

Canadian Postal History: Use of Decimal Stamps in Post-Decimal Era 1868 and beyond

Purpose and Scope:

This one-frame study explores late usage of decimal (cents) stamps in **post-decimal** period, after Confederation and the issue of the Large Queen (LQ) stamps on April 1, 1868. Decimal-, mixed Decimal- and LQ- and Small Queen-stamps on cover and postal stationary covers sent to domestic-, cross-border- and foreign-destinations are illustrated.

Organization of Exhibit



Late but legal usage of the 1¢ and 2¢ Decimals to pay the 3¢ Domestic rate effective April 1, 1868

- Domestic mail using decimal stamps only.
- Domestic mail using combinations with LQ stamps.
- Cross-border mail using decimal stamps only.
- Cross-border mail using combinations with LQ stamps.
- Cross-border mail using combination with Small Queen (SQ) stamp.
- Cross-border mail using Nesbitt postal stationery
- Foreign mail using decimal stamps only
- Foreign mail using postal stationery with Decimal & SQ stamps
- Special interprovincial mail
- Special Cunard mail before issuance of LQ stamps

Background and Treatment

Decimal (cents) stamp era of pre-Confederation Canada covered July 1, 1859 to April 1, 1868 timeframe, after pence issues. Since Canada never demonetized their stamps, it is legal to use classical stamps for postage even today! However, in the pence-cent periods, folks didn't buy and stockpile stamps since they were relatively expensive. After Confederation in 1867, the Dominion of Canada (formerly Canada

Note that Firby (1) in his exhaustive listing of decimals stamps used outside of 1859-1868 timeframe shows a total of 89 franked covers

Rate (up to ½ oz.)	Decimal Era	Large Queen Era
Domestic	5¢	3¢
Domestic Registration	2¢	2¢
Cross-border	10¢	6¢
Cross-border Registration	5¢	5¢
UK (Cdn.. Packet)	12 1/2¢	12 1/2¢
UK (British Packet)	17¢ (15¢ eff. 1/16/1868)	15¢

West, Canada East, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) passed the Post Office Act of 1867 to unify three postal systems which became effective April 1, 1868; a new series of stamps were issued, Large Queens and later Small Queens. In addition, a new rate system (see Table) was introduced for domestic, cross-border and to overseas destinations. However, people continued to use the decimal stamps in their possession until they were gone. Surprisingly less than a hundred late-usage decimal franked covers used in the post-decimal era have survived and have been documented (1) although rare unlisted combinations occasionally turn up. On each page of this exhibit, the rate will be shown and explained.

In this exhibit, various combinations of stamps (and one stampless) will show the new rates paid in cash or by decimal stamps only, decimal stamps in combination with LQ and SQ stamps, postal stationery with and without added stamps and some special rates that preceded the availability of the new LQ stamps. Regular rates and registered rates are featured. Domestic, cross-border and foreign destinations are shown.

1) Charles G. Firby, *The Postal Rates of Canada: 1851-1868, The Provincial Period- A Recording, Part II*, for Canada 1859 Issue Stamps, 1976; revised September 1, 1984.