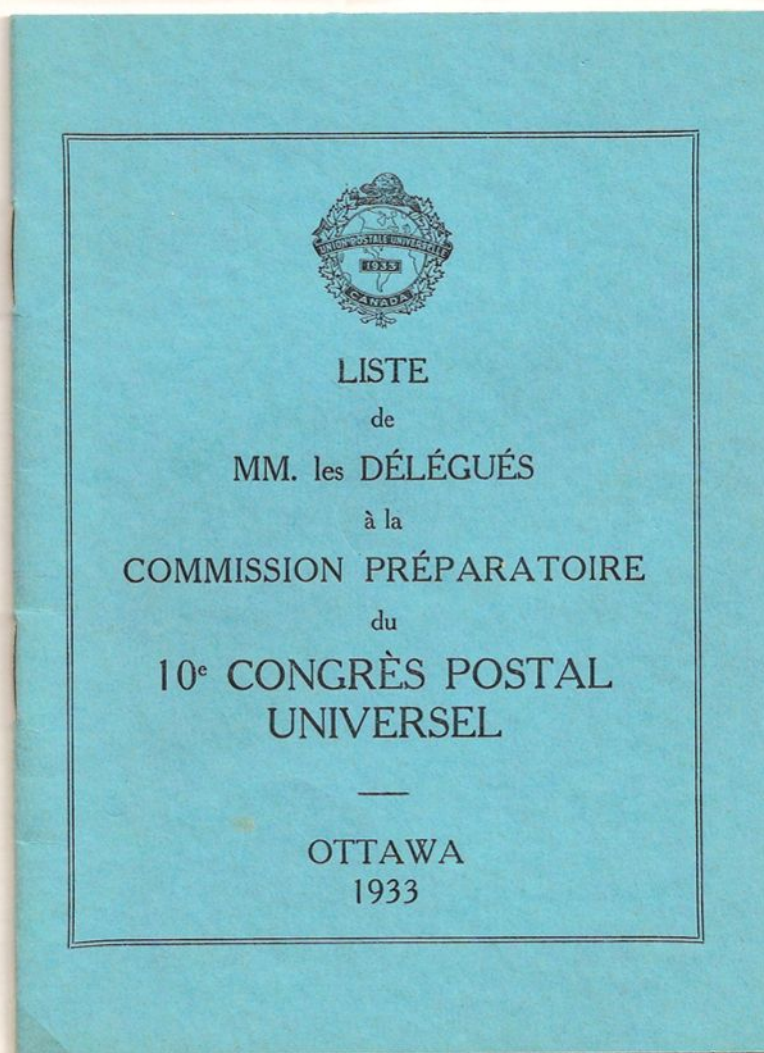
Two first-day covers, mailed on May 18, 1933. The one addressed to Hamilton, Ont. has a single copy of the 5¢ UPU Preparatory Commission stamp overpaying the 2¢ local letter rate, while the one addressed to Ann Arbor, Michigan was registered, with a block of four of the stamps overpaying the 8¢ airmail postage + 10¢ registration fee. Both were postmarked at the Ottawa central post office because the Commission's steel circular datestamp was not proofed until five days later, May 23, 1933.

Preparatory Commission, 1933



Cover registered at Ottawa on May 19, 1933. Intended by the sender as a first-day cover mailed on May 18, it was not postmarked with the OTTAWA-CANADA / R circular datestamp until the following day. The 10¢ registration fee plus 3¢ postage were overpaid using three copies of the U.P.U. stamp. Rubber backstamps of New York (May 20) and Richmond, Virginia (May 20 and May 22) were struck on the back of the cover.

Preparatory Commission, 1933



Booklet entitled “Liste de MM. les Délégués à la Commission Préparatoire du 10^e Congrès Postal Universel / Ottawa, 1933”. It gives a list of the names of delegates to the Commission in alphabetical order of the country they represented, along with their rooms of residence in the Chateau Laurier Hotel. The Commission Secretariat, the Organizing Committee, and the Canadian Secretariat are also listed, along with “Dames Annoncées” (wives of several delegates).

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Two postcards mailed at the post office of the Preparatory Commission, probably by delegates to the conference, and each franked with one copy of the 5¢ U.P.U. stamp correctly paying the rate to a U.P.U. member country. Both are postmarked with the Commission's 27 mm double circle reading COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / OTTAWA on the rim and U.P.U. inside the circles. The earlier one is a photographic view of the Parliamentary Library dated MAI 30 / 1933, and is addressed to the library of the Swiss PTT (Post Office) in Bern, Switzerland, while the later one, showing an aerial view of the Parliament Buildings, is dated JUN 2 / 1933 and is addressed to Alingsås, Sweden.

Preparatory Commission, 1933



Greeting-card size cover bearing two copies of the 1933 U.P.U. commemorative stamp, overpaying by 2¢ the double-weight letter rate to Switzerland, a foreign U.P.U. country (5¢ first ounce plus 3¢ per ounce). The envelope shows a single impression of the Preparatory Commission's oval marking which reads COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / OTTAWA around the rim and U.P.U. / JUN 12 1933 in the centre. The stamps were cancelled on the following day by three strikes of the OTTAWA / CANADA 3-ring orb with time mark 10.

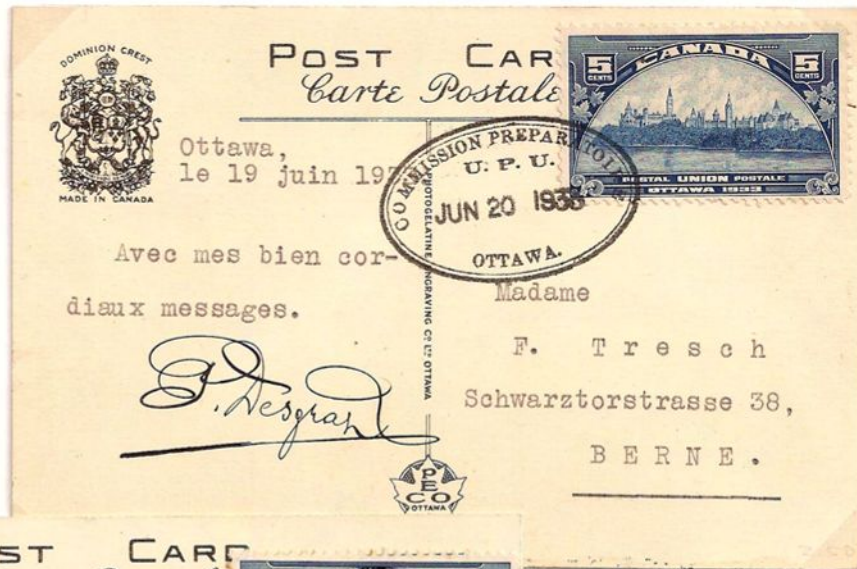
Preparatory Commission, 1933



Two covers addressed to Berne, each with one copy of the 1933 U.P.U. commemorative stamp paying the U.P.U. single-letter rate to Switzerland. The stamps are cancelled and the covers postmarked by strikes of the 27-millimetre diameter handstamp used at the special post office which had been set up at the Commission's meeting place, which reads COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / OTTAWA around the rim. The earlier was dated MAI 24 / 1933 in the centre and the later one JUIN 27 / 1933; the latter also has one impression of the Commission's oval marking of the same date. The flaps of both envelopes show the Preparatory Commission's logo in blue, a photocopy of which is shown at the right.



Preparatory Commission, 1933



Two postcards addressed to Switzerland, both franked with the U.P.U. stamp issued on May 18, 1933. They illustrate the two different postmarks used at the official post office of the U.P.U. Commission Préparatoire's 1933 Ottawa conference. The one dated JUN 20 1933 shows the oval COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / OTTAWA marking, while the one dated JUIN 28 / 1933 shows the 27 mm double circle reading COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / OTTAWA on the rim and U.P.U. inside the circles. Both are different Photogelatine viewcards of the Parliament Buildings.

Preparatory Commission, 1933



Cover addressed to England, franked with three copies of the 5¢ U.P.U. stamp, overpaying the surface rate of 3¢ for the first ounce plus 2¢ per additional ounce (as well as the airmail rate of 6¢ first ounce and 5¢ per additional ounce) to Great Britain. The card was postmarked with the official 27 mm COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / U.P.U. / OTTAWA double circle of the Commission post office on June 28, 1933, the final day of the conference, as well as with the oval COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / U.P.U. / OTTAWA handstamp of the same day.

Preparatory Commission, 1933

Cover mailed at the conference, postmarked with the COMMISSION PREPARATOIRE / U.P.U. / OTTAWA double circle on May 27, 1933. It was addressed to Berlin, and franked with two copies of the 1933 U.P.U. commemorative stamp paying the 10¢ airmail rate to Europe (excluding transatlantic air transport - not available until 1939).

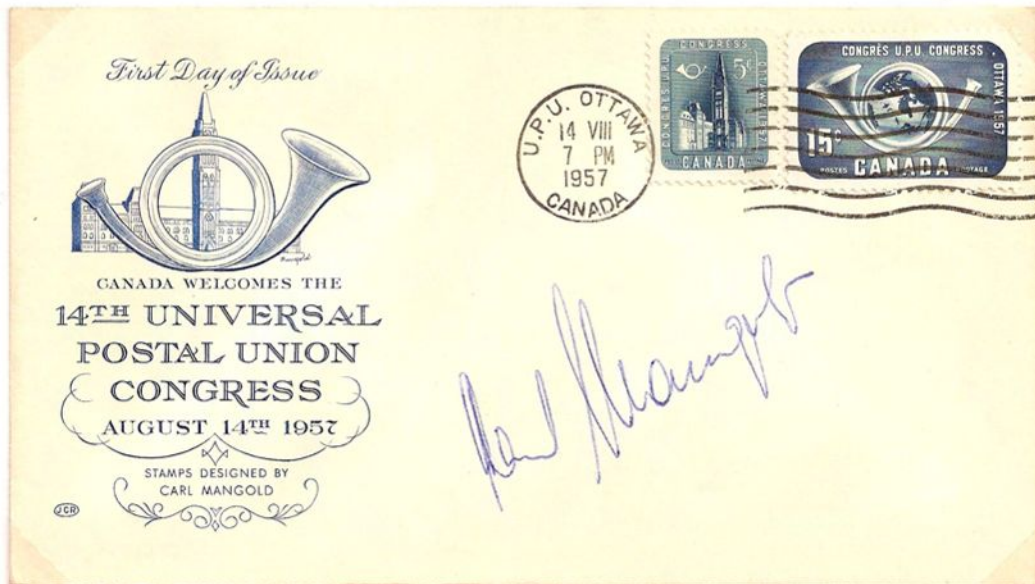


The cover received a German MIT LUFTPOST BEFORDERT / BERLIN C2 transit marking to confirm air transport in Europe, and a BERLIN C c.d.s. receiving mark on June 6, 1933.

XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957

The full Congress of the Universal Postal Union met in Ottawa on August 14, 1957. More than 350 delegates from 91 of the 96 member countries were present at the meetings, held in the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. Postmaster General William Hamilton welcomed the delegates, and introduced Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Walter J. Turnbull, Canada's Deputy Postmaster General, was President of the Congress. The meetings lasted until October 3, 1957.

Two stamps commemorating the Congress were issued on its first day, August 14, 1957. They were designed by artist Carl F. Mangold of Montreal. The 5¢ value, which paid the domestic letter rate, showed the Centre Block of Parliament, while the 15¢ value, which paid the airmail rate to most European countries, showed a posthorn encircling the globe. The souvenir cover shown was autographed by Mr. Mangold, and postmarked with the U.P.U. OTTAWA / CANADA machine.



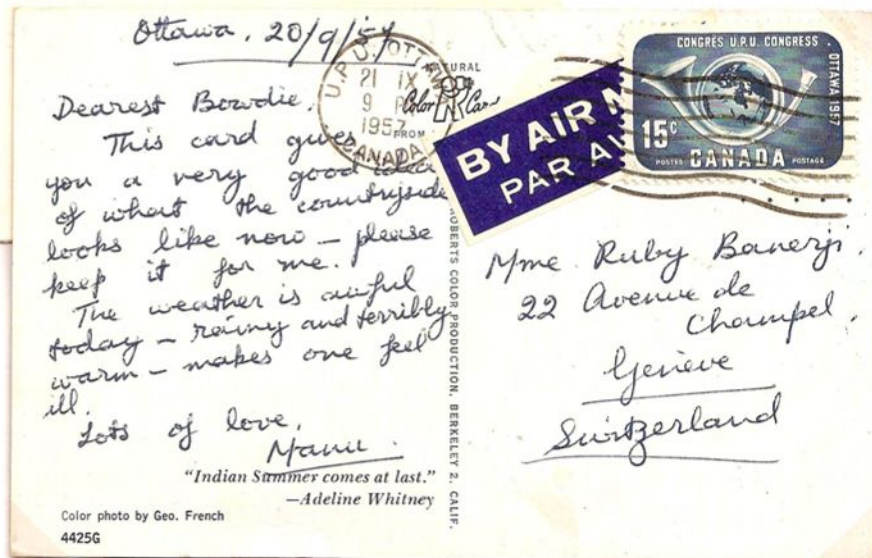
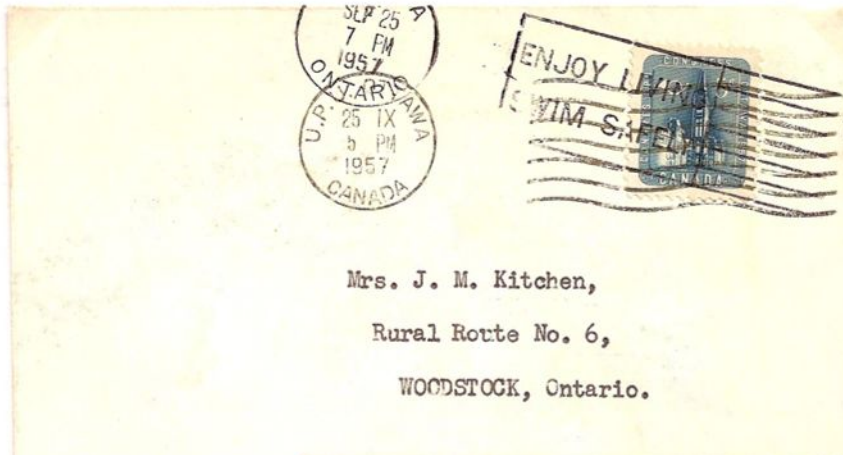
A special post office was set up in the Centre Block whose use was restricted to Congress delegates. As a result, only a few philatelic covers were produced, and covers showing one of the special Congress postmarks are quite scarce. These postmarks include a Pitney-Bowes machine cancel, used with both the DAY OF ISSUE / JOUR D'ÉMISSION as well as the standard seven-wavy-line obliterations, a 33 mm circular dater (2 dies), a MOON 4003 handstamp (2 dies), a roller cancel (2 dies), and a circular rubber handstamp (4 dies) used for non-postal purposes by the Canadian Secretariat. The Pitney-Bowes Company of Canada was refused permission to use their special commemorative meter in the Congress post office, and so set up an exhibit in the Chateau Laurier, where many of the delegates were staying, and a special run of 1000 souvenir covers was prepared for the delegates.

XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957



Airmail cover from an Italian delegate to the Congress with one 15¢ stamp paying the airmail rate to Rome, Italy. The cover was postmarked with the Congress machine cancel reading U.P.U. OTTAWA / CANADA and dated 28 VIII / 8 PM / 1957. A double circle receiving mark of POST P.T. - VIALE AVENTINO / (SEZ. A.R.) dated 2-9. 957-8 (i.e. September 2, 1957) was backstamped on the cover.

XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957



Two items showing proper domestic and foreign airmail rates paid by the two U.P.U. stamps.

The domestic rate cover was mailed at the Conference, franked with one copy of the 5¢ U.P.U. stamp, and postmarked with the U.P.U. OTTAWA / CANADA Pitney-Bowes machine on September 25, 1957 at 5 PM. For some reason the clerks at the Ottawa post office were not satisfied that the stamp had been cancelled properly, and so the OTTAWA / ONTARIO machine was applied (obliquely) on the same day at 7 PM, with a slogan obliterator reading ENJOY LIVING / SWIM SAFELY.

The 15¢ foreign airmail rate is shown on the postcard to Switzerland, franked with the 15¢ U.P.U. stamp, and postmarked with the Conference machine on September 21, 1957 at 9 PM.

R. D. Augusteit chuk
M. R. S. S.
CANADA POST OFFICE
POSTES CANADIENNES



XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957

Large Canada Post Office cover addressed to New York, which according to the Customs declaration label contained a book (probably the "Handbook and Guide" to the Congress). The 20¢ Registration fee and 26¢ first-class postage (5¢ first ounce plus 3¢ per ounce, for a weight between 7 and 8 ounces) were paid by a pair of the 20¢ Paper Industry stamps and a 6¢ Wilding stamp. It was registered at the conference by a Russian delegate (note the nude registration box in red), and postmarked on September 25, 1957 with the 33 mm circular datestamp reading CONGRÈS POSTAL UNIVERSEL/ OTTAWA // OTTAWA/UNIVERSAL POSTAL CONGRESS. The Customs label is struck with a purple PASSED FREE/U.S. CUSTOMS AT NEW YORK/ SEP 27 1957/369 handstamp. Two strikes of the Congress dater were backstamped on the cover, as is as an OTTAWA, ONTARIO / REGISTERED rubber stamp and two New York receiving marks.

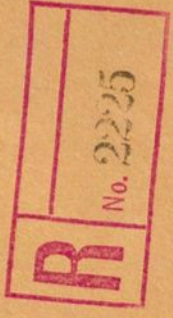
Mr. Ernest A. Ke
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DOUANE
CUSTOMS
(Peut être ouvert d'office)
(May be opened officially)

Nature de la marchandise
Nature of merchandise
Book

Poids net
Net weight
Valeur
Value
1\$-1,000,000 0-6-50

PASSED FREE
U.S. CUSTOMS AT NEW YORK
SEP 27 1957
369



XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957



Registered corner card of the German Delegation to the XIV U.P.U. Conference addressed to Tübingen, West Germany, with the usual nude registration box used at the Congress in red. A 15¢ Congress stamp pays the airmail postage, and two 10¢ Inuit canoeist stamps pay the 20¢ registration fee. The cover is postmarked and the stamps cancelled by a single impression of the CONGRES POSTAL UNIVERSEL / OTTAWA / UNIVERSAL POSTAL CONGRESS 33 mm circular dater with indicia 11 / 17 IX / 1957. Two further impressions of this dater were backstamped on the cover, as was a circular dater reading OTTAWA-CANADA / R with indicia 13 / 17 IX / 57, and a MONTREAL P.Q. B. & F. R. (British & Foreign Registered) barrel postmark with indicia 18 IX 9 AM / 1957.

XIV Universal Postal Union Congress, 1957



Registered cover, with attached Airmail and Special Delivery labels, addressed to his wife in Helio-
polis, Egypt by an Egyptian delegate to the Congress. The 95¢ in attached postage covered the 20¢ registration fee, the 50¢ airmail rate for up to 2 ounces, and probably was also meant to pay an anticipated 25¢ Special Delivery fee, although no Special Delivery service was available to Egypt at that time (the label should therefore have been annulled). The cover is postmarked with two strikes of the Congress post office official handstamp reading CONGRÈS POSTAL UNIVERSEL / OTTAWA // OTTAWA / UNIVERSAL POSTAL CONGRESS, dated 11 / 20 IX / 1957, and has the nude registration box used at the Congress struck in red. An Egyptian censor mark also appears on the front. Backstamped on the cover in addition to two strikes of the Congress handstamp are an OTTAWA-CANADA / R c.d.s. of 20 IX / 57, a MONTREAL P.Q. B.&F.R. (British and Foreign Registered) barrel of 21 IX 10 AM / 1957 and two Egyptian markings in Arabic, one a Heliopolis receiving mark.