

CANADA DROP LETTERS

Definition

A "**drop**", "**box**", or "**local**" letter was one handed in at a post office for delivery at the same office, or to be delivered from that office by a letter carrier to the addressee in the larger towns where such a service had been established.

History

The earliest record I could find referring to the delivery and charge for local letters is in a Bill for the management and regulation of the Post Office in Lower Canada **from and after the first day of January 1836** which stated as follows:

"And be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful for His Majesty's Post Master General and his Deputy and Deputies, to demand and receive in respect of every Letter or Packet left or deposited at any Post Office not to be sent or conveyed by the Post but to be delivered at the Post Office where the same shall be so deposited; the sum of one penny, either of person by whom such Letter or Packet shall be left or deposited, or of the person to whom the same shall be delivered".

However, since early times there had been pressure from the public for a cheaper rate of postage for letters which were posted and delivered at the same post office and it is thought that some postmasters took it upon themselves to introduce such a reduced charge without permission from the Postal Authorities. This appears to be the case as verified by the **1831** Quebec example shown on page 3.

The Exhibit

This exhibit traces the history of the drop letter from **1831** to **November 1, 1968** when the drop letter rate was abolished.

The second page comprises a chart showing in chronological order the dates of change of the rates, the allowable weights, and the alternative ways in which the postage charge could be paid.

Thereafter, the exhibit is laid out in chronological order as per the publication of Government Bills, Department Orders, Postmaster General's Reports, and Official Post Office Guides which gave the dates of change of the rates.

Besides examples of the plain straightforward drop letters the exhibit also includes the following:

- Drop money letter.
- Registered drop letters.
- Special delivery drop letters.
- Short paid drop letters.
- Unpaid drop letters.
- Forwarded drop letters.

Items of particular note are indicated with a red dot thus ●

References

- Canada's Registered Mail 1802-1909 by Harrison, Arfken & Lussey - Collectors Club of Chicago.
- Many of the Official Canada Post Office Guides and monthly supplements.
- Articles in BNA Topics and CPS of GB Maple Leaves.
- Advice and help from members of BNAPS and the CPS of GB.
- Canada Philatelic Archives through the internet.

On November 1, 1968 the Drop Letter Rate was abolished.