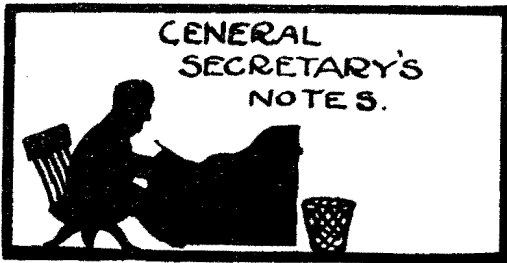


The Customs Journal.

No. 604.

December 17th, 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.

A letter recently published in the "Journal" made complaint of insufficient contact between members in a certain district and their Association officials. It was said that this was causing much dissatisfaction because the members concerned were losing touch with Association progress. Such a state of affairs ought not to be. It has been stated frequently in these columns that District officials finding difficulty in communicating with their constituents—especially with those in isolated places—should make recommendations as to the best method of dealing with the situation. Assistance will readily be given from Headquarters as soon as it is made known by the Secretary what is required. The officers of the Association are only too anxious that all members shall be kept up to date on current activity.

It is a healthy sign that members are beginning to take so keen an interest as to complain of insufficient information. Only by these representations being made can the Executive become aware of unsatisfactory organisation in any District. Too often the grumble does not reach Headquarters and the Association is blamed unreasonably. One or two typical cases that have been reported were brought to the notice of the Executive at the last meeting, and, arising from this a special Sub-Committee has been set up to examine the present system of Districts and Areas, and to report as to whether revision is desirable in order to improve co-ordination.

The point which members and District officers have both to keep in mind is that the officials at Headquarters have no means of

knowing what is happening in the Districts unless the secretaries keep them informed. Unfortunately, some secretaries are not very active in this way, and consequently, when they report at District meetings fail to give satisfaction, and the members are lead to wrong conclusions through lack of guidance, and through absence of adequate information on matters being dealt with by the Association.

Some very absurd rumours have been going the rounds in connection with the negotiations for the issue of mackintoshes. The question of electric lamps is another subject that has given rise to garbled statements by irresponsible persons. This kind of thing cannot happen in a District where the secretary realises his responsibilities, because he could stop it at the outset.

* * * *

It ought to be clearly understood that all information concerning claims prosecuted by the Association is reported regularly in the "Journal." Members who follow these reports can keep themselves accurately informed as to the position of each claim. It is true that this published information can often be amplified, but it is here where the District Secretary should come in. He is always supplied with minutes and reports of all Committees, and should be able to explain the full details of any case in a manner not practicable through the medium of the "Journal." Above all, he should be able to immediately correct wrong impressions. He is always safe in telling his constituents that if it is not in the relative minutes it is not true. One cannot too strongly emphasise the fact that the Association never takes action on important questions without reference to the whole of the members, and without full discussion on the Executive Committee. Therefore, it is quite obvious that an intelligent study of the Executive, Waterguard Sectional, and C. and E. Joint Committee minutes, etc., affords full information of all negotiations that are undertaken. Points of doubt can easily be cleared up by simple enquiry at Headquarters.

* * * *

Generally speaking, District Secretaries give excellent service to the Association, and under very trying conditions in most cases. The damage that can be done, however, by even one of these officers failing to take a live interest in the views of his constituents is too great to allow complaints such as have been made regarding lack of news, to be passed over without comment.

* * * *

On the other hand a good many of our members do not seem to realise that the Executive Committee cannot act outside instructions

given by the Council, and this is the cause of a great deal of confused thought on many Association matters. These instructions are normally given at the Annual Conference, when the Executive is appointed. During the succeeding year any urgent matter arising, upon which the Committee have no instructions, is the subject of a special Council meeting, or is dealt with by correspondence to Council members.

It is therefore quite clear that nothing materially affecting the interests of members can come to pass without their having full opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with all the details of it.

This has been pointed out time and time again, and if members would only take it to heart, District Secretaries would have a more enviable task, and they would not so frequently find themselves in the unhappy position of having to record inopportune expressions of opinion from District meetings, which, had they been made under appropriate circumstances, would probably have been of great assistance to some briefless Councillor at a previous Council meeting. At the 1927 Conference several Councillors complained that their constituents had neglected to clearly indicate their views on some important questions. Yet, immediately after the Conference, when it is too late, we find resolutions being passed in the Districts embodying the desired expressions of opinion. Members ought to realise that to fire shots at the Executive is to a great extent useless. The Councillors are the men who define Association policy, and it should be the business of every member to see that his own Councillor, at least, is kept up to date.

My advice to those people who have had cause to complain of no opportunity either to get news or to voice their opinions through the Districts, is to get into touch direct with their own, or any, Council member and so ensure consideration of the question at the Annual Conference, if not before. Conference delegates are only too glad to get a lead from the membership in this way. NOW is the time to start briefing Councillors for the 1928 Conference.

* * *

Many enquiries have reached the Association Office as to the conditions of transfer to the Clerical Class of successful candidates in the examination announced in G.O. 91/1927. Up to the time of going to press the starting pay has not been decided by the Treasury, and there is no more information to be given than is contained in the order. It is understood that the National Staff Side are making representations to the Treasury for an early pronouncement to be made. Members are informed that the special facilities to sit at the examination are not confined to the P.O. and A.P.O. Grades only, but are the outcome of a claim made on behalf of several other Grades, classed as "Minor and Manipulative." The P.S.A. made no claim to be included in this category, and had no desire for it. The Association is of opinion that the future of the Waterguard lies in quite another direction.

It is recognised, however, that members who intend taking the examination are entitled to Association assistance, and, therefore, all possible information will be given to applicants as soon as it is available. No doubt those who mean to enter for the test have observed that the examination is to be no simpler than the ordinary open competition. It should also be noted that the £250 maximum does not apply to all Departments, and that "provincial differentiation" operates in the Clerical Grades. The eagerness of A.P.O.'s to better their prospects is easily understood. The possibility of civilised hours of duty, even at the same rate of pay, is very alluring, and this applies particularly to failed A.P.O.'s.

* * *

It is interesting to note that the London Branch of the C. and E. Federation are examining a proposal that all officers unsuccessful at the Surveyors' examination, but attaining a specified qualifying mark, should receive special recompense for their added value to the Department. This suggests an avenue for exploration in connection with failed A.P.O.'s. The P.O.'s examination is, of course, declared to be qualifying and not competitive. This aspect of the matter would need much consideration. It is definitely the opinion of many Waterguard Officers, that some candidates have been unlucky through not getting the chance to sit at the right examination.

* * *

Some misunderstanding appears to exist as to the activity of the V.E.C. in connection with clearing up doubtful points in the regulations. Several people seem to imagine that the inauguration of the V.E.S. would mean the immediate settling of these knotty points. The problem is far from being so easy, and it is a mistake to imagine that the Central Committee are not giving the matter attention. The difficulty is to sift out those questions that can really be called doubtful. In a good many cases submitted for consideration all that is needed is a courageous application of the regulations as laid down.

Instances are gradually being gathered where definite rulings are really necessary, and some of these have already been submitted to the authorities, and replies are awaited.

* * *

At the Confederation Half-yearly Meeting on the 10th inst., Mr. P. H. M. Hoey was formally appointed General Secretary. Mr. Hoey has actually been performing the secretarial work for some weeks past, and has evidently been doing some useful service, lightening the load of the Confederation President, who had been carrying on in the absence of the Assistant Secretary. Mr. Herbert Bryan, on sick leave. Mr. Bryan's illness is due to the heavy strain of Confederation work during the past few months. Altogether, the Confederation office staff seem to have been having a rough time lately, but it is hoped that in the forthcoming year things will be more settled.

It was announced at the meeting that Mr. C. A. W. Sanders had relinquished the Editorship of the "New Civilian." No doubt the readers of that bright and interesting weekly will hear the news with regret. Apart from the other contributions to this paper, the editorial features were always well appreciated for their sparkling vigour and pointedness.

I understand that the Editor of "Taxes," Mr. A. J. Brown, will succeed Mr. Sanders. Mr. Brown was formerly a Civil Servant, and is likely to understand the needs of the Service. The necessity for an all-Service paper is so urgent, especially at the moment, that he is assured of many good wishes for success.

* * * *

It is reported elsewhere in this issue that the Staff Side of the Waterguard Sectional Committee have made counter-proposals to the Official Side reference regarding seizure awards. The object of the Staff Side is to bring about a more equal distribution of the whole of the awards paid.

According to the Annual Report of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise, there were, in the year ending March, 1927, 8,246 seizures; 3,726 persons convicted; and, penalties recovered, £21,276.

* * * *

Mr. W. W. Bishop, Secretary to the Waterguard Group of the Hospital Savings Association, writes to say that the scheme is making rapid progress. In the Association there are 4,085 groups, with a total membership of 351,865, contributing £179,759 during the year. Payments for hospital services amounted to £127,196.

The Waterguard Group has 78 contributors, and so far eight of these have received benefit. Considering the short time this group has been in existence, it has demonstrated very clearly its usefulness. Waterguard Officers desiring to become members should apply to Mr. Bishop, Custom House, Sharpness. The benefits to be obtained for a few coppers per week are certainly worth while.

* * *

The correspondent who sends the following extract from a criticism in "The Observer" by St. John Ervine, in connection with the play "Mr. Prohack," is quite justified in thinking it deserves prominence in the Service Press. As a critic of trained ability, Mr. Ervine is well known, and therefore his opinion of the Civil Servant must necessarily be in sharp contrast to the usual vitriolic stuff which masquerades as "criticism" in the public Press. Here it is:—

"There is, indeed, a sense in which a Civil Servant may be described as a monk with the rights of marriage. He may marry, but he may not accumulate money by his labours in the Service. He is dedicated to the cause of the community, to high labours in high affairs, to austere living and to poverty. A Civil Servant is commonly derided as an idle, red-taped and

parasitic person; but it is notorious amongst people of understanding that the level of ability in the Civil Service is extraordinarily high, and that members of that honourable company perform the most delicate and important functions—involving the skill and knowledge of men of high intellect and discernment—for salaries that would be disdained by a film star's press agent."

J. MERRON.

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Fifteenth Meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the Association Offices, London, on November 23rd, 1927, and the two following days, Mr. E. P. Madden presiding over Messrs. J. Merron, J. T. Sutton, W. G. Thomson, S. E. D. Ball, A. W. P. Densley, A. Milne, and W. H. Powell (Minute Secretary).

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

In his Report the General Secretary outlined the position of the following matters now before the Waterguard Sectional Committee.

On the question of LEAVE, the Official Side asked for a further adjournment, being not yet ready to develop the full discussion.

In reply to the Official Side proposal to amend the terms of the agreement re SEIZURE AWARDS by relating the reward to $1\frac{1}{2}$ times duty in respect of ad valorem goods, the Staff Side counter-proposed that rewards should be related to duty on all goods, and suggested three times the duty. The Board's offer of rewards on non-conviction cases to stand. The matter was adjourned.

The Official Side intimated that the itinerary in connection with the EMPLOYMENT OF C.P. MEN would be supplied to Preventive Officers in those districts where it is deemed necessary.

The request to reopen the RECRUITMENT question was granted, and having heard the Staff Side case against the proposed method of competitive interview, the Official Side promised to look into it. Arising on the Executive discussion on this subject appropriate resolutions were passed to serve as instructions to the representatives when negotiating with the Board.

Matters in connection with the issue of MACKINTOSH coats are progressing favourably. A sample of the proposed type has been exhibited to the staff. The Staff Side intimated unwillingness to discuss detailed conditions of issue until some indication of the probable life of the garment could be ascertained. It was suggested that an experimental period of two years should elapse.

An important factor in connection with the issue of ELECTRIC TORCHES still remains to be settled—the method of distribution of the refills. The Staff Side has submitted suggestions.

The reference on SENIORITY OF POST-WAR ENTRANTS has been withdrawn in accordance with instructions from the Council.

References on MONTHLY SALARIES FOR A.P.O.'s and TRAINING OF A.P.O.'s are being sought.

The Staff Side drew attention to current regulations which, at the moment, are embodied in circulars issued to Waterguard Superintendents and Chief Preventive Officers. It was pointed out that this limited circulation would not operate in equal fairness to all candidates at the forthcoming examination for P.O.-ships. The Official Side promised to see if these regulations could be issued in General Order form.

ORGANISING SECRETARY'S REPORT.

In adopting the Quarterly Report and Statement of Accounts, the Committee passed a motion of congratulation on the gratifying results of Organising Secretary's campaign in connection with non-members.

TRADE UNION AND TRADES DISPUTE ACT.

The amendments to the Constitution and Rules made necessary by the new legislation were provisionally agreed to.

CUSTOMS JOURNAL SUB-COMMITTEE.

The report of the Sub-Committee dealt mainly with the activities in connection with the scrutiny of tenders received from printers. The Sub-Committee made recommendations which in operation would effect considerable saving of cost whilst maintaining the high standard of service hitherto enjoyed.

After some discussion the Executive adopted the Report and Statement of Accounts, and expressed satisfaction with the results of the Committee's endeavours.

As regards the proposition that the "Customs Journal" should be published monthly instead of fortnightly, authority was given to the Secretaries to circularise all Districts with a view to securing the majority opinion.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SECTION.

In considering the Central Committee's Report, the Executive Committee noted the difficulty of complying with one of the main points of the original scheme, i.e., equal remuneration, as far as practicable, to tutors. The unhampered operation of the student's choice tends to overload certain tutors, and to avoid this, instructions have been given to allocate students in equal proportions, safeguarding the students' choice where possible.

The great strides of successful progress of the Education Section were noted with approval.

Many interesting innovations for future development are under consideration.

Several "contentious" points have been forwarded to the Board with a view to obtaining authoritative rulings. An early reply will be welcomed in many spheres.

WATERGUARD CLAIMS.

In the very prolonged discussion on this important question it was agreed that precipitated action would be disastrous at this stage and under the existing economic conditions.

Definite instructions were given as to action to be taken in connection with the possibilities of increasing the value of the work performed by the Waterguard.

SUPERANNUATION.

Discussion on this matter was adjourned pending the supply of further details.

AREA REPRESENTATION.

The Executive Committee elected a Sub-Committee of three (Messrs. Merron, Sutton and Powell) to explore and report on the Area and District Representation.

ISSUE OF HANDBAGS.

It was reported that the reference to the Waterguard Sectional Committee is being sought.

EMPLOYMENT OF EXTRA MEN.

Arising on information laid before the Executive Committee to the effect that at Brixham extra men were being employed over long periods on work proper to the A.P.O. Grade, instructions were given to the representatives on the Joint Committee (C. and E. Associations) to have the matter raised on the Departmental Council.

PROMOTION BY MERIT.

A.P.O. to P.O.—It will be remembered that at the Conference it was decided to submit a basis of a scheme to the Districts for discussion. This will be done. It will be noticed that some slight amendment has been made. At the instigation of the District which moved the original basis, that part referring to the limitation of the number called in relation to the number of vacancies has now been deleted.

The Secretaries have been instructed to explore statistics and render every possible assistance to Districts.

The Committee also considered a resolution from Leith asking that all members of Group 3 under the Reconstruction shall be dealt with at one examination. It was decided to seek authority from the Council to circulate this scheme to the Districts.

The question of marks allocated at examinations is being treated on the lines indicated at the Conference.

P.O. to C.P.O.—Following the discussion, in which many useful points were brought out, it was decided to set up a small Sub-Committee (Messrs. Merron, Sutton and Powell), with instructions to draw up a scheme for the consideration of the Executive Committee. The adopted scheme will, of course, be circulated to the Districts.

WAGE CLAIM, 1923/25 ENTRANTS.

In considering the resolution received from Swansea seeking "pay for age" for 1923/25

entrants, the Committee had before it the original reference on which an agreement has already been reached on the Waterguard Sectional Committee.

The original reference is reprinted:—

"That Ex-Service men recruited from the January, 1923, examination should be given starting pay on an age basis up to 26 years, and that the age pay of other Reconstruction Entrants should be re-assessed on the same basis to the same point on the new scale."

On this reference the Association put forward the strongest possible case, and finally succeeded, in October, 1924, in reaching agreement in the following terms:—

"That Ex-Service Assistant Preventive Officer Entrants recruited from the February, 1923, examination who are now in receipt of less than 31s. a week should be raised to that point as from April 1st, 1924."

The agreement was recorded in spite of the fact that a plebiscite of the members affected indicated a closure at an earlier stage and at less favourable terms. By holding out, the representatives were able to secure that all members in this class came immediately on to the higher rate of overtime.

In view of the comparatively recent agreement, the Committee decided that no useful purpose would be served by reopening negotiations at this juncture.

SENIORITY LIST.

Members will remember that the instructions to publish the seniority list were suspended pending the development of certain points at issue.

In view of the uncertainty that exists, created no doubt by the publication in other directions of lists which vary from the official one, it has now been decided to publish the Waterguard Seniority List through the medium of the "Customs Journal" at an early date.

W. H. POWELL.

BRISTOL.

A well-attended meeting on December 1st, at the Central Restaurant, Broad Quay, Bristol, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. H. Stone-street, P.O., was devoted mainly to the discussion of local matters.

The following officers were chosen as Grade representatives on the Local Whitley Council for the ensuing year: Mr. Lundberg, P.O., and Messrs. Ricks and Porter, A.P.O.'s.

LONDON CLUB OPENS THE SEASON.

The first of the series of dances organised by the South Side Cricket Club (or Sports Club, as it is to be called) this season took place on Wednesday, November 30th, at the New Cross Palais de Danse, and a most delightful evening was

enjoyed by about 240 members and their friends. The President of the Club, Mr. C. E. Egan, C.P.O., was present, as also were Mr. H. J. Fleet, C.P.O., and Mrs. Fleet. The spot dance prizes were presented by Mrs. Eldridge, wife of the Club Secretary.

The next dance was announced for Wednesday, January 4th, at the same place. All the dances for the season have been arranged for the New Cross Palais.



The meeting on December 13th, at the Emerson Club—reported elsewhere—goes a long way toward solving a problem that has puzzled many minds during the past few years. The need for a club for the use of Civil Servants has been long felt, and whether the present proposal is accepted or not, an opportunity here presents itself that cannot be lightly passed over.

It has been well said that to form a new club would cost an enormous amount of money, and many difficulties would have to be overcome. To join and gradually expand an existing club, however, is a different question altogether. The Emerson Club is, as clubs go, not a large one. It has a present membership of about four hundred, of which up to about 20 per cent. are Civil Servants. There are two suites of large, well-appointed rooms, and moderately priced meals can be had. The facilities of the club would be specially appreciated by Association officers both in London and also in the outports.

We would not be surprised to hear that the club had been flooded with applications within a very short time.

* * * *

Much of the matter for the next issue of the "Customs Journal" will have to be prepared and printed well in advance, in view of the Christmas season. It would be as well that any communications to the Editor arising out of this issue were forwarded so as to reach him not later than Wednesday next, December 21st. This will give us an opportunity of getting ahead with the work, and will enhance the chances of our appearance to date as usual. We rely on the co-operation of District Officers and contributors to assist us.

* * * *

And now for Christmas.

MAY ALL OUR READERS HAVE A RIGHT ROYAL TIME. A VERY, VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.

"WE ARE CONCERNED."

By W.G.T.

A very definite crisis has arrived in Waterguard history, and we must buckle on our armour for the fray. "W.M.S." has asked, in the last issue of this "Journal," "are we concerned," and I will endeavour to answer him.

Let us review recent events in order to see what bearing they have upon the present crisis. When post-war claims for reconstruction were being considered, the Officer Grade were fortunate enough to get their claim heard before ours. Whilst their claim was being presented, the raging, tearing campaign for economy by sections of the Press was increasing with such intensity that the Treasury got nervous and started to whittle down. When poor Cinderella Waterguard came along with her claim, there was nothing left for her. The Officers were awarded a most succulent dish, and the Waterguard got the sugar of sympathy on a dry crust.

Then came the aftermath. The Officer Grade had made themselves too expensive for a great deal of the work they performed, and dilution in the form of the Clerical Classes began to trickle in. The trickle increased to a flood, and the Officers' Federation got alarmed and tried to stem the tide by persuading the Board to hold the first post-war open competitive examination. But what a miserable failure it proved! Twenty per cent. of the new sixty came from the Clerical Classes, the very class that they were trying to keep out, and, to make matters worse, they came in by selection.

And poor Cinderella Waterguard has been watching this struggle. She asked that she might be given the special consideration of knowing Customs work as well as the Officer Grade, and was therefore the best-suited applicant for entrance to that Grade; and the excuses made by the Board have left her extremely cold. Hope flickered in her breast when the discussions for broadening the syllabus of the entrance examination to the A.P.O. Grade were taking place, and, having clearly indicated that she needed a knowledge of elementary chemistry just as much as the Officer Grade, and that a knowledge of European languages was more useful to her, judge her humiliation when she gathered that these subjects were included in the Officers' syllabus, not for their usefulness in the work to be performed, but rather in order to select who shall work in the drawing-rooms and who in the kitchens. A further rebuff can be read in the note in G.O. 95/27. It would appear that however Cinderella would aspire, however fitting she is for higher duties, she is not given the opportunity by the mistress above, who does not interest herself in the kitchen.

Such is the cycle of events which has precipitated the present crisis in the Waterguard. On the one hand we see Preventive Officers performing exactly the same Customs work as the

Landing Officer, at nearly half of the salary, whilst on the other hand we see Departmental Clerks serenely walking in to assume the same duties by selection. We see the Preventive Officer emerge from an exhaustive test upon nearly the whole of the Customs Regulations, and then, as if by a touch upon the lyre, there stands before us a group of Departmental Clerks who have tricked the test, and are bound to those Elysian Fields where the opulence of higher salaries prevails.

When we have a splendid educational scheme, which is run by our Association and fitting men for the performance of Customs work; when a Conference of the Waterguard urges that entrance to its C.P.O. Grade shall be by a further competitive examination on Customs work; and when the whole of the Waterguard is imbued with a desire to educate, improve, and expand the Department, then I say **WE ARE CONCERNED** if the Board do not make some sign that they believe in and will assist us in our legitimate aspirations.

TRY THESE.

(1) Using present silver currency (no four-shilling piece), what is the largest sum of money you could have without being able to give change for half-a-sovereign?

(2) Two persons were asked to give their ages. They complied. They were then asked to add the two ages together. One gave 44 as the answer and the other gave 1280. It was seen that the first had subtracted one age from the other, while the second person had multiplied them together. What were their ages?

(3) If an army forty miles long advances forty miles while a despatch-rider gallops from the rear to the front, delivers a despatch and returns to the rear, how far has he to travel?

(Solutions on last page.)

NOT FOR HIM.

A man the other day went into the Bank of England and said to one of the clerks: "Excuse me, but I want to talk to someone about a bit of War Loan I've got." "Certainly," replied the clerk. "You can go to the conversion office, where you can get conversion; or, if you like, you can have redemption."

"Look here," exploded the man. "I came here to talk about my bit of money—not about religion." B.J.B.

C. & E. DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL.

The eighty-ninth meeting of the Council was held in the Custom House, London, on Nov. 16th, 1927, the chair being taken by Sir F. L. C. Floud, K.C.B., Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES.

It was agreed that the senior member of the Board present should take the chair at all meetings. Mr. T. Morton was re-elected Vice-Chairman, and Messrs. H. S. Marshall and C. A. W. Sanders were respectively reappointed Official Side Secretary and Staff Side Secretary. The standing committees of the Council were reappointed, with the exception of the Temporary Staff Sectional Committee, the Chief Preventive Officer Grade Committee, and the Launch Service Grade Committee.

OLD AGE PENSION WORK.

Representations based on a draft General Order concerning the delivery of Order Books and visits to pensioners during 1928 having resulted in agreement that personal delivery should be the rule rather than the exception, the Staff Side enquired as to the arrangements contemplated for the provision of the necessary staff. The Official Side stated that it was expected that the existing staff, with the incoming recruits, would be sufficient to cope with the work, and it was also hoped, by arrangement with the Ministry of Health, to dispense with the personal visit to existing contributory pensioners. In addition, further negotiations might result in another reduction of the demands to be made on the staff in connection with Old Age Pension work.

With reference to the undertaking given by the Staff Side at the previous meeting, it was now stated that a memorandum on the question of the transfer of Old Age Pension work from the Department was in preparation and would be handed to the Official Side at an early date.

TRANSFERS.

In connection with transfers between Clerical Officers of the Departmental and General Classes the Staff Side referred to the statement made by the Official Side in March last to the effect that in a few months' time it was the intention to consider applications on their merits, and asked if arrangements could now be made. The Official Side replied that such consideration was now being given; it was necessary, however, in order to avoid wholesale transfers, to impose the restrictions that good cause should be shown and that seniority should be lost on entering the new class.

"P" CLASS PROMOTIONS.

In reply to Staff Side enquiries, the Official Side stated that in the possible event of promotion of "P" Class Clerks the Promotion Board machinery would be used and the system of annual reports incorporated. As regards consul-

tation of the Staff Side, the Official Side would feel bound also to hear representations on the subject from an Association which, although not represented on the Council, contained a large number of the men affected.

STATISTICAL OFFICE ORGANISATION.

Further discussion ensued on this subject, and it was finally agreed that the Staff Side would acquaint the Official Side, at an early date, as to their readiness to agree with the latter's final proposals.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

The question of re-opening the agreement on standards was re-adjourned at the Official Side's request.

DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE.

The Official Side stating that they were still of the opinion that it was inopportune to issue an order generally, that there was no reason to suppose that the rules were not known to officers concerned, and that the issue of composite instructions might soon become necessary, the Staff Side consented to the adjournment *sine die* of their proposal that the terms of the agreement reached on February 23rd last respecting the payment of the allowance for short periods of absence should be issued in a General Order.

MATCH FACTORIES.

On the basis of a Local Committee's report, the Council registered agreements on the schemes of two match factories, and recorded their details in full for reference in other cases.

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS.

The Council received a schedule of suggestions which had been forwarded to the Board by the Suggestions Committee.

OTHER MATTERS.

The Council dealt with a number of other decisions advised by Local and Office Committees, with results that have been communicated to the committees concerned. They included agreements establishing eleven centres for Fixed Officers and twenty-three posts of Collection Unattached Officers.

The next meeting was arranged to be held on December 14th, 1927.

HOSPITALS SAVINGS ASSOCIATION.

The total number of members from the Preventive Staff has now reached 78. £12/11/1 has been paid into the bank during this present quarter, and six claims have been dealt with.

The quarterly returns have been presented, and have been audited by Messrs. Tait, P.O., and L. E. Knight, A.P.O.

Contributions for the quarter ending February 29th, 1928, are due, and should be forwarded to the Collectors as soon as possible.

W. W. BISHOP, Group Secretary, D.582.

A MASTER MIND.

By JOE GOSS, P.O./C. (Retired).

The writer has, during a long rummaging career, been personally interested in many exceptional cases of smuggling, but the following story, for sheer bluff, would be hard to beat.

On a broiling hot afternoon in July in the late nineties, three tired-looking rummagers set forth, from the Toxteth Depot, Liverpool, in quest of the weed. Shipping had been very quiet, and so had seizure making; but information had just come in that a cotton box was docking from Galveston, so the special crew started out to try their luck.

The new arrival proved to be a Field liner of London, with a mixed crew of dagoes, and the prospect of making a job seemed very remote. Going on board, I elected to rummage the crew's quarters, and proceeded to the forward end. When I stooped to descend the companion ladder of a deep fo'castle on the hurricane deck a loud groan greeted me. For a moment I stood and listened, wondering if someone had fallen. Then I hastened below to find the cause. As I descended, the groans became louder and more frequent, but on reaching the bottom step the sounds suddenly ceased. As I peered into the murky darkness of quarters indescribably dirty, I shouted, but received no response. Proceeding cautiously to make a search for the supposed victim, sure enough, with the aid of my lamp, I saw a gaunt-looking figure of a man stowed away in a top bunk right in the eyes of the fo'castle. Reaching the spot, I found the object of my search to be a man past middle age, with a deathly pallor, whose breath was coming in short gasps. His voice was weak and scarcely audible, and in reply to my question about his sick condition, could only point to his chest and cough. As he appeared to be in great pain, I stood on the bunk seat to raise his pillow, and in so doing, the finger tips of my left hand came into contact with something very hot. Looking to see what had happened, I saw a well-coloured doo-dhee lying at the side of the bunk within reach of the old man's hand. Now the Sherlock Holmes instinct got busy; and the old chap's mind got busy too, as I began to feel that the illness was not quite so serious as it seemed at first, and in a kindly and persuasive voice I told him of my intention of raising him up in the bunk, at once putting this into practice, the sick man placing one arm around my neck, and I putting my arm around his waist. Whilst in this position, I felt the presence of more clothing than I thought was necessary for one so sick, and was about to ask a relevant question when the old fellow, anticipating my next move, went off into a dead faint, his head falling forward on my shoulder. I gently laid him back in the bunk and stepped quickly ahead as though to summon assistance, at the same time turning my head sharply round to see what effect it might produce. I was not greatly surprised to see him raise his off-side eyelid and close it just

as quickly when he saw I was making a critical survey of the case.

The time for action had now arrived; so in the sternest voice I could command I ordered him to sit up. With great tears falling down his cheeks he said he couldn't, so I lifted him and asked what was the big bandage doing round his waist. In the easiest of tones, and with great simplicity, he informed me that it was a poultice that the captain had put there four days ago. I said "What a shame! I am going to remove it," at the same time raising his shirt. I saw a piece of sailcloth about a foot wide forming the outside of the bandage, the inside being quilted with red Turkey flannel, the whole being sewn together with twine. It didn't take long to snip the stitches, and there was no need to ask any more questions, as the odour of Cav. was very strong. It was no longer necessary to stand on sentiment, so I told the old man to hop out and dress.

DIPLOMACY AT THE BENCH.

By "ADSUM."

"Officer, I can honestly assure you that I have had that clock for over two years, and, as you can see by its appearance, I take great care of it. In fact, that is the reason why it was wrapped up so carefully and packed right in the centre of my trunk."

"Is that really so, Madam?"

"Oh, yes; it's perfectly true, although the enamel and gilt make it look almost new. But then, it's such a handsome thing, I take great care of it. Now, let me see—yes, that's it—it's two years ago last September that I bought it."

"Where did you purchase it, then, Madam?"

"I really don't remember. You see, when such a pretty thing takes my fancy I simply must go into the shop and buy it, and it's such a difficult thing to remember where one has made a two-year-old purchase."

"Very well, Madam, under the circumstances perhaps you will be good enough to fill in this declaration on Form 104."

"Certainly, Officer; thank you, so very much. . . . Oh, Officer, shall I alter this 'been in my possession at least one year,' because I have had it over two years, you know? All right, then, I will let it remain as it is, but what do I put in this space? Will just the words 'one clock' do? Oh! the clock has a number and the maker's name, and you want me to put that in too! Dear, dear—why is that? Do you trace the history of the clock from those particulars?"

"Even a Customs Officer has professional secrets, Madam."

"Well, really, Officer, I don't think I ought to sign this form. Did I say two years that I had had the clock? How stupid of me! I meant two weeks. Now where do I pay the duty? You see, I must hurry or I will miss my train, won't I?"

Sequel: Offender said she had nothing to declare, but examination of her baggage revealed a new clock wrapped in clothing in the centre of a trunk. It was claimed to be a two-years-old purchase, but when a declaration was requested on Form 104 the lady demurred, and admitted that it was only two weeks previously that she had bought it. Thirty pounds, being the treble value and duty, has been deposited pending the Board's decision.

A CIVIL SERVICE CLUB?

Following the mention in a recent issue of "The New Civilian" of the need for a Civil Service Club, and the publication in the same paper last week of a letter from the Secretary of the Emerson Club, inviting Civil Servants to meet at the club and talk over possibilities, a meeting was held on Tuesday evening last, Dec. 13th.

A small but representative gathering of Civil Servants was presided over by Mr. Corner, Secretary of the Institute of Public Administration.

Mr. Norman, Hon. Secretary of the Emerson Club, stated that the meeting had, unfortunately, been convened for a date when a large number of officers of various Associations were engaged at meetings. He showed that a large sum of money would be needed to start a new club. There had been some idea of a commercial firm starting the idea. For this it was quite probable that a membership of 5,000 would require to be guaranteed, but a guarantee of this sort could not be given. People could not be expected to join a club that had not been yet formed.

It was suggested that the Emerson Club might prove to be a suitable ground for commencement. It had no commercial designs, and was not a profit-making concern. It was formed twenty-three years ago. The name was not descriptive, but it had gone on ever since under the title given to it at its inception. Subsequently it was handed over to the members who, to give it legal status, had formed a company.

By way of entrance fee, new members are required to become shareholders to the extent of at least two five-shilling shares. The annual subscription is two guineas for London members, country members paying one guinea.

At the present moment the club can take about a hundred new members. Development of a Civil Service Club can best be accomplished by developing an existing institution and expanding.

A resolution was passed welcoming the proposal of the Emerson Club, members of the Civil Service present being strongly of opinion that the club was capable of expansion.

There is at present between 15 and 20 per cent. of Civil Servants in the club, the remainder

of the membership being made up of members of municipal bodies and various professions.

Forms of application for membership may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Emerson Club, 1, Little George Street, S.W.1.

IS CHESS A SLOW AND DIFFICULT GAME?

By F. G. BOODLE.

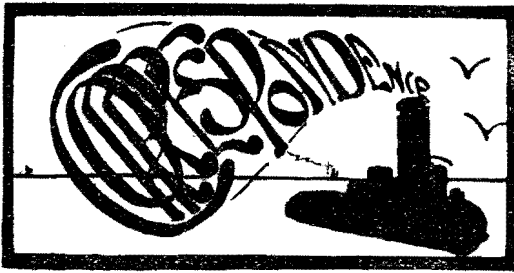
The apparent slowness and difficulty of chess are more often than not the two reasons why many do not take an interest in the game. To the observer the game may certainly appear slow, but in reality the brain of a player is working at its maximum speed. Problem after problem has to be solved and countered in a comparatively short space of time, or his opponent's clock ticks his doom. I ask all non-players, especially those prejudiced against the game, if, in an examination they were given twenty problems to solve in an hour, many very intricate, would they not consider this decidedly a test of speed? This is practically what is required in a good game of chess. It may appear by reference to problems that the game is dry and lacking in excitement; but remember every thought in its own particular way is a problem, and in every mind the very essence of excitement is a struggle for mastery. Chess is entirely a struggle for mastery, brain against brain.

There is a pernicious imagination abroad that chess is a difficult game. It takes time. Its intricacies and profundities are not rightly within mastery of the average human intellect. This, in a sense, is true enough, else chess would not be chess. That it cannot be all known and mastered by everybody is truly its chief crowning merit. Chess is a science as well as an art. It is very easy to compare chess with the everyday struggle of life. When commencing a game you commence as in life—full of hope and taking the board as the world. You experience thereon the hopes, reverses, problems and successes, experienced through life. Chess, therefore, is a natural game and an instrument all may play, no two alike and each according to his own particular temperament.

None will ever regret the time given to the study of the game.

LONDON CRICKET CLUB.

The result of the election for the 1928 Captain and Vice-Captain for the London South Side Cricket Club has been declared as follows:— Captain, Mr. J. Pescod; Vice-Captain, Mr. H. W. Knott.



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.

THE V.E.S. AND THE EXAMINATION.

Sir,—Under the above heading Mr. J. T. Sutton thinks fit to call the “naughty boys” to order for not taking “advantage” of the V.E.S. Surely the V.E.S. has had enough “boosting.” It really makes one wonder how the present-day P.O. passed his examination. Now that Mr. J. T. Sutton has openly expressed his apprehension ré the men who have failed to join the V.E.S., perhaps the examiners will take pity on them. When the V.E.S. was discussed at meetings it met with distinct approval, but it was clearly stated that the P.S.A. should support it, not “run” it, which apparently seems to be the case. As it is purely optional, surely the A.P.O. who desires private tuition, or who remains self-taught, may do so, if he wishes, without any detriment to his chances. Coercion will not get pupils into the V.E.S.—Yours, etc.,
R. A. CROOKS.

◆ ◆ ◆
To the Members, Preventive Staff Association,
P.O. Grade, Tyne Area.

Gentlemen,—I desire to thank you for electing me unopposed to the position of Councillor for the Tyne Area, and to ask everyone to help me to efficiently perform the duties of the office.—Yours, etc.,

W. A. COLWILL, P.O.

◆ ◆ ◆ THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SCHEME.

Sir,—The contribution by Mr. Sutton on the above subject in the last issue is interesting from the standpoint of the Committee and of the tutors. It is disappointing, however, to

know that there are a number of candidates for the next examination who are not taking advantage of the scheme. The Secretary has persistently urged its acceptance and has, I believe, circularised the prospective candidates individually, but there are always those who prefer to “plough a lonely furrow.” To the enthusiastic candidate there is nothing wanting in the courses of study to complete a thorough education in the Regulations, and I think I can safely predict that V.E.S. men will occupy high places in the list of successes.

In connection with the scheme itself, there is, existing in the minds of a few, a suspicion that it was designed as a means of financial gain to the promoters. Like the poor, however, we will always have the petty-minded and suspicious amongst us. These, of course, can be ignored, but, nevertheless, I think that the real object aimed at in the inception of the scheme should more frequently be expounded and emphasised than just bald term advertisements of the courses.

In the minds of those who had the evolving of the scheme of Departmental education at heart the main object was the advancement of Waterguard interests. To increase the efficiency of the officers of the Department by instilling a thorough knowledge of the Regulations will immeasurably enhance the value of the Department. The tendency to delay study, which meant, in fact, postponing the period when an officer should become competent in his own business, was too prevalent in the past. There may have been some argument to justify it in the long march to promotion, but it was bad policy. To know that there is an enthusiastic desire amongst the junior members of the Department to gain a sound knowledge in Departmental requirements is a big step in the direction of claiming increased responsibilities. A low standard in Departmental knowledge at the examinations is a distinct handicap in Waterguard progress. The value of a body is assessed on the efficiency of its members. For this reason it is therefore clear that the scheme is a very valuable, in fact a necessary, adjunct to Association activities.

It is rather early to express any definite opinion on reception accorded to the scheme so far. It is, as yet, in its infancy. Mr. Sutton writes in rather a pessimistic vein, but, personally, having had close contact with the scheme since it was launched this year, I am very optimistic. We witness young men with a few years' service taking a lively interest in the Regulations through the opportunities offered

by the scheme. The spirit of study is spreading, and there is no doubt that when the advantages of the V.E.S. become more widely known and realised, it will speedily develop. Apart from the advantages it offers to the young A.P.O., the headquarters of the scheme is the "clearing house" for interpretation or adjustment in procedure on any obscure point in the Regulations. Consequently, such an innovation in the Department is an asset to every officer.

As far as the financial aspect is concerned, the Association members have probably learnt that the scheme has only just struggled through its first year. The scheme gives to the pupil immense value for the small fees invested. The Committee and the tutors have laboured wholeheartedly towards a successful issue, and whilst there is compensation in the reflection that it is going to be a very successful adventure from a Departmental point of view, it cannot be said that they have gained financially. In fact, in many respects it represents an individual loss when one considers the time and energy to be expended. Unless one is Departmentally patriotic who undertakes the working of the scheme, he will not find a great gain, for the gain is not in £ s. d.—Yours, etc.,

W. M. SHEEHAN.

A LIVING WAGE.

Sir,—It may interest your readers to learn of a little experience one of our colleagues had while in search of a house.

He approached a very influential body to have his name entered for a house erected under the local housing scheme. After giving sundry particulars about himself, he was asked as to his earnings, and on giving the desired information was told: "It's no use putting your name down; you don't earn sufficient to be able to pay the rent."

No wonder only 286 sat at the recent examination!—Yours, etc.,

POVERTY-STRICKEN."

WATERGUARD DUTIES.

Sir.—ARE WE CONCERNED? "I should say so." "The right nail hit on the head." "It's time we got a move on."

Such were the comments I heard during lunch time recently on the article in the last issue by "W.M.S." That I agree with that writer goes

without saying, because, although in the opinion of the powers-that-be we may or may not be desirable recruits to the Officer Grade, there can be no denying the fact that the Waterguard Officer is capable of performing in the most efficient manner all landing and shipping duties.

What I personally marvel at is that the Honourable Commissioners have not yet put such a proposition on the Whitley Departmental Council table. *I wonder why they have not?*

Obvious difficulties lie in the path before such a proposition can be realised, especially if it was tabled by our Association.

I sincerely hope that every District Secretary will get this item on the agenda of his next meeting so as to ensure full discussion, because IT'S TIME WE GOT A MOVE ON.—Yours, etc.,

FAIRPLAY TO THE TAXPAYER."

LIVERPOOL WATERGUARD SOCIAL CLUB.

It is some years since there was a social club in Liverpool, but an insistent demand has now resulted in the formation of a new club. Its first event, a whist drive and dance, was held on Thursday, November 24th, at the White Café, Cook Street.

There was a good attendance to make the evening an unqualified success, and the proceedings went with a merry swing throughout, proving conclusively that there was a hearty welcome awaiting a venture of this kind.

Thanks are due to Messrs. J. Gahan and R. Jones for their able organisation of the proceedings, and the hope was generally expressed that this was but the first of many such enjoyable evenings.

SOCIAL EVENING AT DOVER.

At the Round House Club, on December 9th, an enjoyable evening was spent by many at the invitation of the Assistant Preventive Officers of Dover. Dancing, billiards, snooker, darts, cards, skittles, and a musical programme were among the many attractions provided.

Among those present were the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Barwick), Mr. T. B. Elliott, P.O., members of the Custom House Clerical Staff, members of the Round House Club, and their wives and lady friends.

The duties of M.C. were ably carried out by Mr. A. Cole, and during the evening a willing band of lady helpers assisted him in the provision of refreshments.

At a late (or was it early?) hour the singing of the National Anthem brought to a close a very happy and successful evening.

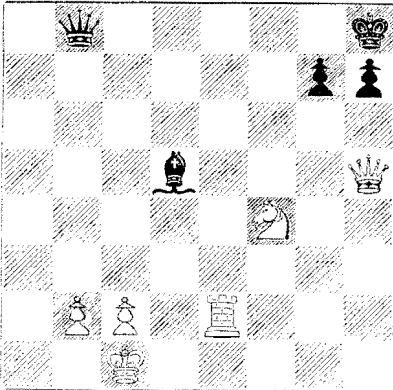
THOSE TOURISTS AGAIN.

A party of American tourists were "doing" Canterbury Cathedral. "This," said the guide, "is Becket's grave."

"Oh," said a member of the party. "Then he did meet Dempsey, after all!" B.J.B.

CUSTOMS WATERGUARD CHESS CLUB.

PROBLEM No. 5.



White to mate in two.

* * * *

Solution to No. 4.

- | | |
|---------|----------------|
| 1. ——— | 1. Q—Kt7 or R7 |
| 2. K—Q3 | 2. R—B6 |

* * * *

CUP CONTEST.

Section 2.

Round 2.—Mr. O. M. Williams, Ayr, beat Mr. A. Vigeon, Ridham.

Round 3.—Mr. J. Smallwood, London, beat Mr. S. H. Matthews, Newport; Mr. J. Hoare, Weymouth, beat Mr. O. M. Williams, Ayr.

TRY THESE (Solutions).

(1) 15/9. It is composed of a crown and a half-crown (or three half-crowns), four florins, and a threepenny-piece.

(2) 64 and 20.

(3) The answer is the square root of twice the square of 40, added to 40. This is 96.568 miles, or, roughly, 96½ miles.

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

ESTABLISHED 1866.

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