

The Charity Stamps of Holland

By F. A. HOFMANN

Conditions Governing Their Issue

The P.T.T. administration has been issuing special postage stamps since 1906. During this time a certain amount of experience has been gained in the matter, and it will not be devoid of interest to set out the conditions under which these stamps are issued and some of the measures connected therewith.

Special postage stamps with surcharge are only issued if they are of general interest. Special stamps without surcharge are, however, issued whenever there is some important national event or one of the great figures who have played a leading part in Dutch history to commemorate.

Numerous are the requests for special issues of postage stamps. They come from Unions, Institutions, groups of private persons, etc., and have often very lofty aims. It would, however, not be wise to exaggerate in this respect, as it would entail too great expense for philatelists, and besides that, damage the good reputation of the Dutch P.T.T. administration. It has thus been necessary to refuse many demands and to limit the issues to a strict minimum. This restriction is dictated on the one hand by the interest of collectors, and on the other hand by that of a group of purchasers who are not philatelists, but who seek to benefit the object for the good of which the special stamps are sold. A line of conduct has consequently been adopted, in virtue of which the issue of special stamps with surcharge shall be limited to two a year, one in summer called "Zomerpostzegels (summer stamps) and one at Christmas, the "weldadigheidspostzegels" (philanthropic stamps or "Kinderpostzegels" (children's stamps) the sale of

stamps instead. As the profits are always devoted to national undertakings and such as interest everybody, it has been found that the postal officers gladly lend their help. Their zeal is stimulated too by the fact that the P.T.T. Aid funds (Children's fund and Personnel fund) share in the profits.

(b) The P.T.T. Publicity service supplies the daily press, Dutch philatelic periodicals and a number of philatelists in the Netherlands and abroad with full information concerning and photographs of the special stamps. The publicity helps to make the stamps known among the public, and induces them to buy, and the information given to philatelists, which is by the way greatly appreciated, is also an incentive to purchase.

(c) Wireless broadcasting is also used as a means of propaganda. At every new issue some competent authority, frequently a Minister, recommends the stamps by radio and explains the end in view.

(d) The P.T.T. administration invites the best artists to present designs for the stamps, in the execution of which the greatest care is taken so that they meet the most exacting demands.

(e) Advertising posters brought out by the central organising committee are put up in the post offices with the approval of the P.T.T. administration, and appear now and again on the letter-boxes during the time the stamps are on sale.

(f) While the stamps are on sale, the cancelling machines for obliterating the stamps on correspondence use from time to time an appropriate date-stamp with a slogan recommending the public to

(g) The Directors of the post offices may give permission to the sub-committees that organise the movement to place a small table or a tiny kiosk in the public part of the post office, at which persons deputed by the committee sell the stamps. The responsible persons must see to it that no damage is thereby done to the premises and that the service is in no way impeded. In order to guard against disfigurement the P.T.T. administration has itself had a number of kiosks made which it lets to the local committees for a small sum.

(h) The Administration supplies the local committees, on credit, with the special surcharged stamps which are to be sold through the agency of their members. This sale takes place as indicated under (g) or from house to house by persons who volunteer their services. When the fixed period of sale is closed, the unsold stamps and the produce of the sale are given over to the postmasters.

(i) During the period the surcharged stamps are on sale, the senders of non-periodical articles paid in money may demand that the postage of these packets be paid and represented in these special stamps. The total value of the postage paid in these stamps must correspond to the postage due on the same. The stamps are stuck on the back of a special form and the clerk apposes the date-stamp no each one.

(j) Committees, institutions, etc., and even broadcasting companies frequently organise charade and puzzle and other competitions. The participators who send their replies to the committee by postcard or in an envelope franked with ordinary or special stamps, take part in a lottery. The essential condition, is however, that all the replies be overpaid to a minimum amount fixed beforehand, for instance 25 cents (Dutch). The Organising committee sends all the cards and envelopes to the P.T.T. direction-general, where the overcharge represented thereon is reckoned. This sum, less the cost of administration (one Dutch

florin per 1,000 cards or envelopes) is then handed to the Committee. Furthermore the P.T.T. administration sells the parts of these postcards and envelopes covered with stamps at the ordinary public postage stamp auctions. The produce of this sale is likewise handed to the Committee.

The so-called "summer" stamps bear the portraits of distinguished Dutch persons. In view of the fact that the profits from the sale of these stamps is devoted to social enterprises and institutes for intellectual development, the portraits on these stamps always represent persons who have gained celebrity in one or other of these domains. The Summer stamps for 1937 represented, that for 1½ cents (Dutch) the portraits of the celebrated Dutch painter Jacob Maris, that for 6 cents that of the great Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel. Both these men had a great influence on the intellectual and artistic life in Holland, and well deserve to be represented on two stamps.

The 5 cent and 12½ cent stamps bear respectively the portraits of Professor De Boe Sylvius, a celebrated Dutch physician of the 17th century, and of Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek, well known for his microscopic research work. These two stamps intend to recall a social work, honour the memory of two distinguished persons.

The philanthropic stamps, the surcharge on which is devoted to child welfare, have symbolic designs recalling the object in view. The last issues of these stamps show, for all four denominations, a cherub blowing a trumpet and appealing for charity in favour of poor children.

Up to now the summer stamps and the philanthropic stamps have been issued in four denominations, viz.

1½ cents (Dutch) (rate for single postage on a printed packet in the inland service);

5 cents (a single postcard rate in the inland service);

6 cents (single letter rate in

which includes the Christmas festival, has doubtless something to do with the excellent results obtained. The gross profits from the sale of these stamps since 1932 was in round figures as follows:

1932 fl.	129,000	(Dutch)
1933 fl.	127,000	(Dutch)
1934 fl.	121,000	(Dutch)
1935 fl.	128,000	(Dutch)
1936 fl.	143,000	(Dutch)

The total amount is handed over to the institutions in favour of which the sale is organised, after allowing for expenses which include cost of printing, artists' fees, and donations to the Funds of the P.T.T. personnel.

The pecuniary needs of the institutions, organisations, etc., that participate in the profits of these sales being always great, the receipts are without exception greatly appreciated. This is particularly the case at the present time when the Government has had to cut down expenses, a measure which has involved a considerable diminution, and in some cases an entire cessation, of its subsidies to these institutions.

Philatelists thoroughly appreciate these special stamps which satisfy every taste. As we have said, the issues are limited to a minimum. This being the case philatelists have never yet complained of too-frequent issues.

We may say in closing that the issue of special stamps without surcharge is an excellent means for honouring the memory of great men and the great events in the history of a nation. As regards the special surcharged stamps it is an acknowledged fact that they have become a popular and indispensable means of obtaining relatively large sums from the public with little difficulty. People generally comprehend the importance of the good works better when they are asked to support them by means of postage stamps instead of by rates and taxes. By engaging the young people, too, to take an interest in social work, etc., these special stamps are un-

nightly.

rate).

These stamps were sold with a surcharge of respectively 1½ cents, 3 cents, 4 cents, and 3½ cents, i.e. at 3, 8, 10, and 16 cents. The inland postage rates on postcards and letters having been reduced on September 1st, 1937, the summer and the philanthropic stamps will henceforth be issued in five denominations, viz. 1½, 3, 4, 5, and 12½ cents.

The validity of the early editions of special stamps was as a rule not limited. Experience, however, has shown that this has its disadvantages, the increasing number of valid stamps making it very difficult for the postal officers to exercise a control over those that are valid and those that are not. To mitigate this difficulty it was decided to limit the validity of the surcharged stamps to five years, and, to prevent any subsequent complaints, the date of expiration is now given on the stamps themselves. It has been decided likewise that the special stamps without surcharge shall be valid for about six months.

The Administration has all the unsold stamps destroyed on the expiration of their validity. Subsequent requests on the part of postage stamp dealers to cede to them the unsold stock, even if the stamps were obliterated, are never taken into account. This manner of acting is much appreciated by philatelists as it limits the number of stamps on the market.

The summer stamps issued since 1935 have each year been favourably received. They are bought by all classes of society; for the surcharge being very small, the most modest purse can contribute towards promoting a social work of such importance. The gross profits of the sales since 1935 were, in round figures:

1935, fl.	86,000	(Dutch)
1936, fl.	85,000	(Dutch)
1937, fl.	86,000	(Dutch)

mer stamps applies even more What has been said of the sum-

forcibly to the philanthropic stamps, which every year enjoy great popularity.

The time and validity of issue,