

Edmonton

*Gateway To The North
Crossroads Of The World*

We know of few, if any, other cities which have two descriptive titles, each connected with transportation. This fact was very forcibly impressed the other day when studying advertisements from the rapidly growing capital of the Province of Alberta, which ranks among our leading Post Offices, and the District Office of which embraces a territory which even from an expansive Western standpoint is truly impressive, embracing over 900,000 square miles!

It seems incredible when considering the place which Edmonton holds in our scheme of national and international communication that a mere seventy-two years ago when Postal Service was first established there it was a small community which consisted chiefly of traders, trappers, missionaries, a few settlers and the Royal Northwest Mounted Police.

Key Air Centre

At the present time, Edmonton is a key point on the Trans-Canada Air Mail network. From it radiate the *Edmonton-Whitehorse-Fairbanks A.M.S.*, stretching through the northern areas of Alberta and British Columbia to Alaska. Northward the famous *CAM 57* carries air mail, ordinary first class mail, parcels and newspapers, together with supplies to the vast area served along the Mackenzie River, Great Bear Lake and Lake Athabaska

POSTMASTER
H. E. GREGORY
Edmonton, Alta.

T. J. REILLY,
District Post Office Inspector,
Edmonton, Alta.



(N.F.B. Photo)

Edmonton in 'Panorama

Districts, serving such points as Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, the mining region at Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Fort Norman, Norman Wells, Aklavik and the Coppermine on the Arctic shores.

From Edmonton, Railway Mail Services and motor services radiate in every direction.

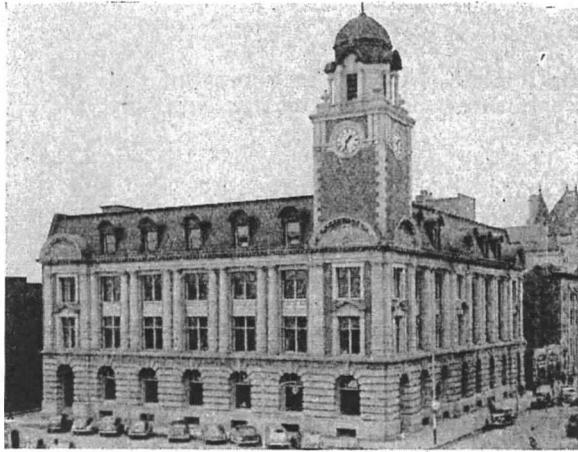
Geographically, Edmonton is equidistant between Vancouver and Winnipeg, and is also the starting point of the famous Alaska Highway. None need be reminded of the strategic importance which the city assumed during war days on the lines of communication by road and by air to the far Northwest and to Alaska.

Serves Mighty Region

The city has earned its sobriquet "Gateway To The North" because from the first it has been the "jumping-off" place and distributing centre of all the area which we now know as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

The Northwest Territories alone occupy an area of 1,300,000 square miles, or nearly one third of the area of Canada. While it is some 315 miles from the United States Border to Edmonton, the distance from that city to the Arctic Ocean is approximately 2,000 miles, or virtually the distance from Halifax, N.S., to Trinidad.

This vast northern region has received its mail through Edmonton from the days when it was carried by courier and dog team in winter, by canoe, and later by



(N.F.B. Photo)

The Post Office, Edmonton



(N.F.B. Photo)

Loading Supplies For North

steamboat in the open season, until the present when the mail planes wing north serving the settlements and newly opened mining areas far within the Arctic Circle.

On World Air Route

And now as to its claim to be *Crossroads Of The World*. The Publicity Bureau of the city recently published an interesting little map of North America. From the dot marked "Edmonton", airplane routes extended like spokes from a wheel—to Alaska, across the Polar cap to Russia, westward to the Orient, eastward, across the tundra and the Hudson Bay, to Western Europe, and southward to all areas of Canada and the United States.

True, the artist was looking into the future—so far as some of these Air connections are concerned—for they are not in being as yet, but he visualized the immense importance the future holds for his city because of its advantageous position on the short northern routes to Europe and the Far East.

Founded in 1807

Paradoxically, Edmonton, while one of our new cities, has long held a position on the map of Canada. It was founded as a trading post in 1807, following the destruction by the Indians of Forts Edmonton and Augustus which were situated some 20 miles distant on the North Saskatchewan River.

A 900-Mile Route

At the time the Post Office was opened on August 1, 1876, a mail was established between Winnipeg and Edmonton, a distance of about 900 miles, serving five intermediate offices. The trip either way was

performed by vehicle over "the Edmonton trail" in about 21 days. The amount paid for this service to the contractor (the late Hon. James McKay) was \$10,000 per annum, according to the report of the Postmaster General in 1882.

As the C.P.R. continued to move westward from Winnipeg, the mails were carried to the end of steel and thence transported by wagon. By 1882, the mails were carried from Troy (Qu'Appelle Station), 323 miles west of Winnipeg, to Edmonton, a distance of 584 miles, the time occupied on the trip either way being about 15 days.

The city's modern postal service dates from the completion of the C.P.R. railway between Calgary and Edmonton in 1891. From this period, the mails were carried by railway to the terminus of this long stage route.

There was a further improvement in service when the main line C.N.R. reached Edmonton in 1907. In the same year, the first Post Office was established at Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories, and was served through Edmonton, and by 1910 regular postal service was being given to numerous far northern points.

A memorable year in the postal development of the northland was 1929, on the last day of which year the first mail carried by air north from Edmonton reached Aklavik at the mouth of the Mackenzie close to the Arctic Ocean.

Speaking generally of the growth of air transportation into the hinterland, it is not commonly known that in 1937 (before the war put a temporary curb on mining activity) more air tonnage was flown north from Edmonton than the whole total

carried by plane in the U.S.A. During war years, with the opening of the Alaska Highway in 1943, and with the institution of air service to the points along the route, and to Alaska, a colossal mail volume passed through Edmonton to the United States Forces.

The Edmonton Post Office

The Postal Service at Edmonton is under Postmaster H. W. Gregory, and besides the main Post Office includes the South Edmonton Postal Station and some 27 sub offices. T. J. Reilly, District Post Office Inspector, has charge of the Edmonton Postal District.

From the modest annual revenue of \$21.71 reported for two quarters at the close of the first year of operation in 1876, the gross revenue of the Edmonton Post Office has grown to \$1,388,049 in the fiscal year 1946-47.

A total of 112,737 lbs. of Air Mail was despatched from Edmonton during the past calendar year, compared with 110,577 lbs. in the year before.

Contributing factors also to Edmonton's large postal revenue are that it is the capital city of Alberta, with the Provincial Government Offices, the site of the University of Alberta which has an enrollment of some 6,800 students, and also that many businesses are opening up their western head offices there. Undoubtedly, *The Gateway to the North*—which stands at the *Crossroads of the World*—has a great future.

Postmaster H. W. Gregory

A few words about the popular Postmaster, H. W. Gregory. He has served with the Edmonton Post Office since joining the staff there in 1912. For some time he was in charge of the Newspaper and Parcel Despatch, and later held the position of accountant. He was promoted to Senior Postal Clerk in 1919 and, was transferred to the South Edmonton Postal Station as Clerk in Charge in 1925. The same year he was promoted to Principal Clerk and placed in charge of the Enquiry Section, District Office, and was assigned to field duty in 1929.

His appointment as Inspector of Postal Services came in 1932, and in 1946 he was detailed to have charge of the Edmonton Post Office as Superintendent of Mails. In

April 1947, Mr. Gregory became Acting Postmaster, and Postmaster on April 1, 1948.

His hobbies, he tells us, consist mainly of gardening. He also enjoys the odd game of golf.

District Inspector Reilly

Mr. Reilly, Edmonton District Post Office Inspector, entered the Service in April 1908, and was assigned duty in the Secretarial Division and the Money Order Division of the Toronto office. He transferred, in October 1913, to the Post Office Inspector's Office in Edmonton and was in charge of the Enquiry Section (Now Investigation Division) for some time, and acted as rural route investigator during 1917, 1918, and 1919. In 1920 he was promoted to Principal Postal Clerk.

The Edmonton Postal District was closed in 1921 and Mr. Reilly was transferred to Saskatoon that October where he served as Principal Postal Clerk in both the Operating Division and the Office Service Division.

When the Edmonton Postal District was reopened in 1925, Mr. Reilly was transferred back and was appointed Inspector of Postal Service in July 1926 (in charge of Railway Mail Service).

Mr. Reilly was on the first trip when mail was carried by plane into the North West Territories in January 1929.

He continued to act as Inspector until July 1940 when assigned duties as Acting District Superintendent and was appointed District Director on January 1, 1946. He has now been appointed District Post Office Inspector as from Feb. 1, 1948.

He is a baseball and hockey enthusiast and plays golf.