

# British possessions today



## STAMP EDE

CALGARY PHILATELIC SOCIETY

### —rocky, isolated, poor

**By Michael Cope**

(Special to The Herald)

LONDON — The British Empire is alive and kicking, thank you, and all the old jingoistic idioms of yester year still apply. The sun still never sets on it, and its inhabitants include most of the world's races, colors and religions.

Although it has now largely been consigned to the history books, what little there is left of it has just acquired a new chief.

He is Mr. Nicholas Lamour, a senior civil servant with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London who is now the senior member of the six committees which administer the remaining dependent territories and colonies.

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While Britain's empire is still very far flung, from Gibraltar at the southern end of Europe, to Antarctica, in the years since the end of the Second World War it has diminished in respect to other statistics.

Its 680,000,000 people, a quarter of the world's population, has now

dwindled to less than 5,000,000, excluding the British themselves. And instead of one-fifth of the world's land surface being colored imperial red as in the old days, now it is a mere 29,930½ square miles.

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Recording the changed fortunes of history's greatest empire ever, Michael Pye noted in The Sunday Times of London recently:

"Independence for the Seychelles (1,000 miles off the east coast of Africa; population 56,000) means the loss of 49 coral islands, 37 granite islands, a tourist industry and a suggestively shaped fruit called the coco de mer.

"The Seychelles were one of our (Britain's) more enticing possessions. The rest, with notable exceptions, tend to be rocky, isolated, poor and liable to volcanic eruption."

As nations, regions and island groupings of the empire have enthusiastically acceded to full independence, what is left today — again with notable exceptions — either do not want independence, such as Gibraltar which is fearful it would be

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ISSUED BY THE UNITED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION



UNITED  
NATIONS  
DAY  
24  
OCTOBER

## STAMP PAINTING

A generation or more ago it was the height of fashion to "paint" pictures using the colored parts of used postage stamps. It was a tedious process as all the margins had to be cut off the stamps before they were glued to a cardboard to make the design. Getting the stamps was another problem, but many secretaries were able to get them from company mail. It was a different thing to do, and a change from tatting antimacassars. In Calgary there are several fine specimens of this pastime in the office of the Calgary and district United Fund.

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## ODDITIES OF PHILATELY

WHEN THE AFGANISTAN POST OFFICE issued its first postage stamps in 1893 it devised an unique method of ensuring that the stamps would not be soaked off envelopes and used again. Postal Officials affixed the stamps to letters, but before doing so tore off a piece of the stamp with their teeth thus cancelling it.



annexed by neighboring Spain, or the disputed Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic which are worried Argentina will gobble them up, or simply cannot afford such an economic luxury as independence.

These leftovers are still costing the British Treasury more than \$525,000,000 pounds a year to run.

They include the one remaining jewel in the colonial Crown, Hong Kong, which conversely includes the only land which has been added to the Empire in the past 30 years — 2,200 acres reclaimed from the sea.

But even Hong Kong's future is uncertain.

The 400-square-mile Crown Colony (which contains nine out of ten of Britain's imperial population overseas) is on a 100-year lease from China which runs out in July 1997.

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It is such a money-maker and so useful to the Communists as a venue for trading with the rest of the world that the British expect the lease to be renewed.

The rest of the remaining empire is made up mostly of small islands,

each with its own claim to fame or distinction. Like Pitcairn Island where the mutineers from the Bounty settled. Today Pitcairn has 61 Seventh Day Adventists, all descendants of the mutineers, and an economy built on postage stamps and souvenirs.

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Another is St. Helena, a particularly bleak rock in the south Atlantic 1,200 miles west of southern Africa, where the British exiled Napoleon Bonaparte.

It even has its own sub-empire which includes Ascension Island where the British maintain a big cable relay station, and Tristan da Cunha, a small fishing island whose entire population of 264 souls had to be evacuated to Mother England in 1963 when its volcano exploded.

The Caribbean contains a cluster of dependent islands — Bermuda, Turks and Caicos, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and the Cayman Islands, which thrive as tourist resorts and tax havens and have retained every link by London to give them their independence.

THE CALGARY HERALD

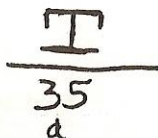
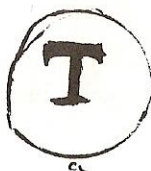
Cyprus: This pictorial set, issued in 1934 was not a commemorative issue, but the designs closely followed the style of the issues which preceded and followed it.





Post-house shield of the *Deutsche Reichpost* until 1923.

## A NOTE ON CANADIAN POSTAGE DUE MARKINGS



Markings similar to the above are found on covers of various countries to indicate postage is due. Agreed upon at U.P.U. congress in 1885 at which Canada was present

- a) April 1877 Over 100 supplied to Nov. 1893
- b) March 1890 May read 5, 10, or 25. Diam of 17<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> mm.
- c) Dec. 1890 May read 5, 10, 25, 50, or 100. 19 mm in diameter
- d) Various ratings. 1896.

October 5 will be life members night. S Richardson and J. Learmonth will convene the programme.

Lower floor of Cenral Library at 7:30

October 19 at C.U.P.E. Hall 104-13 Ave. S.E. an auction will be held. Circuits available and trading.

Western Canada Postmarks and covers wanted. Square Circle and RPO cancels also wanted. P. Wolf 277-5278.

Collectors adds may be placed in bulletin. Contact Secretary.

The November 2 program will be devoted to exhibition preparing and judging. Bring material on pages if you wish. Also all members will judge some displays.