

## Postal History of Some Aspects of the Department of Munitions and Supply

### 1940-1945

One could argue that the two most significant events in Canada's history are the completion of the transcontinental railway in November 1885 and World War II. This exhibit looks at some of the postal history associated with the latter. The depression of the 1930's was devastating for Canada. With an economy dependent on exporting raw materials and with minimal industrial activity, unemployment was rampant and by 1939 it was still over 12%. One on five Canadians relied on government relief for support. The outbreak of World War II changed all of this; everyone who wanted to work could find employment.

Canada officially declared war on Germany on September 10th, 1939, some 7 days after Great Britain. As a legislative democracy the Government required Parliament's approval, through legislation, for any and all the actions it wished to take, at war or not. The Liberal Government in power in 1939 relied on the War Measures Act of 1914 to give its declaration of war full force and effect. This Act allowed the Government to initiate both action and controls by Orders-in-Council (OIC's). OIC's require Cabinet approval but not legislative approval. The WWII OIC's were the foundation of a "planned" wartime economy directed through the Department of Munitions and Supply (DMS). Canada was the only allied nation to centralize its war effort in such away that DMS was made responsible for everything from supplying food for all the armed forces to contracting for Lancaster bombers. Through the DMS and its legislative power the Government could compel manufacturers into wartime production of the needed munitions and other finished goods on the terms, conditions, and prices it determined "reasonable." As well through DMS the Government could expropriate private companies and create Crown Corporations.

The DMS was vast. It was organized around 16 separate Production Branches which were supported by 28 Crown Corporations and 19 Materials Supply and Control groups. At its peak DMS employed some 5000 people.

<b>Department of Munitions and Supply</b>		
<b>Production Branches</b>	<b>Crown Corporations</b>	<b>Control Branches</b>
Aircraft Production	Aero Timber Products	Aircraft
Ammunition Production	Allied War Supplies Corporation	Chemicals
Army Engineering Design	Atlas Plant Extension Ltd	Coal
Arsenals & Small Arms Ammunition	Citadel Merchandizing Ltd	Comptroller
Automotive and Tank	Cutting Tools and Gauges Ltd	Construction
Chemicals and Explosives	Defence Communications Ltd.	Electric Power
Defense Projects Construction	Eldorado Mining and Refining (1944) Ltd.	Machine Tools
General Purchasing	Fairmont Company Ltd	Metals
Naval Armament & Equipment	Federal Aircraft Ltd	Motor Vehicles
Gun Production	Machinery Services Ltd	Oils
Munitions Contracts	Melbourne Merchandizing Ltd	Petroleum Reserves

Naval Shipbuilding	National Railway Munitions Ltd	Rubber
Priorities	North West Purchasing Ltd	Ship Repair
Scrap Disposal	Park Steamships Ltd	
Signals Production	Plateau Company Ltd	Steel
United States Purchases	Polymer Corporation	Supplies
	Quebec Shipyards Ltd	Timber
	Research Enterprises Ltd	Transit
	Small Arms Ltd	Transport
	Toronto Shipbuilding Ltd	Wartime Administrator Canadian Atlantic Ports
	Turbo Research Ltd	
	Veneer Log Supply Ltd	
	Victory Aircraft Ltd	
	War Supplies Ltd	
	Wartime Housing Ltd	
	Wartime Metals Corporation	
	Wartime Oils Ltd	
	Wartime Merchant Shipping Ltd	

This exhibit displays the postal history associated with some of these activities and is organized around the Administrative, Control and Production Branches. **The shaded boxes are represented in this exhibit. Also, as the material shown did not come with their contents there is the potential for it to be relevant to an area of control or production other than the one chosen by the Exhibitor. As an example a DMS cover addressed Canadian Pacific Airways could have contents related to either aircraft production or aircraft control.**

#### Exhibit Outline

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- Section 1. Establishing the Department of Munitions and Supply
- Section 2. Corporate Services
- Section 3. Control Functions
- Section 4. Production Productions
- Section 6. Legacy

The relevance of the first Canadian International Trade Fair of 1948 stems directly from the wartime activities of the private sector companies supported, and the crown corporations created, by the Department of Munitions and Supply. Through the Department Canada had entered the industrial age. The first World Trade Fair in 1948 began the Government's attempt

to market Canadian manufactured goods to the rest of the world; goods made possible by the enhanced manufacturing capacity created during WW2.

#### Sources

- History of the Department of Munitions and Supply, Canada in the Second World War; Volumes 1 (Production Branches and Crown Corporations) and Volume 2 (Controls) . John De Navarre Kennedy O.B.E., K.C. Volume. Kennedy was the Director General of the Department's Legal Branch for the duration of the War.
- Deadly Allies, Canada's Secret War 1937-1947; John Bryden. McClland and Stewart Inc, 1989

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