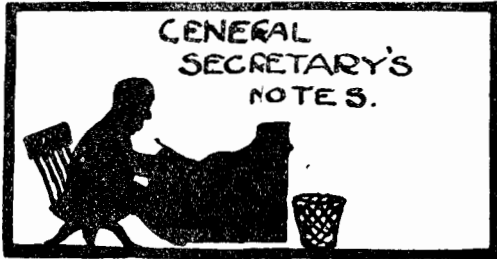


The Customs Journal.

No. 580.

January 15th, 1927.

Fortnightly.



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

As the Editor has already remarked, it is not often that the coming-out day of the "Journal" coincides with New Year's Day. It was all the more disappointing to me, therefore, that I was unable to take advantage of so unique an opportunity to wish all our members the brightest of prospects for the coming year. Though the expression of this greeting is now somewhat belated, I make it with just as much cordiality and sincerity.

I am happy to say that the circumstances which occasioned by absence from the previous issue have now disappeared; and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many kind enquiries received during the past fortnight.

* * * *

Many of our members, acquainted with the work of Mr. Sanders, the energetic and capable Staff Side Secretary of the Departmental Council, were much concerned to hear of his recent illness. The news that he is now well on the way to recovery will be received with satisfaction by all, and particularly by the Waterguard members of the Joint Committee.

* * * *

From the P.S.A. point of view, one of the most important features of 1927 is the inauguration of the Departmental Educational Scheme. A vast amount of work had to be put in during the past twelve months before the scheme began to take concrete form. It was a long and anxious task. Not only was it necessary to obtain full co-operation of responsible tutors, but a great deal depended on the forming of an enthusiastic and capable Central Committee. Also it is necessary that the scheme must pay for itself.

There can be no doubt that we have succeeded in gathering together the most efficient tutors in the Service; and the personnel of the Central Committee is sufficient to inspire confidence in both tutors and pupils. The Secretary, Mr. Purser, is well known for his undoubted gifts as an organiser, and the fact that he is throwing his whole weight into the new movement ought to encourage a generous support from the live members of the A.P.O. Grade.

Mr. Purser is a hustler of the first water. Decisions are rapidly translated into action, and Mr. Powell, who has adopted the role of cheerful volunteer assistant during the initial stages, finds that his normally small leisure time has practically vanished.

Applications for membership are rolling in steadily. An overwhelming rush was not to be expected, because in many cases contracts under the old system must first of all expire. The results reported at the Central Committee meetings each Tuesday are, however, sufficient to cause much optimism.

The success of the scheme means incalculable benefit to the whole Department, and to the P.S.A. Every A.P.O., except those who have no ambition whatever, will make it his business to know everything about this new service placed at his disposal.

The advantages of the scheme must be very obvious. Not the least of these is the fact that every pupil has a controlling interest as an Association member. Authoritative interpretations of obscure points in the Regulations will enable pupils to study with a great deal more confidence than in the past.

Those who do not join to-day will undoubtedly do so eventually, because the Central Committee means business, and in addition to educating pupils, intends also to protect their special interests.

* * * *

The Minutes of the Waterguard Sectional Committee, full meeting, have now been circulated to all Branch Secretaries, and members should insist on having these before them at forthcoming Branch meetings. Secretaries do not usually need reminding on this point, but recently I have had complaints from members who say they can never get any information at meetings. In view of the constant circulation of the Minutes of the Departmental Council, Joint Committee, Executive Committee, Waterguard Sectional Committee, etc., this seems rather strange. It is true that usually Minutes are necessarily brief reports of business transacted, but any enterprising Secretary can get

full particulars on any matter in which his members are specially interested, by applying to the Councillor for the area. The Councillor in turn can, if necessary, seek the information or advice from headquarters. There is no disgrace in acknowledging ignorance regarding the more intimate details of Association activity. Few people can manage to keep so closely in touch with these things as the headquarters staff, whose business it is to deal with them daily. Information is always freely and willingly given.

* * * *

A recent writer in the correspondence column has attempted to make out a case for immediately proceeding with a claim for increased salary. Another correspondent has since criticised him to some effect. It is true that the only argument offered for the putting forward of the claim was that "Everybody was doing it." It is a sweeping argument, and even if accurate, it would remain to be proved that we are similarly situated to these other people. The writer who used the argument hinted that his knowledge of affairs in the Civil Service clerical departments was superior to that possessed by the Executive. He also made the enormous mistake of assuming that the General Secretary had merely to issue instruction to the Executive Committee in order to have them carried out. The boot is, of course, definitely on the other leg.

Since our critic has definitely referred to the clerical section of the Service as a pattern on which the P.S.A. should base its action, I will take him on his own ground by quoting the following from Mr. W. J. Brown's report to the annual meeting of the Civil Service Clerical Association in May last. I would mention, incidentally, that P.S.A. policy was decided some time before this date:—

"Because of the Economy Campaign our activities on wage issues have been somewhat restricted. Take, for example, the question of the Clerical Class maximum. There has been nothing to prevent us during the year going to the Arbitration Board on that claim. We have not done so for two reasons. First, because our view last year was that the prospect of getting an increased maximum for the Clerical Class was bound up largely in the question of re-organisation, and re-organisation had been impossible during the past year. The other reason was that if we went to the Board in circumstances which made the issue doubtful, and got an adverse verdict, it would have made the subsequent task of getting the £300 maximum doubly difficult. The case ought to go to the Board as soon as possible, but not until we are sufficiently confident about getting a favourable verdict as to warrant us taking it there."

The above is taken from "Red Tape," published in June last, and I would direct particular attention to the final paragraph as it emphasises the views that have been expressed in these columns from time to time.

It should be noted that Mr. Brown is an accepted authority on Civil Service arbitration machinery; and his ability is undoubted. He knows from experience what hope there is in claiming increased wages on humane grounds. Having placed before the Court, early in its existence, what is acknowledged to be the most complete case of its kind, he found the Court coldly unsympathetic.

* * *

The C.S.C.A. is one of the most powerful Associations, and it is significant that its leader should consider it necessary to initiate the Civil Service minimum wage move that has now been adopted by the T.U.C. Obviously there is nothing of that nature to be obtained from arbitration within the Service.

* * * *

No wage claim can be successful to-day merely because the claimants can prove poverty. The only argument to stand a chance would be to prove that quality of work was quite out of proportion to the remuneration. Expression of opinion, no matter how fervent, will not succeed. The ammunition must be cold, hard, unsentimental facts, and these must be well rammed home.

P.S.A. policy is not a policy of drift. It is cool and calculated. When the time is ripe, and the ammunition sufficient, we will plant our shots with careful and unerrant aim. There is, however, the ever-present danger that a wanton disregard of the opinions of those who have made a careful and earnest study of the situation might result in hasty and disastrous action.

* * * *

The officers at Victoria Station have basked for so long in the sunshine of a complimentary Press, that the recent charge of "grubbiness" must have come as a slight shock. Many have been the controversies over the facilities and arrangements for baggage examination, but regarding the officers themselves there has been nothing but favourable comment, with the exception of an occasional bark from some irresponsible person in the correspondence columns regarding alleged "rudeness." To be described as "grubby" is, however, really disconcerting unless one considers carefully the exact meaning of the term—if there is any exact meaning.

In deference to the veracity of the people who make the charge, I assume that "grubby" in this case means the normal condition of any hands after performing a few hours of honest work, whether that work be "pen pushing," picture painting, or anything else.

If this assumption is correct, it is difficult to understand why the disgruntled people wish to have their baggage examined by "grubby" females. No feminine charm is capable of warding off "grubbiness" of this kind.

The suggestion surely cannot be that it would be really "nicer" for the ladies to have their baggage examined by members of their own sex. The authors of such a suggestion must indeed be sadly lacking in the knowledge of human nature; or they must be blatantly ignorant of the highly charged atmosphere that normally surrounds the average baggage examination table.

The idea is an outcome of a hasty and superficial examination of the case, similar to that which caused the "grubby" charge to be made.

* * * *

By the time these Notes appear in print the hearing of the Post Office claim before the Arbitration Board will be nearing completion. It is the biggest claim that has yet been before the Court, and is expected to last at least a week.

An interesting feature is the counter-claim by the P.M.G. for a reduction of wages to apply to new entrants. The newspapers are endeavouring to influence the course of justice by broadcasting to the public that the cost to the nation of any concession will be a fabulous amount.

* * * *

Negotiations between the Civil Service Joint Committee and the Treasury in connection with the appointment of an arbitrator for dealing with outstanding claims regarding the Single Men's War Bonus are now coming to a head. The Joint Committee are reviewing all such claims prior to submitting them, and the outstanding claims from the Waterguard are now in their hands. Officers concerned will be notified of results in due course.

* * * *

The information so far received regarding the "Ear-marked" appointments is not very encouraging, and I cannot advise those who have interests in this direction to be too hopeful.

* * * *

Preparations are being made for the holding of a meeting of the Executive early in February. A heavy Agenda is expected. There will probably be some disappointment regarding the Monthly Pay plebiscite, as the voting has not been satisfactory. Up to date only 61 per cent. of the A.P.O. Grade have registered their votes.

J. MERRON.

CHESSE.

Our chess giants now engaged in correspondence games are requested to forward to Mr. Bishop, on completion of games, the results of the contests, together with an account of the moves made. Announcements of the progress of the games will be made as they are received.

NATIONAL WHITLEY COUNCIL (STAFF SIDE).

CONFERENCE OF HIGHER GRADE CIVIL SERVANTS.

The Higher Grades Committee, recently set up by the Staff Side of the National Whitley Council, has issued a statement to all "over £500" Civil Servants, informing them of the constitution and functions of the Committee and appealing for their co-operation.

A Conference is being convened under the auspices of the National Staff Side, which will be held in Caxton Hall, Room No. 1, at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, January 18th, 1927, and which will be open to all "over £500" Civil Servants. It is confidently expected that a representative attendance will be secured. The agenda of the meeting will be circulated at a later date to all concerned.

ARMISTICE DAY STATEMENT.

On Armistice Day the Headquarters and London Port Staffs paid their tribute of respect to the memory of those members of the Department who lost their lives in the War. Just before the Two Minutes' Silence the Chairman of the Board and the Head of each Branch placed wreaths at the foot of the War Memorial in the Long Room of the Custom House.

The total amount received by the Committee, who made the arrangements, was £50 17s. 7d., and the sum of £21 15s. 6d. was spent in providing wreaths, which included one subsequently conveyed, by a Guard of Honour composed of ex-Service men, to the Cenotaph, Whitehall. As was done last year, the balance remaining has been divided equally between the Customs and Excise Orphans', Widows' and War Memorial Fund and the Customs and Excise Temporary Staff (London) Benevolent Fund.

A journalist, travelling on the Underground, looked fixedly at a Customs Officer in uniform who was sitting opposite him, and said:

"If I had a weak-minded son I should put him in the Customs."

"Your father was certainly not of the same opinion," replied the Officer.

BETWEEN REPORTERS.

"Hallo, old bean, heard any fresh items about the Civil Service?"

"I never look for anything fresh in that direction, old top; I invent it."

**HEALTH AND PENSIONS
INSURANCE.**

The following letter has been received relative to the above subject:—

Treasury Chambers,
December 31st, 1926.

Voluntary Contributors whose total income exceeds £250 a year—Reduced Rates of Contribution.

Sir,—I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to refer to Section 6 of the Economy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1926, and to Part II. of the First Schedule thereto, under which provision is made, inter alia, that the weekly rates of contribution payable by voluntary contributors under the combined schemes of National Health Insurance and Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions insurance, whose total income from all sources exceeds £250 a year, and who are therefore ineligible for medical benefit, shall be reduced by 3d. (in lieu of by 2d. as at present) both for men and women, with effect from January 1st, 1927.

2.—Accordingly, the weekly rates of contribution shown in the Appendix to Treasury Circular of July 3rd, 1926 (No. 18/26), in respect of such voluntary contributors for whom contributions are payable by the employing Depart-

ment and whose contribution cards are by arrangement stamped Departmentally, i.e., the weekly rates of contribution in the case of employees within the categories indicated in that Appendix by the distinguishing letters "E" and "H," will be amended as follows as from the beginning of the first half-year, 1927:—

E.—Male Employees: For "1s. 0½d." and "1s. 4d." read "11½d." and "1s. 3d." respectively.

Female Employees: For "9d." and "11d." read "8d." and "10d." respectively.

H.—Male Employees: For "11½d." and "1s. 4d." read "10½d." and "1s. 3d." respectively.

Employee Employees: For "8½d." and "11d." read "7½d." and "10d." respectively.

3.—Paragraph 4 of the Treasury Circular above quoted will also be amended by the substitution of "3d." for "2d." in the fourth and last lines.

4.—Persons employed in Northern Ireland.—Section 6 of the Economy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1926, does not apply in Northern Ireland, and no change should, accordingly, be made in the rates of contribution for insured employees in Northern Ireland as provided for in previous Treasury Circulars on the subject. —I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,
R. R. SCOTT.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY APPLIED

**POST THIS APPLICATION NOW.
REMEMBER—£3,000 IS AT STAKE.**

Applications should reach the Association Office at the latest by the first post, January 24th.

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

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

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



The question of the Waterguard Code is again raised—this time as the result of a District Meeting being in opposition to any change. Probably Bristol would prefer to withdraw the word "any," for we cannot imagine anybody in our Department wishing to make such an unalterable stand on this subject. Bristol has come forward in disagreement with what has been the popular idea, and a criticism appears in the correspondence column. We hope that this question will be ventilated further, for it is a subject upon which much can be said.

Evolution in the Customs and Excise is the same as it is in most places, taken from the point of view of speed. It is exceeding slow. Evolution is of necessity slow and is apt to be painful if otherwise. Ever since a new edition of the Codes was first mentioned, before the war, the Codes have been undergoing a gradual and definite alteration. Some parts of the old volumes still remain, but from a Waterguard standpoint they very seldom need be referred to. We have all been long accustomed with the phrase that "these instructions will be incorporated in due course in a revised edition of the Codes," and as, one by one, revised instructions have been issued, so they have gradually been formed into something like order, and will, we hope, eventually blossom forth into the complete set of Codes. Whether we shall find them perfect is not our object to discuss now, but we must admit that they are more comprehensive to the Waterguard Officer than they were prior to 1914. If bound copies of the Revised Instructions could be produced at this moment with all the amendments and additions incorporated, it would be found that they would be most useful volumes, and there are many in the Waterguard who would rather have the complete edition in its new form than a mere extract of regulations that applied solely to the Waterguard, if it were possible to make such an extract.

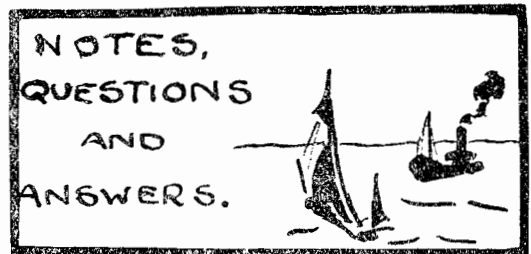
The trouble is that the Revised Instructions are becoming increasingly difficult of reference in consequence of the host of amendments that have been issued; for the older of these instructions have already passed the age of the old volumes of codes.

* * *

We hear that applications for enrolment under the Vocational Education Scheme are coming in in good numbers. If the maximum amount of benefit is to be got out of the scheme

the application form on another page should be utilised in time to reach H.Q. by the date indicated. A job worth doing at all is worth doing well. We have seen the Committee at work, and are thoroughly convinced that no pains are being spared in order to make the movement brimful of efficiency. A great deal of time is being given ungrudgingly, and loyalty on the part of members will be amply repaid by loyalty on the part of the Committee. The members of the Committee are unstinted in their appreciation of the manner in which the tutors are standing by them.

Our advice to aspirants, whatever their present length of service, is **DO IT NOW.**



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

An interesting question and the relative answer are published below.

Question.

The s.s. "Penmount," bound from Ghent to Leith with cargo, calls at Yarmouth for bunker coal only. The vessel remains in Yarmouth over 24 hours (say 30 hours). The question arises—

Should the P.O. at Yarmouth issue a Clearing Note treating the vessel as reporting-in Ballast?; or

Does the master receive the Pratique back from the Report Clerk for production at Dundee?

Answer.

There is no procedure laid down in the regulations to cover such a case.

The correct procedure would, however, appear to me to be:—

The P.O. at Yarmouth would board the vessel in the ordinary way.

As the vessel is remaining over 24 hours the master would report, Pratique being accepted and Travelling Copies of Report issued.

The P.O. at Yarmouth would clear the vessel inwards (either on arrival or subsequent to report), but not exactly in Ballast. The Inward Clearing Bill should be endorsed: "All cargo

from Ghent r.o.b. for Leith." A Letter of Advice is forwarded (if stores under seal).

At Leith the Yarmouth Inward Clearing Bill is withdrawn by the Boarding P.O. and attached to the Blue Book. This obviates the production of List 142.

The master would report his vessel as "from Ghent via Yarmouth." Pratique is not required at Leith, but the Travelling Copy of Report from Yarmouth is required, in addition to the Leith Report.

ARE EXAMINATIONS NECESSARY?

By "REDRIFF."

Heartiest wishes for 1927 to the Central Committee and Tutors of the P.S.A. Vocational Education Movement. May it be a year of solid achievement, all working in the true spirit of happy co-operation.

To the Assistant Preventive Officers interested in vocational education, and to those who may be somewhat sceptical, I would ask, Are the examinations necessary, are they too hard? Having raised these questions, let me give some observations upon them.

Examinations are necessary. We cannot get on very well without them. For most of those who are called upon at one time or another to prepare for these tests they supply a wholesome and indispensable stimulus. Moreover, where else can we find a method of selection for promotion free of suspicion or favouritism? The examiners are no respecters of persons; merit, and merit alone, must count. The examinations do not test intellectual so much as practical powers, and that, in itself, is one reason why young A.P.O.'s should undertake vocational education.

When are examinations too hard? It is tempting to reply when the proportion of failures to successes is high. But this numerical test may be misleading. There has been a high proportion of failures in recent examinations for promotion to the rank of Preventive Officer, but the true inference here is not that the examination is too hard (having in view the requirements of a sound knowledge of the regulations), but that the qualifications of the candidates are too low. This, then, should be of utmost importance to aspiring A.P.O.'s in taking up the three distinct courses printed in the last issue of the "Customs Journal." The scheme will be worked on well organised lines, to ensure that ambitious pupils making a thorough study will ultimately become well trained and efficient candidates.

The Council of the P.S.A. is to be congratulated in formulating and launching the scheme for the benefit of its members. It now remains for the A.P.O.'s to avail themselves of the opportunities placed before them.

It will readily be seen that examinations are necessary, but to the candidate who has a thorough grip of his subject the ordeal of an examination becomes little more than an incident in his career in which there are no terrors. Under a scheme in which a number of conscientious tutors are able to co-operate with a central committee co-ordinating all the ideas available, students are able to obtain a standard course of study which must ultimately make for greatly increased individual and collective efficiency.

LONDON SPORTS CLUB DANCE.

The New Cross Palais de Danse proved an ideal setting for the dance arranged by the South Side Cricket Club on Wednesday, January 5th. There was a good attendance, the number of tickets sold being in the neighbourhood of 250. Perfect dance music was provided by the "Kino" Dance Band, and the arrangements were well carried out by an enthusiastic committee.

A number of spot prizes were presented during the evening, a duty that was performed by the President of the Club, Mr. C. E. Egan, who voiced his appreciation of the attendance and of the manner in which the function had been conducted. The prizes were very well selected, and these were added to by the management of the hall, who gave a number of complimentary tickets to the dances regularly run by themselves. Many well-known faces were to be seen during the evening, and it was a tired and happy company that retired to their beds at the conclusion of a most successful evening.

We hear a whisper of the intention to organise a similar function in the near future.

THE POST OFFICE WORKERS STATE THEIR CLAIM.

Civil Service circles are watching with something more than mere interest the claim for wage increases being made by the Post Office Workers before the Civil Service Industrial Court. At the time of going to press the case has only just been opened, but during the first day, when Mr. J. W. Bowen, the General Secretary of the Union, commenced stating the case for his members, many interesting and startling facts have been brought to light. One of the planks in his platform shows that Post Office work is analogous to conditions in our own Department in this respect, that the duties have greatly increased in complexity since 1914.

In dealing with present scales of pay, Mr. Bowen compared them with the minimum standard of living laid down by Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree, in his book "The Human Needs of

Labour." That standard, adjusted by Board of Trade figures to London, gave a basic wage of 38s. 9d. Tables were submitted applying these tests to scales as they exist at present, and it appeared that not only were the bulk of the lowest-paid classes below the Rowntree standard, but also a substantial proportion of the higher-paid grades. Cases were cited where Post Office employees had actually been rejected as tenants of new Council houses on account of their low pay.

The Postmaster-General is making a counter-claim of a reduction of from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. a week on the basic rates of pay of new entrants.

The Court consists of Sir Harold Morris, K.C. (Chairman), Mr. J. McKie Bryce, and Mr. Frank Hodges.

SOLUTION TO CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

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T	E	A	S	E	L	C	U	L	T	W	R	A	I	T	H		
I	S	M	I	D	R	E	M	I	T	A	G	W	L	I			
C	H	E	K			N	E	T	R	D	G	A	A	G			
L	A	A	G			B	E	N	E	A	T	H	D	A	S	H	
E				H	O	M	E	R		A	I	D	I	L	L		
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THE LIGHTER SIDE.

That's another Xmas gone bust! Once again Father's looking in heaps of coal, at the same time hoping the A. and C.-G. has got muddled with the Boxing Day, Xmas Day, and what-not day, and intends shelling out the necessary a couple of days ahead. But when you have obtained your brass, you mustn't think all your troubles are o'er. No, no, dear friends. The Xmas holidays are over, but automatically falls into being the big question: "Who's on duty Easter Monday?"

That's one thing Old Moore can't fathom, and if you care to study his almanac very, very closely, as I do, you will find he rarely predicts

anything about the Customs. Only once do I recall Old Moore having anything to do with the Customs, and on that particular occasion he spoke of "a revolution which would end up quickly and quietly." Strange to relate, on that very same day our boss fell head over heels down a hatchway, and landed on a bundle of beds in the linen room. Old Moore had predicted everything correctly until our boss recovered his breath, and then, well—. I simply had to go home and delete the word "quietly" in the almanac!

Recently I have taken up a new study. Guess what it is. Snails. I want to find out the momentum of a snail on reaching the tape, in a race with another snail. I have captured a snail for my experiments, and it has become quite a pet now. Alphonso, I call him. However, I intend getting Alphonso a mate, but in spite of my vast experience of big game-hunting, I have failed to locate the lair of one yet. Snails are nocturnal in habit, you know, and this makes it frightfully difficult for me. You see, if I adopted the same habit, my wife would want me to answer quite a lot of questions the next morning, which would make it very awkward for me. However, Alphonso has been very good, and I must say I am obtaining very valuable information. One point I cannot solve. Now, a snail is supposed to have about 72 rows of teeth, but up to the present I am unable to confirm this, because every time I raise Alphonso's head to look into his mouth, he burst out laughing. This led me to discover that a snail, having no bottom to his feet, because he has no feet, his ticklish spot was transferred to his chin. (Presumably at his own expense, Mr. Editor.) Another point worth knowing: the two pole-like arrangements at the bows are nothing whatever to do with wireless aerials. Also, I have decided, after studying Alphonso for just over two hours, that should I ever discover Alphonso among my veg. at dinner, I should not acquire the Vitamin A as contained in the aforementioned Alphonso. Snails have long been reputed to be a fine remedy for pulmonary weakness, but I think that if any of you intend taking up this form of diet, it would be appreciated if you refrained from partaking of your sirloin of "Helix Pro-matia" until your colleagues had gone home. Please remove shell before boiling.

Now, I haven't much more time to spare, or I would tell you a bit more about Alphonso. I must get on with my work, but if any of you are so interested that you would like to help me with my study, I shall be very grateful. Now, up to the present this is what I've discovered.

The average speed of Alphonso is .002976 miles per hour; this is on level ground, with a running start. Now, before any of you go deep into the momentum business, I should try a simpler one, such as, what time would Alphonso have to leave home if he was on at 8 a.m. and got a wriggle on over the last lap.

MY ALPHONSO.

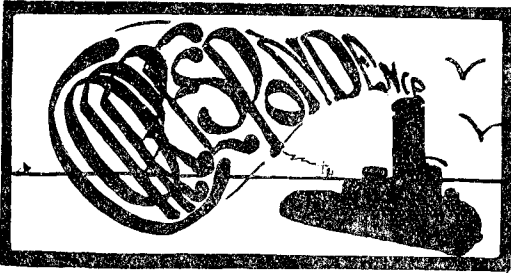
Each day when from work I depart,
I invariably go to the heart
Of my cabbage, wherein I do park
Sweet Alphonso.

I want to record his top speed,
But he can't beat a worm that's knock-kneed.
It's training, I think, that he'll need,
My Alphonso.

I tickle him up with a pin,
But more speed, I'm sure, isn't in him;
He stops, looks back, and then whims
Don't keep on so.

I've tried putting salt on his tail,
But he'd lose to an H.M.C.L.
My stuffed dog, if it came to a race, well—
I'd back Bonzo.

When Alphonso turns up his poor tail,
And if he's destined to go down to ———,
The stoves will be cold, I know well,
He'll be late, poor Alphonso.



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 CODES.

Sir,—In the last issue of the "Journal" I read with consternation that at a meeting in Bristol it was concluded that "a separate code was unnecessary and any alteration should be opposed." This is, I believe, the first published expression of disagreement with what at least the majority in the Service considers vital and necessary to facilitate the study of, and to create a consistent practice in the execution of, our laws and regulations. There must be exceptional reasons to cause this surprising conclusion and determined opposition; reasons unknown to the Service generally—and it would be interesting, if not effective, if some of the propositions which enabled the conclusion to be arrived at were ventilated in these columns.

The writer does not intend to advance, at this stage, concrete reasons in favour of a separate code, but merely to make a few observations

which may not have been considered at the Bristol meeting.

The proposition of a Waterguard Code is based on the principles of efficiency and economy; would Bristol have us defend the present system as fulfilling these principles, or are they misleading themselves by asserting that those principles are no concern of ours? The overlapping system in the commercial world has proved a failure, and it is apparent that it is not a success in the Customs Department.

By reasons of efficiency and economy we have become, practically, a separate Department. Progression indeed, but only brought into being because there were capable and efficient officers in the Department ready to shoulder the responsibility. There is a danger, and in the near future, of this independence being lost, and the cause will be inefficiency. From this particular point of view, a separate code will at least assist in keeping the wheels of efficiency from getting clogged.

"Knowledge is power"; to know your work is also power, and it should be the aim of those directly concerned to support or to try and foster means by which the necessary knowledge may be easily obtained and studied, rather than support an obsolete system of confused knowledge. New codes would be an advantage; but if the present system is again adopted it would only be "new books for old."

To sit on a style labelled "Husetobe" is dangerous and suggests weakness, and that is what Bristol would have us do. The present codes used to be all right, but the laws of the present age necessitate something different to ensure the necessary proficiency for the success of this Department.

There is a good deal more to be said on the subject, but perhaps Bristol will reconsider their decision and think over these few points by.—Yours, etc.,

"REASONABLE."

PROSECUTION.

KING'S LYNN.

Before the justices at the King's Lynn police court on Dec. 14th, the cook of the s.s. "Ludwig Stahl," from Hamburg, was convicted and fined £5/5/4 (in default, one month's imprisonment) for concealing 4 lb. O.S. tobacco and 6/16 lb. Cav. tobacco.

At the same Court, on the 20th inst., the cook of the s.s. "Max Weidtmann," from Hamburg, was convicted and fined £7/5/3 (in default, two months' imprisonment) for concealing 10 small flasks of brandy, .50 liquid, .33 pf. galls.; 1 bottle of rum, .15 liquid, .124 pf. galls.; and 9/16 lb. tobacco, other sorts.

The goods in question were found concealed by Mr. A. Burton, A.P.O., and the prosecutions on behalf of the Crown were conducted by Mr. J. H. Stevens, P.O.