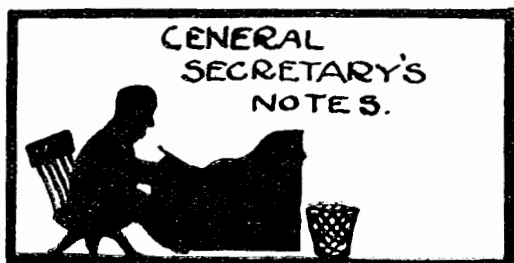


The Customs Journal.

No. 563.

May 22nd, 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 curious things about the great Strike was the absence of any clearly defined motive for it. We were told by the trade union leaders that the intention was to assist the miners, but we were not informed as to exactly how a general strike could solve the miners' problem.

The opponents of trade unionism supplied the deficiency by stating that the intention was to overthrow the Government. Probably this conclusion was arrived at by reasoning that, since nationalisation alone could create a possibility of a decent wage for miners, and the Government being opposed to nationalisation, nothing but the fall of the Government could meet the situation.

Somehow it is rather difficult to believe that this could be the truth—especially in the light of events as they have turned out. It is not easy to picture trade union leaders performing the kind of acts that one expects from the real revolutionary. They are not built for it.

Also one cannot imagine how a sufficient number of brave hearts could be found, willing and prepared, to take the reins of the kind of government that would have emerged from the chaos. I can think of no prominent labour man who would be anxious for the job.

The T.U.C., in declaring that they have won their object, state that they went out simply to

secure resumption of negotiations for the miners. This sounds rather thin when one comes to consider how drastic was the method adopted. The unions possess sufficient power to have gained that object without a general strike. This fact, however, does not necessarily throw us back on the revolution theory. There is another alternative.

It is very probable that the root of the matter is that certain headstrong people were overcome by the ever-present temptation to "try-out" the powerful strike machine that has evolved from the numerous amalgamations that have taken place in the trade union world for some years past. The true seriousness of the step was obscured by an overweening ambition to test the power of the machine, and the consequences were not sufficiently considered. This is one of the dangers of trade unionism on big lines. People in control are assailed by the same kind of temptation that causes the militarist to advocate war for the sheer love of seeing his forces in action.

It is, indeed, fortunate that the saner elements got control of the situation and called off the strike—even though the apparent excuse for doing so was somewhat flimsy. General strikes are ugly affairs, and even where justification can legitimately be claimed, action should be taken only after full and earnest consideration. Had that course been taken in this instance, wiser counsels would certainly have prevailed.

In spite of the unpleasantness of the great crisis, much good has come out of it. For instance, the Prime Minister has proved at last that his policy of straightforward simplicity, combined with firmness, is the best for these troublous days. His critics are silenced—at least, for a short while.

Another benefit derived is that we have gained a greater insight into the real cause of the trouble in the coalfields. Most of us are

surprised at the very low wages earned by the average miner—we have been told the other thing so often. True enough, we are forced to the conclusion that if the miners are to be paid a living wage the mines cannot possibly be run on a paying basis. There is a consensus of opinion that the miner must put up with the situation—that he is unlucky.

Accepting this as the right view to take, it appears fairly obvious that before long a good many more of us will be in the "unlucky" category. The nation is struggling hard to pay its way, and one wonders if Civil Servants can claim to be entitled to more consideration than the miners.

* * * *

The result of the examination has at last been published. The period of waiting is always a trying time for the candidates, and on this occasion the strain has been longer than usual.

There is reason to believe that the authorities are not altogether unsympathetic towards the anxieties of officers awaiting news of their fate. In fact, every effort seems to be made to get the results published as expeditiously as possible. It is, of course, in the interests of the candidates that the scrutiny of the examination papers is not unduly hurried, and, considering the number of candidates and the complicated nature of the subjects of the examination, it cannot be said that there is any avoidable delay in getting through the business.

The number of successful candidates creates a record, and no doubt it will be some time before the list is exhausted. There does not at the moment appear to be much prospect of another examination taking place next Spring.

Whilst congratulating those who have satisfied the examiners, one cannot help, at the same time, genuine feelings of sympathy for the less fortunate candidates. We know that everyone cannot be successful, but it is an important fact that a great deal more depends on the examination for Preventive Officer than is the case with most examinations.

It is not the normal situation, where a man competes for one of the plums that reward the efforts of only the ultra ambitious; it is, instead,

a matter of trying to prove qualifications for the work that one has lived for and been trained for. Failure must obviously result in a serious loss of interest except in the case of the stoutest hearts.

Surely it would seem to be in the interests of the Department that when failed officers have displayed industry and real ability in their attempts to gain the Preventive Officership, they should be earmarked for preferential treatment in some way. Anything would be better than to murder honest ambition.

The problem is, of course, a difficult one, and the Association has spent much time in trying to hit upon a practical scheme, but without much success. Some day, however, a solution will come, and when that happens departmental efficiency will be considerably increased.

* * * *

Requests for information regarding the possibility of an early resumption of normal recruitment for the Waterguard are getting rather numerous, and therefore I take this opportunity to announce that no information can be given at the moment, but that as soon as news is available it will be published in these columns.

The matter is still in the hands of the Waterguard Sectional Committee, and it is hoped that a meeting of this Committee can be arranged shortly.

* * * *

One of the matters for discussion at the Conference is the situation that has arisen on the National Council as a result of the Official Side's refusal to admit the right of the Staff Side to discuss with the Official Side complaints on departmental interpretations of National Whitley agreements.

It is hoped that Councillors will use every endeavour to make themselves fully acquainted with National Council affairs, as it is desired that the relations between the National Staff Side and our own Association should receive more attention than has formerly been the case.

* * * *

I would remind members who intend to become voluntary contributors under the Pen-

sion Acts that it is not advisable to delay action any further, but to get into touch with an approved society now. The Civil Service Approved Society was mentioned in these columns some time ago as being suitable.

The terms of the voluntary insurance scheme are regarded generally as being most advantageous, and judging by the number of people anxious to prove their eligibility to benefit, they are greatly appreciated.

Officers desirous of taking advantage of the voluntary scheme must obtain from their own Department a certificate of eligibility before their application can be accepted by an approved society.

At the last meeting of the Departmental Council the Staff Side asked the Official Side if they would consider issuing instructions to the staff regarding the method of obtaining these certificates. The request is being considered.

J. MERRON.

EXECUTIVE MEETING.

At the last moment it has been found impossible to hold the proposed Executive Meeting, and the date is postponed until further notice.

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

NEWPORT (MON.).

The second annual meeting was held on April 8th, there being a good attendance.

Promotion by merit was the only item of general interest on the agenda. A discussion on the subject plainly showed that there was no desire to scrap the present system of promotion. It was agreed that the suggested scheme be not supported.

Several local matters were gone into, chief among them being the question of rotation of duties. While success has not yet been attained, the Whitley representatives report the position to be fairly favourable.

The election of officers resulted as follows:— District Secretary, Mr. E. T. Sandford; District Organiser, Mr. C. W. J. Morgan.

◆ ◆ ◆

BRISTOL.

A fairly well attended meeting was held at the Central Restaurant on April 29th. Mr. Logan presiding.

PROMOTION BY MERIT.—The scheme of the Executive Committee was fully discussed, and the following resolution was carried:—

“That in view of the opposition of interests fostered in the Department by its varied methods of recruitment, great hardship and consequent discontent must inevitably ensue to one or other of the opposing groups should, on the one hand, the Executive Committee's scheme be adopted as it stands, or should it be merely turned down in favour of a retention of the present methods of promotion.

“The opinion of this meeting is that the material now in the hands of the E.C. is insufficient for the construction of a scheme that will conciliate these opposing interests and, whilst acknowledging the difficulty of the position, requests the Committee to formulate a scheme covering a wider field and involving such practical solutions as earlier retirement and fresh outlets for Waterguard Officerses.”

Owing to the amount of time occupied in discussing the resolution, it was decided to close the meeting and to call an emergency meeting at an early date.

SEEN ON LONDON'S BUSES DURING THE STRIKE.

A bird on the bonnet 's worth two in the bus.

I passed by your window; please pass by mine. (This bus had its windows lined with wire netting.)

Another bus had been in trouble and a window had been badly chattered. The rafter had been filled by a number of boards. Upon the boards was inscribed: “There is no pane now, Mother.”

THE FEBRUARY EXAMINATION RESULT.

The following are the list of Assistant Preventive Officers, in order of merit, who satisfied the Board at the examination held on February 9th, 1926, and following days, that they are qualified for promotion to the rank of Preventive Officer: -

Alfred S. Wilkins, London (Thameshaven).
 Wilfred A. Bessant, London.
 Arnold G. Francis, Liverpool.
 Thos. J. V. Knights, London.
 Stacey C. Steel, London.
 William H. Jones, London (Gravesend).
 Albert S. Annis, Leith.
 Fred. Emmerson, Hull.
 Edward Morrisey, Liverpool.
 John T. Sutton, Manchester.
 Hubert S. Pickford, London.
 Edward B. Jenner, Norwich (Lowestoft).
 Alfred E. Busby, Dover.
 George H. Rugg, Southampton.
 William P. D. Manley, Southampton.
 John H. Costain, Hull.
 F. J. W. Fairchild, Liverpool.
 Frank Watson, Chester (Holyhead).
 Charles A. Turvey, Brixham, Plymouth.
 Edward Payne, Eastham, Manchester.
 Michael Fenton, Swansea.
 Charles F. Lowe, London.
 John Whiting, Liverpool.
 Harold W. Chapman, Southampton.
 Francis J. Fritschner, London.
 George T. Coady, Runcorn, Manchester.
 William G. Self, King's Lynn, Norwich.

Charles E. Adams, Plymouth.
 Laurence W. Hyland, Manchester.
 A. J. L. Sallaway, London.
 Frank Nightingale, Hull.
 Victor H. Walter, London (Gravesend).
 James T. Lyons, Newport (Mon.).
 Horace C. Southey, Dover.
 Eric P. E. Chaplin, Swansea.
 Charles R. Brown, Liverpool.
 Thomas F. Lawler, Eastham, Manchester.
 William G. Burgess, London.
 Stanley Graham, Barrow, Preston.
 James G. Russell, Hull.
 Ernest A. C. Hall, Dover.
 Fred. A. Cridland, Southampton.
 Horace W. Adams, Plymouth.
 Ernest W. Lowe, Grimsby.
 William G. Precious, Methil, Dundee.
 C. P. C. Robinson, Avonmouth, Bristol.
 Reg. A. Rowland, Liverpool.
 Francis Beirne, Newcastle.
 Archibald L. Martin, Swansea.
 Alexander S. Nicol, Barry Dock, Cardiff.
 Albert T. Rogers, London.
 F. G. H. Smith, Dartmouth, Plymouth.
 E. E. J. Godge, Southampton.
 William Fagan, Dover.
 Robert J. Page, London.
 John Henderson, Clydebank, Glasgow.
 A. M. Poelchel, Cardiff.
 Walter W. Bishop, Sharpness, Worcester.
 Walter Varna, London (Gravesend).
 Hugh S. Hannah, Newcastle.
 Ernest W. Kidman, Liverpool.

C. & E. DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL.

The seventy-third meeting of the Council was held in London on April 28th, 1926, the chair being taken by A. J. Dyke, Esq., C.B., C.B.E., Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

MEMBERSHIP OF ASSOCIATIONS.

At the Official Side request the Council again adjourned the Staff Side proposal that the terms of paragraph 6 of General Order 79/1919 be reiterated by General Order.

REMUNERATION.

It was agreed that the scale of Warehousemen in the Stores Branch be changed to a weekly wage scale of 22s. 6d. by increments of 2s. to 61s. 6d., with an efficiency bar at 50s., existing members of the Grade being absorbed into the new scale at their present pay converted into a weekly wage and levelled up or down to the nearest sixpence.

It was also agreed that the payment of special remuneration for additional work in connection with the Old Age Pension Act, 1919, should cease as from February 27th last, under conditions similar to those contained in par. 1 of General Order 11/26, Part IX.

The Council again adjourned consideration of the subject of deductions from special remuneration in the special case of the Unattached Officer who performed the work without assistance in a station in which assistance was given subsequently to the fixed Officer.

ALLOWANCES.

Arrangements were made for representatives of each Side to discuss apparent divergencies between the National Council's agreement on removal expenses and the General Order giving effect to it in this Department.

SCHEMES.

It was agreed that special assessments of units might be allowed in Distillery and Coured Brewery Stations in exceptional cases where it was shown that extra time is normally involved on account of irregular working, frequent short intervals between operations, breakdowns of plant and other contingencies of this nature.

On the question of the administrative variation of personnel at a certain port, the Official Side undertook that no changes would be made until new office accommodation was available, but maintained that conditions were not yet sufficiently stabilised to frame permanent schemes. The Staff Side urged that if, as was understood, the emergency was caused by the Budget of 1925, it was now-time that stabilisation was effected, and that indefinite prolongation of emergency measures would render Whitley schemes useless.

The Council adjourned consideration of an agreement from a Local Committee imposing a

time attendance scheme involving normal weekly attendances of 54 hours for Officers.

The Official Side stated that it was proposed generally to modify the present system of staffing the smaller match factories, and explained the reasons for devolving part of the selective work for counting from the Officer Grade.

DEPARTMENTAL MARKINGS.

Consideration of the Staff Side proposal to afford facilities to Temporary Clerks to make representations on individual departmental markings was adjourned sine die, the Staff Side expressing regret at having brought forward inaccurate figures in respect of their case, and stating that this was due to incomplete information.

INWARD TRANSFERS.

It was agreed to regard as ultra vires an Office Committee disagreement resulting from a Staff Side proposal that information of all proposals to effect inward transfers from other Departments be supplied beforehand to the Office Committee Staff Side.

OTHER MATTERS.

A number of other Office and Local Committee decisions, including various agreements on fixed officiatorships, were considered, with results that have been communicated to the Committees concerned.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on June 2nd, 1926.

PRESENTATION TO RETIRING COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS.

Mr. John Stephen, for seventeen years Collector at Cowes, has just retired after nearly 40 years' service. He was the guest of honour and the recipient of a handsome gold watch and a walking stick from past and present officers who have served under him, and friends who desired to show their appreciation of his long and faithful service, at a smoking concert at the Fountain Hotel, Cowes. Some high tributes were paid to Mr. Stephen's administrative ability and unflinching courtesy and kindness, and many expressions of regret were voiced at his retirement.

An admirable programme was arranged by Mr. Dobrogan. Monologues were contributed by Mr. E. C. Hancock, violin solo by Mr. A. Ferris, and songs by Messrs. W. B. Adams, J. S. Atkinson, Hancock, D. Hamilton, L. Belber, A. E. Ricketts and J. Stephen. Mr. T. C. Letcher was the accompanist. An enjoyable evening concluded with "Auld Lang Syne."

A HINT TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

When you bury the hatchet, don't mark the spot.

PRESENTATION.

GLASGOW.

An interesting event took place at the Masonic Hall, Rutland Crescent, on Friday, April 30th, when a presentation was made to Mr. T. J. Hancock, P.O., on the occasion of his retirement from the Service. Mr. R. Galloway, C.P.O., presided over a large company composed of members of both the Waterguard and Landing Staffs.

Mr. Galloway, in his opening speech, referred to his long association with Mr. Hancock and paid tribute to his sterling ability as an officer, and trusted that he would be long spared to enjoy his well-earned retirement. Various members present endorsed the Chairman's remarks. Mr. F. F. Shannon, on behalf of the A.P.O.'s, wished him God speed and a bad bargain to the Treasury. Following the toast, the Chairman, on behalf of the Staff, made the presentation of a handsome cabinet gramophone, Mr. Hancock suitably responding.

The proceedings were then enlivened by a dazzling display of talent, foremost among the artistes being Mr. McFadyen (Landing Staff), who caused much amusement with his songs and stories. Mr. S. P. Saunder, A.P.O., in song and patter, appeared in the real Dan Leno style. Mr. John Hamilton, A.P.O., rallying to the cause, added to the hilarity with a trombone solo, and graced the proceedings with a superb exhibition of the light fantastic, his "spirited" efforts meeting with rounds of applause. Further contributions were forthcoming from Messrs. Black, MacRae, Reeve, Goldie, Shannon, Houston, Henderson and Harrison.

The catering and success of the evening were entirely due to the untiring efforts of Mr. Don MacRae, P.O.



Everybody seems to be talking of strikes and rumours of strikes and results of strikes. We have been doing it ourselves for the past week, pouring forth a little more candid opinion than we can very well stick into this column. Whatever our private opinions, however, there is a general feeling of satisfaction that things are once again somewhere about normal. The piles of blue books have dwindled down to normal,

shipping is nearer normal than it was this time last week, the number of people using their legs for purposes of locomotion is again normal. Even the pound sterling, for years in an abnormal condition, has succumbed to the prevailing fashion, and we have emerged from a period of anxiety to find ourselves in a stronger position than ever.

* * * *

It is fairly safe to say that the Waterguard has borne its share of the anxiety, for a great measure of the coal control order has fallen upon its shoulders; and although much of the extra work has been performed under difficulty, it has been done cheerfully and with a touch of that spirit that actuated the Service during the war—a feeling that we were there to do the job and we must get on with it. In London and the large ports not the smallest difficulty was that of getting to the office. Many had a journey of ten miles and over to walk, with the happy prospect that when the day's work was done it would only need a walk of ten miles to take one home again. On several stations the expedient was resorted to of making an attendance of twenty-four hours, followed by an absence of two days, in order that excessive walking could be eliminated. This was so arranged that officers were enabled to perform their duties efficiently without exceeding their forty-eight hours' attendance for the week.

* * * *

We hear that certain schools are to be granted extra holiday this Whitsun in view of the extra strain upon teachers and pupils caused by the strike. Those who have shared the strain will readily see the joke.

PRESENTATION AT YARMOUTH.

The Custom House, Ferry Hill, Gorleston (Great Yarmouth), was the scene of an interesting event on Monday, May 3rd, when a presentation was made to Mr. J. Potter, C.P.O., upon his promotion to the Upper Section. The meeting was well attended, and included Mr. H. J. Bax, Collector (Norwich), also several members of the Yarmouth and Lowestoft Waterguard staffs. Mr. J. H. Clifford, P.O. (Yarmouth) occupied the chair, and after eulogising the sterling qualities of Mr. Potter, called upon the Collector to make the presentation, which took the form of a mahogany clock bearing a suitably inscribed plate. After asking Mr. Potter to accept the gift, the Collector, in a few well chosen remarks, referred to the pleasure it had given him to be present on such an auspicious occasion and spoke in glowing terms of the high esteem in which Mr. Potter was held by all who had come in contact with him. Several of those present also expressed their pleasure at Mr. Potter's success, and spoke of

his fine sense of fairness and justice in his associations with the staff.

Mr. Potter, who on rising to accept the present was greeted with loud applause, thanked the gathering for their expressions of goodwill and congratulations, and said that the occasion would live long in his memory.

The Chairman then read a number of letters of congratulation and appreciation from Messrs. Durrant, Childs and Dix (Lowestoft), Messrs. Stevens, Laidman, Burton and Self (King's Lynn), Mr. J. Nunn (Wells), Mr. Patmore (Wisbech), also one signed by all members of the Coast Preventive Force in the district. The meeting then concluded in the usual manner.



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

Answers to questions given at the examination held on February 9th, 1926.

FIRST PAPER.

Question.

5.—(a) What are the general rules to be observed in dealing with smuggling offences by merchant seamen in respect of goods liable to Customs duties?

(b) When is a fine leviable in respect of Tobacco and Cigars delivered on payment of duty by passengers? What are the rates to be imposed per pound, and what is the method to be followed in arriving at the rate for fine?

(c) Under what conditions may ship's and crew's private surplus dutiable stores be left on board at clearance inwards of a vessel which is entering the coasting trade?

Answer.

(a) The general rules of smuggling are—

(i.) When the duty on the goods discovered does not exceed 2s. 6d., detain the goods and take no action against the accused.

(ii.) When the duty exceeds 2s. 6d. and does not exceed 25s., the offender is to be given the option of immediate prosecution or of making a deposit of treble the duty-paid value of the goods. If the goods seized consist mainly or wholly of cigars or spirits or of goods liable to any ad valorem duty or of cinema films, the C.P.O. may extend the option of a deposit up to a duty limit of 50s. in cases where legal proceedings would be disproportionate to the gravity of the offence.

(iii.) When the duty exceeds 25s., the accused is to be prosecuted before a magistrate, except in the cases mentioned at (ii.) above.

P.S. to students.—The action required as to immediate prosecutions has been amended regarding responsible officers since the last examination (see G.O. 29/1926, Part VII.).

(b) Fines are to be levied in respect of Tobacco and Cigars delivered on payment of duty to passengers when the goods are packed with other articles or if packed alone when the gross weight of such package is less than 30 lb.; but a total of 3 lb. may be delivered without fine. The following rates are to be charged:—

Manufactured tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes and snuff, 6d. per lb.

Cavendish tobacco, an additional fine of 6d. per lb.

Unmanufactured tobacco, 3d. per lb.

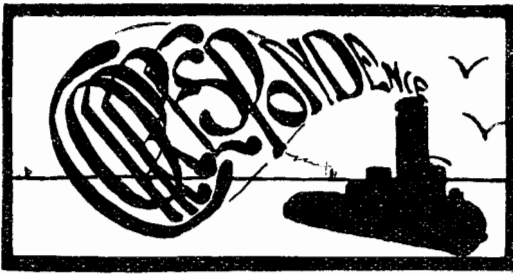
When the tobacco is packed with other articles the fine is to be assessed on the total net weight imported less 3 lb. If, however, the tobacco, etc., is packed alone, the fine is to be assessed either (i.) on the number of pounds, less three pounds, by which the gross weight of the package is short of 30 lb., or (ii.) on the actual number of pounds, less three pounds, whichever method is more favourable to the passenger.

(c) When the duty on ship's and crew's private surplus dutiable stores does not exceed 10s., on vessels entering the coasting trade the duty is to be demanded, and if refused, the goods are to be removed to the King's Warehouse.

When the duty exceeds 10s., two copies of the Inward Clearing Bill are to be issued, marked "Master's Copy" and "Ship's Copy" respectively, at clearance inwards, and a Letter of Advice is to be forwarded to the next port.

If the duty exceeds £20, a Special Bond is to be entered into.

An application is required to carry such stores on more than one coasting voyage.



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.

Sir, -One is particularly interested in reading in your issue of April 24th last the comments by the General Secretary on the examination of baggage at Victoria Station and the incidence re the silk duties.

At the Port of Southampton some interesting stories could be told regarding these duties, and I am prepared to wager that for volume and intricate dealings with these new duties we shall compare very favourably with any port. Crews of vessels, too, are keenly alive to the idea of bringing presents in many forms requiring the strictest attention to duty, and many a Preventive Officer has been, so to speak, tied up in knots when faced with the List 142 of one particular vessel and realising the volume of work entailed in tracking down each individual who has in some form or another declared goods calling for the payment of duty in the silk goods category.

The following is the result of one ship's arrival, passengers and crew:—

Total Duty Slips issued, 291.
Total Duty collected, £278 19s. 7d.
Slips issued by Boarding P.O., 158.

But what strikes me very forcibly is this one potent fact - we have no extra staff. Poor old Waterguard! always the under-dog, so to speak. Any old thing will do. This is one of the most vital ports of the U.K., and, I'll wager, the one port that from the Waterguard standpoint collects the largest amount of duty, and I'll wager an increment, the most ill-equipped port of any. The powers that have been lacked vision, energy, the will to do and keep alive with the times.

There is hope on the horizon, and perhaps there is still a chance of this wonderful port not only retaining but excelling its good name, viz., the Premier Port. More anon.—Yours, etc.,

“ INTERESTED.”

Customs and Excise Orphans', Widows' and War Memorial Fund.

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