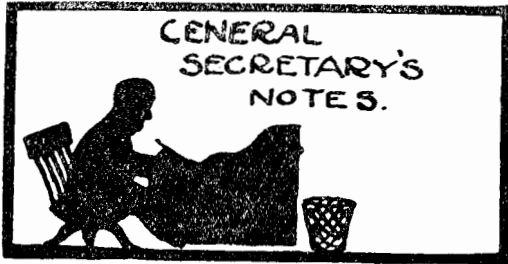


The Customs Journal.

No. 576.

November 20th, 1926.

Fortnightly.



Communications relative to this column should be addressed to Mr. J. Merron, 167, Clive Road, West Dulwich, London, S.E.21.

One of the most encouraging things of late is the fact that the London Branch has at last begun to shake off the inertia that has characterised its Association interests for a considerable time. It can hardly be denied that, in the past, London Port has not filled its natural position of leader for the whole kingdom. But, in justice, it must be admitted, however, that the staff in this District has always been loyal to the P.S.A., even though that loyalty was somewhat passive. Also, they number amongst them many sound and able men who could, if they put their minds to it, make London Branch the most respected and most powerful arm of the whole Association.

Probably the Executive's action in asking London to take a prominent part in the inauguration of the new Departmental Education scheme has been responsible for the pleasing change of attitude. The nominations submitted by the Branch for the various positions on the Central Education Committee indicate that a serious interest is being taken in the floating of the scheme. From these nominees the Council have excellent material to choose in finally deciding the composition of the Committee. The result should be known in time for publication in the next "Journal" issue.

But, whatever may be the cause of London's improved outlook, there are now very plain indications that the sleeping giant is gradually awakening; and the first conscious movement is shown in the setting up of a small permanent and representative Committee charged with the task of giving immediate and close attention to the many and varied troubles that have been affecting the local staff for quite a long time. The function of this Committee is to get to the root of local grievances; to boil them down until clear issues are reached, and thus to arrive at a point where something tangible can be presented to the Branch meetings for serious con-

sideration. The work of bringing to reality the idea of forming this Committee was slow and laborious, but, it is gratifying to relate, no sooner did it actually materialise than operations commenced with speed and vigour. The first meeting took place quite recently, and though the Committee on that occasion dealt only with the fringe of the job it has to tackle, the subsequent report to the London Branch resulted in some very sound discussion, out of which came a decision to take immediate and positive action on several matters of importance.

There is every reason to believe that the London Port Committee will prove to be a long-felt want, and that its future is assured. The keenness of its members leaves nothing to be desired, and it is hoped that the staff will take full advantage of the facility with which they can consult with these committeemen, whose duty it is to meet at frequent intervals to discuss matters of local staff interest.

* * * *

If real success attends this new departure, the reports of the London Branch meetings will become a source of interesting information for the whole membership, because a revived interest in Association affairs is sure to be followed by live discussions on general P.S.A. policy at the District meetings, and these discussions will be well informed, since it is the practice of the Association headquarters staff to be always present on these occasions prepared to impart all the latest information, not only on Departmental affairs, but also regarding the Civil Service generally.

* * * *

There is no doubt that many Districts envy the London Branch their opportunities for having a shot at the Association leaders now and again; and it can certainly be said that the leaders themselves would welcome the chance of being shot at by members at provincial meetings. It would enable them to remove a few of the false notions that exist regarding the progress and management of Association affairs. It is for this reason that much regret is felt at having to refuse the invitations that come along occasionally to attend provincial meetings.

* * * *

Talking of Branch meetings reminds me that the Newport Branch was reported in the last "Journal" issue as having passed a resolution urging upon the Executive the necessity for having a salary claim already formulated, so that at the opportune moment there would be no delay in putting it forward.

Evidently the Newport members are unaware that the Executive has definite instruction from the Council regarding this matter, and that the

question receives close and constant attention. As a matter of fact, the salary claim is fully prepared, after having been discussed in all the Districts, and is ready for launching at a moment's notice.

Reference to this fact has been made from time to time in these columns, and has also been intimated in Executive Committee minutes published in the "Journal."

It should be borne in mind that the Executive has no power to decide as to the terms of any salary claim to be put forward. The Council is the only body enabled to do this. The only function of the Executive on this particular matter at the moment is to keep close watch on events and to report to the Council immediately a favourable opportunity presents itself for putting forward the adopted salary claim.

* * * *

A good deal has been heard lately regarding excessive work in certain ports. It so happens that in almost every case the increase has been due to the abnormal number of vessels importing foreign coal. Of course, it is quite obvious that these vessels, bringing bulk cargoes, are dealt with throughout by the Waterguard, and therefore, not only is the outdoor work increased, but the office work is also considerably greater. Any practical man must realise this, and so I am somewhat puzzled at a report recently received, that a Preventive Officer, stationed at one of these busy spots, has been instructed by his supervising officer not to record in his pocket journal more than twenty minutes per day for office duties, despite the fact that such a record could not be true. I suppose there is some explanation for this phenomenon, but on the facts as presented, it is rather obscure.

* * * *

I understand that the Institute of Public Administration is shortly to consider a report, the chief recommendation of which is that the possession of Diplomas in Public Administration should be a qualification for anyone aspiring to an administrative post.

* * * *

Much discussion has taken place during the past few weeks on the question of staff consultation on the issue of the more important General Orders. The C. and E. Joint Committee has decided to ask the Official Side to set up a small Sub-Committee for the purpose of going fully into the matter. It is hoped that by this means conclusions satisfactory to everybody concerned will be reached. There can be no doubt that the practical views of the staff must be of some value, and the point to be decided is as to exactly how these views can be brought into play without causing delay or disorganisation in the production of new regulations.

* * * *

A correspondent in the last issue of the "Journal" has referred to the magnanimity of the Ex-Service Reconstruction entrants in connection with the seniority question. An analysis of the recent vote taken regarding the

seniority basis of these officers reveals the truth that in many cases his high opinion of them is well merited. They apparently possess in a marked degree the altruistic temperament because so many of them have voted dead against their own personal interests. In some cases, officers have voted to retard their chances of promotion by several years. It is good to meet this kind of thing in these days of self-interest.

* * * *

The newspapers have lately been telling us enthusiastically that the housing problem has now been practically settled and solved, and certainly there can be no doubt that the figures quoted seemed to support this optimistic view. But, somehow or other, facts and figures do not agree, for quite recently I happened to be present when Mr. Sutton, our Organising Secretary, attempted to register his name for one of the L.C.C. housing schemes. He met with a curt response, and was told that no more names could be accepted until the 30,000 waiting list had been considerably reduced.

The only conclusion one can come to is that the newspapers are telling "thumpers"; and one wonders why. Surely it cannot be that baneful political influence again.

* * * *

A very interesting meeting took place last week, at the Association Offices, between representatives of the C.P.O.'s Association and the P.S.A. Officers. Discussions were quite informal, but some very useful results were obtained. The question of training of A.P.O.'s, which is on the Staff Side Agenda of the Waterguard Sectional Committee, received a good deal of attention, and satisfactory conclusions were reached. It is hoped that this practice will continue, since its value has already been clearly demonstrated.

J. MERRON.

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

LONDON.

A good attendance was recorded at a meeting held at the St. Katharine Dock Hotel on November 11th. A hearty welcome was extended to Mr. J. T. Sutton, P.O., and he was recognised as an acquisition to the Association work of the Port. A hope was added that he had come to stay.

A large amount of business was disposed of, and there was a considerable amount of discussion over a number of urgent items.

Mr. Powell informed the meeting that the ballot for the Education Committee was at the moment being carried out amongst the Councilors of the P.S.A.

Mr. R. E. Dudley was appointed District Organiser in succession to Mr. W. H. Johnson, who has recently been transferred to Whitstable. The discussion on this subject amply showed the unlimited appreciation of Mr. Purser's work in connection with this post during the last two years.

The question of the staffing of two stations in London, where the work has increased enormously as a result of the present emergency, was fully discussed, and the recommendations of the London Port Committee on the subject were accepted and necessary action agreed upon.

Mr. J. T. Sutton was elected to fill a vacancy on the Local Whitley Council.

Other subjects discussed by the meeting were: A.P.O.'s acting on Sundays, A.P.O.'s monthly salaries and payment in advance when proceeding on leave, delay in the issue of uniform, re-organisation of the port, and claim for travelling expenses within the port.



CARDIFF.

A local Association meeting was held on Friday, November 12th, with Mr. G. Warne in the chair. It was particularly encouraging to the Association officers to witness the enthusiasm shown by the A.P.O.'s, who were well represented.

WHITLEY COUNCIL.

The following officers were elected:—Mr. G. Warne, P.O., and Mr. G. H. Fox, A.P.O. Mr. Warren, A.P.O., was appointed as a deputy should such an occasion arise.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE.

To continue the good work that has been done in the past, the following Committee was elected to organise the social activities of the District:—Chairman, Mr. Howell, C.P.O.; Secretary, Mr. G. Warne, P.O.; Committee, Messrs. L. Lewis and J. W. Morris, P.O.'s, and Messrs. A. W. P. Densley, A. W. Pucknell, and H. Hemsley, A.P.O.'s.

"CUSTOMS JOURNAL" CORRESPONDENT.

Mr. W. Bowen, A.P.O., was appointed.

The question of accommodation was carefully discussed, and a deputation was appointed to take further action regarding this matter at the earliest opportunity.

UNIFORM.

The Chairman read a letter from the General Secretary, and the Local Secretary was instructed to communicate the views of the staff to him.



SOUTHAMPTON.

A well attended meeting was held on October 28th under the chairmanship of Mr. J. J. Knight. The principal business of the meeting was to hear the report on the Conference by the Councillor and to elect officers. Unavoidable circumstances had prevented an earlier meeting.

The report of the Annual Conference was ably given, every item being dealt with at length, various points raised by the members being explained to the general satisfaction of the meeting. In concluding his report, Mr. Spencer expressed his appreciation of the large attendance of members, whom he hoped would continue to vigorously support the Association officials.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Spencer was passed unanimously.

JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT.

The recommendation of the Council that correspondents should be elected in each District to support the "Customs Journal" was fully discussed, and the necessity for this post recognised. A correspondent was duly elected by a unanimous vote.

DISTRICT OFFICERS.

The following were elected to the District posts:—Chairman, Mr. Northfield; District Secretary, Mr. Dutton; District Organiser, Mr. Beer.

Local Whitley Representatives.—Mr. Spencer and Mr. Dutton for the Preventive Officers, and Mr. Northfield and Mr. Jones for the Assistant Preventive Officers.



WHY NOT AFFILIATION ?

Some years ago the question of affiliation came before the Waterguard Associations, and as the result of a plebiscite, the Associations agreed by a large majority to affiliate with the Labour Party. This decision has never been reversed, and indeed the principle is very general throughout the Civil Service that this course is necessary for the protection of our interests, and there are very few Civil Service Associations that are not so affiliated. The soundness of this policy is recognised by large numbers of Civil Servants of varying schools of thought, and one meets many colleagues with widely divergent views on matters political agreeing that it is in our interest to maintain a connection of this sort. It is agreed by those who are in a position to judge that a vote of the members of the P.S.A. would now show a large increase in favour of continuing the affiliation.

During the past years three successive Governments have paid high tribute to the loyalty and efficiency of the Civil Service, and praise from Cabinet Ministers has been unstinted. A Liberal, a Labour, and a Conservative Government has in turn testified to the wonderful help that has been given in the business of Government. The Dominion Premiers, during their last visit to this country about three years ago, were enthusiastic in their eulogies of the Home Service.

In face of all this, a wise and far-seeing Government now seeks legislation to put an end to affiliation. In spite of the appreciation of loyalty, the Service is regarded with suspicion. The Government intends to enforce a loyalty by Act of Parliament. Most people know the sort of feeling this would engender, and the staff generally has viewed with great alarm the intended action of the Government. Active measures are being taken by the Staff Sides and by individual Associations to combat the danger that threatens the freedom of Civil Servants, but we cannot emphasise too strongly the fact

that a grave danger does hang over us, and that it needs a long and strong pull all together from each individual Association to check this latest move to stifle the Civil Service.

BETWEEN TIDES.

PARAGRAPHS FROM THE DISTRICTS.

LONDON.

It is with extreme regret that we announce the death of Mr. B. Longman, A.P.O., who passed away on November 5th, after a prolonged and severe illness, at the age of 25. Mr. Longman joined the Service in 1920, and first did duty at Gravesend, afterwards being transferred to London, where he was attached to a day station. His last period of sick leave commenced about a year ago, and it was only in September last that the London officers subscribed to help him financially in his sad condition. Many of us will ever remember the always pleasant, genial and ever willing "Barney."

* * * *

SOUTH SIDE CRICKET CLUB WHIST DRIVE AND SOCIAL.

On Saturday evening last the first of a series of social events was successfully run by the Club. Over 60 officers and their friends gathered at the St. Katharine Dock Hotel and participated in what proved to be a very enjoyable evening. Prizes for the Whist Drive were awarded as follows:—Ladies—Miss Field, 1st; Mrs. Steers, 2nd; Gents—Mr. Dowden, 1st; Mr. Ferguson, 2nd. Booby prizes were awarded to Miss Mitchell and Mr. R. A. Stocker, and four consolation prizes to Mrs. Platten, Mrs. Bennetts, Mr. Diaper and Mr. Fletcher. The ladies' first prize was given by Mr. C. E. Egan, President of the Club; the gents' first prize by the Social Committee; the consolation prizes by Mr. F. Fletcher. After refreshments had been partaken of, the evening was given up to dancing to the accompaniment of our old warrior at the piano, Mr. Bert Rogers, and a violinist friend, Mr. Mitchell. Intermingled with the dancing, songs were rendered by Mr. Egan, Mr. Standring and Mr. Bob Stocker. At the conclusion, the President announced that during the evening he had been handed a donation to the Club funds by a resident of the North Side who wished to remain anonymous. Thus a pleasant and sporty evening was concluded by a sporty action. The Committee of the Club acknowledges the receipt of the donation with grateful thanks.

* * * *

Mr. DAVIE, P.O.

By the retirement of Mr. Davie, P.O., the Port loses another of its genial characters, and although tucked away within the sanctum of the Superintendent's Office and rarely encountered officially of late years, he was much respected throughout the Port.



It will be noticed that in this issue there appears a new departure in the matter of headings. This will be a new feature which is made possible by the appointment of Correspondents in each of the Districts, and will be of varying interest. It should be borne in mind that most officers are interested in many other ports than that to which they are at the moment attached, and that there are events happening in every port every day which have an interest for many scattered round our coasts. London only appears this week, but it is expected that several other Districts will have fallen in with the idea by the time we publish again in two weeks' time.

* * * *

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

Preparations are well under way for the publication of our second Christmas Number, and several items and articles have already been received. District Officers who are engaged in collecting matter for this number in their Districts are asked to note that copy should be in the hands of the Editor by Monday, December 6th. If this is done the work of preparation will be greatly facilitated.

WAKE UP.

By INTER NOS.

It is very obvious to anyone who takes a keen interest in Association matters that our P.S.A. needs shaking up. When I say the Association, I mean the whole body which forms the Association; not simply the leaders. The trouble is that too much is left to the leaders. The majority appear to think that when they elect an officer to represent them, that that is all that is needed, and he will do all the necessary work. That, unfortunately, is the disease in our Association, and if it isn't soon stamped out, we shall be a very unhealthy body. Realise! The Association consists of about 1,600 members, and the General Secretary, Organising Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and a few others are only the leaders of the Association. Bear in mind the next time you shout, "What is the Association doing?" you are really asking, "What are WE doing!" No wonder the answer is so often, "Nothing."

But I am afraid the answer is not "Nothing" when it comes to the representatives of our Association; far from it. There is a large amount of ground to cover, and is covered! But a great deal of that ground is made harder through lack of assistance. Too much is left for the leaders to do, and people wonder why there is so much delay in many cases.

If the District meetings were only better attended, more energy and brains used, matters threshed out more keenly, many a valuable minute would be saved. Points which are referred to the Districts for discussion should be picked and pulled to pieces, and not returned without any consideration. It is the duty of every member to pick out the weak points in Association matters and try to strengthen them.

Shouting in the office only is like giving nails to an ostrich. It satisfies the simple mind, but does no good. Hold a meeting and express your views, discuss matters to the best of your ability, then send the results forward. What a help this would be to our leaders! Just an overhaul, polish up, and push on. It would be much more satisfactory to all, because we would know for certain that all matter going through would be in accordance with the wishes of the majority. It is unity which is essential. The quarterly subscription is not all that is required. The brain and moral support of each member is as necessary as his subscription.

I know that in many cases lack of interest arises through an unfavourable District officer. This is ridiculous, and no such case ought to be in existence. There is an election every year, and each officer ought to know who he is putting in office. The remedy is entirely in the membership's own hands.

If you do get the right man in office, don't leave him to do the rest, but support and help him. You put him there to express YOUR views and opinions, not entirely his own. But if you don't support him, he can only do as he thinks best. Under such circumstances he may act entirely opposite to your ideas, and then he is condemned. Really, no blame is attached to him, but to those who elected him. It is the members' place to instruct their representatives what to do.

Now, Association members, WAKE UP! It doesn't require a group of Reds to make an efficient Association; far from it. But constructive criticism is helpful, and whole-hearted support absolutely essential.

CORRECTION.

In the report of a presentation at Cardiff in our issue No. 574 of October 23rd, one of the speakers, Mr. F. Hodges, is wrongly described. The rank of this gentleman is that of A.P.O. We trust that he has suffered no inconvenience on this account.

THE LIGHTER SIDE.

By "SALTS."

It is jolly decent of the Editor to allow me to write for these pages; if it wasn't published, I shouldn't write it. Also, thank the landlady; she left her writing pad scuffling about. I don't know if you know anything about landladies; they're queer things. Let me explain, perhaps you are interested.

The true species belong to the order "Monigrabe Giennaught," and is found in all parts of the world except the isle of Xerezeeze, which is not yet on the map. Their favourite haunt is in "Digs," and a branch, "Jugganbottle Geneve," may be found flitting from pub. to pub. (especially on Saturday night, when they are covered by "shopping"). This latter class differs slightly from the true species, the proboscis being more pronounced and of a bright crimson in colour, which is the result of bad digestive organs. Both classes suffer from bad livers, especially during the day and on bonfire nights. I've had a lot of experience of them, you know. You have to pay for experience—the landlady sees to that. I'll give you an idea how it goes.

Take week-days, when you are supposed to be on duty at 8 a.m. The landlady will roll downstairs after you and grouse because you make such a noise and wake everyone up, and you never wiped your boots when you came in last night, and you slammed the front door something terrible, and you're a cruel brute for kicking the cat just because it was having a little siesta on your bed, and the amount of gas you burn going to bed will ruin her, and really, if she thought her cup of tea would still be hot when she finished, well—I hate to think of it. So, on Sunday, being off duty, you decide to let the poor dear rest. Much against your will, you remain in bed until the clock is just ready to knock off nine of 'em. Out of bed you jump, beaming all over with smiles, wondering what she will look like now she has had some extra beauty sleep (which she so badly needs). Going downstairs, the cat's tail is bound to be in the way, so you stop and say, "Poor pussy," or something (generally something). Of course, you wouldn't know she had started cleaning up the passage, and that the dust-pan and the rolled-up carpet were at the far end of the passage. You find them all right, but you make such a noise kicking the dust about and entering the room head first that the poor dear was frightened and spilt the tea all over the nice clean table-cloth. The fact that you are engaged feeling the back of your head for your nose saves you from the first outburst, but you are soon told what you are, what you were, what you will be, where you ought to be, and where and what you will be when you aren't what you are any more. Then she wants to know if you expect her to keep the breakfast about all day.

Poor dears, they have a hard life of it, you know. The only bright spot in their lives is

pay day. You can always tell it, because there is cake for tea. I never give my landlady her money when it is due. I am generally a month behind. They look after you much better if you do this, because they know that if they underfeed you and don't look after you properly, you'll catch cold and perhaps die before they can get the money.

ODE TO LANDLADY.

By ME.

Oh! Landlady, Landlady, so bonny and gay;
You make a big hole in my miserable pay.
There is nothing in Ham's saying what I'm to do,
So the doing I'm bound to leave solely to you.
And you do it quite well.



All contributions relative to this column should be addressed to "Scrutator," c/o The Editor, 91, Tressillian Road, Brockley, London, S.E.4.

Many students of the Silk Regulations are under the impression that a passenger or member of a ship's crew is allowed to import duty free silk goods as presents for their relatives, provided the duty does not exceed 10s.

This, I presume, is the result of not carefully reading G.O. 55/1926 in conjunction with G.O. 36/1925.

General Order 36/1925 is still our main guidance to the duty-free concessions.

Articles imported as presents were never allowed duty free; except, of course, that duty may be waived when in transit. See par. 11.

Paragraph 12 of the same Order still requires that goods admitted duty free must be "bona fide personal property" of the passenger.

Paragraph 12A strengthens this condition as regards crew's effects.

Now turn to G.O. 55/1926.

Paragraph 9 of this Order reduces the free allowance of par. 12 (2), G.O. 36/25, to a duty limit of 10s.

Paragraph 2 allows an alternative basis of duty charge for goods imported by passengers and ships' crews which are "articles of apparel" and are imported for any other than a commercial transaction.

For the definition of "articles of apparel," see par. 2 (b).

Incidental to the above G.O.'s, it should be noted that:—

(1) Duty should be assessed by a C.P.O., if present.

(2) Duty (whether specific or ad valorem) can only be taken up to a £10 limit.

(3) The ad valorem rate may be accepted without having the alternative rate assessed—if so desired by the importer, and, in such cases, the duty slip and entry are to be noted "Ad. Val." rate elected.

(4) Where the ad valorem rate is taken (it being more favourable), the particulars of both methods are to be shown on the relative documents; i.e., Duty Slip, Import Duty Schedule, Entry Blue Book, etc.

Questions.

(1) A passenger declares and produces ½ lb. leaf tobacco and nothing more. Would duty be required?

(2) What method should be adopted for assessing the proportion of Cavendish liable to additional fine when the goods include unmanufactured tobacco as well as cigars and cigarettes. For example, Cigars 1½ lb., Cigarettes 2½ lb., Cavendish 5¾ lb., and Unmanufactured Tobacco 2 lb.

Answers.

(1) The duty-free allowance distinctly states "Manufactured Tobacco." I can therefore only say that duty would be required.

The only reason I can give is that unmanufactured tobacco being ordinarily a commercial product, it can hardly be termed "bona-fide personal unconsumed stores."

(2) In the absence of an official example, I submit the following as being a reasonable method for the quantities of goods you quote:—

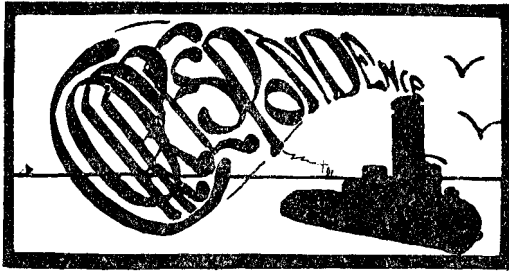
	s. d.
1½ + 2½ + 5¾ + 2 = 11½ lb. — 3 lb. = 8½ lb.,	
say 9 lb., at 3d.	2 3
Now, exclude the unmanufactured.	
10 9	
—x— = 7½, say 8 lb., at 3d. per lb., to	
12 1	
make 6d. per lb.	2 0
Additional for Cavendish—	
6 8	
—x— = 4 lb., at 6d.	2 0
12 1	
Total Fine . . .	6 3

CHESS.

The following is the list of games now being played in the first round. First names have white pieces:—

- J. Mackay, P.O., Leith, v. J. C. O'Shea, A.P.O., Liverpool.
- J. M. Mitchell, A.P.O., Edinburgh, v. S. W. Hargrove, A.P.O., Eastham.

- A. Hardie, C.P.O., Ayr, v. E. W. Kidman, A.P.O., Liverpool.
 B. R. Clark, A.P.O., Weymouth, v. F. G. Boodle, Newport.
 W. W. Bishop, A.P.O., Sharpness, v. W. G. Thomson, Liverpool.



! The name and address of the writer (not necessarily for publication) should be given in all letters to the Editor, who accepts no responsibility for the views expressed.

PROMOTION.

Sir,—In the issue of September 25th, our General Secretary, in his notes, says there is some suggestion in favour of a general discussion on the topic of Promotion.

Several issues have since been published, and one would assume that as his "feeler" did not develop, the subject is one without interest. Yet how different is the case!

The first thing that struck me about the item was wonderment as to where the desire to open discussion emanated. No mention appears to have been made at the recent Conference, which is where one would imagine such a topic would arise.

The next thought was, which step in promotion is likely to provoke debate, and I could only conclude it was that of P.O. to C.P.O.

An important point in bringing me to this conclusion was the fact that the C.P.O. Grade contains the biggest percentage of Waterguard Officers who have come to a definite standstill.

As regards promotion from A.P.O. to P.O., I think, possibly because I have successfully negotiated it, that the present method leaves little to be desired.

The examination is searching, but it is fair. It is conducted in as scrupulous a manner as possible.

Some complain that the oral carries too many marks, whilst others argue that there is no necessity for it, but, generally speaking, the average candidate is satisfied.

It would, however, be interesting to see how a result based on the written test alone would compare with the combined tests.

As regards the next step in promotion and the manner thereof, there can be no doubt that there is scope for improvement.

The method of calling, i.e., by seniority, is open to debate from the official point of view, but the opponents of such will at least admit its fairness to the individual, and it therefore should not be departed from.

I understand that for some time past there have been no failures in the written test, so that unsuccessful candidates in recent examinations for C.P.O.-ship are such solely as the outcome of a few minutes' interview.

Even a casual review of such a position is sufficient to condemn it. I wonder how many of us, before the G.S. jogged our memories, gave a thought to the all-important fact that officers with thirty years', or thereabouts, proved efficient service (otherwise they would not be called up) are failed in an interview lasting maybe twenty minutes.

No wonder we are so frequently amazed when we hear the results of such examinations, and, incidentally, no wonder fear is expressed lest the higher Waterguard appointments go "outside."

Examinations are no pleasure to lightly contemplate, but seeing that the positions of Surveyor and C.P.O. are analogous, why not an examination on similar lines with a sufficiency of candidates called in order of seniority? —Yours, etc., "DINKUM."

TO MEMBERS A.P.O. GRADE, SCOTTISH AREA.

Gentlemen,—I am again nominated as a candidate for the post of A.P.O. Grade Councillor, Scottish Area, and having accepted, respectfully solicit your support when voting.

Since joining the Waterguard, I have always taken a keen interest in the affairs of the Association, and as a District Official my aim has ever been to do the work allotted to me in an efficient manner, for the benefit of the members and incidentally my own.

The conditions under which we work, and the corresponding salary which we receive, are by no means what they should be, and only efficient representation, and co-operation amongst the members, will bring about an improvement. If successful, you can rest assured that your interests will be my interests, and the betterment of our Grade will be my earnest endeavour.—Yours, etc., JAMES DENBY.

WATERGUARD PAY.

Sir,—“That in view of the recent cut in bonus, and the precarious position in which it places the lesser paid A.P.O.'s, this meeting of the P.S.A. urges upon the General Secretary, and the Executive Committee, the necessity for pressing forward with the scheme which is being formulated—by them—for an increase in pay.”

There were some at the meeting, at which this resolution was passed, who, at first, thought "precarious" a little too strong. It certainly is not. I cannot think of a word that is sufficiently strong. The position, for many, is going to be desperate this winter. The bonus has been cut to some purpose, and the cost of living is

absolutely jumping up. The pay, of all those with less than four years' service, is under £3 per week. Granted there is overtime as well. This cannot be depended on, however, and, at least in coal ports, is not a very startling sum.

The new entrant is not a boy. He is a man with, in many cases, a wife and family. It needs an extraordinary able woman to handle such money in such a way as to even obtain the barest necessities of life. I say, without hesitation, that she cannot do it.

Let us face the facts. Those entering the Service during the last twelve months are in receipt of 52s. (round figures) per week. Out of this the following items have to be met:—

	s.	d.
Rent (average)	15	0
Coal (for heating), 1½ cwt. (here 4/4 per cwt., some places more)	6	6
Light	1	6
Gas (for cooking)	2	0
Association Subs.	0	6
Daily Papers	0	6
Total	£1	6 0

This leaves the huge sum of £1 6s. for household expenses. What about the overtime? Something must be put by for clothes, insurance, holidays and sickness. If the overtime is touched, what about these items? If it is not, how are these people to obtain even the plainest of food in sufficiency? Precarious? Not one quarter strong enough.

Let us view the situation from another standpoint. A policeman starts at £3 10s. per week. (He also receives various allowances, which are as much to him as our overtime is to us.) We have to serve six years (at the present rate of bonus) to attain this amount. Although similar, in some respects, our work is more technical than his and every bit as important. Why this difference in his favour? It is because he is in the public eye, whilst we are on the black list of some of the daily papers.

Yet another aspect. One or two of the small Grades in the Service have recently obtained increases in pay. The Post Office workers are fighting hard for one now; close on their heels are the "P" Class; others are awaiting the Arbitration Board's decision—re P.O. workers—in order to see what action they shall take. Are we going to wait on, and on, for an opportune moment whilst others go forward? Are we going to be told—as we were in 1922—that the Board are very sorry, but that there is no money left for us? Is there ever such a thing as an opportune moment for asking for an increase in pay? In any case, waiting will not feed the wives and kiddies of men who are underpaid.

Just one last point. We are commended the whole world over for our integrity. I would respectfully suggest to the Honourable Board that underpaying men—under such tempting circumstances as we are often faced with—is liable to undermine that integrity. It is so easy to render little services. It is so difficult to say "No" when necessity is calling. It is wrong—

absolutely wrong—to place any man in that position. I will not labour the point; although I am tempted to do so, because so many have never known what the word "necessity" means. They cannot realise what saying "No" means under such circumstances, and are therefore only too ready to condemn if the answer is known to be "Yes." I feel certain that the members of the Executive Committee are amongst this number. If they were not, there would be no need for this article. Something would have been done long ago; they would have realised that the opportune time for putting forward a claim for an increase of pay is when that increase is needed.

Some of us have known what it means to be "down and out." I arrived in my new port with sufficient money to last me until pay day. My wife and kiddie had to stay at home until I had sufficient overtime to cover their fares. Twelve months of adverse luck makes a mess of one's savings. I arrived in 1923, and therefore the struggle is still fresh in my mind. It is not all honey now. Do you wonder that I feel very strongly about the 52s.-a-week men? We have had to try to do what they are trying to do now, and we know that it is impossible. The statistical cost-of-living figure is less than it was then. The real cost-of-living figure—i.e., on necessities—is just as high. I therefore say, again, that something must be done now. Let the Executive Committee therefore press forward with the knowledge that Association members are in real earnest about it.—Yours, etc.,

"ACTION."

Sir,—The recent articles by "X," "Old Stager," and "X.Y.Z." on "Overworked and Understaffed," clearly goes to show that discontent is rife in the Waterguard Service. There is no use beating about the bush, and wearing the smile; that can change to a frown like lightning.

The plain facts are, that we are discontented. Need I ask why? The answer is obvious. The conditions under which we work, the supervision (that gives one that Army and Navy feeling), and the salary we receive, are all bad. Some will think that this statement is a rather bold assertion to make, but it is nevertheless true, and we all know within ourselves that it is true, but most of us refuse to admit it.

Let us pull ourselves together. We have a good Association, with competent men at the wheel, but the support given is not what it should be.

Banish that "come day—go day" spirit that some of us have. It becomes all to take a live interest in our Association. Work for it. Think for it, and pay our subscriptions with a good heart, because our Association is our stronghold, and unity is strength.

In this way success is bound to come, and let us hope that we will soon have a brighter and more satisfied Waterguard.—Yours, etc.,

"ATTABOY."