

L'utilisation du compteur postal modèle «H» de Pitney-Bowes au Canada (1929-1957). The use of the Pitney-Bowes model "H" Postal Meter in Canada (1929-1957).

Synopsis and discussion

Purpose of This Presentation

This presentation discusses the development of mechanized postal franking in Canada by the Pitney-Bowes model «H» franking machine. This study covers scope from the late 20s up to the late 50s.

Historical Context

In 1923, Pitney-Bowes (PB) introduced mechanized postage franking in Canada, which had been authorized by the Post Office Department (POD) since October 1922. In 1926, the Universal Postal Frankers (UPF) marketed their apparatus; the "Midget" and the National Cash Register (NCR) had developed their "1900". Unlike the single-value machine produced by PB, the two franking machines offered by these early competitors could provide multiple postage values. To maintain its dominant market share, PB bought the exclusive North American (USA-Canada) right to the "Midget" from UPF and ultimately bought, from Marconi, its majority shareholding in UPF. The "Midget", although very popular in the Canadian market, had some technical problems. The POD invited PB to replace «Midget» by an improved new franking machine. However, PB develops a new device that is modeled on the "Midget" which will have the good fortune to please the postal authorities; the "H" model. Its technology developed in the United States is approved for use in Canada as early as the summer of 1929.

The «H» model offered a choice of 5 postage values (indicia) and was available in manual or electric version. Subsequently, PB produce a three-value and a single value version of the «H» model. In 1930, to counter the competition offered by NCR, which specializes in the parcel post franking market, PB introduce an accessory witch allowed the printing of stamp impression on label tape which could be affixed to parcels and others oversize items.

The stamp impression supplied with the early was unilingual English. The POD having adopted bilingualism on postage stamps in 1927, required the same for stamp impressions produced by franking machines. A further change in the stamp impression came in 1934 when the original «shield» graphic was replaced with one based on the design of the contemporary «Arch and Maple Leaf» definitive. The «Arch and Maple Leaf» graphic not only appeared on newly produced machines but was retrofitted to some older machines.

The «H» model franking machines counted postage based on unit rather than cents to a maximum of 25 units. Thus, if one unit is equal to one cent, the highest postage value a franking machine could offer was 25 cents. Over the live of the «H» model, based on customer requirements and change in postage rates 18 different postage values were offered. To accommodate higher postage amount, PB produced machines where one unit of postage equal to 5 cents. These machines could provide five different postage values between 5 cents and one dollar.

Outline of This Exhibit

The exhibit examines the various aspects of the use of the "H" model franking and its derivatives (HF, HE, H5, H3, HS models). From the serial number which appears on the indicia it possible to identify the specific model and its chronology. Consequently, the items presented in this exhibit can related back to the evolution of the «H» model. Among the items presented are "specimen" imprints, examples of contemporary postal rates, including domestic and overseas tariffs, as well as the various adaptations made to «H» models to accommodate new postal rates. In addition, covers are included where franking machine had been used for official use, for revenue purpose, in combination with other methods of payment, and together with auxiliary markings. Other items illustrating variations in the stamp impression include the use of different colored inks and the addition of an advertising slogan. Examples of the use of franking on illustrated envelopes are included. Finally, the variety of town names appearing on the stamp impressions serves to illustrate the distribution of the «H» machines across Canada.

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The making-up of this collection

The author has been assembling a collection of metered mail material since 1982. In addition, from 1984 he has been corresponding with Mr. Marquis Leland Brown who, although an eminent collector of metered mail since 1940, had never presented his material at a philatelic exhibition. Having acquired Mr. Brown's collection and having integrated it with his own material, the author is presenting here what is probably the most complete study ever conducted on the Canadian version of the model «H» metering device. In addition, the Author's communications with several experts recognized by the MSS (Meter Stamp Society) including Ross Irwin, Richard Stambaugh, Joel Hawkins and Joseph Banchack have contributed to development of this comprehensive presentation.

Items Displayed

This exhibit includes numerous rarities, some well-known to postal machine specialists and others exceptionally rare and not known outside this exhibit. For example:

- Page 1: A 1929 model «H» promotional cover from the Postage Meter Company (USA) – the first year
- Page 3: Set of specimen imprint of the 5 basic values,
- Page 20: Mix franking for Special delivery,
- Page 23/24: Mix franking with a custom stamp for Newfoundland.,
- Page 27: Censored cover mail to Free zone of France in 1941, and suspended service mail due to an invasion,
- Page 33: Cover frank by a single 15 cents indicia (this value is the most difficult to find),
- Page 34: combi-franking to pay a COD shipment,
- Page 37: combi-franking on a bank tag at 1.84\$ rate, by usage of the 25 cents indicia (25x) the top mechanical capacity,
- Page 41: prototype cover for the High values franking machine
- Page 41: multiple franking (10 x 1\$) on a bank tag,
- Page 42: Labels frank by a single 75 cents indicia (this value is the second most difficult to find),
- Page 43: mix franking label by the usage of the two types of mechanical accounting H-5 meter,
- Page 60: 2 covers mailed from the Imperial Economic Conference 1932 in Ottawa,
- Page 74: Inverted hub of «Return Postage Prepaid».
- Page 110: Mix franking on a cover mailed to Switzerland (non-réclamé)
- Pages 138 & 142: **All** «HS» franking is difficult to find, this includes the unreported 48006, and the only reported POW mix franking mail to Chile.

References:

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- The Pitney-Bowes Story, 1961, William Cahn, USA.
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