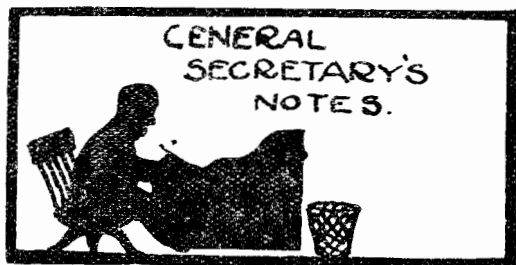


The Customs Journal.

No. 557.

February 27th, 1926.

Fortnightly.



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

A fortnight ago the Civil Service was full of fearful anticipation lest the economy blight should scathe with devastating effect upon their hard-won increments of salary. To-day, feelings of relief prevail, for the danger has passed by us, and there is not for the moment any need for the anxiety that existed amongst numerous Civil Servants who have counted on the security of the incremental system to enable them to discharge their obligations in connection with mortgages or house-purchase. Had the blow fallen it would have been disastrous.

There are reasons for believing, however, that the danger was not so very great as it appeared. The wide publicity given to the unpleasant rumour was really a symptom of the grave anxiety of those who would be badly hit. It was also helped on by the knowledge that the Treasury does not seem to consider that Whitley agreements with the Staff are in any way sacred. Even now it is difficult to believe that any special consideration for the feelings of Civil Servants caused the Government to stay the blow.

Recently in the House of Commons a question from a member elicited the following reply from the Chancellor: "His Majesty's Government have no intention of repudiating the contractual obligations of the State to the investors in national securities."

No doubt the unbusiness in certain quarters which prompted the question was not unconnected with the broadcast suggestion that the Government could break agreements with its own servants with impunity. Possibly we have to thank those powerful monied interests whose instincts always lead them to eschew dangerous propositions where cash is concerned.

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It is no wonder that the Service, suffering from the effects of this crisis, should greet the

famous £200,000 with a curious medley of feelings. Most of us will feel no appreciable benefit if the money is actually granted, and yet we shall be credited by the public with as much benefit as would accrue if the nation's whole income were handed over to us. The result is that an attitude of impatience has been adopted which tempts Civil Servants to fling the money back in the faces of the donors. No doubt a more reasonable tone will prevail when we are able to view the situation more calmly.

The public has lost its sense of reasoning where the Civil Service is concerned, and is willing to accept any picture that an axe-grinding Press cares to place before it. They have been taught by the newspapers to treat the servants of the State with hatred and suspicion. They hear and believe the most outrageous and stupid charges against that body which is regarded by all the world as the finest organisation of its kind.

One can easily imagine the now harassed British public proudly endorsing, when in a more normal frame of mind, the opinions of other nations regarding the fine qualities of the English Civil Service. One can even imagine glowing speeches by prominent citizens insisting that the granting of £200,000 for sports as an aid to preserving the splendid moral and traditions of the Civil Service should be regarded as essential to the welfare of the Empire as the building of battleships. It is not a difficult stretch of imagination to picture them indignantly demanding to know why the "Model Employer" is so tardy in doing what all other big employers have done for their staffs years ago.

The hard facts are, however, that the ordinary man in the street has gradually absorbed the poison on which he has been fed daily, and he now regards the Civil Service as a body of nasty, fat, lazy blood-suckers. Very naturally he is amazed that these obnoxious people should get financial assistance for purposes of recreation and sport. He is not in the mood to see that encouragement of sport in the Service is a very necessary lubrication of an indispensable and remarkably efficient machine.

On the other hand, Civil Servants are sick to death of being constantly maligned and misunderstood, and it is unlikely that a move will be made to refuse acceptance of the £200,000. It would not be a wise course to take, because the gift was promised to the Service long ago, and it would not be a good thing for the Staff to encourage the Government to break one of the few promises that have been made to the Service and kept.

Civil Servants are greatly indebted to the Sports Council for the magnificent work it has done in promoting sport in the Civil Service. An important event in the progress of the good work took place in February 20th, when the King opened the new sports grounds that have been acquired at Chiswick. These grounds contain a very fine pavilion, which was greatly admired by the large and enthusiastic crowd that assembled for the opening ceremony.

The affair was well organised, and splendid entertainment was provided for the visitors in the various matches that took place. The King and the Duke of York made a tour of all the pitches when the games were in full swing, and received a fine reception from the spectators.

In the Association game, Mr. Jack Booker, A.P.O., who is well known as a clever footballer, played for the Service against the Army.

* * *

Amongst the candidates who came to London for the examination I had the pleasure of meeting some of my old Liverpool colleagues. It was a very pleasant reunion in spite of examination worries. One or two came along to see the Association's new office, and they expressed their satisfaction and appreciation of this new departure.

The whole batch of candidates were a goodly crowd to look upon, and seemed fit for anything. Most of them were confident and expressed themselves as satisfied with the papers. There is every reason to think that a high standard has been reached on this occasion.

* * *

Complaints have reached me that in recent issues of Revised Instructions certain parts have been omitted, i.e., Volume 1, Parts 5 and 9, and Volume 2, Part 2. There can be no reason for withholding the issue of these parts, and the probable explanation is that there are none in stock.

A.P.O.'s these days have learned to regard Revised Instructions as of great importance. Serious study of the Regulations is taken up at a much earlier age than used to be the case. It is rather gratifying to note that even the youngest A.P.O.'s are greatly concerned when they fail to receive their full complement of Instructions.

The Association is attending to the matter, and there is no need for the moment to send farther complaints.

* * *

It is a curious fact that though members would be loud in denouncing the Council or the Executive if they were to take any action without reference to the Districts, the greatest difficulty is frequently experienced in obtaining the opinion of the Districts regarding questions submitted to them.

The response to important circulars that have been sent out lately has been most disappointing. It is all the more extraordinary when it is realised that these same circulars provide ample material for interesting debate.

Had the question of Vocational Education been left in the hands of the Council it would by now have been put into operation. As it is, however, there is a danger of its being wrecked by reason of the delay caused through an apparent lack of interest in certain of the Districts where the matter is supposed to be under discussion.

Reports on the Promotion by Merit scheme, and also on the question of the efficiency of launches in the Waterguard Service, are long overdue.

District Secretaries who have not yet dealt with these matters are earnestly requested to attend to them as early as possible.

* * *

For this month the cost-of-living figure has fallen again. It now stands at 73. It certainly looks as though the Food Council is making itself felt. Lord Bradbury is handling the food profiteer pretty severely, and it is not improbable that the dropping cost-of-living figure is a result of his firm stand.

* * *

A fair number of applications have been received from members desiring to take advantage of the special terms that are obtainable in connection with Books' Booklovers' Library. Many more are expected, and it is hoped that officers intending to subscribe will not delay further in applying for the necessary form.

J. MERRON.

OBITUARY.

MR. W. P. HENRY.

It is with great regret that we record the death of another old London colleague in the person of Mr. W. P. Henry, for many years a well-known and respected figure in Waterguard circles. Many members of the Preventive Staff cherish pleasant recollections of intercourse with Walter Henry, whose death has come as a shock to all.

The funeral took place on Thursday, February 11th, and among those present from the Department were Messrs. Gosling and Wilkins, P.O.'s, and Messrs. Amott, Bucknell, Galvin, Myers and Wilkins, A.P.O.'s. A letter has been received from Mr. W. Henry, thanking his father's late colleagues for their ready sympathy and attendance at the funeral, and also for the beautiful wreath which was sent from the London staff.

OUR BOYS.

Congratulations to Mr. Francis Hicks, son of Mr. Hugh Hicks, A.P.O., London, who has recently come out first in a clerical examination for a vacancy in a large City firm at a commencing salary of £170 per annum.

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

BRISTOL.

A meeting of the Bristol Branch was held at the Central Restaurant, Broad Quay, Bristol, on February 4th. Twenty members were present, a number which almost represented 100 per cent. available. The Chairman opened with a few apt remarks and expressed his appreciation of the number in attendance. The promotion scheme put forward by the Executive was discussed at length. The general opinion was that the proposals were to the detriment of the majority, and that the system of promotion by seniority was by far the fairest method. The question was put back for further discussion.

On the election of district officers it was decided that all members present should take part in the election of officials from both Grades.

The officers elected were:—Chairman: Mr. Logan; District Secretary: Mr. Griffin; District Organiser: Mr. Atkins; Local Whitley Representatives: Mr. Lundberg, Mr. Ricks, Mr. Young.

Several questions of purely local interest came forward for discussion. Suitable action was decided upon, and one deputation was elected. A hearty vote of thanks terminated a very successful meeting.

HULL.

The annual meeting was held on January 29th, and was presided over by Mr. A. Cameron. There was but a meagre attendance of members. Several questions arising from the minutes were discussed. Reference was made to the Official Side proposals for an additional rummage crew for Sunday duty, and the reduction of the A.P.O. Grade from 54 to 53. The L.W.C. representative reported what had transpired at the L.W.C. meeting, stating that the questions had been adjourned. Reference was also made to the withdrawal of a Watcher from the Waterguard (Goole), and to the discontinuance of the pier-head office at Goole. Action taken in this matter was approved by the meeting.

The election of the district officers resulted in the re-election of last year's officers, with the exception of the Vice-Chairman and two successors on the L.W.C. Committee, A.P.O. Grade.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

The circular on this subject was read and discussed, and a resolution was unanimously adopted approving the scheme.

PROMOTION BY MERIT.

This thorny question was approached by "masked batteries," but advance was stopped in view of the poor attendance of the A.P.O. Grade. The question was adjourned.

ASSESSMENT OF AD VALOREM DUTIES.

The wording of the regulations on this subject is distasteful to the Waterguard Department. The circular was read and discussed, and a resolution was finally carried approving the action of the Executive Committee that the assessment

of duty on goods imported in passengers' baggage and crews' effects should be regarded as part of the normal duty of a Preventive Officer.

The District Secretary was instructed to write for information on a local matter, and a vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.

WEYMOUTH.

A meeting of the above took place at Weymouth on Wednesday, the 10th inst., to discuss the "Promotion by Merit" scheme, submitted by the Executive Committee.

The members decided unanimously to reject the whole scheme as it stands.

The alternative proposals were as follows:—

- (1) The method of promotion by merit, i.e., qualifying test be continued.
- (2) That reconstruction entrants be eligible to sit according to seniority to be determined by actual service, and that an official list of seniority be published.
- (3) That the present method of two chances be adhered to.
- (4) That A.P.O.'s who have already exhausted their chances of promotion be excluded from this scheme.
- (5) That prospective candidates be notified six months previous to examination.

Mr. BELT (late P.O.).

We are glad to hear that Mr. Belt, who recently retired from the Service, and who is now spending a holiday in South Africa, has comfortably settled down at Cape Town, after a very pleasant voyage. He and Mrs. Belt are experiencing beautiful sunny weather, in striking contrast to the reports being received there of the recent conditions in this part of the globe. Naturally, he was very much interested in the work of the Customs Department when he arrived, and having introduced himself, was well received by the officers and was invited down to their office at any time he cared to go. The duties seem to be very much the same as ours, except that the acting P.O.'s (the same class as our Assistant P.O.'s) receive duty and pay same in to the P.O., who makes out the Primes and pays in to the Custom House. The acting P.O.'s are only termed such when examining baggage. At other times they are Assistant P.O.'s, and do a good deal of patrol work. There do not seem to be any rummage crews as we understand the term at home. We are delighted to know that Mr. and Mrs. Belt are having such a good time, and wish them well during their stay in South Africa.

TUITION.—"Wems" commences a class next month of correspondence tuition. Reply.—"Wems," c/o Editor, 59, Etta Street, Deptford, London, S.E.8. 557

C. and E. DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL.

The seventieth meeting of the Council was held in London on January 27th, 1926, the chair being taken by A. J. Dyke, Esq., C.B., C.B.E., Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Regret was expressed by both Sides at the loss sustained by the Council and the Department by the retirement of Sir F. S. Parry, K.B.E., C.B., and it was agreed to convey to him the sincere good wishes of the Council for his health and happiness in retirement. The Staff Side also expressed their great satisfaction at the appointments made following Sir Sydney's departure.

REMUNERATION.

The Council agreed to rates of extra remuneration payable to Officers and Women Pension Officers for the work of investigating and reporting on claims made under the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925.

An agreement was also recorded terminating the payment of special remuneration for work in connection with the Old Age Pensions Act, 1924.

A Committee disagreement on a Staff Side proposal that Stores Branch Warehousemen should revert to weekly wages was referred back for further consideration.

It was agreed that, as far as practicable, Coast and Land Preventive Men should be paid on Fridays.

SENIORITY.

Terms of reference for a Special Committee appointed at a previous meeting were now agreed as follows:—

"To consider and report on the position to be assigned on the Seniority Lists of the Headquarters Establishment to the Executive Officers transferred from the National Health Insurance Audit Department."

The Council re-adjourned the 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, as far as may be consistent with efficiency, equality of opportunity of promotion from that Grade.

Rules for determining the relative seniority of all Unattached Officers (excluding re-instated men) were agreed to, the three main groups being: (1) Entrants from the March, 1915, and earlier open competitions; (2) former Supervising Assistant Clerks and Assistant Clerks promoted in 1920-21; (3) existing Reconstruction entrants (including entrants under the "Interim Scheme" and entrants from the examination of March 2nd, 1920).

The Official Side indicated their inability to assent to the Staff Side proposal that in allocating duties carrying overtime among the Office Keeper's staff the men should be considered in order of seniority until a suitable man is found, and the men passed over be

definitely told that they are unsuitable. The question was re-adjourned.

RELIEFS.

It was agreed that in all absences of the Collector without relief, in Collections where there is no Assistant Collector, any urgent matters of a general nature affecting the Outdoor business or staff, which would ordinarily be dealt with by the Collector himself, should be dealt with by the senior Surveyor in the Collector's residence.

Following disagreements on specific cases considered at previous meetings, a general disagreement was registered on the question of the payment of "acting" allowance to Assistant Preventive Officers at certain small ports.

DEPARTMENTAL CLERKS.

It was agreed that Departmental Clerks employed on landing and shipping stations, and on warehouse stations other than warehouse accounts offices, if not subject to the supervision of a Clerk, Higher Grade, should be under the directions and supervision of the senior available Officer on duty in the station, except to the overriding authority of the Surveyor.

The Official Side withdrew the proposal that in cases where Waterguard Officers are employed wholly on clerical duties steps should be taken to substitute for those Officers members of the Departmental Clerical Class.

DEPARTMENTAL MARKINGS.

The Council re-adjourned, after further consideration, the Staff Side proposal that facilities be given for representations to be made by or on behalf of Temporary Clerks in respect of Departmental markings, and that such representations, if successful, be made effective. In this connection it was noted that it was now impossible for any modifications to be made in markings made for the 1925 Southborough examination, except in the case of clerical errors. The Staff Side pressed that facilities be given, as suggested, for future occasions, e.g., the establishment of the "P" Class.

PENSION STATIONS.

An agreement was arrived at fixing the basis for scheming Woman Pension Officer Stations, the normal number of pensioners being 1,000.

SMALL PORTS.

It was agreed that in cases where no applications are received for vacancies at small ports to which allowances have been assigned under G.O. 2/23, Part IV., Preventive Officers who are appointed should be required to remain in the port to which they are appointed for a period of three years, at the expiration of which they would be subject to transfer, at their own instance or at that of the Crown, to a large port at the Crown's expense.

LEAVE.

The Council ratified, with certain minor amendments, a final agreement received on the subject of the leave arrangements for the Outdoor Service. Various instructions in eleven

General Orders and three Circulars are thereby cancelled. The arrangements for the Departmental Clerical Class will be determined later.

ASSISTANCE.

A disagreement was registered, after further discussion, on the Staff Side proposal that only in cases where assistance was given during the actual progress of the work should any deduction be made from the special remuneration payable for work arising out of the Old Age Pensions Act, 1924.

SUGGESTIONS.

The Council received a schedule of eighteen suggestions which had been forwarded by the Board of Customs and Excise for information. Of these, ten had been wholly or partly adopted.

OFFICERS' REPORTS.

The agreement of April 29th, 1925, respecting Revenue reports was extended to cover the case of Officers and Women Pension Officers reporting on Old Age Pension matters.

SURVEYORS ON LOCAL COMMITTEES (OFFICIAL SIDES).

The Official Side stated, in response to enquiry, that the selection of the senior Surveyor would be the normal rule, but if in particular cases the application of the rule would cause inconvenience to the Staff Side they would be quite prepared to relax it. Their main proposal was not limited to the senior Surveyor in residence.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEETING.

It was agreed that the question of the replacement of Officers of Customs and Excise seconded to the Government Laboratory by Laboratory Assistant on revenue testing work be reported to the National Council, with a view to an inter-Departmental meeting being convened to consider the question.

OTHER MATTERS.

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

The next meeting of the Council will be held on February 24th, 1926.

GRAVESEND DEBATING SOCIETY.

The second meeting of the above Society was held at the Liberal Club on Tuesday, February 2nd. Mr. H. Keeble occupied the chair. Mr. A. W. Purdye gave an address on the objects of the Society, and on the benefits that were to be obtained from good debate.

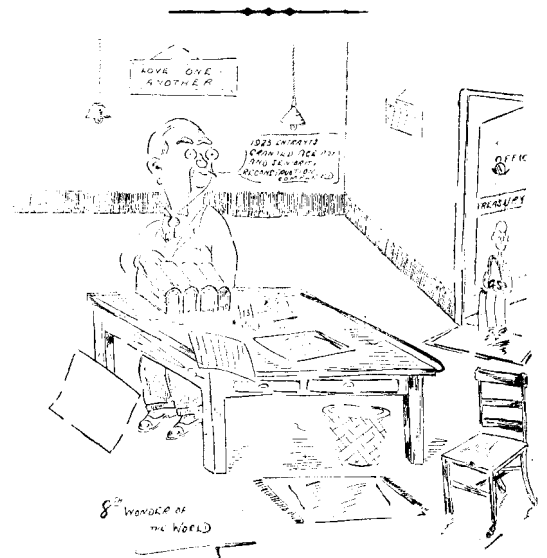
An intensely interesting discussion was held on a resolution "That tobacco smoking is not beneficial to individuals." The proposer, Mr. H. G. Raspison, made out a very good case, and was keenly opposed by Mr. G. E. N. Camburn. Some very intelligent points were made in the discussion that resulted. The resulting ballot showed a majority in favour of the resolution.

THE EXAMINATION.

ONE OR TWO IMPRESSIONS.

A correspondent, styling himself "First Timer," gives the impression that the papers set at the last examination were very fair, but is of the opinion that a wider range of questions could be given for the candidate to select from. He also makes the suggestion that the examination could be held in various centres, and that the examiners could interview candidates in the same manner as they do when an A.P.O. enters the Service. A comparison is drawn between the candidate who, after a nine hours' journey from Scotland, finds himself in a strange bed and has difficulty in obtaining sleep, and the candidate who is at home in London and is thoroughly at ease right through the test. A given number of questions should be asked each candidate, and marks allotted to each question. Our friend asks the reason for the distinction between the number of questions put to different candidates. We are always ready to admit that there is room for discussion on the subject of the examination, but very few people will be found to agree that it would be fairest to ask every candidate the same oral questions; it couldn't be done. These questions, as we have seen them, seem to centre round the type of work that the victim has been used to, so that a man from a naval port would be questioned on matters relating to the Navy, while someone from a packet port would naturally come in for interrogation on matters of baggage.

It would seem that there is not much wrong with the present test as an examination. It is the method of calling up for the examination that is the bone of contention.



SECTIONAL COMMITTEE NOTES.

"Would we have obtained a more favourable settlement of the Reconstruction Claim had it been pressed other than through Whitleyism?" This is the question set me and which I am asked to reply to through this column. As we could not possibly have associated ourselves with Whitleyism and then broken away for Reconstruction, I am going to presume, as I imagine is the intention of my correspondent, that when the Whitley system came into being the Water-guard Associations rejected it and elected to carry on as before, i.e., by Parliamentary action and/or by direct representations to the Board. At once I must say that in my opinion, for all practical purposes, when the Staff Associations as a whole accepted Whitleyism, the House of Commons was not open to them in the same way as it had been before. I am not aware whether any Associations did actually refuse the Whitley system, but, if they did, it would be interesting to hear how their subsequent parliamentary representations were met. The very first question which, I think, would have met a parliamentary deputation must have been: "Why are you not working through Whitleyism like other Staff Associations?" I cannot think of any convincing reply that could have been made, at that time, anyhow, to such a question. Simply to have replied that we had no faith in a system which we had never tried, and which had been secured for us only after much pressure by parliamentary action, would have been very feeble. The interview would probably have ended in us receiving some plain words about the folly of breaking away from other Staff Associations and the stupidity of trying to be different to everybody else. I hope I am not unfair, but I do not see what else could have happened. Even if a Member of the House had been brought to commence enquiries, he himself would quickly have had to find an answer to the question. The only other non-Whitley avenue was by petition or deputation to the Board, and here we would have been flung back to treat with just those whom we refused to meet in Whitleyism and without any of the undoubted advantages which the latter system gives to Staff Sides. No! The only thing, the only sensible thing, was to fall into line with other Associations, and no apology is needed for those who led us into Whitleyism. Had we not at first joined in we must eventually by circumstances have been driven in. To have remained outside would have been to stand still, and my answer to the question must be that, as badly as he thinks we did within Whitleyism, our lot would have been very much worse had we remained outside.

* * * *

My correspondent must remember that Whitleyism for the Civil Service was set up by Parliament with the express object of putting the Staffs, through their representatives, in close and continuous touch with those whom, previously, the Associations had found it a matter of tremendous difficulty to get at. Before Whitleyism, the great difficulty was to get those who could help us (the Treasury of the Board of Customs) to listen to us and, as I understand it, Parliamentary representation was directed to that end. As soon as we were promised a hearing then Parliamentary action ceased. Take, for instance, the Waterguard Enquiry of 1912. The great thing was to get an enquiry. It came as the result of many, many months of what must have been weary work in the lobbies of the House of Commons. But, as soon as the enquiry was promised, Parliamentary interest ceased and the Associations were left to prove their claim to the Committee of Enquiry. My point is that, broadly speaking, the most that Parliamentary action did, and was expected to do, was to get us a hearing. Whitleyism gives us that without having to canvass for it, and I think it is something well worth having. I never did any lobbying, but one can easily imagine that it was a pride-destroying business, and we must always hold in grateful memory those sturdy "agitators," whose shoulders we are now, so to speak, standing upon.

The other day I made a comparison of the pay and conditions the Grades started with when separated from the Landing Staff in 1892 (after the Goschen Minute), and the position as it was in 1920 when we entered Whitleyism. The all-round progress over that time was simply astonishing: in fact, looking at the figures and altered conditions, one would not have thought they applied to the same posts. I have said this to show that I do not underestimate what was accomplished before Whitleyism came. But I want to say this, too—I believe at least as much would have been effected through Whitleyism, and probably in less time. This statement will no doubt bring the rejoinder that what happened to our 1920 Reconstruction Claim, dealt with through Whitleyism, is evidence to the contrary. My reply to that is, that whatever was lost was due to circumstances totally apart from Whitleyism. The difficulties and delays encountered would have been there if Whitleyism had never seen life. The space now at disposal does not permit this ground being covered to-day, but later I will try and show that Whitleyism must not be blamed for what happened to our Reconstruction Claim.

M. P. O'FLYNN.



By "SEAGULL."

"The New Civilian"—much more truthful than that "daily" friend of ours; the newsy villain.

There are still one or two old rowing boats being used in London by the Waterguard. For this reason we are all dubbed professionals and cannot compete as amateurs in any rowing sports.

Having seen some of our chaps kicking around in these old tubs, we have wondered where the term professional comes from; and how one can call them amateurs, either, beats us.

If we could get a hold on part of that £200,000, we would invest it in a job line of motor boats, and present them to our bankrupt country.

We didn't notice any of our own Association with the King at Chiswick last week, but one or two C.S. Association officials seemed quite at home when chatting with His Majesty, who took quite a lively interest in all that was going on.

CROYDON AERODROME.

As a result of representation made by the P.S.A. some time ago, it was decided to arrange for Waterguard Officers to attend Croydon Aerodrome for an experimental period. The following letter has now been received from the Board. The Executive Committee are keeping in close touch with the matter:—

Custom House, London, E.C.3.
January 26th, 1926.

Sir,—With reference to my letter of August 23rd last of even No., I am directed by the Board of Customs and Excise to inform you that the results of the weekly visits of a Preventive Officer to Croydon Aerodrome have not been such as to justify the continuance of the experiment and that the visits have accordingly been terminated.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
(Sgd.) A. S. LUPTON.

The General Secretary,
Customs and Excise Preventive
Staff Association.



It is a very healthy sign that the spirit of debate has arisen in at least one part. A much healthier sign, and one to be always looked for, is the ability to see an argument, not only from one's own point of view, but also from the standpoint of an opponent; for, after all, the object of debate is to search for the truth. Debate, however, to be effective, should be organised, for the word itself is quite a wide term. Every man is continually debating, with himself or someone else. Most forms of conversation, discussions in Parliament and on public platforms, correspondence in newspapers, arguments between one person and another, are forms of debate. An argument between two persons is often fruitless because neither side is willing to view the question from the other's point of view. Each will state his case without any intention of agreeing that the other has come to a correct conclusion or that there might be some truth in his opinion.

Organised debate is a source of increased knowledge, and a well-conducted debating society is of infinite value to those who participate, particularly if the subjects chosen are such that have an educative tendency. It is possible to choose subjects of a frivolous nature, and even from these it is possible to glean much knowledge; how much more so, then, there is to be gained from the study and discussion of an intellectual subject. Subjects for debate should be carefully chosen, and discussion should be led by persons who could be relied upon to study their points well before facing their hearers. They should be prepared to state their case clearly, to explain their points, and to prove their arguments. They should respect the other side, and be ready to accept any truths the other side may offer. They should remember that the object of debate is not merely to beat the opposition. The opposition may be right, and the object in view is that of arriving at a correct solution of the subject under discussion. Those who object to this may just as well keep clear of debate, for they will misuse and distrust it.

We have touched upon these points briefly, for we would like to see more of these activities. We have mentioned before that we are glad to see non-Service subjects being chosen. There are subjects innumerable to select from. We would point out, however, that great care should be taken in choosing, for it is not an unknown occurrence for a society to lose interest and fizzle out simply because matter for debate has been indiscriminately chosen.

BUNK(ER).**THE RUMMAGE TELLS ONE.**

(Rights reserved!)

I crept in the darkling twilight
 With my bulls-eye flashing round,
 And I stopped, and I looked, and listened,
 But never the least small sound.

I valiantly drew my tuck-stick,
 And struck in the small, small coal,
 And struck till I felt there was nothing
 In that dusty, dismal hole.

I walked a few more paces
 And struck, and struck again;
 And I struck again in frenzy;
 I struck with might and main.

Ah! what was that, shining, glinting,
 Where the fallen coal has been?
 Sure, the largest tin of opium
 That ever these eyes had seen.

I stopped, and I looked, and listened,
 And never a soul to tell.
 Again I looked, and beside that
 Lay two more tins as well.

I rubbed my hands in pleasure
 At those beautiful tins so square,
 And I feverishly sought for others
 But the others were not there.

Just then I heard a footfall
 Such as only the keenest hear,
 And I turned and collared that Chinky.
 "So! What are you doing here?"

"No belongee me, Sir!"
 You should have heard his cries.
 "Don't tell 'em." I said on the instant,
 "I can see it in your eyes."

Then the heartless craven knelt, sir,
 And prayed me to let him go.
 But, you know, sir, duty's duty,
 And I cried aloud, "No! No!"

Then the treacherous wretch, as he knelt, sir,
 Brought a shovel down on my head,
 And I fell with an awful welt, sir,
 And—softly crept back into bed.

"CHARACTACUS."

The author makes no apology; the above is
 apology enough.

SOUTHAMPTON'S ANNUAL DINNER.

The esteem with which the members of the Waterguard Staff of H.M. Customs and Excise are held by the shipping community was strikingly demonstrated at the fourth annual dinner at the Dolphin Hotel, Southampton, when representatives of all the leading maritime interests of the port gathered to pay tribute to this important Department. A gathering of 102 was presided over by Mr. A. W. Scarlett, M.B.E., the Waterguard Superintendent, who was supported by Capt. G. N. Braithwaite (R.M.S.P. Co.), Capt. D. Stonehouse (U.S. Lines, Southampton), Mr. E. W. Thew (Collector of Customs), Col. J. E. Dawe, Engineer-Commander W. A. Graham, O.B.E., R.N.R., Capt. N. Ramsay (U.S. Lines), and Mr. T. E. Holdaway (Surveyor, H.M. Customs and Excise). Others present included Mr. G. Gordon Bouts, Mr. A. L. Gosling, and Mr. R. Mellor. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. N. Thompson, I.S.O., M.B.E. (Inspector-General of the Waterguard Department), Mr. J. G. Fitzsimmons (Deputy Inspector-General), and a number of well-known Southampton shipping officials.

"THE VISITORS."

After the loyal toast had been honoured, Mr. A. W. Scarlett submitted "The Visitors," coupling with it the name of Capt. Braithwaite. He said they were honoured that night by the presence of several influential gentlemen connected with the shipping and commercial business of Southampton. He was pleased to say that the relationship between them was of the happiest character.

Capt. Braithwaite responded in his characteristically breezy manner. He said he had been privileged to attend most of the Customs and Excise gatherings, which, he was sure, did the Department a deal of good. Dinners, however, were not the only functions which called for admiration in connection with that splendid Government Service.

THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.

Col. J. Dawe toasted "H.M. Customs and Excise," coupling with it the name of Mr. E. W. Thew, the Collector. From the point of view of experience of the Department, he said, probably no one present was more qualified to speak than he was of their work and the excellent manner in which it was carried out. He had been closely acquainted with their duties for over 40 years, and had every reason to remember the assistance which all the officers, from the Collector downwards, rendered him when he joined a shipping office and was entrusted with passing all types of freight through the Customs.

The people of Southampton regarded the port as a highly favoured and very important one, and they also realised that they were well served by the Customs and Excise. The officers

were efficient, and although their work was far from easy, they carried it out with the greatest tact.

GROWING TRADE.

Mr. E. W. Thew, in reply, paid tribute to Col. Dawe, after which he said that an occasion of that sort afforded an opportunity of reviewing the events of the past twelve months. Last year witnessed an improvement in many respects, notably an increase by 500,000 tons in the amount of net tonnage from foreign ports, but the remarkable development in the amount of work undertaken at Southampton could not be more fittingly demonstrated than by stating that the net tonnage from foreign ports had increased from 2,000,000 tons in 1919 to nearly 9,000,000 tons in 1925 (excluding coastwise traffic). He thought the Customs people could claim a little credit for "pushing" that tonnage through. The number of passengers inward was about 296,050, and this substantial figure had entailed a tremendous amount of work for the Department. He was pleased, however, to say it had been carried out without the slightest adverse criticism.

THE SILK DUTIES.

Discussing the introduction of new duties in 1925, Mr. Thew said that Southampton was taking more in silk duty than any other port in the British Isles.

Practically the whole of the Swiss silk trade passed through the port, and it was whispered that one local firm of forwarding agents were paying £500,000 a year on this duty alone. The silk duty was a very curious duty to collect, and he doubted if there was any other in force which touched more trades and classes of goods than that duty had affected. It had entailed a complete revision of the methods of entry of certain commodities, and these, embracing an exceptionally wide field, ranged from fishing nets to ladies' corsets. The lace and embroidery duty had also created problems—it was really surprising the number of goods that fell in this category—while the work of the Department had been further increased by the re-imposition of the McKenna Duties embracing all types of mechanical articles—big and small—from motor cars downwards.

CHANGES OF STAFF.

Speaking on more personal matters, Mr. Thew said the past year had witnessed many changes in the staff. Some members had gone while others were going in the near future. They had to say Good-bye to Mr. Trewavis, who was going to South Shields; to Mr. Brown, who was going to the Long Room at Cardiff; to Mr. Dornan, who was leaving for Sheffield; and to Mr. Baker, who was travelling to Swansea. He was sure they would wish their old colleagues the best of luck. (Applause.)

Another figure who would be missed during the next twelve months was Mr. Sturdy, and he regretted to inform the company that the function that evening was the last at which their Chairman would be officially representing them.

Mr. Trewavis responded and wished his colleagues the best of health, and expressed his thanks for the generous treatment meted out to him during his stay at Southampton.

MUSICAL NUMBERS.

During the evening there were many delightful musical interludes, in which the members of the Department revealed their talent. The Merry Imps—the Customs and Excise Jazz Band—excelled, while songs were efficiently rendered by Messrs. H. S. Platten, T. Williams, F. Emery, and B. A. Bacon; banjo solos by Mr. J. J. Knight, violin solos by Mr. F. Cridland, humorous monologues by Mr. J. T. Probert, and a bassoon solo by Mr. W. Baker. The Aero Quartette also pleased with their numbers, but one of the features of the musical programme was the hearty community singing. Messrs. Vaudin and Jones made excellent accompanists.



PROSECUTION.

HULL.

At Hull Police Court, on the 2nd inst., C. A. Harding, 2nd engineer, s.s. "York," from Antwerp, was charged with concealing 1 lb. tobacco O.S., 3 lb. 8 oz. cigars, and 11/100 gall. of Geneva, and was fined £10, or in default two months' imprisonment.

The goods were found by Mr. W. S. Outram, A.P.O., of the Rummage Crew under the supervision of Mr. J. J. Sephton, P.O. The case was conducted by Mr. M. Hurley, C.P.O.

SMUGGLERS.

CIVILISATION IN THE CUSTOM HOUSE.

The following appeared recently in the "Manchester Guardian":—

A memorable definition in Mr. E. V. Lucas's recent glossary of travel, if I remember aright, was "Civilisation, The Failure of . . . See Channel Crossings."

Channel crossings, we may surely assume, included that phase of them that begins and ends in the Custom House. Small wonder that the faces of Custom House officials, especially at Dover, are gloomy in repose. Deep depression, sadness, and disgust lurk behind the eyes of the more sensitive of countenance.

Here is civilisation put to the test—and look at it! See how well-bred public school men and delicately nurtured ladies comport themselves when they want to get a seat on the first boat train! The shouting, the shoving, the hurly-burly, the stamping underfoot of the babes and sucklings, of the halt, the maimed, and the blind. The recriminations when someone else's hat box is dumped on Mrs. X's rug bundle; the swift-flung words and few when the next fellow shows not the slightest alacrity to shift his golf clubs sufficiently to enable you to slew round your suit-case so that the lid will lift!

Just look at 'em all! And just listen to 'em all!

The fibs! The whoppers! The stories! More lies are told in Dover Custom House ten minutes after the arrival of a boat train than at any one time at any other place on earth, except the Custom Houses of Newhaven, Southampton, Kobe, Calcutta, Liverpool, Antwerp, and San Francisco. Benedictine, silk, tea, tobacco, field glasses, cocaine, watches, perfume? What are these strange words? Nobody, clearly, has ever heard them before. We are milk drinkers to a man and wearers of sackcloth and canvas. Anything dutiable to declare? I should say not! How rude of these dapper young men in jaunty peaked caps to suggest that well-dressed folk like us, with the accents of the governing class, the mainstay of the virtue and moral enlightenment of the nation, the setters of examples, would stoop to diddling the Internal Revenue!

But listen to the chatter in the dining-car as the boat train thundered up to town. Everyone has smuggled something. There is enough illicit liqueur and perfume on the train to fill a swimming bath! The Customs men know it, but they cannot search four thousand pieces of hand baggage in half an hour. They rely on our honour . . .

If doctors see human nature at its best, surely Custom House officers see it at its worst.

B.D.



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

Just after the examination was held in March, 1925, I urged those A.P.O.'s, whose opportunity was fast approaching to qualify for the position of Preventive Officer, to commence studying if they had not already done so.

This opportunity has come and gone; some for the first time and some for the second.

I sincerely hope my advice was taken and that, as I assured them, they did not find the test too difficult a task.

In these days of competition for seniority on the successful list, I trust that the majority of the candidates are more concerned as to their prospective place of merit than as to whether they have passed or not.

A glance through the question papers shows that any candidate who was anxious as to his future and accepted the advice given from time to time, both in this column and elsewhere, ought to feel fairly comfortable as to the result.

The first paper shows that in twenty-four sub-questions only three cannot be termed as "revenue" subjects. As revenue matters are of primary interest, I can safely say that the test was exceedingly fair and should have been successfully dealt with by candidates who had their future at heart. The candidates themselves admit that the second paper was "O.K." Enough said! As regards the oral—well, I am unable to pass an opinion except that knowledge should have made the candidates at ease.

Let me repeat my advice to all prospective candidates for the next examination.

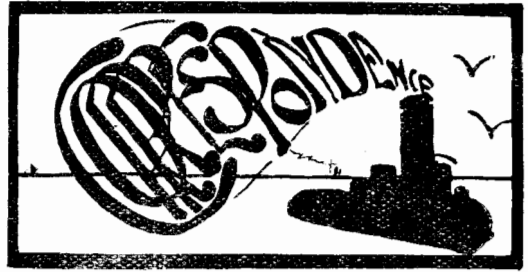
Commence to study now. Do not put off until next winter. As a test, try to answer the questions of the recent examination under examination conditions. It will certainly give you a good idea as to what knowledge you have of your everyday work.

To satisfy many of the recent examination candidates, I am giving below the brief answers to calculations required in the second paper. All the questions will be dealt with in subsequent issues.

SECOND PAPER.

Calculation Answers.

- 1.—£14 7s. 9d.
- 2.—(i.) £21 7s. 9d., £42 19s. 2d., £64 8s. 9d.
- (ii.) £6 15s. 1d., £13 10s. 2d., £20 5s. 3d.
- 3.—402 64/100 tons.
- 4.—Duty £1 19s. 3d., Deposit £2 13s. 3d.
- 5.—£2 3s. 11d.
- 6.—172 33/100 tons.



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.

TRIBUTE TO Mr. J. WICKHAM.

At the Old Arcade Assembly Rooms, Cardiff, a presentation by all branches of the Customs and Excise was made to their late Chief Preventive Officer, Mr. J. Wickham.

The room was taxed to its utmost to contain representatives of the Service from Newport to Fishguard desirous of doing honour to Mr. Wickham.

Moreover, the unity of the Service was manifested in letters read from Sheerness, Weymouth, London, Dundee, Bristol and Birkenhead, apologising for absence, and wishing "the chief" a long and happy retirement.

The chair was taken by the Collector of Customs and Excise, Cardiff (Mr. B. J. Churchill-Lemon), supported by Messrs. J. Andrews, W.S., W. J. Evans (Superintendent, retired), J. Howells (C.P.O., Cardiff), Barrett (C.P.O., Newport), and representatives of both branches of the Service over a wide area.

In calling upon Mr. Andrews to make the presentation, Mr. Churchill-Lemon spoke of the high qualities possessed by Mr. Wickham. His integrity, loyalty, humour, and tact, together with an unflinching courtesy, coupled with leniency and sympathy, had endeared him to all.

Messrs. Parrish, Owen, Densley, Lafferty, Mills, Holland, W. J. Evans, Barrett, and Warne, representing various branches of the Services, rendered further tribute to Mr. Wickham.

The presentation, consisting of a case of cutlery, fish knives and forks, pipes and pouch, to Mr. Wickham, and a dressing-case to Mrs. Wickham, was made by Mr. J. Andrews.

Mr. Wickham, who was visibly moved, responded briefly, hoping he deserved all the good things said of him.

The presentation was followed by a musical programme arranged by the Waterguard Social Committee.

THE A.P.O. AND THE EXAMINATION.

Sir,—I am very much surprised at the apparent inertia of the members vitally affected in opposing the Executive Committee's promotion scheme. I refer to ex-Messengers.

Quite a number, owing to their age, just missed entering the Waterguard in 1915 with the candidates who have sat at the recent examination for Preventive Officer.

They, of course, entered as ex-Service men and headed the seniority list of post-war entrants.

Is it reasonable to expect them to agree to a scheme which will reduce their chances of promotion within a short period, from, say, two to one, to twenty to one?—Yours, etc.,

POSSIBLE VICTIM.

* * *

Sir,—In regard to the suggested new scheme of examination of Assistant Preventive Officers for the purpose of proving fitness for promotion, I would like to submit a few points, which to me appear to be of considerable importance in this scheme.

(1) A standard pass mark should be fixed, and this standard should remain constant over a lengthy period, say, a period covering four or five examinations, and after that it could be reviewed, if review was considered desirable, in the light of experience.

(2) An examination should be held at least once a year, and this irrespective of whether there were vacancies.

(3) All candidates who attained the required pass mark should receive their appointment on promotion according to their position on the list of the successful.

(4) All successful candidates at one examination to be given their appointments, or at least

the opportunity of taking an appointment, before a candidate successful at a subsequent examination is promoted.

Bearing these points in mind, I think the scheme can be made an excellent one, and the results both from the Staff's point of view and the Department's, should be most satisfactory.—
Yours, etc.,

TONY.

PRESENTATIONS.

GRAVESEND.

Prior to the recent departure for Hull of Mr. J. J. Sephton, P.O., this gentleman was the recipient of a handsome present of an oxidised silver fruit bowl and two vases, subscribed by his colleagues and friends of the Waterguard, Immigration, and C.I.D. Services.

The chair was taken by Mr. Sharrock, P.O., and the presentation made by Mr. Donovan, P.O., in the presence of a representative assembly.

Mr. Sharrock, in an eloquent speech, referred to the high esteem in which Mr. Sephton was held by the officials of the various Departments housed in the Custom House at Gravesend, thanked him for his past services on behalf of the Customs Sports Club, and wished him, Mrs. and Miss Sephton, the best of health and good luck for the future.

Speeches followed by Messrs. Williamson (Launches), Palmer and Camburn (A.P.O.'s), Rouffignac (Immigration Department), Keeble (C.I.D.), and others, testifying to Mr. Sephton's general popularity and sincere regret at his departure.

"For he's a jolly good fellow" was then sung, and "au revoir" bade to "one of the best."

SOUTHAMPTON.

An interesting event took place at the Waterguard Office on February 6th when Mr. J. Trewavas, A.P.O., was made the recipient of a barometer from the officers at the port to mark the occasion of his transfer on promotion to the position of Preventive Officer at North Shields.

Mr. A. W. Scarlett, M.B.E., Waterguard Superintendent, in making the presentation, wished Mr. Trewavas every success in his new port. Mr. Trewavas suitably responded, and it was noted with satisfaction that the barometer stood at "Fair," a reading which was regarded as a good omen.

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

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