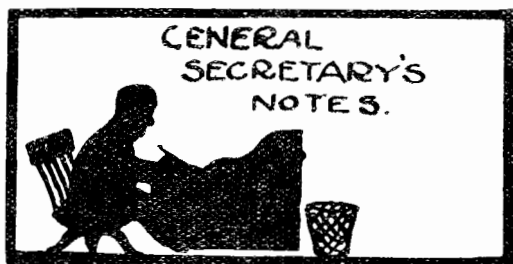


# The Customs Journal.

No. 561.

April 24th, 1926.

Fortnightly.



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

These are busy days at Association headquarters. The Secretaries will be working at high pressure for many days to come. This, of course, is quite a normal state of affairs at this time of the year.

All business to be dealt with at the forthcoming Council meeting must first be submitted to the Executive for approval, and this means the early preparation of all documents, reports, etc., so that ample time may be given for their full consideration. The compiling of a Council agenda is by no means a simple affair. It requires extreme care and a thorough investigation of the business transacted at District meetings during a twelvemonth. The annual stocktaking of Association progress must be made, and the drafting of this report entails much time and labour.

Another item which claims much attention is the co-ordinating of all data and information that is likely to have a bearing on the matters which are to be discussed by the Council. A successful Conference depends on the thoroughness with which this part of the work is performed.

Each year since its inauguration the P.S.A. has registered a steady advance, and judging by the volume of business to be discussed at the coming Conference, the present year is to be no exception.

It is unfortunate that at this juncture the Assistant Secretary has fallen a victim to the exigency of the Service, and is compelled in future to perform his official duties at a station some distance from the scene of action. The physical strain will thereby be increased greatly, but the authorities, in spite of all pleadings, have decreed that this must be so, and we have no right to question their wisdom in these

matters. Mr. Powell will report to the Council as to whether he can carry on his Association duties in the changed circumstances.

Members of the Council are now being supplied with copies of the "New Civilian," and it is hoped that this will enable a more lively interest to be taken in general Service movements. No doubt some attention will be given at the Annual Meeting to the very important developments that have taken place during the past year regarding wider issues than those immediately affecting the P.S.A.

Most Civil Service organisations are waking to the fact that interests affecting the whole Service must in future take a more prominent place in their discussions. A great deal of the failure that has attended National Staff Side efforts has been due to the difficulty of convincing the Government that the Civil Service really is dissatisfied. The tendency of the Official Side is to treat our leading negotiators as people who manufacture grievances. This is perhaps natural when one comes to consider that many associations, whilst keenly interested in the success of various claims put up by the Staff Side, do not concern themselves greatly regarding the methods for promoting the claims. The rank and file will have to take a broader outlook and be more vocal on the important matters affecting the Service as a whole.

The P.S.A. has always endeavoured to fulfil its obligations in this respect, but a certain section of our members have in the past held the view that our domestic affairs should occupy us to the exclusion of all else. The answer to this, of course, is that conditions to-day make it impossible to attend efficiently to our own affairs without we have an up-to-date knowledge of what is happening around us.

Frequently national agreements are affected which have a definite interest, directly or indirectly, for every branch of the Service, and that fact alone warrants an active interest by every Association member in all questions of this nature.

The "New Civilian" provides a means that has not existed before for following up all the important events of the Civil Service, and therefore it is expected that Council members at this year's Conference of the P.S.A. will have a knowledgeable interest in up-to-date Service politics and their bearing on our own domestic activity.

The examination of baggage at Victoria Station has always been a task calling for the

exercise of all those qualities of tact, forbearance and dignity that are the possessions of the ideal Customs Officer, and many tales are told of delicate situations successfully handled.

When the silk duties came along, experienced people foretold friction and trouble with the public, but the prophecy was not fulfilled. Instead, the officers rose to the occasion in splendid style.

To-day the effect of the new duties shows no sign of diminishing, and indeed, there are indications that the work is on the increase. Much interesting matter could be written regarding the numerous unusual incidents in connection with Victoria Baggage, and let us hope that some day in the distant future this will be done.

At the moment it is some satisfaction to be able to say that the Waterguard continues to prove its value in the handling of this very difficult work, and is at the same time contributing quite a respectable amount to the Revenue.

This is a fact worth recording.

\* \* \* \*

An interesting question was asked by the Staff Side at the last Departmental Council meeting. This was in connection with the procedure at a Sworn Enquiry. The point on which information was sought related to the function of the colleague attending as adviser to an accused officer. The Staff Side desired to know what reasons, legal or otherwise, prevented the adviser from assuming pleading powers.

From the statement made by the Official Side it would appear that, though no such restrictions exist, it would not be desirable either in the interests of the Board or the Staff that any departure should be made from the existing practice.

\* \* \* \*

Sir Henry Craik and the Hon. Esmond Harnsworth have been showing a rather comical anxiety to protect His Majesty's Ministers from the control of bureaucracy.

The whole thing is very absurd, and seems to indicate that some of the Service critics have actually succeeded in believing their own mis-statements.

Recently in "G.K.'s Weekly" an analysis was made of the figures quoted in the "Daily Mail" as showing the great increase in the cost of the Civil Service. This analysis indicated the true situation, and the writer concluded his remarks by saying that "Mr. Harnsworth's call to Parliament to guard its privileges from the encroachment of bureaucracy is a trifle funny."

\* \* \* \*

At April 1st the cost-of-living figure stands at 68. The figure for food only is 59. This is the lowest point the cost-of-living figure has yet reached.

J. MERRON.

## CHANGE OF EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

All communications to the Editor (matter for publication, etc.) must in future be addressed to the Editor.

91, Tressillian Road,  
Brockley,  
London, S.E.4.

We would again remind correspondents that matter intended for insertion should reach the Editor not later than the Monday preceding the date of publication.

## PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

### DOVER.

A District meeting was held at the Queen's Head Hotel last week. Unfortunately, the attendance was below the average.

Promotion by merit was one of the main items for discussion, and the members present were very decided that little benefit would be derived from such a scheme. A proposal to reject the scheme as it stands met with no opposition. An alternative scheme was outlined, the main idea being that new entrance to the Landing Staff should be through the Waterguard. By this method it was maintained that we should get a more efficient and satisfied staff, with prospects of promotion for all. It was suggested that discussion would be futile, but eventually it was carried that the suggestion be discussed at local meetings.

Many other items were discussed, including the investing of Association money in the Civil Service Housing Scheme

### GLASGOW.

A District meeting was held at Mavisbank on Wednesday, April 7th. Mr. E. Robbins presided over a fairly large attendance of members.

The question of District office-bearers was brought up for discussion, in consequence of the fact that these officers should not have been elected until the first meeting after March 31st. The meeting ratified the names of members submitted at the last meeting with the exception of Mr. J. Denby, who was re-elected District Organiser, unopposed on this occasion, and Mr. M. Garvie, vice Mr. T. McGlenon (resigned), as one of the Whitley Council representatives.

The remainder of the evening was occupied in discussing local affairs, and various proposals were submitted for necessary action to be taken.

Members of the Glasgow District and Northern Ireland are asked to note the address of the new District Secretary, Mr. W. G. Manson, 14, Willowbank Crescent, Glasgow, W., to whom all communications should in future be sent.

**GRAVESEND.**

A well attended meeting was held at the Liberal Club on Friday, April 9th, nearly every officer off duty being present.

**PROMOTION BY MERIT.**—The District's vote in this matter was scrutinised by three members present, the result being a majority against the scheme.

**CONSTITUTION AND RULES.**—A resolution was carried to delete Rule 6 (a) 6, and to substitute "Special district meetings may be called at any time on the request of 25 per cent. of the members. Only business detailed in the paper convening a special meeting shall be dealt with, but other business of an urgent nature may be dealt with at the discretion of the Chairman."

It was agreed that the Preventive Officers of the District move into Committee to formulate an account of extra duties imposed on the officers of this port for the information of the Executive Committee, and to place on the agenda of the next meeting a discussion of the shipment of bonded stores.

A vote of thanks to the chair brought the meeting to a close at 10.30 p.m.

**LOWESTOFT.**

A meeting was held on Friday, April 9th, with an attendance of 100 per cent.

Discussion took place on the questions of failed Assistant P.O.'s, publication of an official Seniority List, and promotion by merit.

A resolution was passed in sympathy with the efforts made by the Council to provide some outlet for failed A.P.O.'s, and opinion was also expressed that renewed efforts should be made by the Executive to press for the publication of an official seniority list.

Pending the receipt of further information regarding the promotion by merit scheme, discussion of this question was adjourned until the next meeting.

**PLYMOUTH.**

At a District meeting on April 16th, the following officers were elected to officiate during the ensuing year:—Chairman, Mr. A. E. Everett; District Secretary, Mr. J. W. Erickson; District Organiser, Mr. W. Dandy.

The meeting was well attended, and local grievances were discussed at length.

A correspondent sends us a newspaper cutting referring to a police official of an east coast town who has completed 26 years' service, entitling him to pension, and who has offered to continue to serve. His pension will be secured and he will receive an additional allowance of 10 per cent. on his pay while serving. We are asked what we think of this,

We have no doubt that we think just about the same as he does about it; but if the gentleman had been a Civil Servant certain sections of the Press would have lost no time in letting the public at large know what they thought about it.

**THE LATE Mr. A. J. HEWITT, P.O.**

The funeral of our late colleague took place on the 6th inst., and prior to the burial at East Ham Cemetery a service was held at St. Paul's Church, East Ham, London.

A large number of Waterguard Officers of all Grades attended to pay tribute to a most respected colleague, and Messrs. G. H. Baldwin, J. Donovan (Gravesend), H. J. Fowler, W. H. Gosling, W. H. Johnson, H. Miller and J. O'Driscoll, Preventive Officers, were pall-bearers. Among many floral wreaths there was one in daffodils, representing a crown, from the Waterguard Department, London.

Mr. Hewitt was 54 years of age, and except for a short period of service at Wisbech, spent all his official career at Gravesend and London. He leaves one son, to whom all our sympathies are extended in the loss of both his parents, Mrs. Hewitt, as stated in our last issue, predeceasing her husband by a few days.

Mr. Hewitt, Junior, in a letter to Mr. Miller, P.O., desired to express his thanks for the floral tribute, and for the respect shown his father by the presence of so many of his late colleagues.

**GRAVESEND DEBATING SOCIETY.**

The sixth meeting was held at the Liberal Club on Tuesday, March 30th, Mr. A. Richardson occupying the chair.

The subject of the evening's debate, "That Capital Punishment be abolished," proved very instructive, and good points were made by Mr. C. Paisley, whose arguments were ably criticised by Mr. T. Wood. The keen debate which followed was well represented in the ballot, an equal number of votes being recorded for each side. The Chairman awarded his casting vote to the opposition.

Mr. R. Dunlop occupied the chair at the seventh meeting, which was held on April 13th, to discuss the question "That marriage is a hardship to women," proposed by Mr. L. Carnie and opposed by Mr. H. Keeble. The arguments of both speakers showed a good knowledge of the problems of modern housekeeping. Every member present spoke in the ensuing debate, and all testified to the importance of the subject. The ballot resulted in a majority in favour of the opposition.

The Chairman announced that arrangements for the forthcoming mock trial were completed. It is hoped that all members will make a note

of May 11th, and arrange to attend, as much time and thought has been spent in preparing what is hoped will be the most interesting event of the history of the Society. The trial will be on the capital charge.

## C. & E. DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL.

The seventy-second meeting of the Departmental Council was held in London on March 24th, 1926, the chair being taken by A. J. Dyke, Esq., C.B., C.B.E., Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

### ORGANISATION OF STAFF.

The Staff Side proposed that, in view of the lapse of six years since the inception of the Whitley system in the Department was officially announced to the staff, the terms of General Order 79/1919, bearing on the advisability of considering membership of the appropriate associations, should be embodied in a new Order. The Official Side undertook to consider the proposal.

### SENIORITY.

The Staff Side intimated their agreement with the adjourned Official Side proposal that a joint seniority list be compiled of all members of the Treasury Junior Clerical Grade employed in the Department, with a view to securing, so far as may be consistent with efficiency, equality of opportunity of promotion from that Grade. It was stated that this acceptance was subject to the Staff Side's right to bring forward, at a suitable date, their proviso that a common seniority list should be compiled for Higher Clerical Officers on similar lines. A further Staff Side proviso, referring to voluntary transfers of Junior Clerical Officers between the various Headquarters offices in order to obtain general experience on approaching the promotion zone, was accepted at a previous meeting.

### SWORN ENQUIRIES.

The Staff Side enquired as to what restrictions exist to prohibit or render undesirable the grant of full pleading rights to a colleague who may be permitted to be present at a sworn enquiry in the capacity of adviser to the accused. The Official Side stated that there was nothing to prohibit such grant, but that various considerations, which were fully explained, rendered it undesirable in the interests of all concerned.

### DEPARTMENTAL MARKINGS.

Consideration of this subject was further adjourned at the Staff Side's request, it being intimated that it was receiving general attention.

### "P" CLASS.

The Official Side undertook, in response to the Staff Side's request, to inform the latter at

the earliest possible moment how many men of the "P" Class would be appointed to the Department.

### PREVENTIVE OFFICERS' DUTIES.

It was agreed, on a Staff Side proposal, to empower Preventive Officers to assess and receive certain duties, within specified monetary limits, to accompanied baggage and crews' effects.

### COLLECTORS' OFFICES AND SUB-OFFICES.

The Council agreed, on a Special Committee's report, on the staffing, etc., of offices at Goole, Grangemouth, Holyhead, Manchester (Customs), and Portsmouth.

### FIXED OFFICIATORS.

Numerous agreements for the creation of Fixed Officiator centres were confirmed on the basis of Local Committee reports.

### REMUNERATION.

The Council agreed on terms of remuneration for Surveyors, Officers and Women Pension Officers for the additional work arising out of the Old Age Pension Act (Northern Ireland), 1925.

Agreement was also recorded in regard to the payment of special remuneration for work in connection with the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925, in cases where arrears of assistance were due to a station.

### STORES BRANCH.

At the request of the Staff Side, consideration of the Office Committee disagreement on the latter's Staff Side's proposal to increase the annual increments of Warehousemen from £5 to £7 10s. was adjourned.

It was agreed that the posts at present filled by two Watchers and one Unestablished Messenger be filled by three Packers as soon as possible.

### OTHER MATTERS.

A number of Local and Office Committee decisions were considered, with results that have been advised to the Committees concerned.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on April 28th, 1926.

## IMPERIAL SERVICE MEDAL.

An interesting ceremony took place at the Custom House, Gravesend, on April 10th, at which Mr. Donaldson, M.B.E., I.S.O., Waterguard Superintendent, on behalf of H.M. the King, presented to Mr. John Gay, late Preventive Officer, the Imperial Service Medal as an appreciation of his long and meritorious service in the Department.

In addressing the gathering, Mr. Donaldson paid tribute to the good qualities of Mr. Gay, saying he was well worthy of the honour conferred.

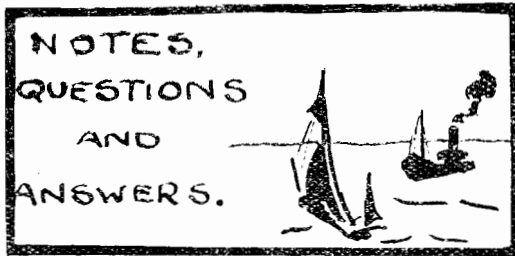
Other speeches were made by some of Mr. Gay's old colleagues, testifying to the good feelings engendered by him during his period of service at Gravesend.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the Boarding Station, Landing Stage, Liverpool, Mr. T. J. G. Coady, P.O. (retired), was presented with the Imperial Service Medal by the Collector of the port, E. Stonham, Esq., O.B.E. The presentation was made in the presence of Mr. Paisley, Superintendent, Messrs. Meiross, Plesants, and Kieran, C.P.O.'s, and all other available members of the Staff—P.O.'s, A.P.O.'s, and Launch Service.

In presenting the decoration, the Collector paid high tribute to Mr. Coady's ability and efficiency as an Officer, and also commented upon the unblemished character which Mr. Coady had maintained during his 36 years of service. He expressed the hope that the example would be followed by all who were present.

Mr. Coady expressed his appreciation of the honour which had been bestowed upon him, and stated that this event, coupled with the memory of the wonderful "send-off" which had been given to him upon his retirement, would live in his mind for ever. He thanked them for their good wishes and expressed the hope that the same measure of happiness and contentment which he enjoyed would be theirs upon their retirement.



All contributions relative to this column should be addressed to "Scrutator," c/o The Editor, 59, Etta Street, Deptford, London, S.E.8.

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

**Question.**

3.—(a) A baggage agent produces to you 8 packages of private effects for clearance and the owners' declaration on the approved form 2 (b). On examining a selected package you discover, wrapped in clothing, 2 bottles of Bay Rum (.22 gall.) which had not been declared. Describe your procedure in dealing with this case.

(b) Under what conditions would you waive payment of duty in respect of silk garments declared and produced by a passenger who is resident in this country?

(c) On boarding a vessel on her arrival coast-wise the master informed you that he had broken the official seal while at sea and had issued to the crew a quantity of Tobacco and Spirits remaining from a Foreign voyage. What action would you take?

**Answer.**

3.—(a) Fully examine the whole of the baggage. Detain the Bay Rum. Transmit full particulars on Form 125 by post to the owner to the address given on the declaration. Report full facts to the Board on Form 158, annexing the relative Notice No. 2b.

(b) In the absence of suspicion, silk garments which are actually worn on the person are not liable to duty. Similarly, goods which are claimed to be reimported are not liable.

Goods which are not actually being worn or claimed as reimports, but are claimed as personal property, and have been in the passenger's possession and abroad for not less than three months, may be passed free of duty if there is no reason to doubt the claim.

In the case of goods not covered by the concessions shown above, duty may be waived in the following circumstances, provided the duty assessable does not exceed a total of £3, i.e., that the P.O. is satisfied that the goods are the bona fide personal property of the importer, are reasonable for his or her personal wear or equipment, and are not intended for other persons or for sale. When the duty on such goods in this case exceeds £3, duty must be charged on the whole of the goods under this heading.

In cases of doubt regarding any of the above concessions, a written declaration is to be requested on Form 104a.

(c) Call upon the master for a written explanation of the circumstances.

Verify the master's statement by enquiry among the crew, and collect any tobacco or spirit that remains unconsumed.

Check the quantity of goods produced and collected with the relative Inward Clearing Bill and Letter of Advice.

Place all the stores produced under seal and endorse the documents accordingly.

Rummage the vessel for any excessive discrepancy.

Request the master to appear before the Collector or other superior officer to make a deposit to cover the illegal breaking of the seal and the duty involved on the missing stores.

Report full particulars to the Collector, showing the quantity and description of the missing goods, and also the duty involved.

**SCRUTATOR.**

## PROMOTION BY MERIT.

By "WEMS."

The proposal to introduce a new system of promotion by merit has aroused a controversy. This is quite natural, but, strange to say, we find some entirely opposed to the principle of the system. It is difficult to understand what some of the correspondents to the "C.J." are driving at really. Some have used the proposal to make subtle suggestions that the members of the Executive are not fair or sincere in their efforts. Others, that such a scheme would work detrimentally to the interests of a particular section.

As the constitution of the Department places automatic promotion by seniority out of the question, the existing system provides for a demonstration of ability through the medium of examination, and, necessarily, it is the man with the thorough knowledge of the regulations who scores. The idea, as far as one can see, is merely to effect an improvement on this system of promotion by merit, and which will accord to the intelligent officer more facilities for displaying his intelligence and realising his ambitions.

It is agreed that the officer who displays the best knowledge of the necessary requirements, who demonstrates that he is fit to undertake the responsibilities of the superior post, should be promoted. It logically follows, then, that the principle embodying such a system of promotion should not be applied in a half-hearted way, as it were, but should be extended, within reasonable limits of service which would ensure experience, to any officer who deems himself efficient and intelligent enough to compete for the superior post.

It is rather obvious that the young man joining the Service, who knows full well that according to his place in the seniority list he will not be called for a number of years to an examination, is too prone to procrastination in the matter of study. The apathy of many A.P.O.'s in the direction of acquiring a knowledge of everyday practice has been a great drawback. His immediate duties do not require of the A.P.O. a searching knowledge of the regulations, and he is more inclined to put off study during the years when he is best able to assimilate knowledge. Study is left to within a short period of the examination, and then we witness a high percentage of failures. There is always a clamour for increased responsibilities and the opening out of avenues for promotion, but the results of each successive examination are certainly not in favour of the Department.

The introduction of a system of competition after a period of service would mean that the new entrant, after settling down in the Service, would have to decide whether he intended to gain the necessary knowledge of the regulations and practice, or whether he would be content to remain in the Grade. If he takes the road to knowledge, then from his earliest years he begins to be a more valuable officer to the Department by his gradual but consistent acquisition of knowledge, and as this spirit would doubtless spread, the "hanger on" would become more rare in evidence. The efficiency of the Grade in the matter of departmental knowledge would be considerably enhanced, the departmental standard would be raised, and an increase in departmental responsibilities would inevitably follow. It is a matter which affects not only the A.P.O. Grade, but every Grade in the Waterguard.

Some interested parties are continually endeavouring to draw a kind of comparison between ex-Boy Messengers and ex-Service men. It is all delightfully vague, and one wonders whether the champions of either side realise that "mud-slinging" is not an effective method of construction. The question of what a man *was* does not enter into the matter, and there is no record to show which side possesses the monopoly of brains. The point is that they are now Waterguard Officers, and their business should be to build in the best interests of the Department. The evil of bringing the "have been" argument into a controversy is that it breeds suspicion and enmity. One can imagine the result of such a spirit in the old nomination days, a section of ex-Butlers, another of ex-Solicitors' Clerks, another of ex-Shellbacks, and so on—a lively prospect for organising one consolidated Association! There is no wish to belittle the merits or aspirations of either the ex-Boy Messengers or the ex-Service men, but we must realise that unity should be the only consideration.

The necessity for the A.P.O. aspiring to promotion is a thorough knowledge of the regulations. It is not necessary to have a university education to acquire that knowledge, either in our Department or in any other Department in the Service, but it requires intelligence, concentration in the matter of everyday practice, and a consistent study of the regulations. The road is open to any man with ambition, whether he be an ex-Boy Messenger or an ex-Service man, and **THE INTELLIGENT MAN SHOULD NOT FEAR COMPETITION.**



Few members thoroughly realise the amount of work attached to the annual Conference before, during and after the sitting. Our Secretaries have for some time past been busy preparing references and searching documents that will have a bearing on the subjects that will come up for discussion. Extreme care has to be observed in this period of preparation, for everybody knows how easy it is to miss a point that might prove of vital necessity in satisfying a questioner or in supporting an argument.

\* \* \* \*

The agenda, too, is a most important matter. There are subjects which, from their general importance, cannot fail to find a place; but there are, again, other matters which affect only a section of the staff, and which must not be lost sight of. Small Port Allowances, for instance, would be of immediate interest to a few, comparatively, but it is an important matter, nevertheless.

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A careful eye is kept upon matters referred from the Executive, and also upon resolutions from the Districts that have accumulated since the last Conference.

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The discussions at this year's Council promise to be no less interesting than in the past, and the problems to be faced will require some very deep thinking and will, no doubt, be met with the seriousness that is due to them. The Districts have usually been very wise in their choice of Councillors, as evidenced by the settled policy that has been laid down for a number of years. Many sections of interest in the Association are looking to this year's Council to untie some extremely tight knots

**PROSECUTIONS.**

**KING'S LYNN.**

At the King's Lynn Police Court, on March 25th, the cook of the s.s. "Coral" from Rotterdam was charged with concealing 5 bottles of Geneva, 3,500 cigarettes, and 12 lb. of tobacco. The case for the Crown was conducted by Mr. J. Potter, C.P.O., and the offender was fined £34 1s. 10d.

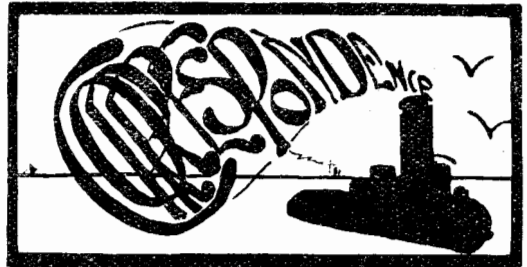
The goods were discovered by the rummage crew under Mr. J. H. Stevens, P.O., Mr. A. Burton finding the Geneva and Mr. W. G. Self the cigarettes and tobacco.



**LIVERPOOL.**

At the Dale Street Police Court, on March 23rd, the Deck Topaz of the s.s. "Tarantia" from Karachi was charged with concealing 1 1/2 lb. cigars, 20-100 pf. gallons brandy, and 2-6 gallon wine, n.e. 42. The offender was found guilty and was fined treble duty-paid value or one month's imprisonment.

The goods were discovered by Mr. J. Brownlow, A.P.O., under the supervision of Mr. S. J. McKinley, P.O.



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.—The gentleman writing under the nom-de-plume of "N.E.42" need hardly have mentioned the fact that he was a 1923 entrant—with all due respect to this class. Does he read the "C.J." regularly? for often enough has the ex-Service Boy Messengers' case been stated in these columns; and anybody with a sense of fair-mindedness could glean whether there is any justification in the claim for preferential treatment or special virtue by this class.

"N.E.42" remarks that the Boy Messengers were fortunate in having employment as such. I fail to see where their fortunes will lie if their claim is not considered with this proposed promotion scheme. Does he think the ex-Service Boy Messengers obtained their positions without an object to attain at the end of their messenger career, which commenced at the lucrative salary of 9s. per week? The ex-Service Boy Messengers are quite willing at any time to pit their brains and intelligence against those persons who are bursting to show their intellect in the examina-

tion room. Our friend "N.E.12" need not worry on the score that we are awe stricken with the thought of meeting others in the open. All we ask is our rights and fair play to the minority.—Yours, etc.,

XSXBM.

Sir.—The General Secretary, in his Notes in the last issue of the "C.J.," mentions that I roundly condemn Mr. Sutton. I have written to the "Journal" on several occasions, and only once have I mentioned his name, and I did not roundly condemn him. I quoted correctly a definite statement represented as being uttered by him at Liverpool, which could not be interpreted as meaning other than that the ex-Service Messengers should fight it out with the ex-Service men and others. That utterance does not appear an excellent way of championing our interests. It must be remembered that Mr. Sutton is the Organising Secretary, and any utterance by him quoted in the "C.J." must have much influence on the lay members. When the scheme was first proposed no mention was made of ex-Service Messengers, and it was only when an agitation commenced in the "Journal" that the Executive took any interest in their case, and even now that interest is not very satisfactory.

We thank Mr. Sutton for his interest, and would welcome some concrete expression of his sympathy. Ex-Service Messengers are few in number and are scattered around the coast; consequently, they are unable to pass any resolutions at District Meetings. As a suggestion to Mr. Sutton, the following amendment could be added to his scheme: "The scheme shall not become operative until the last ex-Service ex-Messenger has been called under the existing method."

"N.E.12." This gentleman advances no facts or arguments, but contents himself with "slinging mud" at the intelligence of the ex-Messengers. No amount of that pleasant pastime can gloss over the definite right of our category. We certainly have sufficient intelligence to know that the promotion by merit scheme is contrary to our interests, and as such we intend to contest it. It is quite natural for a 1923 entrant to be prepared to pit his brains against his senior colleagues. He has everything to gain and nothing to lose. The scheme, in effect, is simply placing diverse interests in complete antagonism one with the other to the detriment of the Association.

Your correspondent with the Latin non-deplume writes high sounding and intellectual phrases which will prove themselves poor palliatives to the many A.P.O.'s who will fail under this scheme, but who, in the course of time, would ordinarily have earned the palm under the old scheme. I do, however, agree with him that the scheme will not solve the failed A.P.O. question. Very few men who have failed

twice in a limited competition of one in two can stand much chance in an intense competition of one in twenty.

As a constructive suggestion, why does not the Association take some active steps to further the earlier retirement scheme? This has been lying dormant on the Agenda of the National Whitley Council for two years. The scheme would solve stagnation and help promotion, and would benefit the whole Association from the oldest to the youngest member.—Yours, etc.,

"AV IN."

#### PROMOTION.

Sir. With reference to the numerous letters published in the "C.J." relating to the injustice to the ex-Service ex-Boy Messengers, there are some points which may not have occurred to the "great majority."

First of all, at a rough estimate there is one ex-Service B.M. to nine other A.P.O.'s (two have not been called for examination), so that, if the "great majority" struck all the names of the B.M.'s off the list, the benefit derived would be negligible; whereas if they let the minority keep the position to which they are entitled, their advantages would be the same, and the B.M.'s would feel that they were getting justice.

Another point is that, prior to the Board stopping the examination during the war, a case was taken to the Board on behalf of the B.M.'s, asking that they may qualify for P.M. before joining the Forces, so that those who returned could immediately take up the position of P.M.

Although similar conditions were obtained by the Boy Clerks and Assistant Clerks, the Board would not allow an examination for Boy Messengers, but they guaranteed our re-instatement and promised that we should lose nothing by joining the Forces. I feel sure that the Organising Secretary was not aware of this when he made his comments in Liverpool on the subject; and it is more than likely that many of the "great majority" are likewise ignorant of such a case being before the Board.—Yours, etc.,

XSXBM2.

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