



THE ONTARIO NUMISMATIST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ONTARIO NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

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Many of you have read or heard ABOUT the address delivered by Norval A. Parker, master of the Royal Canadian mint, at the ONA's annual convention. The speech gave valuable insights in Canada's biggest moneymaker. For a good story about the preparation of coins and the development of the mint's numismatic section, The Ontario Numismatist reprints Mr. Parker's April 18, 1964, ONA dinner speech.

I feel very honoured to have been invited to attend the Second Annual Ontario Numismatic Association Convention Banquet. When I was asked to speak to you, many different subjects presented themselves but each was discarded in favour of one which, I hope, will prove of more interest to you as coin collectors.

I am going to speak to you tonight about some of the Mint's activities dealing directly with the designing of coins, the development of coins and, more especially, with the preparation of uncirculated coin and the growth of our Numismatic Section.

Let us begin with a new coin design. A new coinage design comes into being when there is an event of national significance to be commemorated or when public opinion warrants a change. The Government of the day must first give its assent to the change and then select a Board of Judges to choose a suitable design. This Board is chaired by the Master of the Mint who also acts as technical advisor.

The Board first drafts a memorandum which sets out the conditions of a coin competition, suggesting a number of subjects for the artist's consideration, or in the case of a commemorative coin, the national event to be honoured. The announcement of the competition is made by the Minister of Finance and published in newspapers throughout the country. Over a thousand designs were received for the 1964 dollar, many with merit, but unfortunately, only one could be chosen as the winning design.

When the competition closes, each design is given a number so that each design may be judged on its own merit only. The Board of Judges meet where the designs are on display, and after careful scrutiny, each member selects a number of designs which, in his opinion, are

the most suitable. These designs are then discussed as to legality, theme, historical backgrounds, and last but not least, adaptability to the technical side of coinage. So many artists fail to realize that a design on paper has a very different appearance than a design on metal. Certain effects, such as shading, cannot be reproduced on metal and this can alter completely the artist's original conception.

By careful elimination, the choice is narrowed to about a dozen and an intensive study is made of these. Do they represent what is being commemorated? Will the design be clear when reduced to the size of a coin? Finally, four or five designs remain and from these, the winning design is chosen.

This, by the way, was the process followed in the selection of the 1964 dollar. We, of the panel, thought that the artist had depicted the real theme of the Conferences. As you are no doubt aware, these meetings at Charlottetown and Quebec were just the preliminaries leading up to the actual signing of the British North American Act. Therefore, buildings were not considered as a suitable subject to depict the main idea of Confederation. Geographical areas were also discarded, because it was felt that there were no definite boundaries. Actually, the beginning of Confederation was the uniting of the people of various origins, and the approximate population figures for Canada a hundred years ago were as follows: French, 1,082,940: Irish, 846,414: English, 706,369: Scottish, 549,946: Others, including other British Isles origins, 77,773. The artist of the winning commemorative dollar design interlocked the emblems of the four main groups - interlocked them again with circle. Although it would have been wonderful to have the emblems of all the nationalities included, it was obviously out of the question.

I suggest that when the competition for the 1967 commemorative designs is opened, you numismatists can be of great assistance by putting forward your ideas in the form of designs - instead of waiting until after the selection has been made! I urge you to put your ideas on paper and possibly, share in the production of a centennial issue.

After the design has been selected and approved by the Cabinet, a clay model is made of it. Then a plaster cast is taken off the clay model. In this stage the plaster cast can be tooled to get rid of any imperfections and any lettering can be added by cutting or engraving into the plaster which is "intaglio". From this mould another plaster cast is taken, which brings it back to cameo. This, in turn, is dressed and tooled to clean up any imperfections and from this model or pattern, another cast is taken, which is thoroughly dried to get rid of all moisture, and then is primed with wax. It is now ready for the final stage of the model to be used on the reducing machine.

The practice of the Mint is to take an "Acrylic Plastic" cast of this pattern and mount it on the machine ready for engraving of the master punch. In coin work two cuts are usually taken - a roughing out and a finishing cut. For the ten cent finishing cutter, the cutting point or tip is brought down to five thousandths of an inch. All cutters have two cutting lips and run at a speed of 3500 r. p. m.

After the engraving is completed on the machine, it is worked on by hand - corrections and improvements are made and all blemishes removed. The master punch is then hardened and tempered, or heat treated. It is now ready for transferring into another piece of steel which is to be the master die or matrice. First the block of steel is coned, or pointed, and polished free of blemishes. Then the two pieces of steel are brought together, the point of the soft matrice is placed dead centre on the master die. Pressure is applied with a press and the impression is

transferred to the soft steel. From the master die the working punches are made and from the work punches come the working dies. This is the reason there are few errors in our coinage.

It might be of interest to you to have me tell you a little about the striking of coins.

Coin blanks are made into coins by pressing them between two chrome-plated, hardened, steel tool dies while they are held in a steel collar the exact size of the coin produced. The blanks are placed in the feed tube of the press by the operator and at each stroke of the press, feeding fingers take a blank from the bottom of the tube and place it upon the bottom die which is, at this moment, just level with the surface of the table. The bottom die then sinks to the centre of the collar, the blank resting upon it, and the top die, following down, strikes the blow causing the imprisoned metal to squeeze out and fill all the space - thus taking the impressions of both dies and any markings placed on the inside of the collar (the milling, in the case of silver coins). The top die then rises and the bottom die follows, forcing the struck piece out of the collar. The feeding fingers advance, pushing the struck piece down the delivery tube at the back of the press and placing another blank on the bottom. The process is then repeated.

One of the lesser known aspects of coinage is an annual event called the Trial of the Pyx. On the first Tuesday in May of each year, the Government appoints three Assay Commissioners, under authority of the Currency, Mint and Exchange Fund Act. These Commissioners come to the Mint, are sworn in by a Judge and then proceed to examine coins which have been set aside in sealed packets during the year. These sample coins were chosen without preference from each journey (720 ozs.) produced during the year. The Commissioners weigh and assay these coins in order to determine whether they fall within the prescribed limits stated in the Coinage Act. Up to the present time, all coins so examined have been within the limits prescribed by law. This examination is the Trial of the Pyx. The Pyx was originally the name given to a certain chest in Westminster Abbey for the safe custody of the Host, but it also covers the idea of any receptacle containing treasure.

You people gathered here this evening have played a great part in the creation of a new section of the Mint - our Numismatic Section. The demand for uncirculated coin has risen from 18,000 sets in 1958 to an unprecedented total for last year of 673,000 sets and 290,000 silver dollars. The facilities in our Numismatic Section have been improved by the acquisition of more space and by hiring extra staff on both a temporary and permanent basis. Partial mechanization of our shipping operations has been achieved by the purchase of a machine designed to insert each coin set into its envelope, together with relative enclosures, in one operation. The changes, plus extensive overtime, have enabled this section to complete - but just barely - the processing of all 1963 orders before the year's end.

Before 1958, there were few coin sets sold at the Mint. At that time, the best coins were selected from the ordinary run of coinage produced at the Mint and were put in cases and called Mint sets. In 1958 more attention was focused on these, our first uncirculated sets, but they were still selected from the ordinary run of coin.

Today, the Mint has a separate division whose sole function is to produce uncirculated coin. These coins start with ordinary coin blanks which are rumbled and washed until they are completely free of all abrasives. The dies used are carefully selected and, after a certain number of pieces have been struck, are replaced with new dies. The presses for these particular coins are slowed down and are operated

with greater pressure to ensure a finer impression. The room used for striking the coins is kept free of dust and the operators are required to wear clean gloves. These precautions help to keep the coins as free as possible from dust, fingerprints and contact with body acids. Finally, the coins are carefully scrutinized for imperfections and are then put in the packaging machine.

Now, as to orders, the majority of these are received during the first few months of the year. The letters are opened, the enclosed remittance checked and, if correct in every respect, an order is written up, given a number, and a receipt sent out. This all sounds relatively simple, but you must realize that a great many mistakes are made by the people ordering coins. Sometimes the amount of money enclosed does not compare with the order - or it is insufficient - or quite often, the sender forgets to enclose his remittance. All this checking, of course, is time-consuming. We have even had orders where double the amount of the required remittance has been enclosed. In every case, extra correspondence is necessary and, just to make matters worse, quite often handwriting cannot be deciphered or the sender has forgotten to include his address!

As you may be aware, the Mint's facilities are limited. It has been most difficult over the past few years to forecast, or even hazard a guess, as to what the coinage demand for any given year might be - and I am speaking now of both types of coin produced. The fantastic rate of increase that has taken place is reflected in the figures of our annual reports. Unfortunately, the Mint has not been able to expand its facilities to meet this tremendous demand for coins.

Since the primary function of the Mint is to produce coinage for commerce, we must consider the curtailment of production of uncirculated coin at any time it may look as if its continued production will interfere with the requirements of the Canadian banks. If the time comes that we must discontinue the acceptance of uncirculated coin orders, we can only hope that we will have the understanding of all coin collectors.

MORE HELPING HANDS

The O. N. A. gratefully acknowledges receipt of two donations from its members during the month of May. Mr. John L. McKay-Clements of Haileybury and a numismatic friend from London have both made generous contributions to the association in view of the recent loss by robbery. The treasurer reports that a total amount of \$410.00 has been received to date.

CALL FOR TENDERS

The O. N. A. Executive will entertain applications from Ontario clubs in consideration for the 1965 and 1966 O. N. A. conventions. These applications are to be made in writing with full data on accommodation available, locale, etc. Please direct all applications to the O. N. A. secretary, Mrs. Ruth Mueller, 239 Lancaster St. W., Kitchener, Ont.

O. N. A. MEDALS AVAILABLE

The Ontario Numismatic Association's official insignia is on one side of the medal. On the other side is the club design of the Capital City Coin Club. Make your money order available to: Ontario Numismatic Association, Box 4, Waterloo, Ont.

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The Rebellion token of 1837 was so named because a small star and a liberty cap, emblems of independence, appear between the leaves in the wreath.

1. 10K Solid Gold Numbered 1-25	\$40.00	Set A - 1,2,3,4	in plastic	\$66.00
		Set B - 1, 3, 4	in plastic	\$50.00
2. 10K Gold Plate	\$15.00	Set C - 2, 3, 4	in plastic	\$25.00
		Set D - 3, 4	in plastic	\$10.00
3. Sterling Silver	\$ 5.00	Set E - 3	in plastic	\$ 6.25
4. Bronze	\$ 3.50	Set F - 4	in plastic	\$ 4.75

AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICE

All secretaries of O. N. A. member clubs, please note: The three new sets presented at Ottawa are now available to your clubs.

The third in a series of What's My Coin? donated by the London Numismatic Society, contains a wide variety of interest . . . tokens and decimal coinage of Canada, interspersed with just enough popular foreign coins to give your own club members an interesting time.

Canadian Voyageur Dollar by Claudia Pelkey primarily covers one coin, analysing and explaining everything in and on the voyageur dollar.

Something new and different, donated by David Ash, is the featurette, the first of many more to come. Lundy Island and World Famed Orders are two short features. Or if your programme does not permit, use just one of the features. Available only in sets of two.

CLUB NEWS

The NORFOLK COIN CLUB has a question and answer period during their meeting to further their knowledge in numismatics. To help boost their treasury, the club features a bingo, the prize last month being a 1963 mint set.

The KITCHENER COIN CLUB is planning a first annual coin exhibition and dinner for Oct. 3. Site for the affair will be St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church hall, corner Queen and Weber Streets. Bourse tables will be limited to 15. General chairman for the one-day event is club president John Craig, 105 Lancaster St. W., Kitchener, Ont.

The INGERSOLL COIN CLUB held a successful banquet, May 9. A cup, awarded for Best of Show, went to Don Flick, Oakville.

The STRATFORD COIN CLUB second annual banquet, held April 26 was successful far beyond their expectations. There was an abundance of the finest displays on view to the public. One of the main items of interest was the medal which was on sale . . . honouring William Shakespeare and the Stratford Festival . . . a beautiful medal.

The ONTARIO NUMISMATIST is published monthly by the Ontario Numismatic Association. The publication may be obtained with memberships of one of the following categories: Adult -- \$2 yearly; junior -- \$1 yearly (up to 18 years of age), husband and wife (one copy) -- \$3 yearly; club -- \$10 yearly. Remittances (plus bank exchange if paid by cheque) payable to the Ontario Numismatic Association, Post Office Box 33, Waterloo, Ont.

The LONDON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY had their annual display night, May 5. They were rewarded with 40 cases of numismatic non-competitive displays ranging from Canadian decimals and tokens, through British Empire and Commonwealth, Mexican, odd and curious and paper money.

The London Numismatic Society is progressing very favourably with their collection of numismatic items for a future museum display. The donations are coming in and being gratefully acknowledged for this very worthwhile project. The most recent donation was a memento of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Canada Trust, Huron and Erie.

The HURON COUNTY NUMISMATIC CLUB is having a crest competition for a design for their club. The winner was to have been chosen at their May 14 meeting.

The industrious BAY OF QUINTE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION holds two meetings every month . . . the second Sunday and the third Thursday. This club is one of the very few putting out a real numismatic bulletin. A very interesting feature, by Alan Guay, is a column Did you Know? featuring some real gems of numismatic information.

The SARNIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY is experiencing a noted rise in their attendance since moving to the Eastern Star Hall.

The ST. CATHARINES COIN CLUB offers a silver cup to be awarded in December, to the person who has the best total points for displaying for the rest of the year. For their June meeting, a panel discussion is planned where the audience may participate by asking the questions.

The NIPISSING COIN CLUB has put out the welcome mat to anyone visiting their area. Their meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month, except for July and August.

The GUELPH COIN CLUB reports a very remarkable junior member. Bev Preator won the quiz game by answering 15 out of the 22 questions asked at their last meeting.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We enjoy reading about your club activities . . . send us your club bulletins.

COMING EVENTS

July 19 Owen Sound 4th Annual Exhibition, Sauble Beach pavilion. Bourse (\$5.00) Auction. Open to the public from noon to 11:00 p. m. For information contact Secretary, Box 94, Owen Sound, Ont.

The Sauble Beach pavilion is situated just south of the main entrance to the free six mile stretch of open sand beach on Lake Huron. The Sauble Beach is known as the Daytona of Canada and at the time of the show all tourist entertainment facilities will be in full operation. Visitors may enjoy a day at the beach or a trip into the historic and attractive Bruce Peninsula, together with a numismatic exhibition.

August 27-9 Canadian Numismatic Association 11th annual convention. Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax, N. S. Host club: Halifax Coin Club. Chairman: A. M. MacDonald, Box 243, Armdale, Halifax, N. S.

October 3 Bay of Quinte Numismatic Association annual Coin-a-rama.

Oct. 17 Toronto Coin Club Fall Collector's Rally. Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Host to the Ontario Numismatic Association semi-annual meeting.

Oct. 24 The St. Catharines Coin Club annual banquet, Saturday, at the Queensway. D. J. Ferguson, past-president of the CNA and ANA is to be the speaker.

MUSICAL MONEY

(From the Huron County Numismatic Club May bulletin)

Pat Melligan, club editor, acquired a record of Swiss music, one cut of which features the interesting TALERSCHWINGEN - a large silver coin (probably a five-franc piece), is thrown into an earthenware basin, which is then moved with one hand in a horizontal circle. Centrifugal force drives the coin up the side of the basin, and an unusual hissing noise results -- a peculiar background for the yodellers. Anyone wishing to "hear" this money, may borrow the record. It is LP monaural 33 1/3 R. P. M.

NO MORE 1964 PROOF-LIKE SETS

As of May 1st, 1964, no more orders are being accepted by the Royal Canadian Mint, Ottawa, for proof-like sets or silver dollars. Due to the overwhelming 1,500,000 orders (April 18), it was necessary to discontinue issuing coins in order that those requests already received could be filled by the end of this year.

NEW MEMBERS

Applicants Nos. 405 - 410 and 412 - 417, C33 - C36 published in the May issue of the Ontario Numismatist have been accepted. With respect to No. 411, the O. N. A. regrets it cannot accept a business as a regular member. The following applications were received in May. If no objections are received, their acceptance will be acknowledged in the July issue of the Ontario Numismatist.

- 418 James C. French, 145 Cameron Ave., Ottawa 1, Ont.
- 419 Noel Gordon, 30 Tecumseh Rd., Chatham, Ont.
- 420 Leonard Heise, 726 S. Selkirk St., Fort William, Ont.
- 421 William A. Attwell, 147 Symons St., Toronto 14, Ont.

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The design of the armorial bearings of Canada, in use since 1937, was re-designed by Mr. T. Shingles, chief engraver of the Royal Canadian Mint in 1959. The original design was by Kruger Gray.

Postage Stamp currency in Canada was issued by Weir and Larminie. Stamps of 1, 3, 5 and 10 cent values were put in a brass frame with a mica window because of an acute shortage of small change.

Jetons, struck for the French colonies in America, are counters and not coins, made to facilitate the reckoning of sums in old French fractional currency.

The last issue of the English Guinea was issued in one year only, 1813. It became known as the Military Guinea as it was used mainly to pay the troops and supplies of the British armies under Wellington during the Peninsular War.

On the Hudson's Bay tokens issued about 1854 the initials NB should have been MB, for made beaver, signifying a prepared beaver skin accepted by the Hudson's Bay Company.