

Queen's Park steps up AIDS action

by
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MPP
Simcoe East
Acquired immune

deficiency syndrome, or
AIDS, has been in the
headlines throughout
the summer months.
With the renewed

publicity and interest in
this disease, the Liberal
Government is
following up on action
initiated by previous

Progressive Conserv-
ative governments.

In June 1983, the
Ministry of Health
established a provincial
advisory committee on
AIDS to monitor the
disease in Ontario, to
advise doctors and to
help the Ministry
establish priorities for
research.

Since then a total of
\$700,000 has been made
available to support
AIDS research. The
University of Toronto is
conducting a
comprehensive study on
AIDS, and work is also
being conducted at
Toronto's Hospital for
Sick Children and the
University of Western
Ontario, in London.

Following up on this
research and advisory
program, the Liberal
Government has
announced it will donate
\$1 million to the
Canadian Red Cross to
start a nation-wide
blood screening and
testing program to
ensure no blood
containing the AIDS
disease is used in
transfusions.

This Red Cross
program is being
developed with the help
of the Ontario advisory
committee on AIDS, as
well as national
committees, the
Canadian Blood
Committee and the
Laboratory Centre for
Disease Control in

Ontario.

This fall, the Ministry
of Health's central
laboratory in Etobicoke
will begin testing
suspected AIDS cases.
It is expected that the
cost for starting this
service will be in the
neighbourhood of
\$200,000.

Once this service is in
operation, doctors from
across Ontario can send
specimens from
suspected AIDS cases
for expert analysis at
the Ministry laboratory.

This service will be
insured by OHIP and
will supplement testing
that has gone on at the
Ottawa Laboratory
Centre for Disease
Control.

I am pleased to see
the new Liberal
Government following
up on action to curb the
spread of AIDS. But
more must be done to
properly educate the
public about this
disease. In addition,
support must be given to
those suffering from
AIDS but still capable of
leading an active
community life.

It is my hope the new
Minister of Health, the
Hon. Murray Elston,
will ensure that the
people of Ontario are
kept fully and
accurately informed
about AIDS. The public
needs, and deserves, to
know more about this
disease.

Cape Triangular Stamp is root of dealer's success story

by
LARRY MCINNIS

A single stamp design
issued between 1853 and
1863 is credited with
being the success story
behind one of the largest
stamp dealers in the
world -- Stanley
Gibbons. It's the Cape
Triangular.

As the name would
imply, it's a triangular
stamp, the world's first,
issued in 1853 for the
British colony of Cap of
Good Hope, which is
now part of South
Africa.

(For the trivia-
minded, the first stamp
in the world picturing
the founder of the Boy
Scout movement,
Robert Baden-Powell,
was issued there April 9,
1900, although he was a
military officer at the
time.)

Back to the Cape
Triangular, and back to
a young man who was
one of the earliest to be
so bitten by the stamp
bug that he wanted to
make it his life's work.

Stanley Edward
Gibbons was born in
1840, the year of the
world's first adhesive
postage stamp, now
known as the Penny
Black. By the age of 14,
he had a stamp
collection.

Gibbons was the son
of a chemist, which we
now call a druggist.
Between 1854 and 1859,
he was dealing in
stamps from a small
portion of his father's
store in Plymouth, and
in 1859 business had
expanded so much he
had a room above the
store, and had hired an
employee.

This was less than two
decades after the first
stamp, but still a few
years away from his
windfall.

Between 1859 and
1863, following his
father's death, Gibbons's
stamp business became
greater than the drug
store business, so he
sold the latter to become
a fulltime stamp dealer.

The magic happened
in 1863, as legend has it.

One day two sailors
entered his Treville St.
store in Plymouth and
dumped a duffle bag of
stamps onto the table.

They said they had
been on shore leave in
Cape Town when they
went to a party. They
won the bag of stamps in
a raffle.

It boggles the mind to
picture two British
sailors ashore in Cape
Town being at an event
that offered postage
stamps as a raffle prize,
but that's the story.

It's even more mind-
boggling to consider
these sailor taking their
prize aboard ship,
protecting it carefully
all the way back to the
British seaport of

Plymouth -- but they
did.

Gibbons offered them
the equivalent of \$25
about \$10 today, but no
doubt a princely sum at
the time.

The stamps that were
so cheap then -- and
Gibbons was selling
them by the gross
(that's 144, folks) for
pennies -- are not so
cheap now.

A one-penny red
issued in 1861
catalogues at \$12,000
unused and \$3,250 used
(Scott No. 7). There's
even an error, in a four-
penny red (Scott No. 9b)
that catalogues at
\$100,000.

Gibbons business,
spurred by the Cape
Triangulars increased
so much that he moved
to Clapham, near
London. Even that
wasn't enough -- he soon
moved to Tower St. in
London.

Gibbons retired in
1890 when he sold the
firm to Charles J.
Phillips for the
equivalent of \$125,000 --
real big bucks at the
time.

The firm went on to
become the world's
largest stamp dealing
firm, a claim still made,
but perhaps not
accurate. Stanley
Gibbons has had a
number of owners since
Phillips, but its troubles
began in 1979 when it
was sold to the firm that
sells Letraset, the
wunderkind do-it-
yourself graphics
material.

This is not a stamp
column, not a big-
business column. It
didn't work.

Letraset sold Gibbons
to a Swedish firm, which
then sold it to a group of
people who had worked
for Gibbons and went
out and raised the funds
to make it British-
owned again.

Later, there was a
short-lived move by a
philatelic entrepreneur
to take over the
venerable firm and
make it an agent for the
many spurious issues so
many former British
colonies put out, not to
mention issues for
places that have no
right to issue, such as
the Scottish islands of
Staffa, Bernera, and
more.

It didn't work.
Gibbons is getting
back on track and is
striving to regain
collector confidence.

Guess What? Gibbons
is currently selling Cape
Triangulars in a
promotion to renew
interest in the firm.
(Write Stanley Gibbons
International Limited,
399 Strand, London
W6R 0LX)

I doubt if they're
selling the stamps from
the bag Stanley Gibbons

had dumped on his table
so long ago.

LETTERS

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