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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Famous Stamp Deal Is Recalled

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Provincial - Farm Editor

I HAD a look here recently at a complete set of the Nova Scotia "remainders", a stamp collector's item that has probably received more international publicity - practically every well known stamp magazine in the world has speculated about them - than any other stamps in existence. A Nova Scotia paper recently called it "a 68-year old, million dollar mystery . . . that has been reintroduced into the philatelic world as a result of a recent publication by the Royal Philatelic Society of London".

The Nova Scotia paper recalled that speculation on the value of the "remainders" bought by a syndicate headed by Managing Director A.A. Bartlett of Charlottetown and Douglas King, postmaster at Halifax for many years, for \$18,000 in 1896 ranges as high as \$2,150,000.

The story observes that the stamp prices "low at first soon showed the business acumen of the syndicate members . . . estimates of the stamp quantity ran from several thousand to more than a million" and the impression is left that the syndicate members realized a huge profit.

THE NOVA Scotia story added that no information is available because descendants of the syndicate members cannot be traced, and the London firm that purchased the remainders some 25 years later was completely bombed out in World War Two.

The paper was wrong on at least two counts. I talked here this week with Mrs. A.B. Cosh, the former Mary Bartlett, a daughter of the managing director, and her reaction to the suggestion her father and his colleagues made a big profit on the transaction was "absolute nonsense, I only wish it were true."

Pre-Confederation Issue - 1860-63

THE "REMAINDERS" referred to involve a cache of pre-Confederation Nova Scotia stamps of the 1860-63 cents issue and the Bartlett-King syndicate bought them from Hon. W.S. Fielding, premier and provincial secretary of Nova Scotia, on condition the quantity of stamps would not be revealed, as that would naturally affect their desirability and cash value as collectors items.

The old mystery will be solved in part when the W.S. Fielding memoirs are published in a few years, as they will likely reveal the quantity of stamps - they were in one cent, two cent, eight and one-half cent, 10 and 12 ½ cent denominations - but the price the syndicate received may never be revealed.

Mrs. Cosh gave me a copy of a letter her father sent out under date of August 1, 1896 offering the "remainders" for sale in lots of 50 or more, but it has never been revealed how many they sold in this way.

IT WAS after Mr. Bartlett's death in December 1920 that the bulk of the "remainders" were sold to Stanley Gibbons, biggest English dealer, who left one complete set with each member of the syndicate on condition they would not be sold, though they could be used for trading.

Others in the syndicate included Sir Louis Davies, one time Chief Justice of Canada; C.D. Rankin and Parker Carvell, all of Charlottetown and W.H. Chase of the Annapolis Valley. Mr. Bartlett, the managing director, apparently had a flair for showmanship in his salesmanship for he had a letterhead made up which carried true color reproductions of stamps from British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island which he used in his correspondence.

Stamps Letterhead Is Colorful

AN INTERNATIONALLY recognized stamp magazine said some years ago: "The shades quite well approximate the shades of genuine stamps, and between the perforation outlines and the designs, the paper has been toned to resemble the yellowish wove paper on which the stamps were printed. A multi-color job that even today would tax printing plants best equipped for this kind of work, and yet this work was done just about the turn of the century, presumably in Germany at a cost of \$750 per thousand sheets in quantity." Mrs. Cosh tells me the figure is much too high. She has kindly given me a copy of the colorful letterhead which I shall be happy to show to anyone interested.

Mr. Bartlett was warned that he was contravening the Post Office act by using the letterheads, but he protested that he had spent a great deal of effort on the design, and money on the printing, and was given permission to use the quantity he had on hand.

DURING THE war the Washington post office department wrote to Mr. Bartlett's family asking where the letterheads had been printed, as counterfeit stamps were showing up and the American government felt they might have been coming from the same source.

The accurate and colorful reproductions brought many appreciative comments. One of the most unusual came from Camden, Maine where a nephew of Col. S.S. Weatherbie, Orwell, a collector of note, wrote "I have seen the Bartlett pears but now I have seen "the Bartlett peaches".

Orange Groves - Trip To Europe

MR. BARTLETT had a private collection of British North America stamps that was rated as one of the finest in North America at the time. He sold it in 1906 or 1907, for a price I promised not to disclose. But it bought two orange groves in California that paid a first-year dividend big enough to finance a five-month trip to Europe for four people. But the groves brought nothing but bills later, and Mr. Bartlett finally sold them at a financial loss.

One of the interesting features of the trip in 1908 was an audience with Pope Pius X who has since been canonized. Mr. Bartlett, a Presbyterian, sought the audience on the suggestion of the then Bishop of Charlottetown, Most Reverend James Charles McDonald. Mrs. Cosh recalls that the ladies wore black lace Mantillas on their heads, black dresses with high necks and long sleeves. The men wore full evening dress. "His Holiness blessed us and our families in a beautiful ceremony" Mrs. Cosh recalled, and they were taken to parts of the Vatican which the visitor normally never sees.

MRS. COSH has the entire issue of stamps in the brief reign of Edward VIII who abdicated to let his brother George VI take over in 1937, and she has a complete set of the King George VI - Queen Elizabeth coronation issue stamps that cover every possession in the British Empire as it was then known.

One of her regrets is "I haven't got a complete set of Prince Edward Island stamps though father had hundreds, yes thousands of them."

There are many other items of philatelic interest in the Charlottetown woman's possession. She insists she doesn't collect them, they are merely a part of the wide ranging field of interest for this versatile lady whose every minute is filled with interesting activity. "It would be a novelty to be bored" she observed, as I looked at just a small part of the many antique and unusual objects of art her family has gathered from many parts of the world.

A COAT of arms beautifully done in needlepoint particularly caught my eye. It was made by Mrs. Neil Rankin, Mrs. Cosh's grandmother, 114 years ago.

An unusual local item is a special issue of the Patriot published at 2:15 pm December 7, 1918 with the news of the Armistice that ended the First Great War. The fact the announcement was four days premature adds to its value as a souvenir item.

Dr. Creelman, Pioneer Against TB

A BRIEF reference to the late P.A. Creelman in last week's column on the Dalton Sanatorium, and the early fight against TB, left the impression, apparently, among his friends I was minimizing his qualifications. I had no such intention of course, but I asked Mrs. Creelman this week for a few details about the man who was introduced to an annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association here in June 1928, as the newly appointed "chief diagnostician" who had been sent here by the Canadian Tuberculosis Association to pioneer in the battle against the disease.

A graduate of Dalhousie Medical School following three years service in the First Great War, he was personally interested in TB because his mother and two sisters had died from it.

FOLLOWING TWO years in the North where he was the only doctor to upwards of 1,000 people including men from eight lumber camps, and meeting problems ranging "from broken bones to beri-beri, and typhoid fever to triplets" he studied in New York under Dr. Alexander Miller, one of the outstanding men of his time. Dr. Creelman completed his senior internship in Bellevue Hospital, and proceeded on a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship to a short course in public health with the fieldwork taking him to the state of Ohio.

A further period of experience at Riverglade Sanatorium in N.B. where he was temporarily in charge while the superintendent visited Europe, preceded his arrival to P.E.I. which then had the second highest death rate of any Canadian province.