

The Customs Journal.

No. 579.

January 1st, 1927.

Fortnightly.



Our readers will learn with great regret of the illness, over the Christmas holidays, of Mrs. Merron. She was taken ill on Christmas Eve, and only the greatest care prevented an attack of pneumonia. We have received news at the time of going to press that she is now on the mend. The General Secretary has our sincerest wishes for the speedy recovery of his wife. These circumstances, coupled with the fact that he himself has contracted a serious chill, will explain the absence of the General Secretary's Notes in this issue.

* * * *

It is but once in a number of years that we are able to publish on January 1st. But it so happens that on this occasion we appear on the day itself to wish all a Happy and a Prosperous New Year. May 1927 be an improvement on its predecessor. We have, of course, much to be thankful for during the past year. A healthy mind never needs look far for cause for thanks. The Association has performed some useful work in several directions, not the least important of which has been the launching of the Vocational Education Scheme. The Committee has now reached a point where it can make a definite move ahead, and the prophecy of starting business early in the New Year is fulfilled in the announcement in this issue that application forms are in course of preparation and circulation. The project itself has been an ambitious one, and well deserves the hearty support of the Association membership, for on this support now rests the success or failure of the scheme. The Committee has done its part so far with a thoroughness that is most admirable, and has amply justified the selection made by the Council.

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"A Smuggler's Song," reprinted in this issue, was intended for inclusion in the Christmas Number. Permission to reprint was sought rather late in the day, and it became necessary to hold over until now. The lines are well known to many of us, and recall the days when fleetness of foot was a bigger asset than now,

when surreptitious importations were being considered.

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In order to include as much as possible in the Christmas Number, we decided to omit the general index to Volume 23 and to include it in this. This issue will consequently be the last one of Volume 23.

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Much inconvenience is occasioned to contributors who are still addressing letters to the old Editorial address. This was changed last May, and the new address has appeared inside the cover for the past eight months.

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

Annual Council Elections.

The members in the respective electoral areas are hereby informed that the following members have been duly nominated as Grade representatives on the Council for the Area indicated:—

P.O. GRADE.

London Area.—Mr. M. J. Griffiths, Mr. A. N. Lake.

A.P.O. GRADE.

South Coast Area.—Mr. S. E. D. Ball (Dover), Mr. J. W. Erickson (Plymouth), Mr. W. S. Goldsmith (Folkestone), Mr. H. O'S. Moody (Falmouth).

Gravesend Area.—Mr. S. Dines, Mr. J. A. O'Connor.

Tyne Area.—Mr. L. N. Cumberlidge (Newcastle), Mr. T. R. Keightley (Newcastle), Mr. A. Shortland (Hartlepool).

Scottish Area.—Mr. J. Denby (Ardrossan), Mr. A. Milne (Leith), Mr. K. Sutherland (Aberdeen).

Ballot papers are now being circulated, and members are requested to ensure that their vote is recorded. Ballot papers may be forwarded through the District or Local Organiser, or if preferred, they may be sent direct to the Association Office, 13, Beer Lane, E.C.3. In this latter connection, I desire to inform members that the ballot paper may be forwarded in an open envelope under a ½d. stamp.

The following members have been elected unopposed to the Council as P.O. Grade representatives for the area indicated:—

Mr. W. G. Thomson, Liverpool; Mr. G. E. N. Griffiths, South Wales; Mr. P. W. Howard, Hull; Mr. W. Manson, Scotland.

The election of Mr. Manson is consequent upon the transfer from the Area of Mr. W. M. Sheehan.

For the Executive Committee,
J. T. SUTTON,
Organising Secretary.

BRISTOL.

A meeting was held at the Central Restaurant, Broad Quay, on December 2nd. Mr. Logan presided over a good attendance.

The election of local Whitley representatives resulted in "no change."

A resolution was carried recommending the reduction of the Association subscription to 5s. per quarter.

On the subject of a Waterguard Code, the meeting came to the conclusion that a separate Code was not necessary, and that any alteration should be opposed.

HARWICH.

Under the chairmanship of the General Secretary, Mr. J. Merron, and ably supported by the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Powell, a very interesting meeting was held at the Queen's Hotel, Dovercourt, on December 10th, 1926. Several local affairs were discussed, and the Chairman gave us his advice as to the best way of dealing with them.

Outside local matters, the most lengthy discussion took place over item No. 4 on the agenda, which read: "Reduction of Subscriptions to the P.S.A." but after the Chairman and Mr. Powell had answered numerous questions regarding the income and expenditure, the possibility of cutting the expenditure down and also producing the figures of every item, it was found that the Association was being run on the most economical lines, and the meeting was unanimous in withdrawing the proposition.

Questions were put to the chair concerning the Seniority of ex-Service Men, Educational Classes, Uniform, Waterguard Code, and Electric Lamps, and each item was explained most satisfactorily.

The meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Merron and Mr. Powell for coming along to enlighten us on the subjects we were doubtful of, and a vote of confidence in the Association was moved which was heartily applauded.

CONCERT AT SOUTHAMPTON.

It was a happy and appreciative gathering of Civil Servants and their friends that met at the Civil Service Sports Ground, Southampton, on December 11th, when the third concert of the winter series was provided by H.M. Customs.

The chair was taken by Mr. E. W. Thew (Collector), and with him was Mr. A. Langridge (Ministry of Health) and Mr. W. Bradshaw (Ordnance Survey Office). For three hours the

company were entertained with items by Messrs. Williams, Parsons, Emery, Knight (banjo solos), and Cridland (violin solos), while the "Arco Septette," directed by Mr. White, P.O., with their classical numbers, and the "Merry Imps," with their syncopated numbers, contributed to an enjoyable evening.

The humorous songs of Mr. Probert (C.I.D.) and the violin solos of Miss Moody were also enthusiastically received, but the feature of the evening was the community singing, in which everyone present joined heartily.

Much credit is due to Mr. H. S. Platten, P.O., who was responsible for the arrangements, and also to the artistes, whose efforts were greatly appreciated by all present.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

The following letter draws attention to the advertisement on the next page:—

The Editor,

"Customs Journal."

Sir,—The Central Committee set up by the Association to foster the keener desire for a thorough knowledge of the regulations is now in a position to invite applications from those Assistant Preventive Officers who desire assistance in this direction.

The Scheme provides for three distinct courses—

(1) A Preliminary Course, extending over two quarters and intended for those who have so far made no study of the regulations.

(2) An Intermediate Course, which will take the student through an intensive survey of the whole of the regulations applicable to Waterguard Officers.

(3) An Advanced Course, during which questions of the examination type will be constantly presented to the student.

The first course is limited to twenty sets of papers within two terms, and the fee is 5s. per quarter. The duration of the second and third courses is at the option of the student, but the Committee advise at least four terms at the Intermediate and three at the Advanced. The fees are 12s. 6d. and 20s. per term respectively.

Enrolment is limited to Preventive Staff Association members.

The Committee has been fortunate enough to secure the co-operation of the following well-informed coaches:—Messrs. E. O. G. Ashford, A. P. Angus, L. Gardiner, W. H. Finlay, W. Jeffrey, A. N. Lake, W. M. Sheehan.

Application forms are now in the hands of the various District Organisers, but lest they have insufficient to go round, the one on page 927 may be used.

Yours faithfully,

C. R. PURSER.

**To Assistant Preventive Officers who
are Members of the Preventive Staff
Association and seek promotion.**

Are you interested in

THE GREATEST INVESTMENT

the Association has yet offered to you?

Three Years' Study

under the Association Scheme

will cost you £8/5/0.

SUCCESS AT THE EXAMINATION

means a financial gain to you of at least
£3,000, calculated on the basic scales of
pay of the two Grades.

THE HIGHER YOU RISE THE GREATER WILL BE YOUR GAIN

Ensure success by enrolling to-day.

The Secretary (V.E.C.),
Preventive Staff Association,
13, Beer Lane, London, E.C.3.

Please enrol me for a Preliminary Course
Intermediate Course (delete courses not required) in Waterguard
Advanced Course

Departmental Regulations. Postal Order, payable to C. R. Purser, London, value
..... (insert amount), enclosed.

Name

Address

(Note.—Where possible, preference of tutors will be given if desired.)

Fees: 5/0, 12/6 and 20/0 per term respectively.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The following letter has been forwarded to the Prime Minister by the Staff Side (N.W.C.):

December 20th, 1926.

Sir,—

I am asked by the Staff Side of the National Council for the Administrative and Legal Departments of the Civil Service to advert to the correspondence which recently passed between that body and yourself on a request that you should receive a deputation on the question of procedure of Whitley Councils in the Civil Service, and the working of the Arbitration Agreement. I am to point out that since your inability to receive oral representations was communicated to the Staff Side certain new and important considerations have arisen which justify the request that you will look again at the proposal to receive a deputation.

In the ordinary course the Staff Side would feel not only unwilling, but unable to press for the personal attention of the Prime Minister so soon after a decision had been given, and it is only in the light of what the Staff Side regard as exceptional circumstances that the request for a deputation is reopened.

It will be recalled that the interview was desired in order that the Staff Side views on one or two vital points of principle might be discussed, one of which related to the interpretation of the agreement on arbitration.

The divergence of view between the two Sides of the National Council on the subject has now become interwoven with a completely new point—one of principle affecting the relationship that should subsist between the two Sides of the National body.

I have no doubt that your attention has been drawn to a statement made by the President of the Industrial Court in an Award on a claim before the Court sitting as the Civil Service Arbitration Court, claiming the non-continuance of the Cost-of-Living Bonus "Super-cut." I enclose a copy of the Award and would draw attention to the following references in it:—

"Such undertaking could be withdrawn by the overriding authority of Parliament, but it was only natural in the circumstances of the present case that feelings of resentment would be aroused when the 'Super-cut' was put into force without consultation on the Whitley Council.

"The Court are of opinion that as there is in existence a Whitley Council for Civil Service matters, every effort should be made to bring forward all questions within its jurisdiction for discussion before executive action is taken.

"During the hearing of the case it became clear that the parties were at issue as to the scope of discussions on the Whitley Council . . ."

It will be observed that in the award of the Court on the super-cut case the position has been reached wherein the Court regard it neces-

sary, in adjudicating on staff claims, to give weight to considerations other than those affecting the merits of the case. This new, and from the staff point of view grave—element in the consideration of a Court whose function is intended to be purely judicial, raises a question which, difficult though it may prove to discuss, must be faced if a Civil Service Arbitration Court is to perform its duties with the full confidence of the Civil Service; and without impugning the good faith of the Court, the Staff Side would desire to raise the question of a revision of the existing agreement. The authority for such a revision could only come from the Official Side with the full authority of the Government. The proposed personal interview would provide a suitable and convenient opportunity for the Prime Minister to receive at first hand the views of the staff.

The Staff Side are of opinion that the comment of the Court on the relationship between the Government and Civil Servants through the machinery of the National Whitley Council raises an issue of profound importance, not only to the Civil Service, but to the Government. If, as the Staff Side assume, the Government view as expressed by the Official Side of the Council remains unchanged since the question at issue was discussed on the National Council, the Staff Side feel that an overwhelming case exists for the presentation of their views personally to the Head of the Government.

You may also be aware that on more than one occasion executive action has been taken by the Treasury or other Government Departments on questions that should first be discussed through Whitley machinery. In other cases, executive action has followed Whitley disagreement without recourse to arbitration procedure.

The Staff Side also find in practice that in the absence of opportunities of discussing the important matters of principle upon which the Staff Side would like to make representations to you personally, approaches have to be made from time to time to Members of Parliament to exercise their responsibilities towards State servants. It is frequently the case that M.P.'s express the view that Parliament, having sanctioned the establishment of Joint Councils in the Government Service, there should be no need for Members to be troubled with matters that ought to be discussed and settled on the National Council. Thus the Staff Side are placed in great difficulties, as Members of the House of Commons cannot be persuaded that the Government refuse to permit the Whitley Councils to be used for their real—and primary—purpose.

In all the circumstances, the Staff Side respectfully request you to be good enough to give further consideration to their request that they may be given an opportunity of presenting their views in a personal interview.—I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) GEORGE MIDDLETON.

The Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P.,
10, Downing Street, S.W.1.



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

In many quarters the question has arisen as to the necessity of the Vocational Education Scheme that has just been formed.

It has been implied that, up to the present, the staff has got on very well without any organised method of study, and that there is no reason why things should not continue as heretofore.

Perhaps it would not be inopportune at this time to devote a few minutes to this interesting venture.

Being somewhat interested in the Scheme, perhaps I am not presuming too much in voicing the following details.

Our regulations are becoming more varied each year. Consequently, there are many more contentious points to-day than there were a few years ago.

An increasing demand for knowledge is obvious in all walks of life, and is therefore very much prevalent in our own Department.

The staff to-day will not be put off with such excuses as "The practice here is to . . ." and "You will not get queried if you do this," and "Do that." We naturally want to know which is right and which is wrong.

The present methods of study do not produce unity and correctness of action in many subjects.

The Scheme will endeavour to overcome this difficulty.

Promotion by merit has also caused a deeper probing into the studies of the staff, mainly to ensure a higher place on the successful list.

The Waterguard Staff generally are alarmed at the number of failures at the examination for P.O.-ship. The staff have decided that this number of failures can be greatly reduced by organised study.

The examination is, in the first place, "qualifying" for the rank of P.O.-ship, and secondly, "competitive" regarding order of promotion to that Grade.

I am sure the Scheme will reduce the number of failures and cause keener competition for seniority as P.O.'s.

Beyond an attractive advertisement in our very creditable Christmas Number of this journal, followed (I think) by one in this issue, the operations of the Central Committee are, as

yet, unknown. This Committee have, however, been very busy, meeting every week, and are hopeful of launching their Scheme early in the New Year.

Like every new idea, it will take a long time to get settled down to smooth working.

I am confident that, with the full and sympathetic support of the staff, the efforts and deliberations of the Committee will achieve the success anticipated and deserved of such a helpful project.

"SCRUTATOR."

TO THE A.P.O.'s, SCOTLAND AND NORTH IRELAND.

Gentlemen,—Probably most of you are wondering why I have not written my "election letter" before this. Well, I was always of the opinion that these followed the publication of nominations, so now that these are to hand I will just say my few words.

As you will see, my colleagues in Leith have again nominated me, and I have accepted the nomination. During my two years in office I have always done what I could for the grade as a whole, and particularly for the grade in our outlying and much-scattered area. If I have satisfied you I trust you will return me again. I am really keen to be returned, but do not for one minute imagine it is a job to be run after. It means a great deal of work, and much time occupied in Association affairs. My real reason for asking your support is that during my time in office I have developed a real liking for Association work, and I feel that with this and your support I shall again be useful to you. The subjects which have received most of my "speaking and writing" support during the last two years are Seniority of Post-War Entrants—and from the first I have fought for the preservation of the vested interests of ex-Boy Messengers; New Conditions of Entry into the Waterguard; Monthly Pay for A.P.O.'s; and the Re-grading of the Waterguard Staff. A little point of explanation may not go amiss here. While I was fighting—in two Conferences—for the reconsideration of Seniority of Post-War Entrants, several of my colleagues throughout the area imagined that I was acting in my own interests. I'm 31 years of age now, and I did not enter the Service till December, 1919—that should be enough!

Gentlemen, I trust you will again return me, and I assure you that if you do I shall do all I can, but please remember that I would like more support and more criticism.

Don't forget, too, that the Council evidently approved of my election, for they elected me to the Executive Committee—the first Scottish and North Ireland Councillor to be on that body in the P.S.A.—Yours, etc.,

A. MILNE, A.P.O.

CIVIL SERVICE CONFEDERATION.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Civil Service Confederation was held on Monday, December 20th, 1926, at Caxton Hall, Westminster. Mr. W. H. James presided over an attendance of twenty-eight.

Reports were given of recent proceedings of the Civil Service National Whitley Council, particularly on the subjects of the amendments to the Constitution of the National Council proposed by the Staff Side at the Annual Meeting of the Council on December 10th, 1926; Super-cut Arbitration Award; Acting Allowances; Hours of attendance of officers employed in London other than at Headquarters Offices; Joint Committee to consider the question of staff operating calculating machines; Open Competition; Contagious Diseases—analysis of sick leave—proposed medical test on engagement of temporary Civil Servants; Vacancies on the National Staff Side occasioned by the withdrawal of the Joint Consultative Committee from the National Council; Progress on the Higher Grades Committee. A communication is being addressed to constituent organisations concerned on the subject of the representation of Higher Grades.

Reports were given of recent proceedings of the National Federation of Professional Workers, particularly on the subjects of Income Tax Allowances; Offices Regulation Bill—proposed re-introduction next Parliamentary session; campaign to organise clerical workers in outside industry. Communications were received from the National Federation on the subjects of (i.) individual and collective agreements, and (ii.) company unions and pensions schemes. It was decided that the Federation should be supplied with any available information on these subjects.

In regard to the campaign being conducted by the Civil Service Rights Defence Committee, in opposition to the threatened Government legislation to prohibit the affiliation of Civil Service staff associations to outside industrial and political bodies, it was reported that active work was being carried on in the constituencies, deputations to Members of Parliament were proceeding, and meetings were being arranged.

It was decided that the Half-yearly Report on the work of the Confederation, presented to and adopted by the Half-yearly Council meeting on November 27th, 1926, should be printed, and copies supplied to constituent organisations at a cheap rate. Constituent organisations are being communicated with on this subject.

The General Secretary referred to two questions which had been raised at the Half-yearly Council meeting, in endeavouring to answer which from memory and on the spur of the moment, he had given the impression, he thought, that the Confederation office was at fault. On looking up the facts, however, he had

found this was not so, and in neither case was there any negligence attributable to the office.

The question of group representation on the Executive Committee was discussed, arising out of the constitutional amendments adopted by the recent Half-yearly Council meeting, and the Executive Committee decided to apply the Constitution as it stands, as amended by the Half-yearly Council, and to co-opt, as a temporary measure, any existing members of the Executive Committee who, under the strict application of the Constitution, would lose their seats on the Executive Committee.

In reply to questions on the subject of unestablished back service counting for pension, it was stated that a meeting of the Staff Side of the Superannuation Committee of the National Whitley Council would be summoned early in the New Year, when these and other matters before the Committee would be under consideration.

On the subject of outstanding border-line cases in connection with the Single Men's War Bonus, it was reported that cases for submission to the proposed independent adjudicator were being prepared.

Attention was drawn to the question of pay for work performed on public holidays, and it was decided that information be obtained from constituent organisations as to the existing practice and that the matter be referred to the General Purposes Committee for consideration and report.

SOLVED.

(A Question of Identity.)

At first appearance, he was decidedly seedy, and his fore and aft rig-out stamped him, to my mind, a nautical man, as he sauntered along the quayside at a South Wales port. Probably an ill-paid second mate on a Cardiff tramp owned by one of the less generous shipping firms of that city, I surmised. Closer inspection failed to reveal the secret of his cap badge, weather and age having combined successfully to obliterate any recognisable feature thereof. The aforesaid closer inspection, however, disclosed the fact that, apart from his uniform, he was well dressed. His collar was snow-white, his tie (black silk) of commendable neatness, and his shoes, well-fitting, serviceable and smart, set off to advantage his black cashmere socks. My curiosity was aroused. Why should a man, apparently almost fastidious about some articles of his attire, be so negligent in others? Why so neat about the neck, and so baggy at the knees? Why such smart shoes, but such ancient and dilapidated sleeve braid? The man's manner conveyed nothing. A certain assured air and a keen, almost prying, look about the eyes gave me no clue. Almost immediately, however, an answer was vouchsafed to my unspoken question. A voice from a steamer alongside the quay hailed the paradox. "Officer,

we've just had some bonded stores put aboard; will you come and fix them up?" The scales fell from my eyes. My mystery man was a mystery no longer.

He was just a Preventive Officer whose issue of uniform was considerably overdue.

GEN.

A SMUGGLER'S SONG.

If you wake at midnight and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind or looking in
the street.

Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen
go by!

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk,

Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gen-
tlemen go by.

Running round the woodlump, if you chance to
find

Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of
brandy wine,
Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em
for your play,
Put the brushwood back again and they'll be
gone next day!

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark.

If you see the stable door sitting open wide;
If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
If your mother mends a coat all cut about and
tore,
If the lining's wet and warm—don't you ask no
more!

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark.

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue
and red,
You be careful what you say and mindful what
is said.

If they call you pretty maid and chuck you
'neath the chin,
Don't you tell where no one is nor yet where
no one's been.

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark.

Knocks and footsteps round the house; whistles
after dark,
You've no call for running out till the house-
dogs bark.

Trusty's here and Pincher's there, and see how
dumb they lie.

They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen
go by.

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark.

If you do as you've been told likely there's a
chance

You'll be give a dainty doll, all the way from
France,

With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood—
A present from the Gentlemen, along o' being
good!

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk,

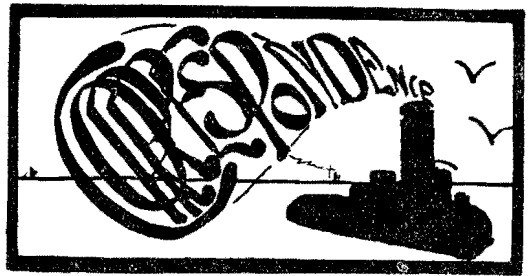
Laces for the lady, letters for a spy,
And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gen-
tlemen go by!

Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie—
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen
go by.

KIPLING.

[From Kipling's prose—inclusive edition.]

Reprinted by Mr. Kipling's kind permission.



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.

WATERGUARD PAY.

Sir,—Mr. E. T. Sandford's rejoinder in support of his "Action" letter does not greatly augment his original contention. Apparently his commendable enthusiasm overwhelmed all other considerations. Perhaps he does not realise that Executive work is not simply a question of "Ask and ye shall receive." There is much to be said for the word "tactics."

His first point is that the P.S.A. officials have failed to keep in line with the officials of other Service organisations in claiming improved salary scales. He mentions airily that some are already in receipt of an increase. I am very doubtful whether he can give an instance where an increase has resulted from recent agitation. The very best he can say of others is that they are fighting for one. My reply is that so are we. A fight that shows no result may be commendable, but is not very satisfactory, and can hardly be held up as a shining example.

Then Mr. Sandford says, "Everybody's doing it except us," and later contradicts himself

with the admission that "we were aware that the Executive had been given instructions." I would suggest that he makes himself conversant with the constitution of the P.S.A.

To the rational mind, our leaders do not "appear to be looking for the opportune moment from the point of view of officialdom." They are most decidedly looking for the opportune moment in the interests of the Waterguard staff, and Mr. Sandford's "head against a brick wall method" will certainly not appeal to them.

Regarding his allusion to "Axes," I should like to call his mind back to a certain rather over-crowded little meeting of Civil Servants, held at the Albert Hall not so very long ago, and its outcome.

Also, I hope he does not assume that he is the only Local Secretary who reads the "New Civilian."—Yours, etc.,

GEN.

THE CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

The solution to the crossword puzzle in the last issue will be published in the next, appearing on January 15th.

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