

Postal History of Official Stamps in Canada

For forty years, 1923-1963, the Government of Canada employed “standard” stamps that were perforated O.H.M.S., or overprinted O.H.M.S. or G

These “Official Stamps” were used for Government Departments and agencies for their postage needs.

This exhibit surveys the many and varied uses of these “Official Stamps” over the forty years they were employed.

This exhibit includes examples of standard mail, International Post, Special Delivery, wartime uses, First Day Covers, Air Mail, Registered mail, Acknowledgment receipts, and much more...

One of the Oldest Covers

In 1923 the Government of Canada began perforating stamps with the initials: O.H.M.S. which marked stamps which were to be used solely for Government purposes.

Mailed from Ottawa in April 1924 to Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK and was subsequently forwarded using British postage to Genoa, Italy arriving in May 1924. The Department of Finance, Canada, had free franking but was required to pay for registration.

The Stamps:

4 cent yellow
(OA110) Position B,
10 cent blue (OA117)
Position A

A Very Large Five Hole Perforation Multiple



Block of eight of 20 cent Harvesting (OA157) plus two singles:

One 20 cent harvesting and

One 10 cent Library of Parliament.

Fully dated CDS cancelled Toronto, September 3, 1931

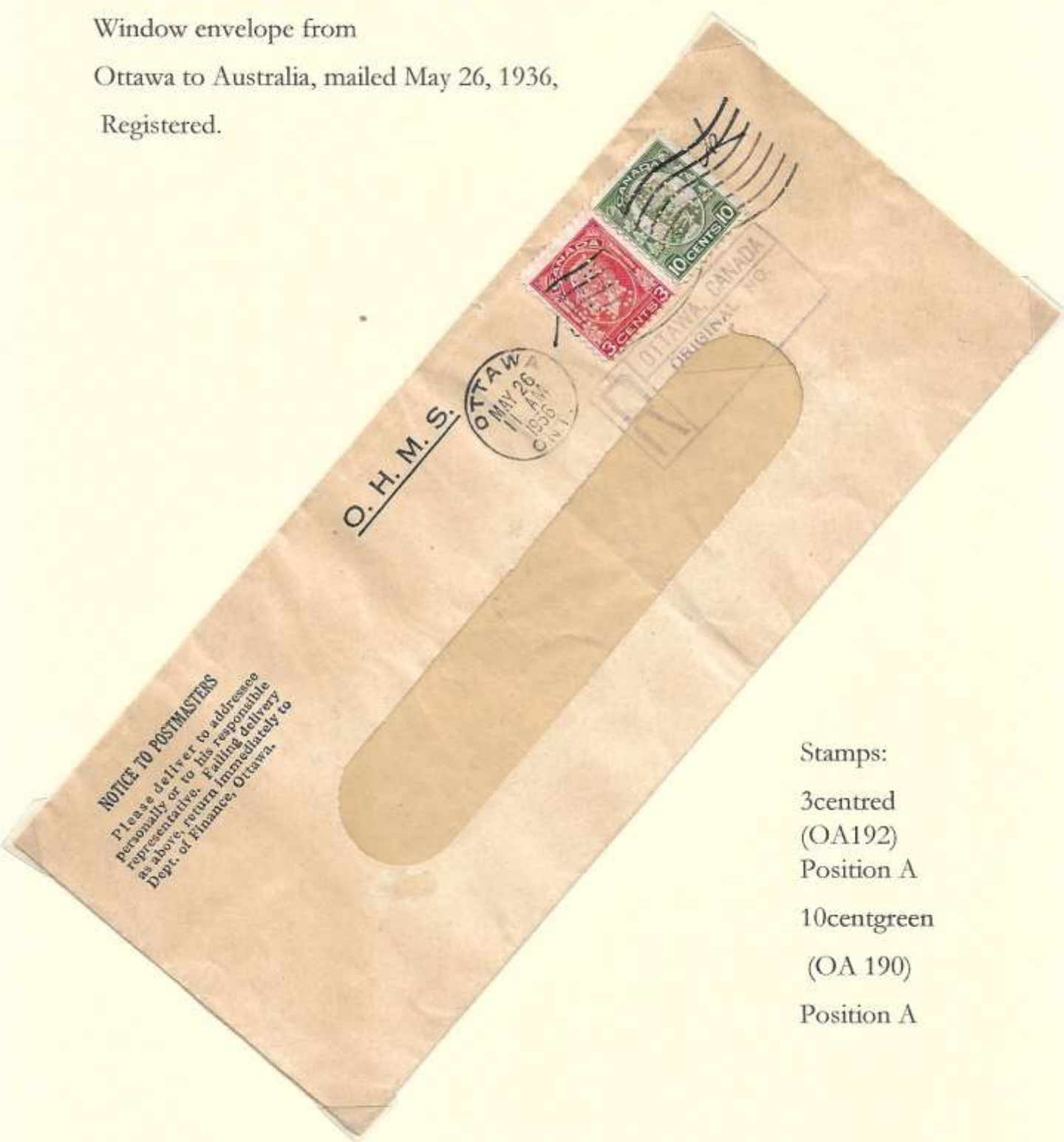
The block of eight shows all 5 dies horizontally including the missing pin in the "S" (right side of third stamp) The 10-cent green is Position A

Highlights of the Early Years

Window envelope from

Ottawa to Australia, mailed May 26, 1936,

Registered.



NOTICE TO POSTMASTERS
Please deliver to addressee
personally or to his responsible
representative. Failing delivery
as above, return immediately to
Dept. of Finance, Ottawa.

Stamps:

3centred
(OA192)

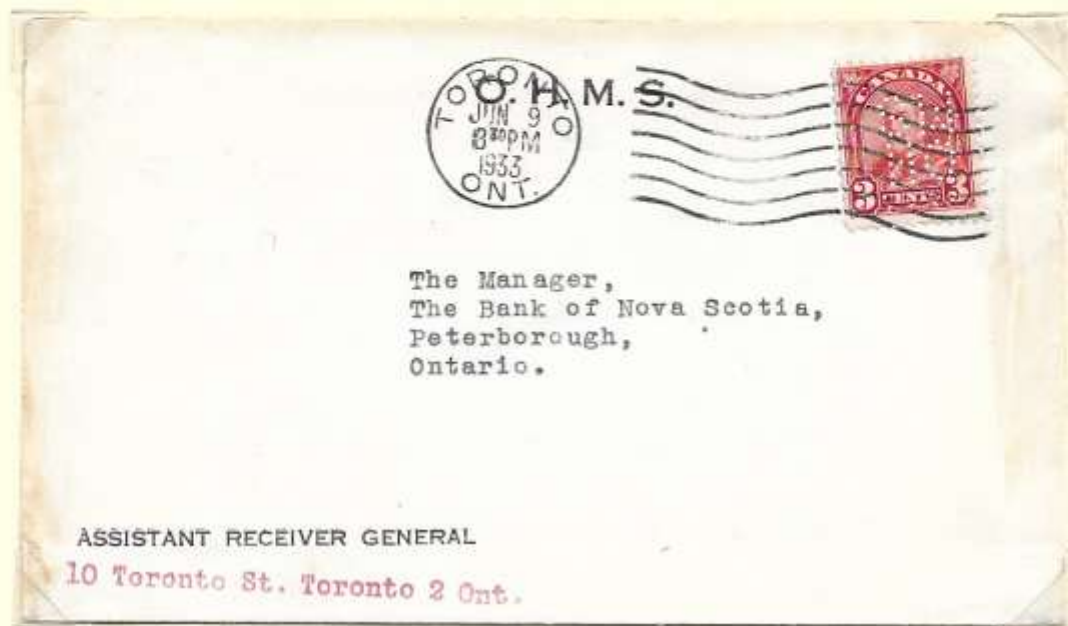
Position A

10centgreen
(OA 190)

Position A

Highlights of the Early Years

The Department of Finance was initially the “keeper” of the perforating machine and one of the principal users of early perforated stamps



3 cent red from Leaf Series (OA 167), mailed from Toronto, June 9, 1933 to Peterborough, Ontario



3 cent red Medallion Series, Mailed from Toronto, August 10, 1934 to Goderich, Ontario

King George VI 1937 The Mufti Issue, Four Hole Perforated



King George VI 1937 The Mufti Issue Five Hole Perforated...Contrived Covers?



Special Delivery letter from Canada Militia Field Post Office Petawawa Camp to Montreal, mailed November 1940 Using a 13 cent Halifax Harbour Five Hole. Captain Morgan apparently was related to a stamp dealer in Montreal

King George VI 1937 The Mufti Issue Five Hole Perforated...Contrived Covers?

A cover with set of Officials: Five Hole Perforated O.H.M.S. 1 – 5 cent plus 10 cent Memorial Hall and 13 cent Halifax Harbour. Mailed from Ottawa to Montreal on November 15, 1938.



See page 9 of this exhibit for another cover addressed to H. I. Nelson

Royal Visit 1939 First Day Cover

A First day Cover with stamps perforated O.H.M.S. postmarked May 15th, 1939, Ottawa

An unusual item and the question is: How could stamps be perforated before the first day of issue and provided to someone to mail?

The story is that the addressee would bring his own stamps and his friend in the Philatelic Bureau would provide access to the perforating machine and arrange for the postmarks.

Apparently, there are two more such covers.

On page eight of this exhibit there is another contrived cover addressed to the same person at a different address.



Three stamps issued to Commemorate the Visit of Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada in 1939:

- 1 cent Princesses: Elizabeth and Margaret
- 2 cent World War I Memorial
- 3 cent King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

First Day Cover...\$1 Totem Pole Overprinted "G"
Another Contrived Cover...?



A First Day Cover of the \$1 Totem Pole overprinted "G", appropriately date stamped February 2, 1953, which is the correct date of issue

Mailed from Montreal to Bridger and Kay a well known and long-established stamp dealer in London. (now located in Bristol, UK)

World War II Censored Mail

War Issue, Two Five Cent Blue (O255) Position E

Mailed from Ottawa on July 24, 1944
to Suriname.



Opened by Censors in Suriname.

During World War II, on
November 23, 1941 under an
agreement with the

Netherlands government-in-exile, the United
States occupied Suriname to protect the bauxite
mines to support the Allies' war effort.

War Economy Labels...

"Re-Use This Envelope...Paper is A Munition of War"

TO OPEN, SLIT ALONG DOTTED LINE. ENVELOPES CAN THEN BE USED AGAIN

FROM:

D. T. O., "H" District

D.P. & N.H., Regina, Sask.



To:

CITY OF SASKATOON,

LEGAL DEPARTMENT,

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

ATTEN:

The City
Solicitor

P & N.H. 105

puisse servir de nouveau

Bradley Bros.,
220 York St.,
HAMILTON, Ontario.



RE-USE THIS ENVELOPE...PAPER IS A MUNITION OF WAR

POSTMASTER
If addressee
known and
W.P.T.B.

at
AU MAITRE
retourner à
délivrez pas
connaissiez, p
rationnement

Slit along top so envelope can be re-used

Coupez en haut pour que l'enveloppe



*Letter June 23/43
from book to Lushington
on from 4 x*

The Estate of the Late
Frederick Harold Begg,

R.R. # 3,

Shedden, Ontario.

Prix et du Commerce en temps de guerre
AU LIEU D'ORIGINE

THE W.
LA COMM

War-time Prices and Trade Board
AT POINT OF MAILING

Commission des Prix et du Commerce en temps de guerre
AU LIEU D'ORIGINE

Official Business Only

Heavy penalty for private use to
avoid payment of postage

HEAVY No. 420

**BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION**



ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE



Au Comité international de la Croix-Rouge,

GENÈVE,
Suisse.

POSTAL CENSORSHIP

EXAMINED BY D. B. / 81

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL WAR SERVICES

35-5000-26-11-42

Acknowledgment of Receipt Cards

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES CANADA

This side to be filled in by office of origin
Le recto est à remplir par le bureau d'origine

REGISTERED ARTICLE

Envoi recommandé

ENTERED AT THE OFFICE OF

Enregistré au bureau de poste de

DATE 12/2/48 UNDER NO.
A192-026

ADDRESSED TO Mrs. Hazel E.
Adressé à

COLLEN
AT Oliver, B.C.

39B-4003T-21-11-48

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

To be filled in by sender
indicate below his full address

A remplir par l'expéditeur
inscrire ci-dessous son adresse
complète.



RETURN TO Manager

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES CANADA

This side to be filled in by office of origin
Le recto est à remplir par le bureau d'origine

REGISTERED ARTICLE

Envoi recommandé

ENTERED AT THE OFFICE OF Ottawa

Enregistré au bureau de poste de

DATE UNDER NO.

ADDRESSED TO Ferguson Cleaners,
Adressé à

900 Water St.,

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

Date stamp of office of origin
Timbre du bureau d'origine

To be filled in by sender
indicate below his full address

A remplir par l'expéditeur
inscrire ci-dessous son adresse
complète.



RETURN TO

Dominion Bureau of Statistics

Sussex St.,

STREET AND NUMBER

Rue et numéro

Ottawa.

ORIGIN OF REGISTERED ARTICLE

Le de l'objet recommandé

PRINTED CHARACTERS

En lettres moulées

CANADA

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

ON POSTAL SERVICE
Service des Postes

(1)



Apposez un
timbre-poste

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

REGIONAL OFFICE

(2) RETURN TO

Renvoyez à

DOMINION

ROOM 533

107th ST. &

STREET AND

EDMONTON, ALTA.

PLACE OF ORIGIN

Lieu d'origine

(1) If this advice is to be returned by air, it should be
label "By Air Mail".

Si le présent avis doit être renvoyé par avion, le recto
doit être marqué "Par Avion".

(2) To be filled in by sender, who will indicate his complete address for return of this advice.

A remplir par l'expéditeur, qui doit indiquer son adresse
complète pour le retour de cet avis.

(3) In printed characters.

En lettres moulées.

39B-7

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

ON POSTAL SERVICE
Service des Postes

(1)

CANADA

MINISTÈRE DES POSTES



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT
AVIS DE RÉCEPTION
REGIONAL OFFICE
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS
ROOM 533 FEDERAL PUBLIC BLDG.
107th ST. & 90th AVE
STREET AND NUMBER
EDMONTON, ALTA.

(2) RETURN TO

Renvoyez à

(3)

PLACE OF ORIGIN OF REGISTERED ARTICLE

Lieu d'origine de l'envoi recommandé

CANADA

(1) If this advice is to be returned by air, it should bear very conspicuously the indication "Return by Air Mail" and the
label "By Air Mail".

Si le présent avis doit être renvoyé par avion, le recto doit porter très apparentement l'indication "Renvoi par Avion" et de l'étiquette "Par Avion".

(2) To be filled in by sender, who will indicate his complete address for return of this advice.

A remplir par l'expéditeur, qui doit indiquer son adresse complète pour le retour de cet avis.

(3) In printed characters.

En lettres moulées.

39B-7

Inappropriate Use of Official Stamps

In an attempt to stop inappropriate or illegal use of government stamps by civil servants the Government started perforating stamps with O.H.M.S., then overprinting O.H.M.S. and eventually overprinting G. Although it must have had some impact, the practice continued.

In 1963 the Government of Canada, based on a recommendation in the Royal Commission on Government Organization (also known as the Glassco Commission) moved to using postage meters for government mail

Inappropriate in that Official stamps were used for personal mail. And although there is never 100% certainty, it would appear that the following are examples of inappropriate or illegal use.



A Cover from Marquis Hotel, Lethbridge, used in a mailing to an individual in Toronto.
Mailed June 27, 1945 from Lethbridge to Toronto.

Stamps: 10 cent green Coat of Arms Canada, Special Delivery (OE10) four hole Position A
7 cent R.C.A.F Training Plane airmail (OC8) four hole Position A

Inappropriate Use of Official Stamps

Example of inappropriate use
of official stamps

Letter from a Ticket Agent
in Vancouver

Canadian Pacific Hotel

Mailed to colleague in same

Airline in Philadelphia



Blackout Cancellation

Which was in used
during the war to
conceal locations in
the event of mail
falling into enemy
hands. However as
seen in this
example, the return
address on
letterhead remained

Inappropriate Use of Official Stamp

Mailed from Fernie British Columbia
on May 11, 1945 to Toronto.

Inappropriate use of Official Stamps?

It may be as the sender has same
name as addressee,

envelope is not government issue.

However, the initials: W.P.T.B.

Wartime Prices & Trade Board

May suggest otherwise.

The address is presently

The Robarts Library

University of Toronto



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
DAWSON CREEK DETACHMENT.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

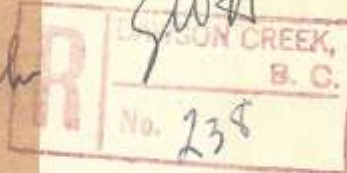
DIV. FILE No. _____

H. Q. FILE No. _____

Dawson Creek, B.C.
September, 24th, 1953.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS PARCEL, TO BE FORWARDED
BY AIRMAIL, DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY INFLAMMABLE, EXPLOSIVE,
DANGEROUS OR DESTRUCTIVE SUBSTANCE OR LIQUID WHICH
WOULD CONTRAVENE THE POSTAL REGULATIONS.

G. Redhead
(G. Redhead) Cst. RCMP.



BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

DIV. FILE No. _____

H. Q. FILE No. _____



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
Dawson Creek, B.C.

367-53

Via Air Mail.

Officer in Charge,
Crime Detection Laboratory,
Royal Canadian Mounted Police,
Regina, Sask.

Mr. Hay
cc. James

SEP 26 1953
REGISTERED

Official Special Delivery



Special Delivery UIC from Hamilton August 2 1953:

Stamps: 10 cent Coat of Arms (EO1) and 7 cent Canada Goose (O31)



17 cent airmail Special Delivery to San Francisco, USA from Vancouver, 1958

Stamps: 10 cent Coat of Arms (EO1), 1 cent QEII Karsh (O33) & 2x3cent QEII Karsh (O35)

Air Mail, Registered O.H.M.S.



Mailed 1951 from Ottawa \$1.20 registered to USA Stamps: O18, O20, O22 O25 Rare franking



Mailed 1951 from Sherbrooke PQ, 7 cent airmail To USA Stamps: O16, O15A. Unusual combination

A Series of Wartime Covers: Airmail, Special Delivery, Registered



Mailed Ottawa to US, Stamp: 14 cent Ram Tank, Position A

A series of covers from Ottawa addressed to Major H.A. Abramson at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. Edgewood Arsenal was a military facility focused on chemical warfare, including mind altering drugs. From 1941 until just after the war Canada had a Liaison Officer stationed at the Arsenal

Major Howard Alexander Abramson was a physician and psychiatrist and the medical Officer at Edgewood Arsenal. His focus was chemical warfare especially with mind altering drugs. After the war in 1951 he began experiments with LSD. He was awarded the prestigious Legion of Merit by US Army General of the Chemical Corp in 1946.

A Series of Wartime Covers: Airmail, Special Delivery, Registered



1940 17 cent airmail to US stamp: OCE2, Position A



1940s Registered to US, Stamps: pair 13 cent ram tank, Position A

Not Taking any Chances...

Envelope mailed from St. John's Newfoundland March 31, 1949 at 8:30AM
using 2 Newfoundland stamps:

One 1 cent and one 4 cent PLUS one 7 cent Goose Airmail stamp from Canada

Why?

Newfoundland joined Confederation at midnight on March 31st, 1949

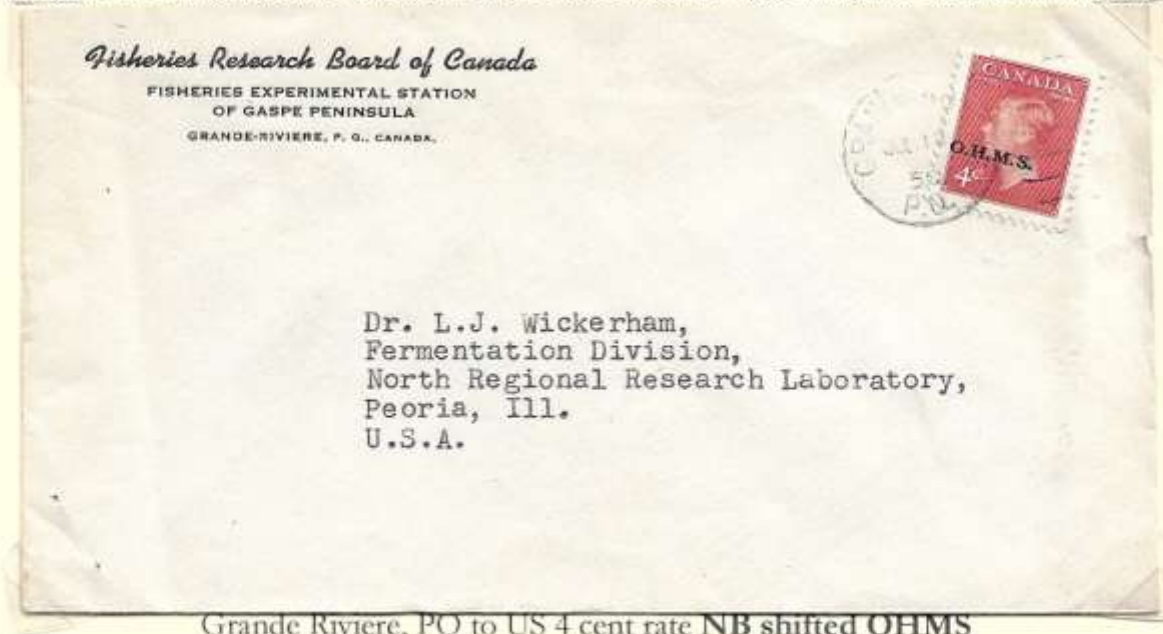
Assume the mailer was not taking any chances and used postage from Newfoundland and Canada



O.H.M.S. Overprint Covers



Windsor to London, Ont. October 26, 1950, 21 ounces rate: 44 cents: 4 cents first ounce,



O.H.M.S. Overprint Covers

Five cent rate to Greece

Mailed from House of Commons

NB Free Frank and Hof C cancellation

Stamp: 5 cent blue George VI (O20)



Mr. R. L. C. Knight,
c/o British Embassy,
Athens,
Greece.

R.R.K. m.p.

Robert Ross Knight,

MP for Saskatoon, CCF
Member of Parliament first
elected 1945, again in 1949, and
1953, defeated in 1957

Mixed Periods...

...using Perforated, OHMS and/ G Overprints



Registered cover to South Africa, Mailed from Vancouver sub station No. 50, 1952

24 cent surface registered rate

Using stamps from three different types or periods:

1 cent green war issue, four hole perforated (O249) Position F issued 1942

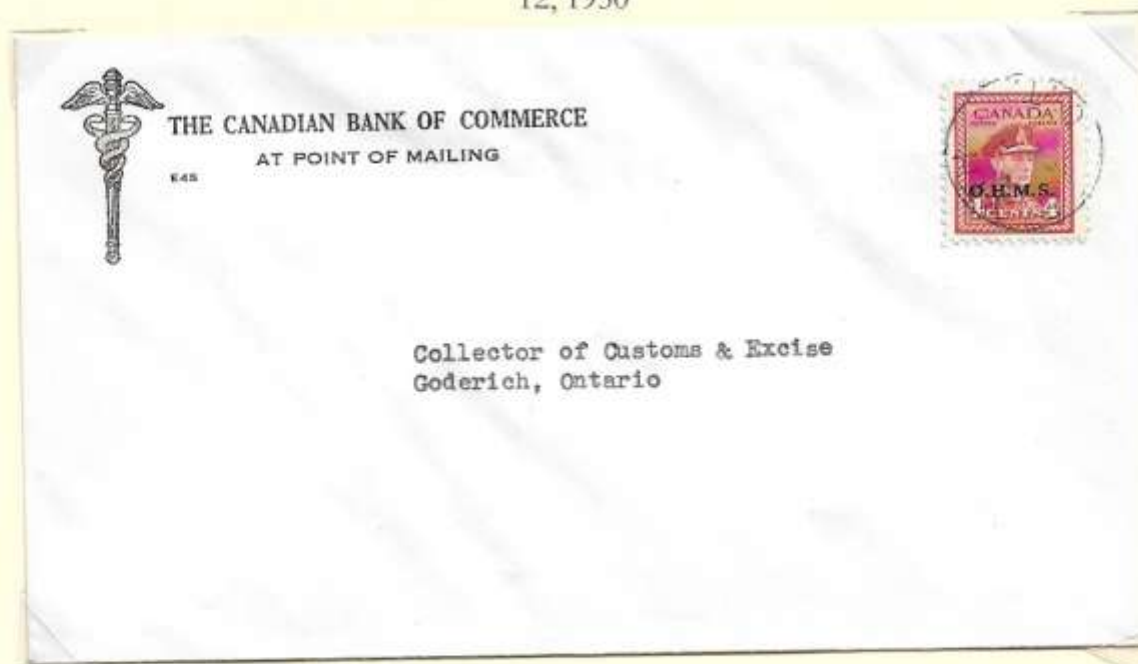
2 cent sepia King George VI Postes-Postage (O17) issued 1949

7 cent Canada Goose overprinted G (O31), issued 1952-53

O.H.M.S. Overprint Covers



Double Registered, rate 22 cents mailed from War Service Records(Awards), Ottawa May 12, 1950



O.H.M.S stamp (O4) used on reply envelope

2 cent Official paying printed matter rate to USA Mailed from St. John's Newfoundland, to
St. Paul, Minnesota, November 1963 A rare use for a single use. Stamp: O41



Registration Tag, Lethbridge to Calgary District Taxation Office, January 20, 1956



The Last days of Official Stamps

4 cent Official Cameo

carrier drop letter rate,

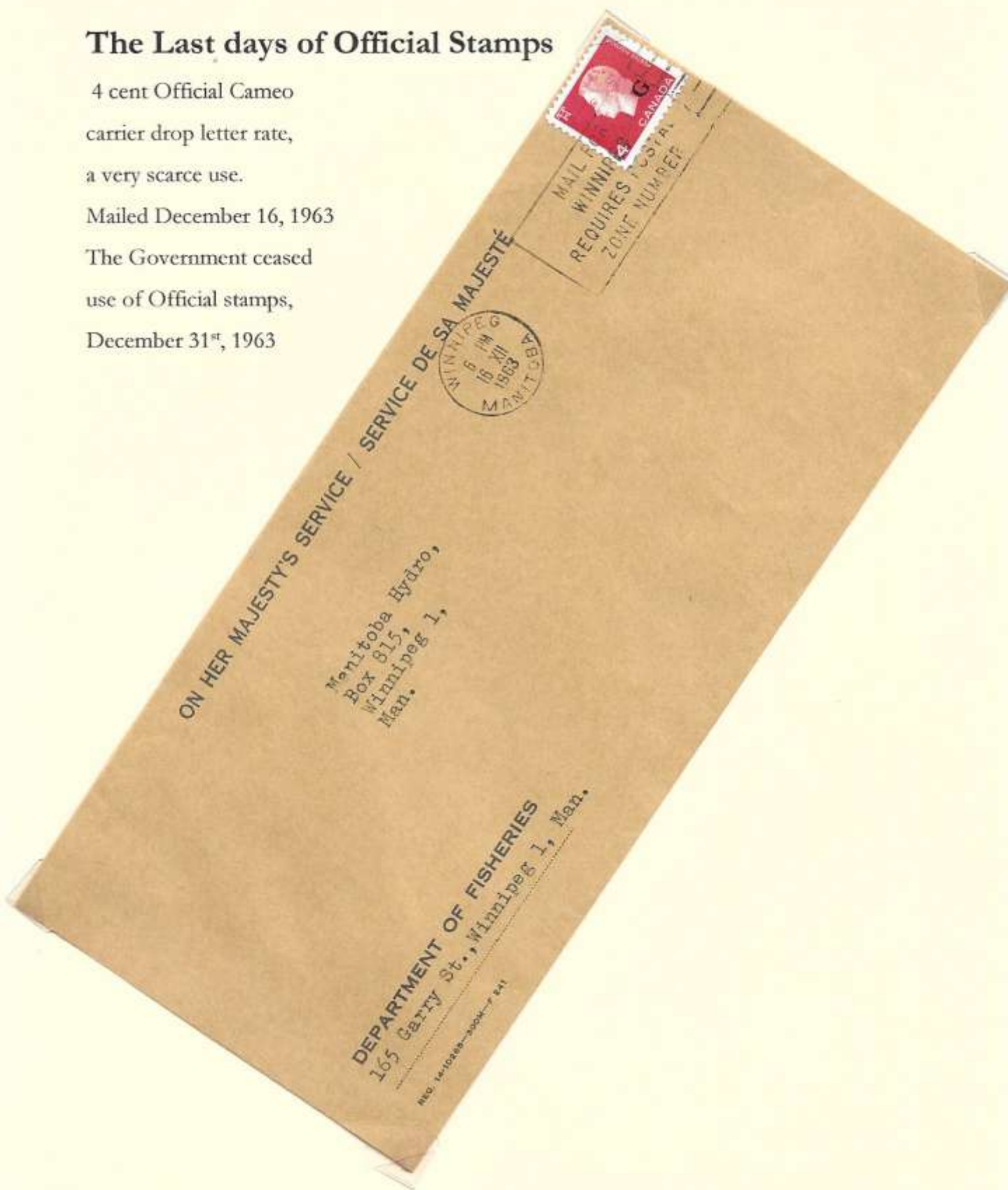
a very scarce use.

Mailed December 16, 1963

The Government ceased

use of Official stamps,

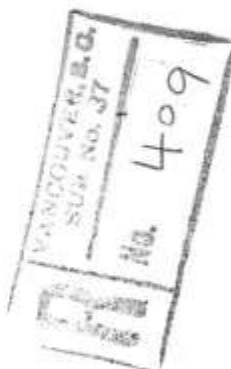
December 31st, 1963



Defence Construction Limited

Despite the decision to discontinue
Official Stamps Effective December 31st, 1962
the Government granted
permission to a few
Crown Corporations
to continue using
Official stamps
until February 28, 1965.
Given that day was
a Sunday,
February 26
became the de facto
last day to use
Official
stamps by such
corporations

DEFENCE CONSTRUCTION (1951) LIMITED
AT POINT OF MAILING
AU POINT D'ÉDITION
875 WEST BROADWAY
VANCOUVER 9, B. C.



Mr. H. H. Dilworth,
1744 West 7th Avenue,
VANCOUVER 6, B. C.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE
SERVICE DE SA MAJESTÉ