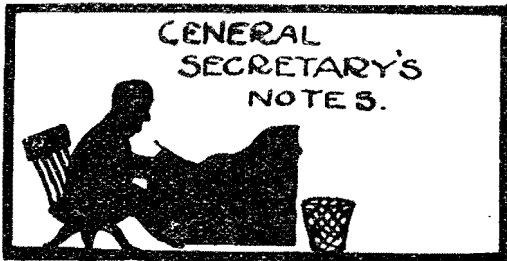


The Customs Journal.

No. 597.

September 10th, 1927.

Fortnightly.



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

Preventive Staff Association—
Thames Chambers,
13, Beer Lane,
London, E.C.3.

The proposal made at the recent Conference, that the "Customs Journal" should be published monthly instead of fortnightly, has had at least one useful effect. It has started people thinking more seriously about the problem that confronts those whose task it is to keep the little paper going. This is all to the good, because too often do members, with little thought, refer to the "Journal" in terms that are not complimentary. Just a little reflection would cause them to realise that adverse criticism coming from the members is about the last thing that should happen. Our "Journal" is the mirror of the Waterguard Staff, and if what they see in it is not to their liking, the remedy is quite obvious.

The one thing to be kept in mind when studying this question is that the "Customs Journal" depends entirely upon voluntary contributors. If the paper is dull or uninteresting, then the same description must apply to the members who fail to make it bright and lively.

A common mistake is to make comparisons with other Service journals, and it is overlooked that these other publications are run on quite a different basis. The Associations connected with them have large memberships able to give substantial financial support. The wide circulation of these papers also makes possible a good revenue from advertisements. In these circumstances there is everything favourable for producing high-class material, for the simple reason that contributors can be paid for their work, and, not less important, the Editor is in a much better position to refuse unsuitable matter submitted for publication.

In the case of the "C.J.," the only ground upon which the Editor could gracefully refuse publication of a contributor's effort regarded as unsuitable would be that his space was crowded. He is, however, very rarely in that happy position, and this is so very obvious.

Yet, we have in the Department numbers of people who could keep the Editor busy with interesting and lively contributions—and, not necessarily dealing with the shortcomings of the Association.

* * * *

In spite of all the things that are said, however, it is not at all certain that the "C.J." is so uninteresting as some would have us believe. The letter by "Detail" in the previous issue would indicate that, though certain deficiencies are realised, the "Journal" is looked forward to eagerly by members at small ports and other isolated places. There is every evidence that "Detail" is right, and even in the large ports, where Service news is more readily obtainable, members would be considerably disturbed if the "Journal" ceased to make its appearance. We have only to cast our minds back to that disastrous period during the War when publication was suspended for a time.

* * * *

Perhaps my remarks on this subject have been somewhat lengthy, but I am ready to take all the criticism that may come to me on that score, because I consider it a matter of first importance, and because it is one which will soon be under discussion in every District. There is still much more that could be said, and it is hoped that members will say it—not only amongst themselves, but in the "Journal."

* * * *

District Meetings are now being held all over the country to receive the Councillors' report of the Conference. Several important items have been referred by the Council to the Districts in order to get full discussion by the members. There is usually a tendency, which is not altogether desirable, to dispose of such subjects in summary fashion after inadequate consideration at a single meeting. The result is that decisions are sometimes reached which indicate a lack of knowledge regarding essential details. It is far better to adjourn any matter if the fullest possible information upon it is not available. Willing assistance is always to be had from Headquarters when requested.

* * * *

As has been remarked on other occasions in these columns, the London District is in a favoured position compared with provincial Branches. Not only are two Councillors able to attend District Meetings, but the Association

Headquarters staff are always present. Thus there is every incentive for any member with a live interest in Waterguard affairs to come along and gain all the latest information. Full details of general Service activities, as well as those of our own Association, are always available at these meetings. Despite this incentive, meetings in London are not as well attended as might be expected. At one time the complaint of the absentee was that there was nothing on the agenda worth discussing. Now, however, the system has been adopted of including on the agenda every subject in the Association programme, giving opportunity for a member to single out any subject which specially interests him. The plea, now, of the stayaways is that the agenda is much too unwieldy.

* * * *

There is a strong rumour going about that the forthcoming London District Meeting, fixed for Thursday, September 15th, is likely to prove an exception to the rule. A bumper attendance is prophesied, and many new faces are expected to be seen. If the prophets are right, the D.S. will be a happy man, and the old faithful regulars will enjoy the experience. This new and welcome interest in the practical side of Association affairs will, no doubt, give added zest to the Councillors when retailing their Conference experiences.

In any case, I wish to make a special appeal to every London member to make a special effort to attend this meeting. Some very important matters are to be discussed which are likely to have far-reaching results. It is the duty of every member concerned to do his bit in showing that London can lead the country in shaping Association policy.

* * * *

I had the pleasure of being present when the London Waterguard Cricket Team, at their own ground, played Gravesend on August 31st. It will be remembered that the London team were beaten when they visited Gravesend. On this occasion they were more fortunate. The weather was perfect, and everyone spent a most enjoyable evening, concluding with a short musical programme after tea.

There is no doubt that Gravesend is an excellent team; and they are grand sportsmen. They were heartily cheered as their char-a-banc departed on its homeward journey.

* * * *

The London team is improving immensely, and considering that this is their first season, they have done very well. They have had a good many obstacles to overcome, but hopes are high for a good start off next season now that the foundation of the Club is made.

Mr. C. E. Egan takes a keen and active interest in the fortunes of the team. His efforts have made the existence of the team possible.

Mr. S. E. Romans is also an ardent supporter, but, unfortunately, was unable to be present at the Gravesend matches.

Anticipations of an examination for promotion to the rank of Preventive Officer early next year have been fulfilled by the announcement in G.O. 70 that this important event will take place in February next.

It is not possible to forecast how many will be called, and the only safe way is for those who are anywhere near the mark to place themselves in the hands of the V.E.C.

The Educational Scheme is reliable and efficient, and the pupils have the advantage of studying questions carefully compiled by a group of experienced men.

* * * *

The National Staff Side have been giving very careful consideration to the proposal for alteration of the date and periodicity of the cost-of-living bonus revision. Statistics have been gathered and closely examined. It is expected, as a result, that the Staff Side will decide not to favour any alteration in the existing arrangements.

* * * *

The reduction in bonus for the new period ranges from £1 0s. 6d. to £1 6s. 5d. per month for Preventive Officers; and for Assistant Preventive Officers, from 2s. 8d. to 4s. 4d. per week. The amount involved for the whole Service is about £1,250,000.

The drop of two points on this occasion, though anything but pleasant, is not so serious a matter as appears at first glance. At the last revision we only just scrambled through by a fraction for the increase of two points. We have had the benefit for a full six months of the extra point we so nearly lost at that time, and so to lose it at this stage is not too bad.

* * * *

Arrangements are being made, I hear, for the employment of a Customs aeroplane on the coasts of Mecklenburg, Lubeck, and Oldenburg. Vessels will be signalled by means of a flag in the day time, and by green rockets at night time. Every facility must be given for the Customs Officers to board vessels thus signalled.

Promotion problems will no doubt be eliminated in the Customs Department of Mecklenburg. J. MERRON.

PROSECUTION AT PORTSMOUTH.

At the City Police Court, on August 15th, an ex-C.P.O., R.N., pleaded guilty to illegally harbouring 15½ lb. of tobacco, the duty on which amounted to £8/13/8. The goods were found during a search by the police of the offender's residence. Offender stated that he made up sailors' tobacco and took ½ piece from each man's pound, and that was how he collected such a quantity.

Mr. G. B. Hart, C.P.O., who prosecuted for the Crown, said he had been instructed to ask for the full penalty of treble duty and value. The Bench imposed a fine of £10/0/11.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

that failure to secure promotion from A.P.O. to P.O. represents a financial loss to a candidate of at least £3,000. Through the medium of your elected representatives you have asked for and obtained a system of promotion by merit.

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ASSISTANCE

to obtain the best possible place in the examination?

The Association has instituted a Section to deal with this problem in place of the old haphazard method of tuition. A New Term commences last week in SEPTEMBER, and if you are interested you should

FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM NOW.

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

Please enrol me for 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

Tutors.—Messrs. Angus, Finley, Gardiner, Gordon, Jeffreys, Lake, Sheehan, and Thomson.

Please indicate Tutor desired, and choice of Tutors will be given as far as possible.

Fees: 10/0, 15/0 and 20/0 per term respectively.

PARLIAMENT.

By "CARACTACUS."

VIII.—THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

Without special enquiry, it is well-nigh impossible to conceive the enormous difference between the Parliamentary world of to-day and that of a century ago. For instance, in the seventy years before the Act of 1832 it is fairly safe to say that 50 per cent. of the members of the House of Commons were nominated by patrons, whose interests had to be studied and whose lightest wish was tantamount to an order. Acquisition of a seat was only too often in the nature of a family investment. Here is an instance culled from *Iberty*. In 1810 a young man was roundly abused by his elder brother for lack of zeal in his family's behalf. His reply is illuminating.

"As to my being justifiable in thus abandoning the interests of my family," he writes, "after all the money that has been spent to bring me into Parliament, I have only to answer that the money so spent has, I think, been well spent. Your lord lieutenantcy and Peter's receiver-generalship have been the consequence. In point of pecuniary advantage to the family, the receiver-generalship pays more than the interest on the capital sum."

Patronage was a valuable thing to the owner. A George Selwyn returned two members for Ludgershall and sometimes one for Gloucester. He held, as a result, and all at the same time, the offices of Surveyor-General of Crown Lands, Registrar of Chancery at Barbadoes, and Surveyor of the Meltings and Clerk of the Irons in the Mint. He never surveyed a piece of land in his life, was never within a thousand miles of Barbadoes, and visited the Mint but once a week, when he ordered and ate a good dinner at the expense of the nation. But he drew his pay!

Posts in the Customs and Excise were used as bribes in the constituencies, and one instance is recorded that when, in 1782, Revenue Officers were disfranchised, Bossinney, a Cornish fishing village, then a borough, had its electorate reduced to one.

The only means of obtaining a seat other than by patronage was to buy one. Prices ruled high, and tended to mount ever higher. The practice was quite recognised, and the Treasury would even strike a bargain with a candidate as to how the cost of election should be divided between them. The Whig administration of 1803 used the practice to increase the public revenue by buying seats as cheaply as possible and selling them to the highest bidders. In the twenty years preceding the Act of 1832, the price of a seat averaged about £5,000 to £6,000.

Although these things are sordid and make unpleasant reading, we must remember that the Parliament of that day was the foundation stone of a system which has been copied wholesale by

pretty well every country in the world, with the possible exception of Hungary. Moreover, if we follow the trend of thought of that time, and judge by eighteenth and early nineteenth century standards, we shall probably conclude that the Reform Acts were even a little in advance of the people in some respects. The Conservatives of the time were influenced by the terrors of the French Revolution, which was the outcome of a wave of feeling which swept the whole Continent, **including this country**, and they were convinced that the existing brand of franchise and the methods of control in the constituencies were the best that could be devised to represent the various interests and the ruling powers as they then were, especially remembering the extent of the discordant elements which had to be kept within the constitution. Perhaps, in the circumstances, any attempt at more democratic methods would have resulted in sheer anarchy. With all their coarseness and their errors of omission and commission, their corrupt practices, it must be conceded that they did great things, brought the country through terrible times of stress, and paved the way for the industrial era which was upon us, even if these acts **were** forced upon them and the results not designed.

But the reaction against the terrors of the French Revolution passed away, and certain great leaders of reformist thought, like Bentham, forced themselves into the public eye. We had our James Mill and Francis Place, others as great as they, and countless smaller fry, the forerunners of democracy. The discontent of the middle classes at their exclusion from political power, the attempts at repression of a working class who would no longer consent to be repressed, who felt that they should be something more than mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, created and developed the feeling that Commons was out of sympathy and touch with the country at large. The Reform Bill was introduced by aristocrats, but it was the middle classes who forced it through and moulded it as an instrument of democracy. It is true that as the House had formerly been dominated by the aristocracy, now it became largely the tool of the middle classes, reflecting their vices and their virtues, but it effected a change in the legislation of the country whose importance cannot be exaggerated. The previous century produced a great volume of legislation, but little of it of a permanent character, and still less of any great value to a country which was feeling its growing pains. Much of it was of a local character, such as authorising the construction of roads and canals, work which is now done by local authorities, and regulating

the conduct of industries and the conditions of labour. After the Reform Act we find the poor law remodelled, municipal corporations revolutionised, and the fabric of central and local government largely rebuilt. The function of Parliament became less executive and more legislative, the executive passing more and more into the hands of the king's ministers. It was necessary that it should be so, for the growing complexity of the new laws required to deal effectively with the rapidly changing balance of trade, the surge of industrialism, the need of intricate administrative changes necessarily lessened the share of individual members in the initiation and enactment of laws and correspondingly enhanced the responsibility of the government, so that the specialisation which is the great feature of the industrial era was felt very early in the legislative world.

The Act of 1832 made changes which in their turn made possible a complete change of basic ideas such as was needed to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing social order. The remainder of the nineteenth century was full of legislation which demonstrated both. The Acts of 1867 and 1884 reorganised the electorate on more democratic and just lines, and the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885, which was demanded by the Lords as a condition for the passing of the Act of 1884, was no less valuable. The basis of the franchise remains a property ownership or occupation qualification, but we are much nearer to the desired adult suffrage than many people imagine, for according to Lawrence Lowell's calculations, the proportion of male voters to adult male population, excluding paupers and criminals, is more than two in three, and, of course, a large proportion of women now have the vote. It seems logical that age, good citizenship, and sanity should be the only qualifications for the franchise, thus doing away with plural voting, while, failing proportional representation, fairly frequent redistribution of seats is desirable to offset the changes in local densities of population. Proportional representation certainly seems to be the immediate remedy, though it is sixty years since John Stuart Mill advocated the adoption of Hare's scheme. I think the tendency is in this direction, for there is a strong feeling that minorities should not be entirely eclipsed, that their voice should be heard, and the best of their arguments heeded. The people seem to be ever more determined, not merely to elect members, but to use them, and no candidate nowadays would be surprised to receive a sheaf of questions on his policy respecting all kinds of subjects, from anti-vivisection to the abolition of capital punishment.

The main idea of our constitution, the principle which gives it significance, is that it shall be representative of the whole country, yet a doubt creeps in as to whether this is really true. Psychology plays a leading part in elections, and the best election agent is he who can best estimate it and turn it, through the medium of propaganda, to good account. It is astounding,

when one comes to talk to electors at election time, to find what a large number of people there is who have no honest, carefully-conceived opinions. Still more is it astonishing to find a large proportion who will not vote at all, or who vote the same as their friends, or their fathers and grandfathers, and, in the case of women, the same as their husbands. There is the man, too, and his name is legion, who allows his newspaper to think for him, who reads a leading article and accepts it as public opinion. There is an inherent human desire to be "in with the crowd," and such articles therefore have a tendency to become indeed matters of public opinion. Men do not stop to consider that such an article is written by one man, and may not even be his opinion. Probably it is written to fill the policy of the newspaper-owner, who very likely controls several others which publish the same sort of thing. Such is the power of the Press. Its freedom is abused to administer to gullible people small, attractive doses of fact, garnished, distorted and misrepresented to suit a party end. To think of these things, and the childish influence of motor rides on polling day, the discouragement of a fog, or rain, is almost to despair of Parliament ever being truly representative under the present system.

Again, it may easily happen that a government in power by a clear majority of members in the House may be a minority party as to voting.

Say you have an election in three one-member constituencies, fought by parties A and B. In the first constituency A polls 55 per cent. of the votes cast, and the same again in the second constituency, while in the third, A party polls only 20 per cent. The result of the election is, A party 130, and B party 170, as to votes; yet the representation is, A party two members, and B only one. Obviously, the system is most unfair when, as often happens, public opinion is just on the point of changing, and votes are nearly equally divided. Examination of recent election figures reveals startling variations in the number of votes cast per member as between different parties, and even this does not reveal the whole truth, for plural voting is still a big influence.

Even an admitted minority should be adequately represented, for, say what we will, we are compelled to acknowledge that every great political advance began with a small minority. A new idea does not simultaneously strike and convince the majority of a population, and invariably there is some vested interest in opposition. It seems to me that majorities are just as often wrong as are minorities.

* * * *

Books for reference:—

- Medley's English Constitutional History. Blackwell. 10s. 6d. net.
- Constitutional History of England: Professor Maitland. Camb. Univ. Press. 12s. 6d.
- The Unreformed House of Commons. Vol. I. E. Porritt.



It appears that the N.Q.A. Column, withdrawn after being associated with the "C.J." for practically the whole of its existence, is sadly missed in many directions. We have received a number of letters from different people in the Department deploring the fact that one of our most useful features is no longer available, and urging us to take steps to restore the fortnightly article on the regulations.

"Scrutator," as an individual, was bound to resign his position in consequence of the awkward position he was placed in by virtue of his seat on the V.E.C. He found that by writing for the "C.J." he was breaking one of the most important rules of that Committee.

Be that as it may, there is an insistent call for a successor, in order that the N.Q.A. Column shall not fall entirely into oblivion. The query is not altogether patent to the A.P.O.'s, for a number of P.O.'s have told us that they found the column particularly useful to themselves in checking their own interpretation of knotty points.

We should be grateful to hear of a Preventive Officer who could spare a little time once a fortnight to conduct a fortnightly article somewhat on the lines of the late N.Q.A.

C. & E. SPORTS.

The third annual athletic sports meeting was held this year at the Civil Service Sports Ground at Chiswick. This wise choice of ground undoubtedly had much to do with the much larger attendance than in previous years. The amount of support from an attendance point of view was exceedingly gratifying to those who were responsible in different ways for the success of the meeting.

Those members of the Waterguard who were present noted with appreciation the fact that practically the whole of the London Chief Preventive Officers put in an appearance. There is little doubt that this interest that is being shown in matters affecting the lighter side of the staff is having a marked effect on the personnel of the several grades represented.

The sports themselves were a decided success. The daily Press has shown how a C. & E. team beat a team selected from the rest of the Civil Service in a relay race over 400 yards, on an up and down track.

The Waterguard was represented in a number of events, and we are able to record at least one individual success, which we think is the first at this meeting. H. B. Peake was unfortunate in failing to get first place in throwing the cricket ball; he obtained second prize, having dropped his ball only six inches behind that of the first man.

J. W. Booker and H. B. Peake ran well in the 100 yards handicap heats, but did not reach the final. L. Hill and W. J. Blake entered for the mile and the 880 yards handicap. Booker was also in the 100 yards championship.

The Chief Preventive Officers' Challenge Cup was retained by the holders, Waterguard "Dreadnoughts," a matter of great satisfaction. It is to be regretted that two other teams entered for this event were unable to turn up in full force, thus leaving only two teams to fight it out between them. However, if the spectators were disappointed at what is practically the most spectacular event of the meeting, we hope they will be amply recompensed next year by witnessing a much keener contest. In fairness to the other teams, we understand that the breaks in their ranks were due to annual leave and sickness.

The Waterguard team and friends met in the Pavilion at the end of the meeting, where the Cup played no inconspicuous part in the festivities. Congratulatory speeches were delivered under the genial chairmanship of Mr. Egan.

CRICKET.

LONDON ENTERTAINS GRAVESEND.

The London South Side Cricket Club entertained the Gravesend Team at Lower Sydenham on Wednesday, August 31st. The match was witnessed by a good number of spectators from Gravesend and London, and great interest was shown. The President of the Club, Mr. C. E. Egan, C.P.O., was present, and received the members of the Gravesend team with a cheery handshake, afterwards following the fortunes of the opposing sides with evident interest.

The inundation referred to in another column had left its mark on the ground, and the pitch was a bowlers' paradise. The ground generally was difficult for batsmen and fielders alike, for while the batsmen were seldom able to get the ball away, the fielders found that the ball became very elusive after it had touched the ground.

Runs came very slowly, and the London team, who batted first, were hard put to it to reach the modest score of 22. However, they took the prospect of a second defeat philosophically, and were amply rewarded, for Gravesend were ultimately dismissed for 20, having struggled hard on a most difficult pitch.

The game was finished much earlier than would otherwise have been the case. There was still considerable time to elapse before the repast

that had been arranged would be ready, and it was decided to take the field again. London fell short of their earlier score this time, Gravesend being more fortunate. As it was a one-innings match, however, this second knock did not affect the result of a win for London.

An excellent meat tea was laid at the Fambbridge Hotel for the teams and their friends. Mr. Egan expressed his appreciation of the sporting spirit that had been displayed, and gave as his opinion that the revival of Waterguard sport would spread, now that it had been firmly established.

He felt confident in stating that the seed that had been sown in good fellowship would grow, not only locally, but between port and port. There was no reason at all why matches should not be played in the future much farther afield even than Gravesend and London, and he looked forward to the time when fixtures would be arranged with other ports sufficiently accessible to ensure good games.

ALTERNATIVE SPORT.

I know the Editor is keenly interested in the doings of the London South Side Cricket Club. I've seen him for myself hiding behind his pencil making noises like a W.S., trying to make us run, so I will endeavour to give my impression of what happened or might have happened on the other Saturday.

A return fixture was arranged with the Office to take place on the Lower Sydenham ground—well, when I say ground, I mean it is sometimes, and at other times it is not. On this Saturday it was decidedly not. At an early hour in the morning of this particular day, rumblings, with occasional flashes, could distinctly be heard and seen in the direction of Sydenham, and eager faces could be seen peering through glass panes at the water coming down in sheets. However, by 8 a.m. the storm had abated, and Old Sol struggled hard, until at last he was the sole occupant of a beautiful blue sky. Hopes ran high, and as the morning wore on, tinklings of telephone bells denoted activity in the C.C. ranks.

At 3 p.m. the teams were to take the field. The respective players began to assemble, and at 2.35 I had managed to get to the edge of the field. On approaching the field I had noticed a line of people, as I thought, admiring the wicket, but when within earshot, I heard someone shout, "Go on, the little 'un." To my intense amazement I saw half-a-dozen nippers tearing across the pitch, some doing breast stroke and one doing the crawl. If only you could have seen this race it would have done your eyes good. The crawl expert was an easy winner by about two "wides." This apparently was the signal for a massed plunge by another half-dozen urchins, who had been busily undressing. The splashing for the next few

minutes was tremendous, and many a splash reached the boundary.

The game was developing rapidly, and one youngster, finding his form, bowled two "maidens" in succession. One managed to scramble out with a mouthful (not the sort of mouthful some of us are used to hearing), and the other went "deep slip" and had to be dragged out. Two youngsters travelling in opposite directions collided heavily; one submerged and is "not out," the other was "stumped" shortly afterwards when he discovered his clothes had been stolen. The mothers of five of the performers appeared, and they were all smartly "caught." Then a policeman came and the remainder were "run out."

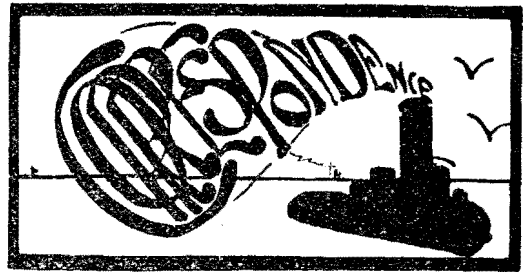
Someone suggested that we should make a start, but that was a "silly point"; it would be better if we all "took cover," so off we all went after a fairly "long stop."

Now I've come to the end of my tether, and I'd just like to wind up by saying that the cricket gear was never unpacked, and as it was the Treasurer's turn to carry the bag, this made the third time he had "carried his hat."

More news later.

"HOWZEE."

P.S.—There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that Brighton bathing tent proprietors contemplate opening a depot at Lower Sydenham.



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.

G.O. 25/27: SUPERANNUATION.

Sir,—While everyone is keen to obtain the maximum pension on retirement, I think it is a mistaken policy for us to clamour for concessions under the above G.O. Life is far too short to tack another five years on to our service. What we want to accomplish is a few years of life to enable us to enjoy the pension if we ever reach that stage, and we are reducing that possibility if we extend the retiring age. Furthermore, it is obvious that very few are fitted to carry on the arduous duties of the Waterguard after sixty. The tendency should be to reduce the age rather than increase it.

I have in mind a feasible suggestion. We all know that the Waterguard incur a large amount of overtime, and this fact, I am assured, is not by any means overlooked when the question of increased salary is approached by the Staff Side. Although this O.T. is absolutely essential to allow us to live, it rather depletes the social side of our lives, putting us in a class entirely on our own. There is no need for me to enlarge on the hardships of a Waterguard Officer, as we all know what it is to be invited out on a Bank Holiday and to have to reply, "Sorry; I'll come to the station and see you off. I cannot come as I am not free in the afternoon"; or something of that nature.

Take last Christmas. It fell on Saturday. I had the pleasure of my privilege day on Friday, when everyone else was preparing for their holiday. Then I was on duty Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, 8/4. The "2s. 7½d. per" was very welcome, but what a price to pay year in and year out. Now, my contention is this. Why should thousands of Civil Servants do round about 306 days' duty per annum while the majority of Waterguard Officers do anything up to 365? On one large Station last year, P.O.'s averaged 36 Sundays and A.P.O.'s 30. Now, is it not possible that a scheme be adopted whereby, $52 \times 6 = 312$, minus 6 Bank Holidays = 306, working days be considered equivalent for pension purposes to one year's service, the extra days put in counting towards another year, in the same way (only vice versa) as leave granted for Association purposes is deducted.

I think this well worth consideration when the question of remodelling the Association policy on Superannuation is being discussed.—Yours, etc.,

" MAXIMUM 35."

↕ ↕ ↕
GENERAL ORDER 25/1927.

Sir,—I note that "Interested" has opened up a subject that unquestionably should have been raised and discussed by the nomination members of the Waterguard instead of by the Association mentioned in his letter. It is, of course, quite obvious that a very large percentage of Waterguard Officers cannot, through the delay of appointment by nomination and age entrance, be able to complete 40 years of service at the age of 60 or 61. Therefore, in fairness to those who unfortunately would be unable to complete the full period for the maximum pension, and also to the War-appointed officers, the concession granted by the Honourable Board to the Landing Officers, to be allowed to remain until the age of 65, cannot consistently be denied or refused to those who were unable to enter the Service at an age to enable them to enjoy their maximum pension, which, owing to the high cost of living, is all too small, consequent on the smallness of our salary. I therefore endorse and support "Interested's" request that all (and not one section of officers) should be allowed

to remain until the age of 65 if necessary.—Yours, etc., "ACTIVE MEMBER."

[This question was referred to by the Gen. Secretary in his notes in the last issue.—Ed.]

◆ ◆ ◆
CHESS.

No doubt the Waterguard Staff will be interested to hear of the entry of the Department into the Kent County Chess Association Correspondence Chess Tournament, beginning on October 15th. It is but a short time ago that the Waterguard Chess Club was formed, and it is gratifying to relate that we are entering two teams of mixed ranks to compete in the tournament. We wish them success and good luck in the enterprise.

It will be realised that many of the opposing teams have had considerably more experience than ours. The Waterguard Club is gradually growing and has prizes to offer belonging to the Club itself. Those interested in the game, whether as pupils or players, should communicate with the Hon. Secretary. Officers who are already members of the Club are welcomed to any chess club affiliated to the Kent County Association, and the name of the nearest will be given by the Hon. Secretary if required.

The great game of chess is one of the oldest games in existence, and originated in Persia. It is described by many as the game of life. T. H. Huxley said: "The chess-board is the world. The pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient, but also we know to our cost that he never overlooks a mistake or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance."

The Club is open to all officers, and the Committee asks all members of the Staff interested in the social spirit of the Department to support the Club.

The entrance fee is 2s. 6d., with an annual subscription of 2s. 6d. for playing members. The subscription is 10s. for Vice-Presidents.

The two teams referred to will be:—

No. 1.—Team Captain: J. M. Mitchell, Leith. Messrs. A. Hardie, Ayr; F. G. Boodle, Newport (Mon.); J. Smallwood, London; W. G. Thomson, Bangor.

No. 2.—Team Captain: W. W. Bishop, Sharpness. Messrs. E. T. Sandford, Newport (Mon.); E. W. Kidman, Liverpool; R. E. Dudley, London; H. S. Pickford, London.

Reserves.—Messrs. G. Douglas, Liverpool; O. M. Williams, Ayr.

Officers unable to play must notify the Hon. Secretary by September 13th, as entries must be in the hands of the Association by September 15th.

W. W. BISHOP,

Hon. Secretary.

F. G. BOODLE,

Match Conductor and Referee.