

Edmonton Numismatic Society

October 2002

Volume 49 Issue 8



DATE: Wed. Oct. 9, 2002 **TIME:** 7:00 p.m. door opens, 7:30

Meeting

PLACE: PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA, 12845 - 102 Ave.,

(Use Archives entrance to Main Floor Lecture Rm. P138)

PROGRAM: World Coin Talk, Fall AUCTION, Show & Tell

2002 Executive

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PROGRAM / LIBRARY

ARCHIVES

Dan Gosling

NEWSLETTER

Michael Schneider

ANNUAL DUES

Family \$12, Reg. \$10

Junior \$3 (16 & under)

ENS is a member of:

Canadian Numismatic Assoc.
American Numismatic Assoc.

Canadian Association of
Token Collectors

Canadian Association of
Wooden Money Collectors

Canadian Paper Money Society

Classical & Medieval
Numismatic Society

OCTOBER MEETING AGENDA

October's meeting will see the meeting back to the regular schedule. Our October Guest speaker is James Kindrake. James is highly knowledgeable in World Coinage, and will present another great talk on his specialty of World Coinage. At time of this writing, the specific topic is not known, but be assured of an interesting and insightful presentation. James has been to most of the countries he talks about, many more than once and always puts on a great show. In addition we will have our fall Auction. See the listing in this newsletter. As always, Show & Tell items from the members are always welcome and encouraged. See you at the meeting!

**One more dealer &
"Kids-on-Coins" display
squeezed into the Nov.
Show!**

**Get your advance tickets
to the show at the
Meeting**

mously approved, however someone is needed to spearhead the research and writing of the information. Dan polled those in attendance who were able to see the "Money" display the museum had over the summer. He also thanked Jules for donating 4 books to the club Library. Michael indicated ticket books are available for pre-sales for the November show, and several

members signed up for the books. They will also be available to sell at October's meeting, in addition to flyers which will be available. Dan asked for Show & Tell talks, and Maurice Doll, Museum Curator thanked those members who donated time and material to the summer

display. The show was a great success. Some members providing display material, foreign coins to give away and volunteer time were: Ray N., Terry C., John C., James K., Ron D., and Dan G. The next show in October is entitled "Rome" and will have some ancient coinage on display. Ray then stood up and gave a short talk on a "Roman Bread" gold statue he had acquired, along with 2 gold medallions containing 12 oz. of pure gold, each valued in the \$2500 range. The first was a Columbus 1987 medallion with only 20 minted. The second was a World Columbus Exhibition medal dated 1893. In addition, he showed the members a "shrunk" 1954 \$1 note, in

SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Forty (40) members and guests packed the house at the September meeting. Dan swears it was his charisma, but the Free Pizza probably had something to do with it. Late comers were out of luck as everyone came hungry and anxious to get back into the collecting mode. Dan welcomed all back after the summer break, and introduced a few guests and new members in attendance. Members were asked if we should pursue preparing a history of the club, similar to what Calgary has done. This was unani-

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WEB PAGE: <http://www.edmontoncoinclub.com> Recently Changed to a Domain Name!

Minutes of June Meeting Con't

perfect proportions, about 30% smaller than a normal note. David P. described the Mint Reception held at the Museum. Ron D. & Dan G. were volunteers for this event which saw about 1500 attend to commemorate the issuance of the new Victoria 50 Cent piece. Bob Ericksson then gave an overview of the CNA convention, which was held in a great venue in Vancouver. The VNS and NSNS were co-hosts and put on a great show for the delegates and guests. The Auction was highly publicized and broke Canadian records for gross sales totaling over \$1.1M. The Mint Reception included a talk by master of the Mint, Danielle Wetherupe. She talked about Non-circulating Legal Tender coinage and noted the Numismatics department of the Mint was the only one which showed a profit last year. The Club Delegates breakfast was disappointing again, with only 20 in attendance, including 4 CNA executive and 6 US guests. The discussion was good with the general consensus being Clubs need more help from its members. Too few run the show and succession is a problem. The Bourse was fairly well attended with about 300 attending each day Friday and Saturday, and 150 or so Sunday. Total was about 750. It's interesting to note our Club shows have that attendance over a 2 day period. The Banquet and reception were well attended, with the main theme being a tribute to the late Executive Director, Ken Prophet. Bob thanked the club for the honorarium for the registration. The next CNA will be the 50th anniversary in Windsor.

Albert Meyer then gave his accounting of his trip to the ANA, with Jack Jensen of West Edmonton Coin & Stamp. The ANA was in New York, where they visited 'Ground Zero'. It was quite an emotional experience. They stayed at the Marriotte Marquis downtown beside Times Square. The hotel room was \$349 US/night, and was the special convention rate. Two coin clubs organized the show, which has no admission charge. The cost is totally borne by the dealer table rentals, which had a smaller than usual show with only 300 dealers in one room, and 20 Mints represented. The US postal service was even set up to ship and receive mail. All in all it was a great experience. Following the talks, a 45 minute video was shown on "Cut Coins - Coinage of the American frontier". Following the meeting, several members met at the Boston Pizza to continue numismatic discussions. Several door prizes were won as follows: 1974 Nickel \$- Maurice Doll; 1976 Isle of Man Crown- Jay Charland; 10 Diff. Half pennies-Dieter Link; 1909 Russian Note - John Zwickstra; Grab bag of 30 can cents each - John Callaghan & Ken Goodwin; Magnifying Glass - Greg Wichman; RCM VHS Video- Marvin Berger.

NOVEMBER SHOW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help set up Friday night before the show, as well as man the table Saturday and Sunday. We have a few volunteers already but could use a few more. Please contact Michael at 496-6602 (day) and 450-0155 after 6:00 pm if you can help out.

FALL AUCTION LOTS

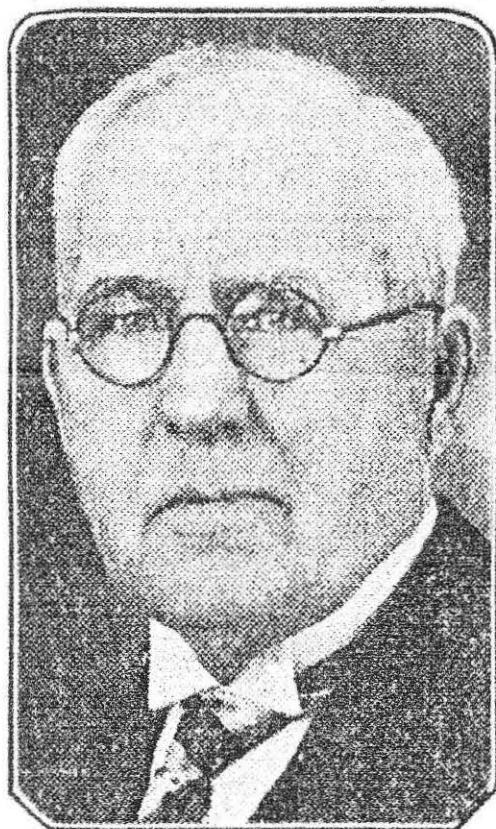
- 1) USA 25 cents, 1905/1929/1964, CV \$8.50
 - 2) USA 25 cents Washington quarters (6), CV \$8.00
 - 3) USA 10 cents, 1887/1920/1912/1959/1996, CV\$21.00
 - 4) USA 1 cent—50 cents, 20th century, CV \$12.00
 - 5) USA 1 cent—50 cents, 20th century, CV \$8.00
 - 6) Canada 10 cents, 1918/1944/1959/1999, CV \$6.00
 - 7) Canada 25 cents, 1919/1952/1965/1990, CV \$8.00
 - 8) USA 1 cent—50 cents, Barber var. years, CV \$25.00
 - 9) West Pakistan, Mint Set (3) 1961, CV \$4.50
 - 10) Pakistan, Coin Set (6), 1948-1961, CV \$11.85
 - 11) Pakistan, Mint Set (7), 1948, Unc, CV \$13.15
 - 12) Iran (Persia), Mint Set 1-10 Rial, 1963, CV \$24.00
 - 13) United Nations Sterling silver medal, 1970 Silver Value \$6.00
 - 14) Australia, Mint Set (6), 1972, CV \$37.50
 - 15) USA 25 cents, 1942/1953/1964, CV \$8.00
 - 16) 1 large jar of Can. 1 cent to 50 Cent coins, King George, \$19 face value
 - 17) 1 separated Toownie
- ... and many more !

COMING EVENTS

Oct. 26 & 27
Nov. 9 & 10

Torex, Novotel Downtown, Toronto. For info contact Brian at 416-861-9523
ENS Fall Money Show, Coast Terrace Inn, Edmonton

Do you know this famous Albertan?



This Red Deer resident's collection was one of the best in western Canada. He joined the A.N.A. in 1913 and was a frequent contributor to the Numismatist from 1914 to 1927. He is best known for his study and research in the Ships Colonies and Commerce tokens and his classification of the varieties of this series is still the standard reference work today.

For more information and the answer see p.9

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE "DEVINS & BOLTON" COUNTERSTAMPS.

Of all the private counterstampers of coins in North America, the Montreal firm of Devins & Bolton stands head and shoulder above the rest in quantity. Pieces over stamped "DEVINS & BOLTON - MONTREAL" were originally issued in huge numbers and even today are not hard to come by as a general type. During the early phase of Canadian numismatics, this counterstamp was little studied although it was noted. Some assembled a collection consisting of as many different undertypes as they could but, having done so, did not pass down the lists, note the die differences or seriously undertake a "population survey". Since they were being issued at precisely the time and place where Canadian numismatics had its genesis, this loss of knowledge is all the more profound.

The earliest writings "of substance" only dates back to the early 1950s. In 1952, J.D. Ferguson noted 82 different in his collection, including a number which we know today to be rare, even extremely so. In the mid-1950s, Maurice Gould, a serious collector of the entire Canadian token series, had assembled an unbroken sequence of over stamped American large cents of every date 1826-56 - and a fair number of others also, including some back to 1793 as well as the counterstamp on U.S. colonial coppers. The best background on this firm was by Warren Baker in "The Canadian Token" (1977): "Devins & Bolton, Chemists and Druggists". Perhaps the standard reference for this series has been two writings by R.F. Buckley appearing in the CNJ: "A Proposal for the Classification of Devins & Bolton Counterstamped Pieces" (CNJ, Feb., 1979) and "Devins & Bolton Counterstamped Pieces Revisited - Addenda and Errata" (CNJ, Jan. and Feb., 1981). A valuable addition was Gregory Brunk's "Canadian Merchant Counterstamps" (CNJ, July/Aug, 1988) which made an attempt at "population figures".

In brief, the partnership of Devins and Bolton existed from 1863 to 1880, their advertisements stating that they were "Wholesale and Retail Druggists and Chemists, Next the Court House, Montreal", a location also known as Apothecaries' Hall, 193 Notre Dame Street. Not only did they carry a large inventory of retail drug products, they were also wholesale agents/distributors for a number of English pharmaceutical companies.

Although R.J. Devins was interviewed by Breton in later years, very little attention was paid to the over stamped issues so that - unasked and certainly unrecorded - we still don't know the time period in which this was carried out. Early collectors were much more interested in the actual bronze(?) business card dated July 1, 1867 in the name of this firm (Br-569). According to Devins, this whole latter episode was a misunderstanding: merely inquiring as to cost through an English intermediary for such a metal card, the project was supposedly shelved when the go-between died. The firm was therefore both surprised and chagrined to have a shipment addressed to them land at Quebec customs. In size and general obverse design much like the Canadian large cent, it was deemed illegal, seized and ordered melted by the authorities. However, as seemed to happen with remarkable regularity, a certain number "fell to the floor". It is still not excessively rare and usually available in the upper conditions. For years afterward, Devins was pestered by collectors for examples even though he declared he had never possessed one - nor did he know many details concerning them, even as to number struck or by whom.

This brings us to the counterstamped pieces which were done merely as a means of advertising, a circulating business card. In Devin's own words: "When I was in business, owing to the numerous and endless oddities of coins (coppers) then in circulation, I punched every one I got hold of with the words "DEVINS & BOLTON - MONTREAL". I kept count up to eighteen hundred dollars, but did not give up stamping, but kept on until I had them about most all labelled".

Although Devins never gave us a solid date for this counterstamping activity, we have two probable parameters: the last dated coin so overstruck was a Swedish 5-ore piece of 1865 and in Warren Baker's opinion, they would probably not have been issued after 1870, the year in which the Canadian government declared only the federal large cents and the "legitimate" tokens (Habitants, Front Views, Quebec Bank and Bank of Upper Canada) as legal tender. However, as an archaeologist would quickly point out, only one thing was proven: at least part of the total issue was struck in 1865 or later.

But with the embarrassing episode of the illegal business cards - something for which they could have been prosecuted, innocent or not - it would seem unlikely that they would have even continued (let alone began) the overstriking of the older coins. The tentative investigation into their own metallic business cards would seem to indicate a desire to improve their "Business image" beyond the issue of crudely-overstruck pieces of indifferent quality.

Therefore, the writer believes that the period of overstriking was (a) obviously after 1863 since that was the start of the partnership, (b) that the overstriking was going on in 1865 or later but (c) not later than mid-1867 when the business card debacle occurred.

During the "period of issue", they appeared in large numbers. Devins' "eighteen hundred dollars" would translate into 180,000 with the halfpennies passing as cents (although some pennies were also overstruck) - and this was only where he lost count or tired of keeping a running total. It is not unreasonable to believe that at least 200,000 copper coins were so overstruck. R.J. Buckley noted that about twenty years ago, these pieces were so frequently met with in New England flea markets that he assembled a collection of some 400 different in about a year. Those days, of course, are past.

From the above, we might assume that these pieces are common; they are not. Brunk chased down every one he could find or heard of in order to do his report on "population breakdown" of them. His score was a total of just 542 pieces, 89.5% of which fell into two categories: overstrapped U.S. large cents (46%) and overstrapped Canadian tokens (43.5%). We might further assume that most of the U.S. cents were of the period 1836-56 (due to size of mintage and proximity of time); by far the commonest Canadian token met with carrying this overstamp is the Habitant halfpenny. All others fell away behind in the sample, ranging from 9 English copper coins down to single pieces for many listings.

The 43.5% "Canadian tokens" included samples from nearly the whole pre-Confederation series, including brass counterfeit "Tiffins" and Blacksmiths, but nearly all these scattered numbers are accounted for today by only a single specimen - or very few. Of course, the Brunk sample is not complete:

several times the "542 pieces" may be in existence, some retained unidentified and many more here and there by numerous collectors who do not report them. Even the extent of the catalogue may be incomplete. Nevertheless, the listing is the best we have.

From it, we can draw some conclusions. In the first place, Devins' own words would have us believe that they over stamped every copper piece they encountered which wasn't a current Canadian large cent; the listing and collectors' experience show this wasn't quite so. Habitant halfpennies were routinely over stamped but later issues may have been assumed "legitimate" and thus mostly passed over even though presumably more common. "Front View" halfpennies of 1842/4 are known so over stamped but distinctly scarce while the 1842 penny is not known at all even though Habitant pennies of all banks are. The Quebec Bank 1852 pennies and halfpennies are known but also scarce. The Bank of Upper Canada series must have been "dirt common" at this time but only the 1850 halfpenny and 1857 penny are recorded over stamped.

The above shows that there was a "skewing" in the choice of coins over stamped and while the sample is a useful "slice in time", whether or not it is truly a representative slice of Montreal's circulating copper currency at the time is another matter. It is on record that some extremely strange birds were circulating here and the countermark proves that a Danish skilling of 1771, Guernsey 4-doubles of 1830, Straits Settlements cent of 1845 and the Swedish 5-ore of 1865 were found in circulation. But: each of them is represented by a single coin; in fact, each of these countries is represented in the sample by these single coins. It would seem that the bulk of the Canadian copper circulation - the large cents aside - consisted of American large cents and tokens of the four "legitimate" series at this time. There were others around - in fact a few were still present in the 1880s - but they must have been heavily outnumbered.

While the Devins & Bolton countermarked coins are, as a whole, reasonably common, they become somewhat scarce - even rare - when sub-divided into their appropriate categories. The major sub-division is that there are two dies used for the countermarking: the "Large Ampersand" and "Small Ampersand" varieties. The first variety is markedly the scarcer of the two and, in turn, is sub-divided into "perfect die" (no missing parts) and "broken N" variety where the N in DEVINS has the final upright missing. The "Small Ampersand" die exists in three states: perfect die; with the crossbar of the "A" in MONTREAL missing (making it appear as an inverted-V); and as last but with the bottom arm of the "E" in MONTREAL also missing so that it appears as an "F". For some time, it was conjectured that there were five different dies but R.F. Buckley went to the trouble of photographing the various die states, enlarging the negatives and comparing them over a light-box. Conclusion: there are but two dies, each progressively breaking down.

Nor do we have any idea which die was used first; the last dated coin recorded - the Swedish 1865 piece noted above - is with "Small Ampersand" but this conclusively proves nothing.

When sub-divided in this way, scarce pieces tend to become even scarcer. So far, there has been no definitive catalogue listing broken down by type, date and die-state although the Buckley listing of 1981 did note those pieces known with "Large Ampersand". However, they may also - and probably do -

exist with the commoner "Small". A case in point is that his listing notes the 1837 Habitant City Bank halfpenny as existing "Large Ampersand"; the writer's collection contains this same coin except as a "Small Ampersand" - "Missing Crossbar-A" variety.

With the two dies comprising a total of five "die states" and the wide variety and dates of coins overstruck, many - if not most - are at least "scarce" when so broken down. In fact, true rarity might be just the inverse: being able to track down two or more with the same variety overstamp on the same type and date.

With an original "mintage" of some 200,000(?) coins, a "wastage" over the years of 99% would still indicate the survival of some 2000 coins today - in all varieties. There may be that many. Even so, it means that the commonest of the overstamps - identical as to undertype, date, die and die-state - probably exist in numbers of no more than two or three dozen with the others ranging in rarity all the way down to "probably unique". With so many of the "Only One Known" pieces institutionalized, a complete collection is out of the question but a widely representative one consisting of a dozen or twenty pieces is entirely within the grasp of most collectors - with persistence and luck being more than half the battle.



Pierre Napoléon Breton (1858-1917)

Breton is a name that is associated with Canadian colonial tokens because of the well known token and coin catalogs. However, the individual after which these catalogs were named is not that well known, even to collectors.

The son of Francois Breton and Victorine Heney, Pierre Napoleon was born in Montreal on June 18th 1858. Like a lot of young Montrealers of this era, he received his elementary education from Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes until the age of 15. At 15, he started working for a banker and broker named Marchand. That's probably where he got interested in numismatics by handling coins and bills. In 1875, he began working in a bookstore, Beauchemin & Valois, and then moved to another one, Cadieux & Derome. In 1879, he married Marie Louise Lafrique. They had 15 children.

In 1889, he started his own business, selling books. He then added a numismatics section. Breton's place became very popular with Montreal numismatists at the beginning of the century. Breton himself was a member of the famed Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Montreal. According to one of his books, Breton's business was located at 1664 Ste-Catherine and then at 215 Ste-Catherine West (probably as a result of a change in street numbers).

His first publication was the little known *Breton's Illustrated Canadian Coins Collector* (1890). He presented 313 pieces over 48 pages with their degrees of rarity. The numbers from 1 to 313 are not, however, the ones associated with Breton's numbers today. The pages of this book are now old and yellowed because of the poor quality of the paper. Later, Breton wrote that he sold 5 000 copies of this book (in 2 editions). This is a very large number even by today's standards in the numismatic world. However, the fact that it is so tough to find this book today can give one doubts about this statement.

In 1894, Breton published his famed *Illustrated History of Coins and Tokens Relating to Canada*. This classic of Canadian numismatics contains more than 248 pages of information on the subject, namely the description and the designs of 513 pieces that are still known today by the numbers Breton gave them. One can also read in this book the biographies of several numismatists of that era like McLachlan and Leroux. This book was printed by the British American Bank Note Co. of Montreal on frosted paper.

*from the author
P. N. Breton
Montreal 12th Feb 1913*

Autographe de P.N. Breton, dans le cadre d'une dédicace d'un volume à un collectionneur de Philadelphie. / Autograph of P.N. Breton in a dedication of his book to a Philadelphia's numismatist.

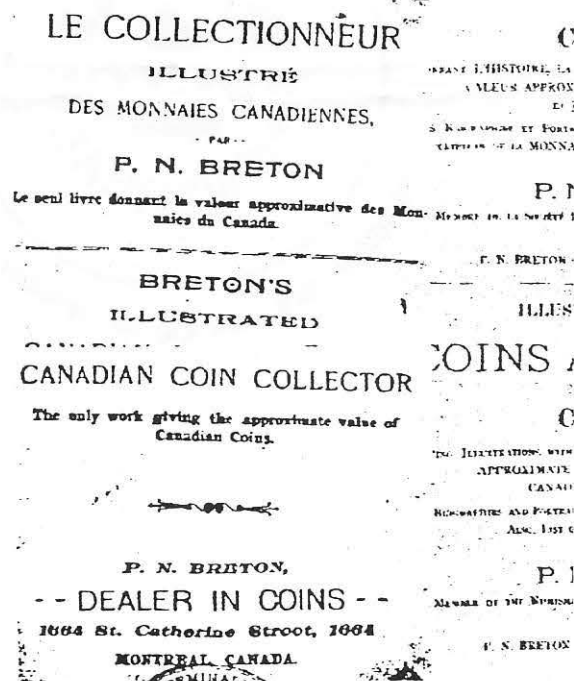


which is still in good condition today. The photographic plates of the numismatists are very good. The costs of production of such a book must have been great.

Several years later, in 1912, Breton published a more commercial-oriented book, *Popular Illustrated Guide to Canadian Coins, Medals, &c.* This catalog has the same pictures as the other

books did but Breton added pictures of medals. Seven hundred and twenty pieces are thus presented: numbers 1 to 207 and 501 to 1013. The texts of the 1894 book cannot be found in *Le guide populaire*, but there is, however, useful information concerning the prices Breton actually paid for the pieces. Unfortunately, since the paper used was not of the highest quality, the copies that we can find today are not in very good condition. The pages are often torn and yellowed. However, reproductions of the 1894 and 1912 editions can be found.

Breton died in November of 1917 in Varennes, but he had already left his mark on Canadian numismatics.



Pages titres des trois ouvrages de Breton, dans l'ordre: 1890, 1894 historiques sur la monnaie canadienne. / Title pages of Breton's

Retires at 75



Judge Dickson Lees, long on the bench of Wetaskiwin's district court, who celebrated his 75th birthday Monday and automatically retired. He has been a member of the Alberta judiciary for 25 years.

Judge Lees, at 75, Steps From Bench

Wetaskiwin District Court Loses Veteran Member

1934 of Judiciary *Edm.*
(Special to The Journal)

WETASKIWIN, Aug. 27.—Dickson Lees, judge of the district court for Wetaskiwin, completed 25 years of judicial service and was automatically retired on his 75th birthday which he reached Monday.

Judge Lees has enjoyed the esteem and high confidence of both the legal profession and the people at large. He was particularly fitted to preside in courts among farming communities for his interests were engaged in agricultural pursuits which he followed in a practical way on his model farm at Camrose.

Lawyers who have practiced in his court for more than 20 years cannot recall a single occasion on which the judge was not on the bench at the appointed time.

Judge Lees was a successful farmer and out of this occasion he experienced two great thrills, the first when he obtained \$1.40 a bushel for a heavy crop of wheat and the second when he had 60 hogs graded "select," when select hogs were not so common as they are today.

Among the judge's extra legal accomplishments is his carpentry which enabled him to construct with his own hands a cottage at Pigeon lake. He also is interested in rare coins and his collection is one of the finest in the west. He is an authority on the habits of the bird life of the province, and he is widely-read whose place among the judiciary will be difficult to fill.

Judge Lees was born in Ottawa August 27, 1859, the son of Robert Lees, K.C., crown attorney and clerk of Carlton county, Ontario, and Jessie Dickson, daughter of the sheriff of the Bathurst district, Ontario.

Educated at Ottawa Collegiate Institute and Toronto university, he studied law with Lees and Gimmet, Ottawa, and was called to the bar in 1893. For two years he was acting crown attorney. Soon after being called he married Elizabeth Turnbull of Russell, Ontario.

He came to Alberta in 1904 and practiced law at Fort Saskatchewan alone and in association with W. M. Corbett until 1909. After being crown prosecutor for the Victoria district for four years Judge Lees removed to Red Deer on his appointment until 1918, when he purchased his farm at Camrose and took up residence there.

Judge Lees was a member of the Queen's Own Rifles regiment and was a captain in the Forty-Third Rifles from 1880 to '85. The judge's only daughter married Captain W. M. Beatty of Winnipeg.

EDMONTON'S MONEY SHOWS



November 9-10, 2002

*The Coast Terrace Inn, 4440 Gateway
Boulevard, Edmonton, Alberta*



Coin & Stamp Show Hours:

Saturday - 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Sunday - 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



*Up to 28 coin & stamp dealers at 50 tables with millions of
dollars in inventory! Displays for public viewing including
Canadian Decimal Coinage, Ancients, Paper Money and More!*

GOLD COIN AND OTHER DOOR PRIZE DRAWS!

The following Dealers are confirmed for the November show:

1. National Pride Coins & Stamp; 2. Loose Change, St. Michael; 3. Classic Cash, Sylvan Lake; 4. West Edmonton Coin & Stamp; 5. Collins Coins, Sherwood Park; 6. Canada Coin & Paper Money Abbotsford, BC; 7. R.D. Miner Philatelics, Calgary; 8. Royal William Stamps; 9. Pack Rats Antiques Coins & Stamps, Morrinville; 10. OK Coin & Stamp, Kelowna, BC; 11. Joe Bardy Coins Edm.; 12. Kensington Coin & Stamp Edm.; 13. Lub Wojtiw Paper Money Edm.; 14. Calgary Coin Gallery, Calgary; 15. Diverse Equities, Calgary; 16. Lucky Dollar Coins, Edm.; 17. Kameron Coins, Edm.; 18. M.J. Daniels, Calgary; 19. Charles D. Moore, California; 19A. Newcan Coins, Cards & Collectibles, Kenora, Ont.; 20. Michael Walsh, Vancouver; 21. Ed Jackson Coins, Edm.; 22. Dan Vettors Paper Money, Edm.; 23. Ed & Norms Coins, Edm.; 24. Michael Riddell Coins & Stamps, Edm.; 25. J. Garvey & Sons Stamps, Edm.; 26. George Manz Coins, Regina; Lorne Paydli, Bruno, Saskatchewan



**Admission \$1.00/day in advance, \$2.00/day at the Door
16 & under FREE!**

Join us for Edmonton's Premiere Coin & Stamp Show of the Year!



Sponsored by the Edmonton Numismatic Society

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