

S-service stamps

INTRO (EN)

Origin and Objectives

Service stamps are a type of special postage stamps that may only be used by a government agency, in this case, the SNCB (National Railway Company of Belgium). These stamps served various functions and were primarily used for administrative and official purposes within the national railways. Here are the main aspects of service stamps:

A service stamp is a postage stamp that can only be used by a government organization, such as the SNCB. These stamps are not available at post offices and cannot be used by individuals for postage. As a result, the likelihood of service stamps being stolen or used for personal purposes is relatively low.

The service stamps were intended for use within the country and could be ordered from the Post Office with a 35% discount.

Usage

Service stamps were used for postage on administrative documents that were not sent via regular mail. This included official communications, such as letters, invoices, and other documents sent by the railway company.

The SNCB, established in 1926 as the successor to the State Railways Administration, which was a department within the Ministry of Railways, Telegraphy, and Post, began using stamps for postage on service mail in 1929.

Rates and Payment

Although service stamps did not fulfill the traditional function of postage stamps, they served as a kind of administrative tax that had to be paid to officially recognize documents. Their function was similar to that of postage stamps but specifically aimed at the internal and administrative purposes of the SNCB.

Types of Service Stamps

Service stamps were available in various denominations and could be used for both internal purposes within the SNCB and for communication with external parties. This ranged from simple administrative documents to official contracts.

Use of Service Stamps

Documents and Letters

Service stamps were used for sending official letters, reports, and requests relevant to the railways.

Restriction to Railway Use

These stamps were specifically for the SNCB and were generally not used for private or regular commercial mailings.

End of Use

With the rise of digitization in administrative processes, service stamps gradually fell out of use. Since the 1990s and the early 2000s, it became less necessary to use these stamps, as many administrative tasks could now be handled electronically.

Summary

In summary, service stamps were once used by the SNCB for administrative purposes, primarily for affixing postage to internal and official documents. With advancements in technology and digitization, the use of these stamps gradually declined.

Album Overview

Postage stamps depicting King Albert I, in the so-called 'Houyoux' type, were printed with a black overprint in the form of a 'winged wheel,' the then-logo of the SNCB. This logo appeared in various forms with other railway companies. The SNCB could acquire these overprinted stamps from the Belgian postal service with a 35% discount on the total ordered amount of postage values. The postage stamps were valid only for domestic use.

S-service stamps

INTRO (EN)

Later, postage stamps with the 'winged wheel' overprint were issued on the series 'Heraldic Lion,' 'Small State Coat of Arms,' and 'King Leopold III with Open Collar.' Depending on the color of the stamp, the overprint was applied in black or red to create the highest contrast.

In 1942, three postage stamps with the 'winged wheel' overprint were issued with altered value overprints: the 35c. stamps with an overprint of 10c., and the 70c. and 75c. stamps with an overprint of 50c. This marked the last use of stamps with the 'winged wheel' overprint, which lost their validity for postage on October 1, 1959.

As a successor to the 'winged wheel' logo, the SNCB introduced a new logo in 1936, consisting of the letter B in an oval or horizontal ellipse, designed by Jean de Roy, artistic advisor to the SNCB. This new logo was not used on the postage stamps for service items until May 1941.

The last stamp that changed its function to a service stamp for the SNCB through an overprint was issued in December 1943. It was a postage stamp of 2.25 Fr, originally issued on July 10, 1943.

After the introduction of the oval logo with the letter B in May 1941, it was decided that new postage stamps would no longer be provided with an overprint but would incorporate the logo as part of the design. The first stamp executed in this manner was the 10c. stamp in the 'Small State Coat of Arms' type.