

NETHERLANDS PHILATELISTS of
CALIFORNIA
(now in its 50th year)

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May-June 2019

Since no meeting is scheduled for May-June this edition will contain only four pages.

Dutch Tax on Playing Cards during the 1920s.

by Hans Kremer

During the indexing of all the cancels printed off in the *Rijksmunt stempelboeken* (Royal Mint's Books of Cancels) I came across some unfamiliar cancels. They were printed off in the book of early March 1920, and they contained the word "*Speelkaartenbelasting*" (Playing Card Tax) and showed denominations of 25 C and 50 C. An additional one digit number, varying from 1 thru 8, could also be seen at the lower left.



Figure 1. Examples of the two Dutch playing card tax markers.

After a bit of 'Googling' I found out that these (metal) markers were used to indicate that the playing cards tax of 25 or 50 cent had been paid. The two are similar, except the 25 cent has an undulating circle, while the 50 cent has a smooth one.



Figure 2. 50 cent # 6, Playing card tax marker.

The eight numbers were assigned as follows:

1. Amsterdam, 2. s-Gravenhage, 3. Haarlem, 4. Oldenzaal, 5. Roosendaal, 6. Rotterdam, 7. Utrecht, and 8. Venlo-station.

Decks of cards of 32 cards were assessed 25 cent, while decks with more than 32 cards were due 50 cent tax. 32 card decks (7 thru 10, J, Q, K, and Ace) were often used in Northern Germany.

The marker was applied to the Ace of Hearts. The tax became effective on May 1, 1920.

As with most taxes some people tried to get away with not paying these taxes at all; however, the most common way of avoiding this tax was illegally bringing in decks of cards from Belgium. The border between the Netherlands and Belgium offered many crossings where control was 'less than optimum'. Due to the large number of illegal decks not many legal decks were sold anymore.

The tax was done away with as of April 1, 1927. By that time the government had calculated that it cost more to collect the tax than the income it generated. A cartoon shows the Prime Minister/Minister of Finance (de Geer)(R) telling the previous Prime Minister (Colijn)(L) that the playing card tax had crumbled like a deck of cards.

References:

Rijksmunt stempelboek 1919-1921.

Staatsblad, April 6, 1920.

Cartoon from the "*De Groene Amsterdammer*", July 24, 1926.

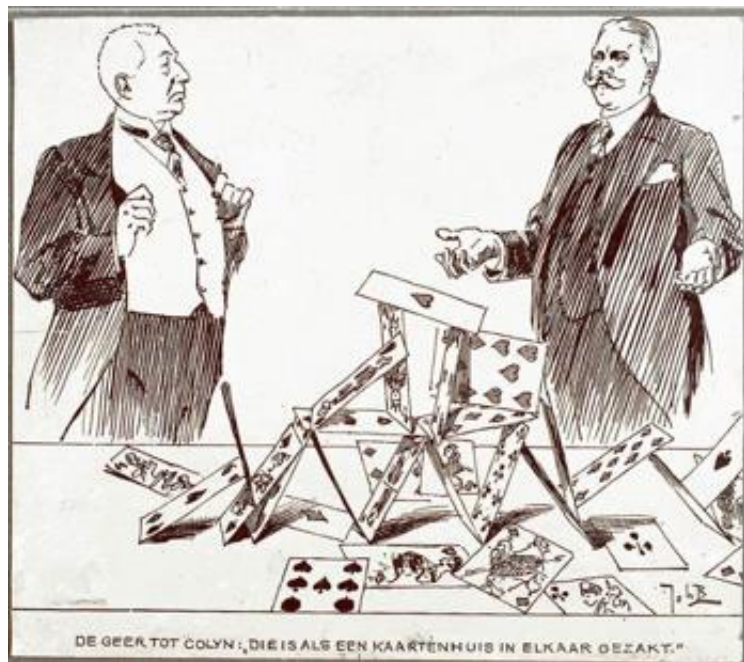


Figure 3. De Geer to Colijn: The playing card tax has crumbled like a stack of cards.

A somewhat unusual message to a person's parents.

by Hans Kremer

The picture postcard shown here was sent in 1915 from Batavia (Dutch East Indies) to The Hague (in The Netherlands). It was addressed to J.A. Barnard/Rijtuigschilder (=painter of carriages)/ Brandstraat 20 / Den Haag.



Looking at the number of *besteller-stempels* =mailmen delivery markers (=D 319, etc.) at least six attempts to deliver the postcard were made. They ended up finding out that Mr. Barnard no longer lived in the Brandstraat.

Picture Postcard sent in 1915 from Batavia to The Hague.

At the top of the card in script is the “*Vertrokken zonder adres uit de Brandstraat*” marker (=Departed the Brandstraat without leaving an address). Since none of the queried postal employees seemed to know where Mr. Barnard had moved to, standard procedure was to hand the card over to the Civil Registration office, in this case in The Hague.

Sure enough, based on investigation by the Bureau of Civil Registration, lower left in purple ink, “*Volgens informatie Bur. Bevolking den Haag*” (=According to information from the Bureau of Civil Registration) Mr. Barnard was tracked down at Boylestraat 6, in red script. I assume the card was delivered there.



When one reads the message on the back of the card (addressing his parents) I wonder how happy they were hearing from him.

The message on the right margin reads:

*“Lieve Vader en Moeder
Ik ben thans werkzaam in het Kol. Frank Fillis Circus als sterke man en om te
worstelen met een zwarte beer. Hartelijke Groet. Brief volgt”*

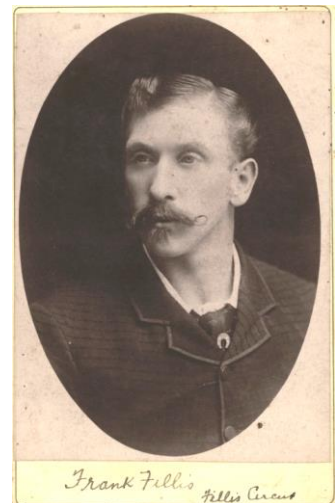
**Dear Father and Mother,
I am currently working in the Colonel Frank Fillis Circus as a “strong man”
and to wrestle a black bear. Kind regards. Letter will follow.**

Of course we don't know under what circumstances the sender (the Barnards' son) had left home, so just any sign of life might have been a relief to the parents.

Who was Frank Fillis (1857–1921) ?

Frank Fillis: The Barnum of South Africa

Frank Fillis was one of South Africa's greatest circus proprietors ever. In fact, the name Fillis was once synonymous with the circus. He was born in London in 1857 and died in Bangkok in 1921. He came to South Africa in 1880 and for 30 years he was the top circus proprietor in the country. Beyond the entertainment routes travelled by Fillis in southern Africa, his 100-strong company also toured the colonies and settler societies of Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and India. Frank Fillis' circus was considered the biggest and most important public entertainment in Africa. (Source: *SA Journal of Cultural History*. Vol.16(2) 2002: 110-131



A notice in the regional Java newspaper, *Preanger Bode* of July 27, 1915, indicated that one of the Circus company, W. Bos , would enter the tiger cages and “hypnotize” the animals with violin music!!

References:

Internet link: Jurrien Voorsmit 7 generaties-Tjaart Egger.....Genealogy study.

Internet link: Johan Albertus Barnard, rijtuigschilder geboren op dinsdag, 1 september 1868.

The next meeting will be at Dennis Buss' home July 6, 2019 starting at 12:30 pm. Dennis' telephone number is (707) 774-6296. **Note the date change correction.**

The Summer Luncheon is scheduled for August 24, 2019 at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Concord, CA at 12:00 noon. Spouses are invited.
