

PHILATELISTS AND STAMP COLLECTORS.

Wherein lies the difference between a philatelist and a stamp collector? To many people the names are synonymous. If we had been asked to define the terms we should have suggested that "a stamp collector" belongs to that great body of people who are actuated by the acquisitive instinct, while "a philatelist" is he who possesses also the inquisitive instinct. In other words, we imagine that the "stamp collector" is concerned more with the actual collecting than with the study of matters pertaining to the production, issue and use of stamps.

"The Australian Stamp Monthly" offers another definition. In commenting upon the recent Sydney Philatelic Exhibition our contemporary remarks: "A stamp collector is not necessarily a philatelist and, apparently, according to some standards, a "philatelist" is one who places self-interest before the welfare of philately."

Though we are not fully cognisant of the reasons for the strictures passed upon the philatelists of New South Wales, it seems to us that this statement is rather too sweeping to be applied generally.

It is unfortunately true that in the ranks of philately there are many — whether we call them philatelists or stamp collectors does not matter — who either through diffidence or selfishness are adverse to assisting others who are interested in our hobby.

Some years ago that excellent and regrettably short-lived publication, "The Stamp Collector's Monthly Circular", attributed the partial failure of philately to the canker of commercialism, and the condemnation that was then passed is applicable equally to-day.

Equally obnoxious and harmful is the superior individual whose real knowledge may be redimentary, but who views with thinly-veiled contempt and condescension the enthusiasm of the young or the inexperienced members. When the opportunity is offered to him to assist by reading a paper, by contributing a display or by the loan of material that might be useful in research, he is too busy to participate. And yet it is this same individual who is loudest in his criticism of errors that he might have obviated.

Philatelic societies invariably incorporate among their objects one relating to the general advancement and encouragement of philately by the mutual exchange of ideas, and it is to be assumed that when a new member is admitted he is subscribing to this commendable ideal. The conduct of regular meetings and the institution of an exchange branch are too often considered the sole duties of a society, and such projects as the publication of hand-books and the organisation of exhibitions, which entail combined effort and a possible inroad into the accumulated funds, are evaded.

Fortunately, in most philatelic hives there are workers who refuse to be discouraged by the loud buzzing of the drones!

— (Reprinted from New Zealand Stamp Collector)