

Canadian Postage due registered mail

We would expect that registered mail cannot be postage due, since to be registered, an item has to be taken to the post office, where it will presumably be correctly rated and stamped. This exhibit concerns the exceptional situation, registered mail charged postage due. There are a number of reasons that this may occur.

- (a) **Undercharging at the post office** The item can be of borderline weight, and upon reweighing at a subsequent office, *found to be liable to one rate more*; or the letter is *forwarded to a destination requiring more postage* (such as a domestic letter forwarded internationally).
- (b) **Additional services required subsequent to mailing** This includes *poste restante* (charged in a different country, as Canada had no fee for this service); or *compulsory registration* on a letter not originally registered but likely to contain items of value; or if the letter were undeliverable, and there was no visible return address, a *returned letter fee* was charged by the Dead Letter Office; .
- (c) **Obvious procedural or clerical errors** A letter marked *registered* and *dropped into a mail box* (rather than taken to a counter) would be registered by the post office if sufficient postage were applied and returned to sender if not—but in some shortpaid cases, it was improperly registered and charged postage due; or *clerical misinformation* about rapidly changing rates and routes (such as destinations eligible for the Empire air mail scheme).
- (d) **Weird or inexplicable errors**

From its inception in Canada (1855), registration was required to be prepaid. Prior to 1865, there was no requirement for prepayment of the rest of the charges, but from that date to 1898, short paid registered letters were supposed to be returned to sender. After 1898, if they did enter the mail stream, then they were to be treated as registered mail, and double deficiency charged in the period 1878–1934, changing to single deficiency in 1935.



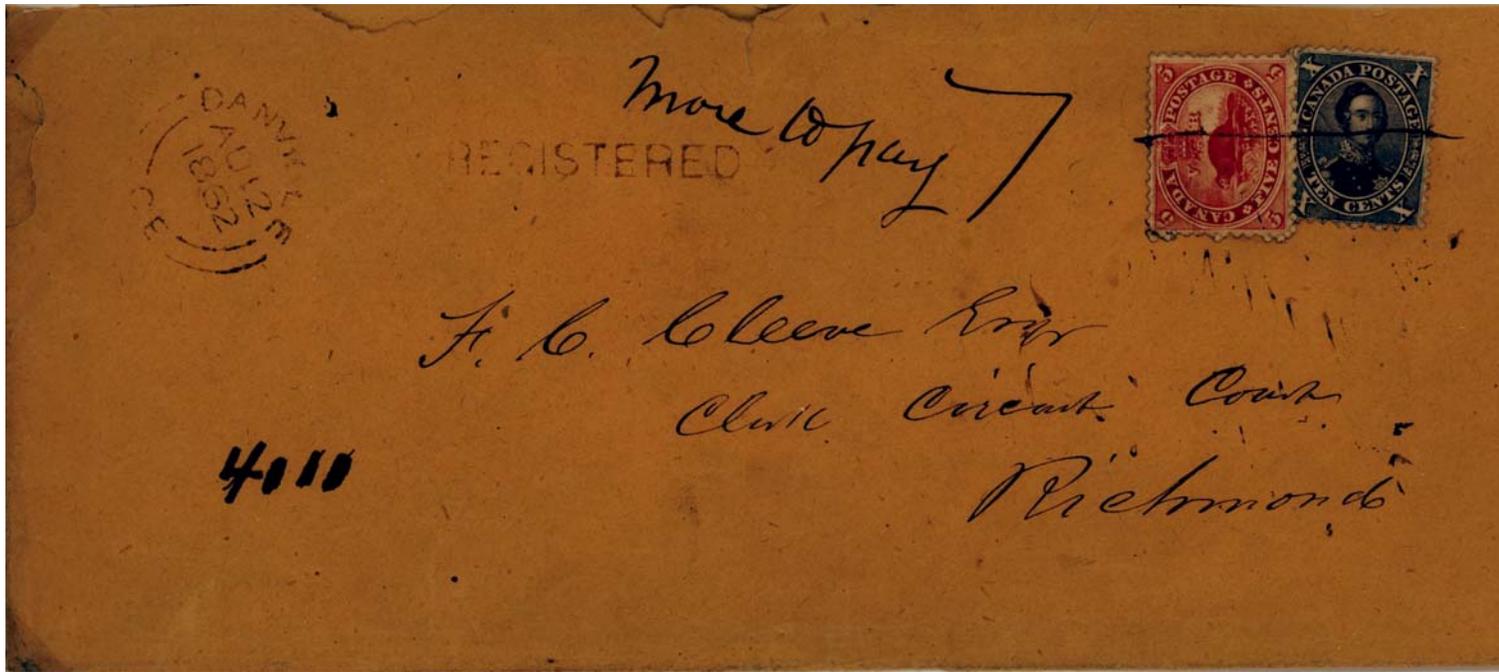
Should have been postage due!
(1919) The 5¢ registration fee is paid by a War Tax stamp, which was invalid for postage, but obviously accepted at the offices of origin and destination.

The 3¢ Admiral pays 2¢ + 1¢ domestic letter rate (including war tax).

Mailed from the village of Lac-aux-Brochets (QUE), whose postmaster might not have been familiar with the rules.

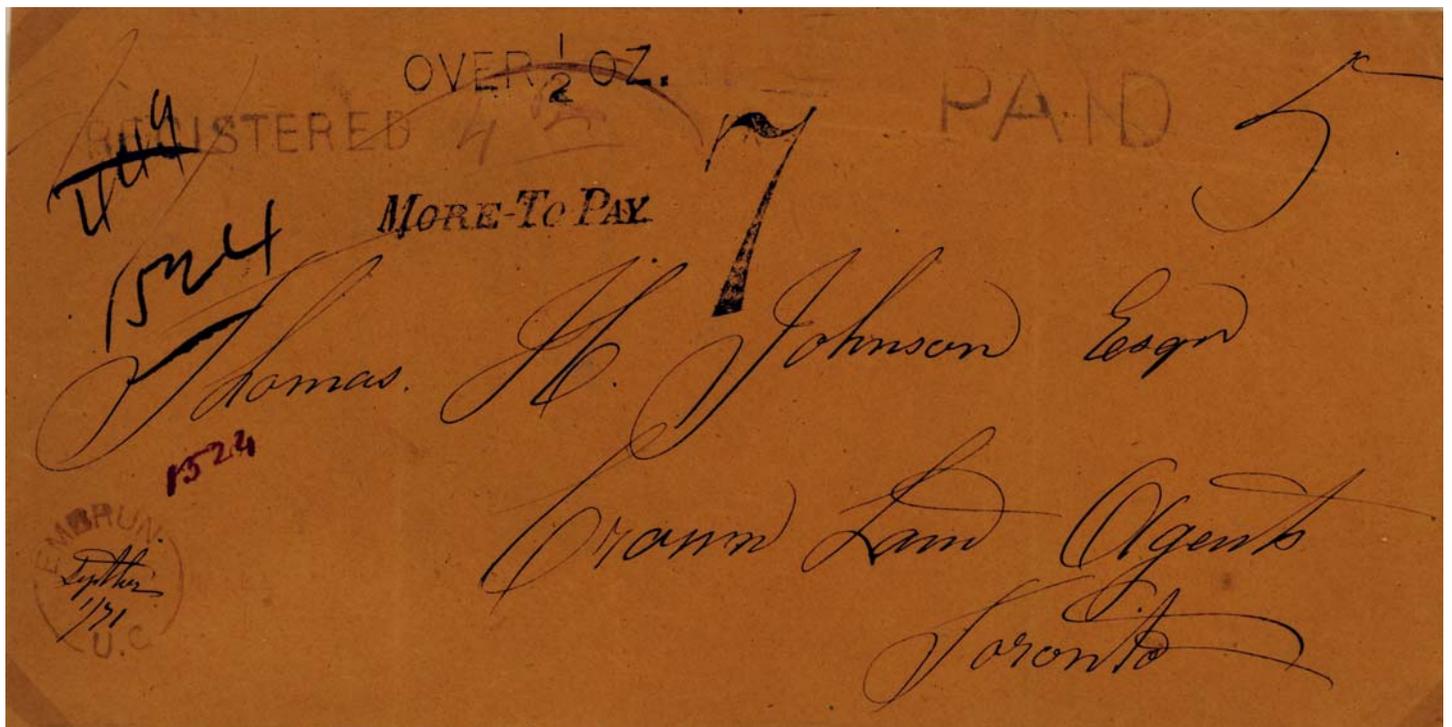
Reweighed

During 1859–75, shortpaid letters were to be charged at the collect rate per weight, crediting any payment; after 1865, shortpaid registered letters were not supposed to be accepted. However, letters could be reweighed at the destination office, and found to be underpaid, hence charged according to the formula—which was often misunderstood. Both of these were reweighed at a subsequent office, and found to be heavier than rated.



Incorrectly rated, 1862. Registration prepaid in cash, and triple domestic (3 × 5¢) applied with stamps. Found to weigh 1½+ to 2 ounces quadruple), it should have been charged 4 × 7¢ (collect rate) less 15¢ applied, or 13¢ due.

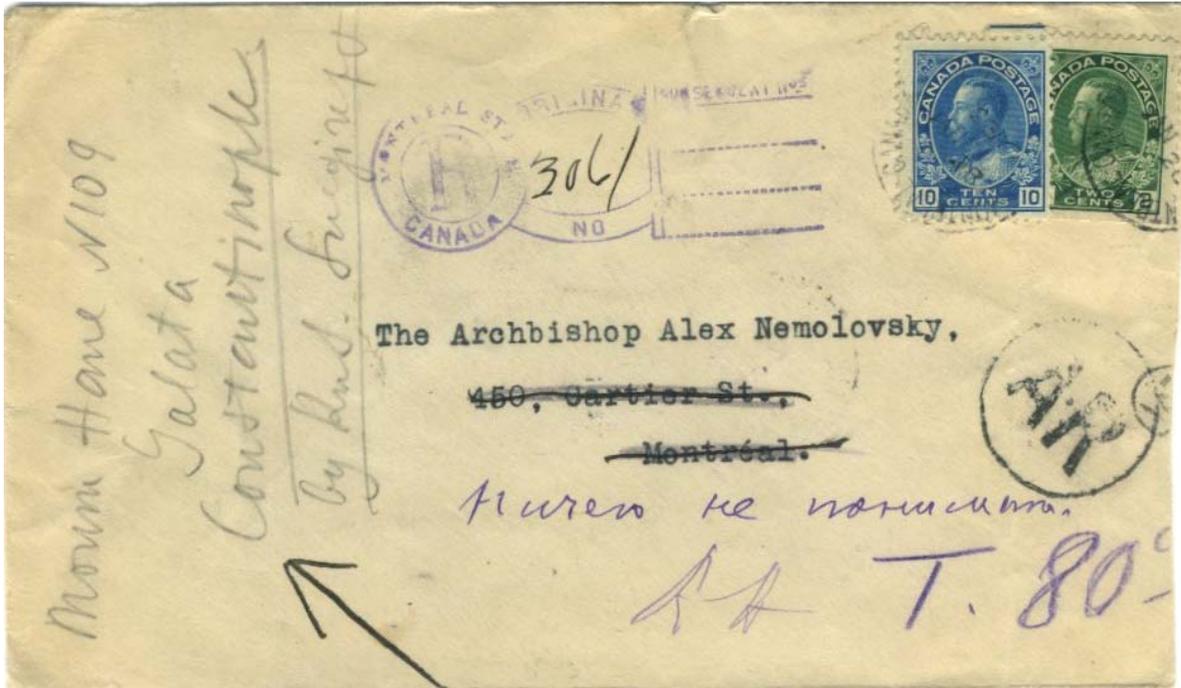
Instead, it was considered single deficiency, and charged only 7¢.



Correctly rated, 1871. Registration and single domestic (PAID 5, combined registration and 3¢ postage) both prepaid in cash. Found to be OVER ½ OZ. (double), so charged 2 × 5¢ (collect rate in this period), less 3¢ prepaid, yielding 7¢ due.

Postage due caused by forwarding

Single deficiency was supposed to be applied to the difference to any letter (not necessarily registered) forwarded to a destination requiring more postage.



Montreal to Constantinople, postage due caused by forwarding, 1925. Originally addressed within Montreal, forwarded to Galata (Constantinople); the difference between drop letter (2¢) and UPU rate (10¢) was chargeable, but it should not have been doubled, as it was here. **Rated** 10¢ registration and 2¢ drop letter; deficiency mistakenly doubled to 16¢, converted to 80 centimes postage due.



Sarnia drop letter, postage due caused by forwarding to Toronto, then returned to sender 1943. Charged **1 CENT DUE**, covering the difference between drop letter rate (2¢), and domestic rate (3¢).

Additional services

Many countries charged for *posted out of course* (an irregularity with registration) and *poste restante* service (known in Canada as *general delivery*), but Canada did not.



Airmail, Vancouver–London, posted out of course (POOC), 1937. Rated 10¢ registration and 6¢ Empire air mail rate. The 3d charge in London for POOC apparently because of forwarding of a registered letter.



Airmail, Montreal–Lodz (Poland), poste restante, 1946. Rated 10¢ registration and 15¢ air to Europe; charged 2 Zloty poste restante fee in Lodz.

Compulsory registration

Letters believed to contain items of value were subject to compulsory registration in many jurisdictions, including Canada and UK. The UK in this period charged 8d (rather than the usual 2d registration fee) for this service, payable by the addressee.

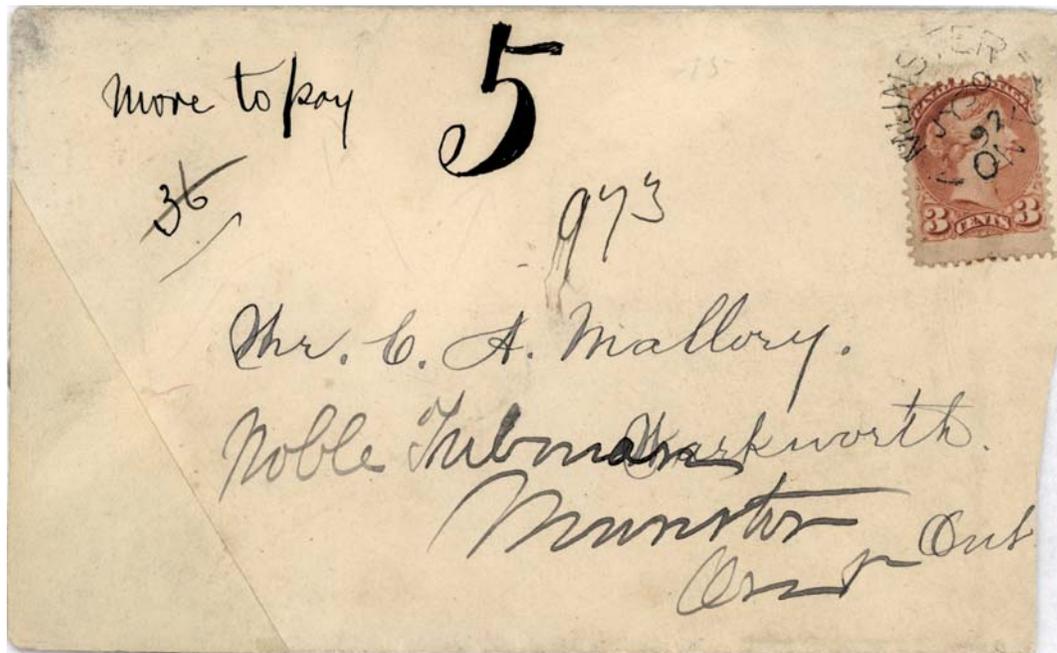


Compulsorily registered in UK, refused, and returned to sender, Maxwell (ONT)—Hull, 6 May 1885. Originally sent unregistered at the single letter rate to UK, 5¢. *Contains coin* noted, and registered with CAUTION sticker applied on reverse. Arrived at Hull 25 May, forwarded to London EC 27 May, where it was *Refused* (bottom; presumably addressee unwilling to pay the 8d), and returned to sender, arriving at the Canadian Dead Letter Office (Ottawa) 19 June. Whether the sender had to ransom it is unclear.

Three nineteenth century compulsorily registered covers from Canada to UK are known; this is the only one returned to sender.

Compulsory registration

It is often difficult to decide whether compulsory registration has taken place, as Canadian clerks seldom marked it as such.



Munster-Warkworth, 1932. Charged *More to pay*, referring to the 5¢ registration fee. Not marked *registered*, but the fee and the registration numbers indicate that it was registered, without being so requested by the sender. Charged single deficiency; more frequently, double deficiency is charged in this period.



Toronto-England, 1932. **Rated** 5¢, paying the UPU rate, rather than the 3¢ Empire rate (2¢ overpayment credited to postage due). Registered at *Montreal* (not at the office of origin, Toronto), charged 80 centimes, double 10¢ – 2¢ (16¢). Blue cross applied in UK.

Complimentary and compulsory registration

This pair of covers, mailed from Quesnelle (BC) to Victoria in the same month and from the same correspondence, were both registered, and the only postage paid was the 3¢ of the stationery, missing the 5¢ registration fee. The first one seems to have gone through without any notice, but the second one was caught, and charged double deficiency, *Due 10¢*.

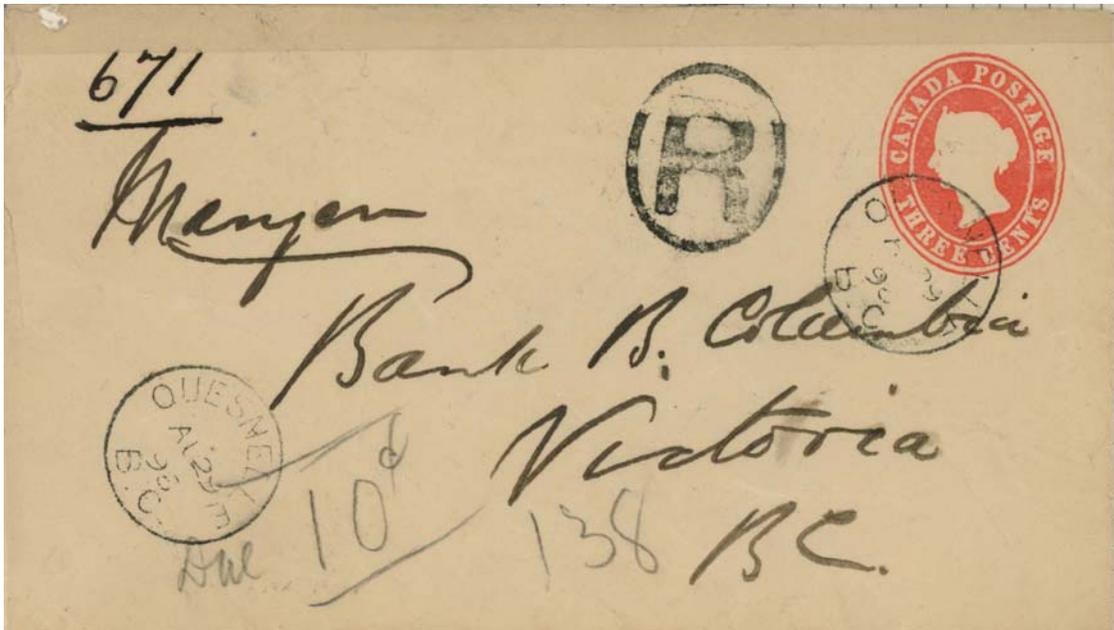
Most likely, a clerk en route suspected that valuables (such as cash) were included (the addressee is a bank manager), and *compulsory registration* applied.

For the first cover, the clerk erred in not charging for registration (resulting in *complimentary registration*), but the same clerk (note the pencilled registration numbers) smartened up by the time the second one arrived, and charged double deficiency.

Both have only an uninteresting Victoria backstamp. Quesnelle became Quesnel around 1900.



Probable complimentary registration, Quesnelle–Victoria, 1 August 1896.



Probable compulsory registration, Quesnelle–Victoria, 29 August 1896.

DLO service fee and compulsory registration

Registered only on return to sender Undeliverable letters with no visible return address were sent to the Dead Letter Office, to be opened in order to determine the address, and returned to sender in a covering envelope. A service fee was charged. If items of value were found and the letter was not registered, the covering envelope would be returned as a registered item, and registration charged.

Undeliverable letter returned from UK, and sent to the Canadian DLO, and returned in the covering envelope as a registered letter.



Returned from UK, sealed in UK, December 1937. Calgary to Weybridge, undeliverable, British official seal applied, *not* registered in UK. Postage pays Empire rate. Enclosed in covering envelope below.



Returned to Calgary (ON), registered at Ottawa DLO, January 1938.

Charged 10¢ (compulsory) registration & 3¢ DLO returned letter service charge.

ORIGINAL NUMBER handstamp at DLO Inspection Service office.

RETURNED DEAD LETTER.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

REGISTERED

17

W. J. Leythale

The Postmaster

6129

Montreal

g.



POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,

Dead Letter Office.

2,000-10-69.

DLO service fees

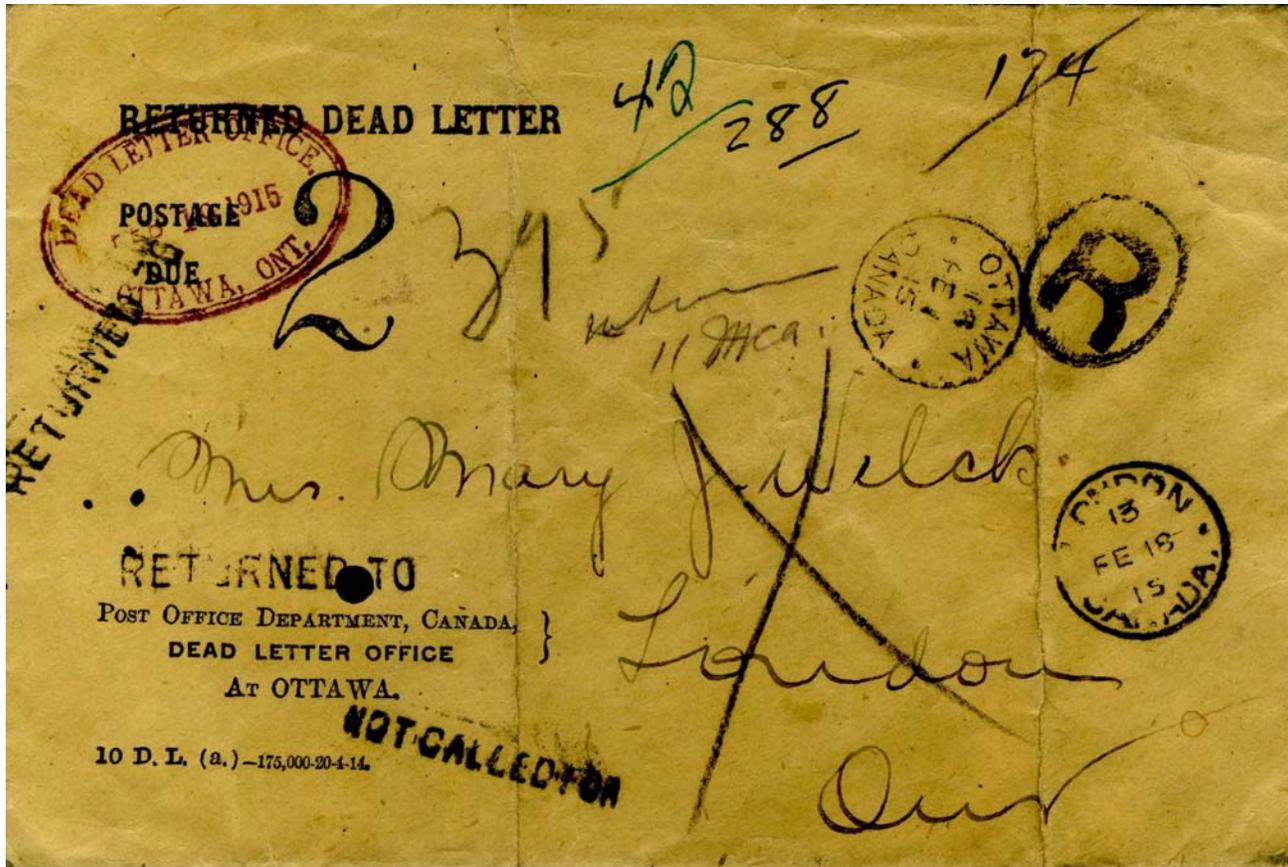
If an undeliverable letter had no visible return address, it would be sent to the DLO, opened for the address, and returned to sender in a covering envelope, with a *returned letter fee*.

If the item were registered, the covering envelope would be returned registered; prior to about 1875, the registration fee would also be charged, but this was dropped subsequently.

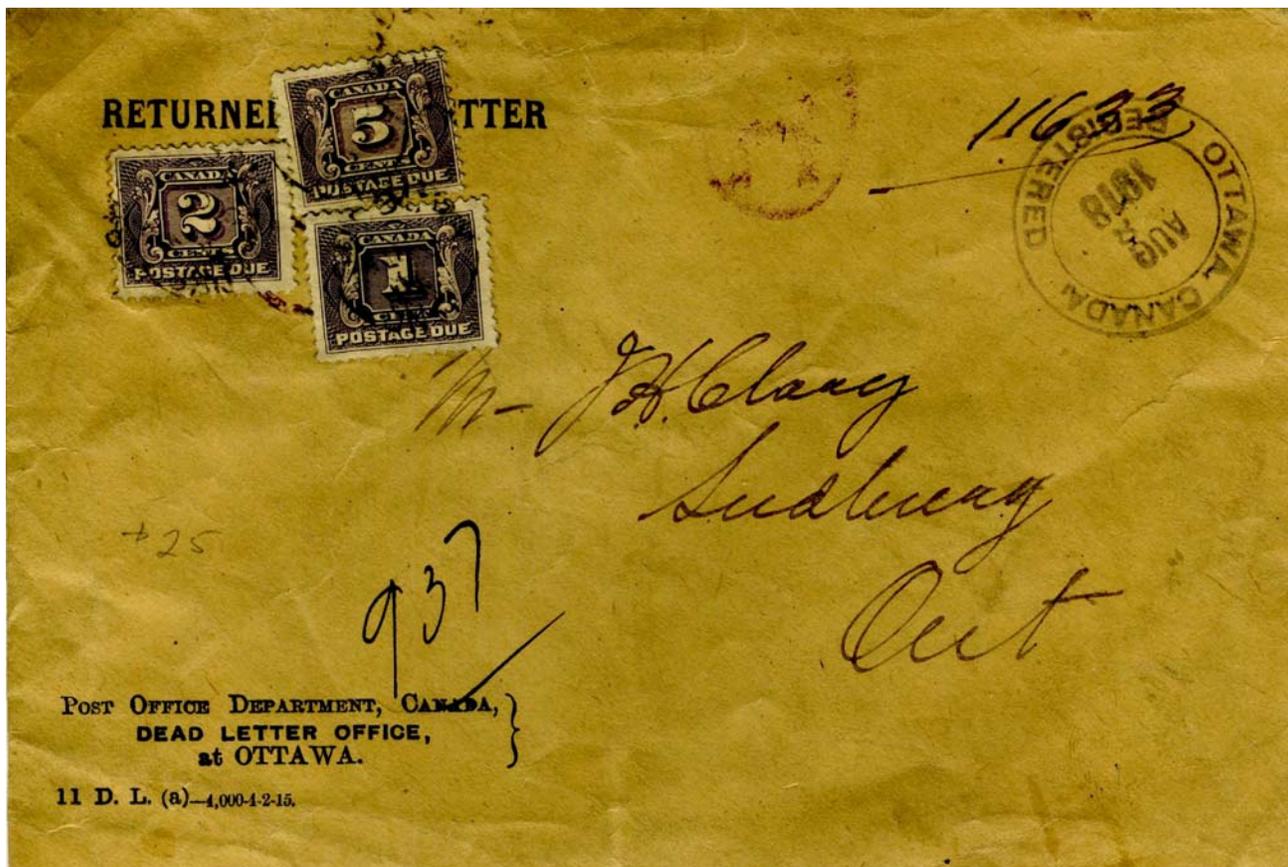
Returned registered to Postmaster, Toronto, March 1871. 17¢ postage due. Probably enclosed three returned letters (return service fee of 5¢ each), at least one of which was registered, hence the extra 2¢.

Red DLO wax seal on reverse. Print data: 2,000-10-69. (Very low print run and very early post-Confederation printing of a large DLO envelope.)

DLO service fee



The letter that couldn't be returned to sender, 1 February 1915. Charged the usual (at this time) 2¢ returned letter fee. Contained a registered letter. However, this mail, to the sender, was itself **undeliverable!** Contents of value in letters which could not be returned to sender were removed and eventually sold.



Returned to Sudbury (ON) from Ottawa, August 1918. break Postage due stamps paying 8¢. A plausible explanation is four enclosures, each charged 2¢ return service fee.

Procedural and clerical errors

Shortpaid registered letters which had been accepted were supposed to be sent to the DLO, and then returned to sender (until 1898). Apparently, the DLO could also request additional payment, and on its receipt, send it off.



Wrong registration fee to the US, 1885. Although domestic registration was 2¢ (1859–89), registration to the US was 5¢ during that same period (except for one month in 1888). At this time, use of a registered letter stamp (RLS) was compulsory. Correctly returned for additional postage—which was never applied, as the letter was returned to sender (based on the backstamps and the message on reverse).

Presumably the clerk in the small town of Brighton forgot the rate. Letter rate to US was 3¢.

Claims \$25= but only \$21 found when opened at the DLO.

Claims \$25, but only \$21 found when opened at the DLO



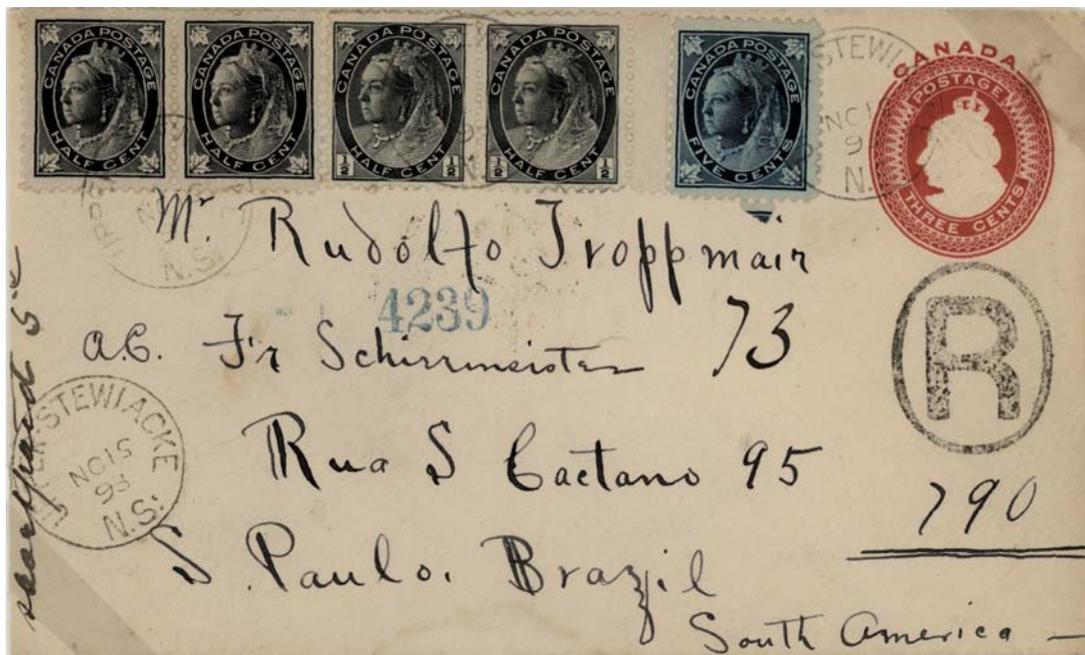
Missing letter rate to US, 1884. From Frankford (ON) to Morris (OH) with 5¢ RLS correctly applied, but missing US letter rate. Inexplicably charged 4¢ in US.

Procedural and clerical errors



Sent to DLO, deficient postage supplied, Langevin (QUE)–Lille (France), 3 May 1897. Rated as single (5¢ for each of registration and first letter rate UPU), found to be double, hence shortpaid 5¢. Sent to Ottawa branch DLO (as indicated by the dates on reverse), where 5¢ small queen was applied and cancelled with the Ottawa encircled C, and it continued to Lille (arrived 20 May 1897), via London.

Likely a notice was sent to the sender to pay the additional 5¢.



Upper Stewiacke (NS)–Brazil, shortpaid and returned to sender, 1898. Paid as single usual UPU-letter rate (5¢) and 5¢ registration, but (probably) found to be overweight, thus *shortpaid 5¢* (at left), and properly returned to sender. Never made it out of Nova Scotia.

Procedural and clerical errors

Post-war airmail rates changed frequently, and sometimes clerks did not even notice the large blue **AIR MAIL** sticker. By 1947, one Swiss centimes equalled 3¢.



To Denmark, 1947. Rated 10¢ reg'n, 15¢ air to Europe; thus 9¢ short paid, apparently converted to 50 or 52 centimes. Should have been 27 centimes, which (perhaps) a subsequent clerk tried to double—inappropriately (since single deficiency applied to registered matter) and incorrectly.



To France, 1947. Rated 10¢ reg'n, 15¢ air to Europe; 10¢ short paid, converted to 30 centimes.

Procedural and clerical errors



To Southern Nigeria, not part of Empire airmail scheme, & amount due miscalculated, 1939. Rated 10¢ registration plus double 6¢ per half ounce Empire airmail rate—but Southern Nigeria was not served by a British carrier, so the usual 25¢ per half ounce airmail rate to Africa applied. Short payment was thus $50 - 12¢ = 38¢$, which was mistakenly calculated as 17¢, or 85 centimes (single deficiency from 1935 registered matter).

Forwarded from Calabar to Victoria (at no extra charge), postmarked VICTORIA–CAMEROONS/UNDER BRITISH MANDATE.



To Southern Rhodesia, wrongly charged, May 1945. Rated 10¢ reg'n, 4¢ Empire rate; 10¢ (single) due, likely as a result of incorrectly not recognizing special delivery stamp as payment for registration (a proper use).

Opened and resealed by the Foreign Exchange Control Board (FECB), which is possibly where the postage due handstamp was applied, as the colour of the ink matches that of the Montreal datestamp on reverse.

Weird

Although the registered cover was correctly prepaid, its AR card was not.



AR cover returned to sender, AR card unpaid, Edmonton drop letter, 1952. Registration of 20¢ and drop letter fee 3¢. Returned to sender (pencilled left) with AR card attached. Contained a summons.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES CANADA		ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AVIS DE RÉCEPTION	
This side to be filled in by office of origin Le recto est à remplir par le bureau d'origine		Date stamp of office of origin Timbre du bureau d'origine	
REGISTERED ARTICLE Envoi recommandé		To be filled in by sender who will indicate below his full address A remplir par l'expéditeur qui doit inscrire ci-dessous son adresse complète.	
ENTERED AT THE OFFICE OF Enregistré au bureau de poste de		AFFIX POSTAGE STAMP Apposez un timbre-poste	
DATE UNDER } No. 26123		RETURN TO Retournez à	
ADDRESSED TO } Adressé à		Messrs. Harvie & Yanda, Bank of Toronto Bldg., Edmonton, Alta.	
AT } à		STREET AND NUMBER Rue et numéro	
39B-400-5-1-50		PLACE OF ORIGIN OF REGISTERED ARTICLE Lieu d'origine de l'objet recommandé	
		CANADA	
		(1) IN PRINTED CHARACTERS En lettres moulées	

AR card missing fee. Formerly attached to the cover above; *Tax 10¢* indicating that the AR fee (which was to have been paid in stamps on the card) was missing.

A probable explanation is that this was part of a large mailing (by a law firm), and a secretary missed stamping this card among a pile of them, and the clerk missed it as well.

Weirder

Mishandled AR card, and retracted postage due



AR card considered as registered post card, double deficiency, 1930. Registered letter mailed 7 November 1930 and delivered eight days later. For some reason (unfamiliarity with AR?), PM at McEachern did not return the card until 19 November.

Seeing the 10¢ stamp (paying the AR fee), he decided it paid the registration fee, and gave the card a tentative registration number (72); then as a post card (!), it was 2¢ shortpaid, hence charged double deficiency *Due 4¢*. AR cards were not supposed to be returned as registered matter.

Being “registered”, the card was postmarked at offices en route, McCord, Summerberry, Assiniboia, and an RPO.



20¢

Covered by post office sticker. Indicates originally charged 20¢ postage, double deficiency for registration; the addressee thereupon *refused* the letter. On return to post office, charge covered and *refused* struck through (backstamps confirm this story). Likely contained money.

Refused and accepted, postage due retracted, 1933. Sent as domestic letter, Alexandria PM registered the item, endorsing it *Drop Letter/ Placed under Registration by PM*. Use of *Drop letter* is incorrect, as this was intended only when the sender indicated it was to be registered and applied the correct postage, but dropped it in a mail box.

One of very few examples where compulsory registration was (effectively) noted on the cover.