

Shopper tokens - an early Canadian example.

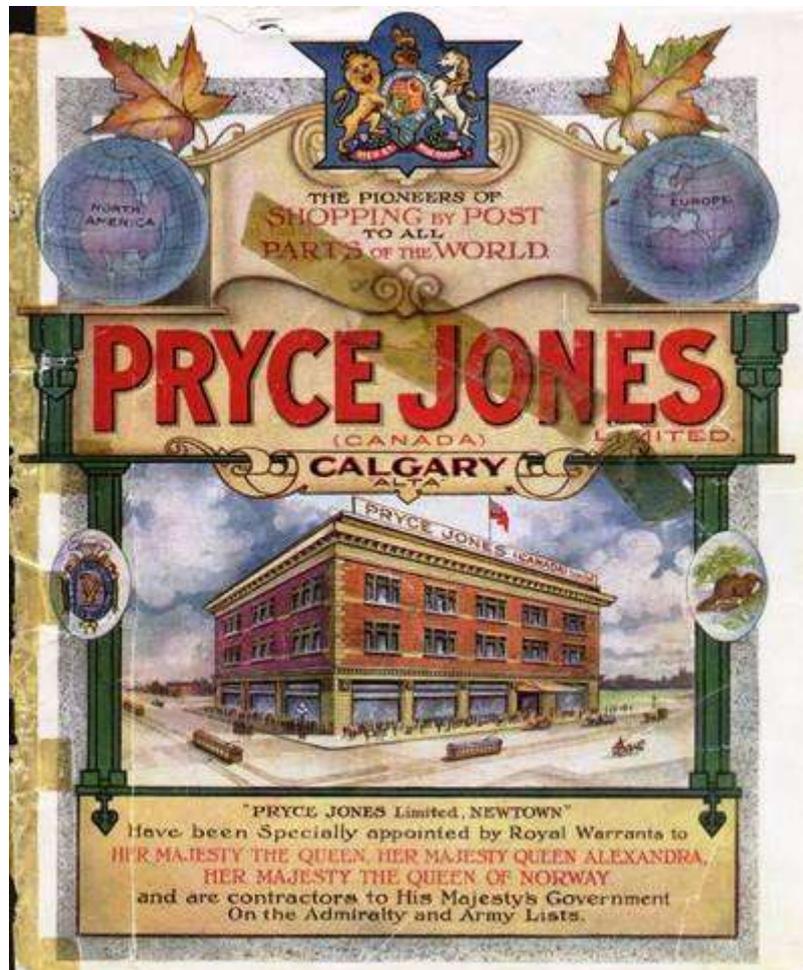
Some of us remember Green Shield Stamps, first developed in 1896 and running until the 1960s, and many of us now own a loyalty shopping card, or perhaps several. Around 1900 seems to have been the time when labels, tickets and stamps became popular, at least in America, as a means of giving customers a small reward for their purchases. The trend has continued to this day.

The Textile Museum has two tokens, examples of this idea. Produced by the Pryce Jones department store in Calgary, Canada, each token offered \$1.00 on any purchase of \$10.00 or more for cash, a generous discount of 3%. No doubt the aim of these tokens, in this case in particular, was to encourage trade both in the shop and by mail order as their mission was to offer a Metropolitan Store in the 'fenceless prairies of the west'.



The Calgary branch of the famous mail-order company in Newtown was first mooted in June 1910 when Albert Pryce Jones, son of the founder of the Royal Welsh Warehouse in Newtown, visited the area. By February 14, 1911 the three-storey building with 100 employees had opened for business. Its success spurred competition from the Hudson's Bay Company who also built a big new store in the area which opened in

1913, but there was not room for two such shops with a limited customer base.



The shop was open six days a week – ‘an elegant emporium chock full of fine merchandise’. Newspaper articles detailed the layout, floor by floor, (many equivalent department stores still have a similar plan), and ‘the crowning glory was the Royal Welsh Tea room, furnished in the Mission style, where an orchestra played’.

Along with the parent store in Newtown, the shop won medals for best merchandise displays in Alberta in 1911, and then in the Canadian category the following year, but strong emphasis was also placed on the mail-order business with coloured lithograph images in the 176-page catalogue.

Circumstances changed however, competition from the new Hudson’s Bay store, the economic fall-out from WW1, and the absence of its

managing director when Albert Pryce-Jones left to go to war with the Lethbridge Highlanders in 1916, proved too much and the doors were closed for good.

Albert Pryce-Jones had taken his father's entrepreneurial spirit to the distant prairies of Alberta. The building still stands in Calgary but little else remains of this courageous venture.

For more information, check out these links.

<http://tinyurl.com/h5olk6x>

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat2410e.html>

https://www.horizon-custom-homes.com/Mission_Furniture.html