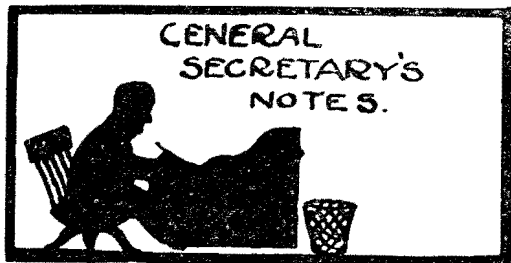


The Customs Journal.

No. 600.

October 22nd, 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 Editor, in the last issue, made reference to the suggestion that District meetings should discuss the practicability of arranging for periodical news letters or articles to be contributed to the "Customs Journal" by District Officers. The idea is that each District should stake a claim in the "Journal" columns and thus accept a proper share of responsibility for making our little paper an adequate reflection of the opinions and ambitions of the staff.

Just a moment's consideration would convince any thinking person that the general adoption of this suggestion would result in a greatly improved "Journal," from a news point of view, but, if the job were done conscientiously by the District Officers there would also be the additional advantage attaching to it, that Councillors would be afforded an excellent means for getting an idea of the trend of opinion in other areas than their own. The value of this would soon be apparent at Council meetings, because it must be admitted that lack of understanding between the different areas and districts is a handicap against getting the best out of Conference discussions.

It is true that reports of District meetings are published, but these for the most part are merely brief records of resolutions passed. In many cases reports of meetings fail to reach the "Journal" at all. Frequently it is impossible to gain an idea as to why certain resolutions were adopted, and it is here that the proposed system of news contributions would come in useful, because full appreciation of the line of thought in any particular District would be made possible through the medium of the District representatives themselves.

The stimulating effect upon the Executive is another point that ought not to be overlooked. Nothing is more encouraging than tangible evidence of intelligent interest on the part of the membership regarding the activities of the Association between Annual Council Meetings.

* * * *

I notice that "Vulcan," in his usual vigorous style, has thrown his weight against arguments for a monthly "Journal." It ought to be made clear that the proposed change (which, by the way, did not originate with the Executive, as some people suppose) was not in order to effect economy, but to produce a more ambitious publication costing about the same annually as the existing periodical. The idea has much in its favour, but, in my opinion, it is impracticable at the moment for several reasons.

It would not be satisfactory to ask the members to give up the fortnightly issue merely to have a double dose of the usual material in a single monthly issue. Those who have put forward the monthly proposal had in mind a publication of the magazine type. Experience indicates, however, that with a scattered, and comparatively small, membership, such a "Journal" would not be successful. It is very doubtful that a sufficiently high standard could be attained to compensate for what would be a real loss to the bulk of the members if the mid-month issue were abolished.

* * * *

"Vulcan" raises another point, in connection with superannuation. He is quite correct in saying that earlier retirement for Waterguard Officers is beyond the purview of Departmental Whitley negotiations.

The exact situation regarding the application of the Prison Officers' scheme to the P.O. and A.P.O. Grades is that the question was officially discussed by the Association some years ago, and the Waterguard claim was accepted by the Staff Side of the National Council Superannuation Committee as part of their programme. The reference still remains on the agenda of that Committee, but, in company with many other superannuation questions, no progress has been made with it owing to the attitude of the Treasury towards all schemes involving heavy expenditure.

There is not the slightest doubt that there is a good case for the application of the Prison Officers' scheme to our Department, but evidently circumstances are against even a good case just now. Anyways, the matter has passed out of the hands of the Association, and we must await the result of the Superannuation Committee's endeavours.

The letter by "A.E.F." in the last issue refers to a Liverpool resolution urging the Executive to immediately press for "pay for age" basis of remuneration for the 1923/5 entrants. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Executive have no power to act without instructions from the Council, and no instructions on this question were given at the last Conference.

Another thing to be remembered is that the case of this class of entrant has already been the subject of a very tough fight, and on that occasion the success achieved by the Association was regarded as exceptional, even though full satisfaction was not obtained.

Therefore, to assume that the 1923/5 entrants have been neglected, or used as a "stepping-stone," is wrong.

There is no doubt that their circumstances are bad, and this is fully recognised by the Executive. But those who took part in the negotiations when the last increase was dragged from the Treasury must realise that it is of no use to talk about sympathy in a wage claim in these days.

The only forcible arguments are those proving increased value of work. In 1924 we succeeded in getting the last possible ounce from the Treasury that could be got on humane grounds.

It is a fact that the Executive are as keen on getting increased pay for this class of officers as the officers themselves, and that if the slightest opportunity of getting anything for them arises, no consideration of a general wage claim would prevent immediate instructions being sought from the Council.

The promotion of ten Departmental Class Clerks to the Officer Grade has caused many a Waterguard Officer furiously to think. There is not the slightest doubt that the most natural recruit to the Officer Grade from within the Service is the thoroughly trained Waterguard Officer, possessing as he does a full and practical knowledge of certain regulations applicable to either grade.

The last has not yet been said upon this subject, and those members who have expressed themselves so strongly can rest assured that the Association is quite active in the matter.

It is interesting to note that the Waterguard is making a gradual invasion into the realm of departmental sport.

Recently three London officers, Messrs. Steers, Blake and Dowden, gave a very good account of themselves at the C. and E. Annual Swimming Gala.

The fine performance of these gentlemen is likely to encourage more entrants next year from the Preventive Staff.

Another interesting event is the forthcoming Chess Tournament, at which about 500 Civil Servants will be matched against 500 drawn from the "Rest of England."

The Waterguard will probably be represented on this occasion by three players from the Waterguard Chess Club.

The tournament will be held at the Ministry of Health some time in the current month.

* * * *

Officers interested in claims under the Single Men's War Bonus are informed that all the cases submitted to the Association have now gone forward to the Independent Adjudicator.

* * * *

Cases coming under the category of "Fare-marked Appointments" are not being dealt with at the moment. Full information as to when these cases are to come under consideration will be issued to the officers concerned as soon as it becomes available.

* * *

In connection with the negotiations for the supply of mackintoshes to the Waterguard, a specimen mackintosh has been submitted for the Staff Side inspection. This has been sent to the Councillors for their comment, and no doubt they will give opportunity to as many officers as possible to view the garment.

It will not be practicable to circulate the mackintosh to every port; but the method adopted will enable a representative opinion to be obtained. It is hoped that Councillors will expedite circulation.

J. MERRON.

BETWEEN TIDES.

PARAGRAPHS FROM THE DISTRICTS.

LONDON.

The dance arranged by the North Side Sports and Social Club at the New Harmonic Hall, Plashet Grove, East Ham, on October 7th, was a huge success. Things went with a swing from start to finish. These assemblies are really excellent, although we regret the absence of some of our colleagues. Come with your friends! They will come again.

A playing pitch has been acquired from the P.L.A. Sports Association on their ground at Cranford Rise, Hford, with dressing accommodation. A successful football season is anticipated.

October 27th is the date fixed for a match between Preventive Officers and Assistant Preventive Officers which will be open to all London officers. Will Preventive Officers willing to play in this game please send their names to Mr. G. H. Clague, the Club Secretary? Assistant Preventive Officers should communicate with Mr. A. E. Cooper, Assistant Secretary. Please do this without delay.

On November 2nd our team will be engaged with the London Dock Police on their ground at Hford.

We supply the sport. Have you given us your support? Make this season a successful one! We are anxious to embark on a series of

cricket fixtures next season. It is now up to you. G.H.C.

A HULL PRESENTATION.

Mr. M. J. HART, SURVEYOR.

The first Annual Dinner and Dance of the South Side Cricket Club will be held at the New Cross Palais de Danse on Wednesday, October 26th. The Committee hopes for the presence of all members and their wives.

A limited number of combined dinner and dance tickets will be issued at 5s. each. Tickets for the dance only will be 2s. each.

The dinner is timed for 6 p.m. (sharp), and the dancing will commence at 8 p.m.

The closing date for applications for combined tickets is October 20th. W.O.B.

At the 18th Annual Swimming Gala held at the Holborn Baths on the 11th inst., the Waterguard Department was represented by three competitors, two of which secured prizes.

Mr. W. J. Dowden, A.P.O., received second prize in the final of the 30 yards Club Handicap after winning his heat, and Mr. W. J. Blake secured second prize in the 100 yards Club Championship and also swam in the Inter-Office team race.

Two of the London members of the Waterguard Chess Club recently travelled to Brighton and participated in a County Tournament for Kent v. Sussex.

GLASGOW.

It will be of interest to many of our readers to note that in the columns of the "Glasgow Herald" the name of Elizabeth Galloway is included in the list of graduates (Glasgow University) for the M.A. Degree. Miss Galloway is a daughter of Mr. R. Galloway, C.P.O., Glasgow, and we take this opportunity of offering our heartiest congratulations to this talented young lady on her success.

The Corn Exchange Hotel, Hull, was the scene, on October 18th, of a presentation to Mr. M. J. Hart, Surveyor, to mark his retirement from the Department after forty years' service. Members of the Waterguard were present.

The Chairman, Mr. J. P. Cross, O.B.E., Collector, was supported by Mr. Warren, Assistant Collector; Mr. Johnson, Waterguard Superintendent; Mr. Dawson, Indoor Staff; Mr. Lawton, Landing Staff; Messrs. Dickens and Howard, Waterguard; and Mr. Kennils, Customs Fund Timber Measuring Department.

The Chairman paid high tribute to the qualities of Mr. Hart, and said that, although he had not known him long, he had seen quite sufficient of his work to regret the loss of such a capable officer, and trusted he would be spared for many years to enjoy his well-earned rest. Mr. Warren, the Assistant Collector, also spoke of Mr. Hart's capabilities, which were endorsed by Messrs. Howard, Lawton, Dawson and Kennils.

Mr. Johnson, the Waterguard Superintendent, then made the presentation, and paid a high tribute to Mr. Hart's qualities as an officer, and claimed his entry into the Service was made through what is now the Waterguard Branch of the Service. Mr. Hart suitably replied.

The company were entertained during the evening by the Hull City Police Concert Party, under the direction of Sergt. Richardson, songs being sung by Mr. Hart and Mr. Jeffrey, of the Waterguard Department. A vote of thanks to the Collector for his kindness in taking the chair was proposed by Mr. Dickens, seconded by Mr. McLoughlin, and the evening's enjoyment was brought to a close by musical honours being given to the guest (Mr. Hart) and the singing of the National Anthem by the company present.

Messrs. Dickens, Dawson and Clark were responsible for the arrangements.

The Secretary (V.E.C.),

Preventive Staff Association,

13, Beer Lane, London, E.C.3.

Preliminary Course

Please enrol me for 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.

SMALL PORT WORK.

By "VAGRHETH."

MERCANTILE MARINE.

The work which the Preventive Officer-in-charge performs as Superintendent of Mercantile Marine for the Board of Trade covers a very wide field, and at most small ports it forms the bulk of the work. The class of duties under this head varies considerably at different ports, and I propose to confine myself to matter which, whilst proving of general interest, will also fairly reflect the work performed at the average small port.

The authority under Parliament for the performance of this work is contained in the various Mercantile Shipping Acts, but the principal Act of these is the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894. It is under this Act that the Board of Trade obtains most of its mercantile marine powers, and it is remarkable for the protection and assistance it generally provides for the British Mercantile Marine. Perhaps the most striking part of the Act is in the great benefits and care bestowed upon seamen. Under the supervision of the Board of Trade, the conditions of employment are carefully supervised: the quality and quantity of food is regulated; the quarters provided for the crew of a vessel are regulated and inspected; the agreements as to service and wages are carefully checked; and the facilities for the payment of wages are simple and numerous. Right through the Act one reads of the careful thought its promoters had for the welfare of British seamen.

It is largely with conditions of employment, and payment of wages of seamen, that a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine is concerned. He must be careful to note that the provisions of the Mercantile and Marine Shipping Acts are carried out in agreements between the master of a ship and his crew. These agreements are drawn up on official Board of Trade forms, and signed and witnessed before the Superintendent, who, if necessary, reads out the terms of the agreement and explains them to the crew.

The crews of all foreign-going ships (i.e., ships trading outside the Home Trade limits) must be engaged before a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine. An agreement for the voyage is drawn up on Form Eng. 1, and must be strictly in accordance with the provisions of the M.S.A. The description of the voyage, the scale of provisions, the rates of wages, etc., are all entered. An official copy of the agreement is taken by the Superintendent, and, when satisfied that the agreement is correctly entered, he issues Form A.A. to the master. This form must be presented at the Custom House before the vessel can obtain outward clearance.

When a vessel returns from a foreign voyage the master must present the Official Log Book and the ship's copy of the agreement (together with the particulars of the wages and effects of

deceased seamen and seamen left behind, on proper forms). The crew are then paid off, when, after scrutiny of the official log and agreement, and upon receiving no valid complaints, the Superintendent, if satisfied, will issue Form B.B. This is the form which is required by the Preventive Officer before he finally clears a ship inwards.

Vessels in the Home Trade (i.e., on the British Coast or between the River Elbe and Brest) run on six-monthly agreements. These forms of agreement, Form Eng. 6, are drawn up between the master and crew, and not before a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine. They cover all the voyages in the first or second six months of the year. The master keeps a record of his crew, showing the date and place where he engaged them, and the date, place, and wages he paid them off with. To each of his crew he issues a certificate of discharge when he pays them off, and the crew in turn sign off the agreement. As soon as possible after June 30th and December 31st, the master must lodge the agreement with a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine. When the Superintendent has checked the entries and is satisfied that the agreement has been properly drawn up and carried out he issues Form C.C.

Each member of the crew of a foreign-going ship must be provided with a Certificate of Continuous Discharge (Dis. A.). This is the familiar blue book which every sailor takes care of because it contains his marine history and character as a seaman since he first took to travelling abroad. The book is issued by a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, who charges half-a-crown for it. It contains a detailed description of the owner of the book, and bears a number which is registered by the Registrar-General of Shipping and Seamen. Every ship the sailor joins is entered in it, and a certificate of ability and character is given by the master of the vessel at the end of each voyage. Sometimes these books are transmitted for issue to the seaman at another port, when the charge of half-a-crown is received by the Superintendent on Form F.24 and brought to account on Schedule 43. When Dis. A.'s are received direct from the Registrar-General of S.S., as in cases of lost books, etc., the charge is brought to account on Schedule 55. At the end of every month the Superintendent makes a return of the stock of Discharge Books and those issued from other offices on Form Dis. 13. Voyages made in the Home Trade are not recorded in seaman's discharge book A., but, as previously stated, the master issues a discharge sheet on each occasion. These sheets may be purchased from any Superintendent of Mercantile Marine.

(To be continued.)

PARLIAMENT.

By "CARACTACUS."

XI.—A SOCIAL INSTITUTION.

Let us consider Parliament as a social institution.

If a system of government does not succeed in making the people happy and prosperous, it fails in its primary object. Where a section of the people are in need it is the business of the State to help them to their feet if they are unable to help themselves. In this country we have Poor Law relief to serve this purpose in one direction, and we may find plenty of room for criticism in its administration, or, rather, mal-administration. If the State did not step in and compel such relief, those people would certainly starve and swell the ranks of criminals, so that there is no question of the necessity of relief. The Boards of Guardians are elected by the people, and strive to carry out the programme on which they were elected, so that the policy of a particular Board is a reflection of the opinions of their electorate. If their policy is such as to entail expenditure which does not meet with the approval of the Ministry of Health, the members may be surcharged or removed bodily. So that the vote, in this case, is of very little value, a state of affairs which is un-English.

Our relief system has the great disadvantage of being degrading, which is a tragedy, inasmuch as the worst dis-service you can do a man, as an individual, and as a citizen and worker, is to rob him of his self-respect. Whether you speak of an "Institution" or a "Workhouse," it still carries a stigma; it is still a spectre to haunt the sleep of those whose only crime is to be poor. When a man applies for relief he finds that he has immediately become an object of suspicion; he is made to feel that he is a "pauper," a failure, a throw-out of life, that he is on the dust-heap, and that no decent man, none other than a ne'er-do-well, would ask for relief. The writer knows of one case where a man in receipt of relief succeeded in passing an examination for a Civil Service post. The relieving officer who dealt with his case, when enquiring as to what efforts the applicant had made to secure work, received this news as a fairy tale. "Why!" he said, "I found great difficulty in passing a Civil Service test. You don't expect me to believe you, do you?" The implication was, apparently, that a pauper must be brainless, or a congenital idiot. The whole attitude is wrong; the Guardians should remember that they are Guardians of the poor and not of the rates.

This poor law relief is paid for out of the rates of the same district, so that that district which is cursed with the most poverty and is thus least able to bear the burden, will naturally have the highest poor rate. If the rates are to

be kept down to a reasonable level, it follows that some vital service must be starved. In London, of course, a system obtains by which the poor rate is more or less equalised as between boroughs, but this is at best but a piece-meal way of dealing with the matter, and affords no relief to the country at large. One cannot help but feel that the whole thing should be a national charge, in the same way as Unemployment Insurance is. Better still, a nation so far advanced as we are should remove its aged and infirm from the taint of poor law relief, providing for them adequately and sympathetically through an extension, say, of the Old Age Pensions scheme, as a matter of right, while the able-bodied could well be provided with work of national value, even if for only three days per week, at little more cost than that of poor law relief and the "dole." Such a scheme would have the great merit of keeping unemployed men fit for work and employable, while the sense of degradation would be gone.

In education, too, we seem to be barking up the wrong tree. This matter is in the hands of the local authorities, and rightly too, since they are the best able to judge what local requirements are likely to be, but there is a deplorable lack of co-ordination between them, and we find the central authority interfering in attempts to cut down expenditure. It is a fact that we, as a nation, are poorly educated compared with Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and America, and we are being left further and further behind. Our need is for better, not poorer, education. We should aim at becoming a nation of experts, and the first beginning of that must be through the medium of a thoroughly efficient scheme of education. One cannot help being surprised at the difference in the standards of education found in different parts of the country. In London, the writer has found children in the seventh standard learning elementary algebra and French, Latin roots, and other subjects calculated to make a good basis for higher education, while there is a comprehensive scheme of higher elementary and central schools, scholarships and continuation classes and evening schools even for adults, while in several places in the north, east, and south, he has found children who seem to have learned little or nothing up to school-leaving age, and have no incentive to self-improvement. It should be the business of the State to foster schemes whereby every boy and girl will be educated up to the best of which he or she is capable, without regard to social station, with maintenance, and with such co-ordination between authorities as will maintain equilibrium and keep pace with the needs of the country.

Perhaps it is true that an ambitious scheme of education would cost money, but it would be money well spent, and money which would be returned over and over again.

The shortage of housing has caused successive governments in recent years to encourage local building schemes, and this is well. But the State has made no attempt to deal with the rings who force up prices to such an extent that the finished houses are beyond the purses of those who are most in need of them, namely, the working people. We are told that it is the business of the State to protect the nation from a section who would hold up industry to enforce an increase of wages or the retention of existing rates. To be logical we must agree that it is also the business of the State to protect the nation from building rings, meat trusts, and grain market manipulators. Those speculators who would hold up production for the purpose of forcing up prices are greater enemies to industry, aye, and to civilisation itself, than the worst strike maniac we ever had. Must we admit, after all, that money *does* talk, and with a louder voice than the call of human need?

Liverpool desires to link up with Birkenhead by means of a tunnel in order to enhance the value of the Mersey as a port. It has to spend thousands of pounds and waste months of valuable time to secure Parliamentary assent and powers. Should not a local body have the power to put improvement schemes into operation on the sole authority of its citizens, who, after all, must foot the bill? The Government should, of course, sometimes point out where an improvement is desirable and necessary, and why. Is that not the proper function of a government, to conduct the affairs of the nation; not to interfere with those of the towns, cities and counties, but rather to weld these latter into one harmonious whole?

The most vital of all our public services is that of transport. Yet our railways are controlled by private individuals, and the companies have Parliamentary powers not given to any other transport body. On the other hand, we have competition in the transport world of such a nature as to be wasteful in the extreme. Competition is undoubtedly a fine thing—in its proper place—but transport is not a suitable sphere. It is just as senseless, nationally, as to have many competing police forces, or postal bodies. Why should we not contract out the collection of revenues, or military and naval services? Yet without transport, none of these things has value. As to the danger of the transport service under a nationalisation scheme becoming bureaucratic, that is an exploded criticism. The postal service is efficient, and the amount of waste is very small indeed for such an enormous undertaking. As to the Revenue Departments, there is not a private firm in the world which could collect such a vast amount of money and deal with such an enormous volume of work at such a small proportion of cost. Nor, I venture to say, is there any body which could prevail upon its personnel to carry out similar work for similar pay and prospects.

Those who serve in railway docks could point to a thousand instances of waste and wasteful management which would not be tolerated for a moment in a Government Department. We have railways, motor services and water transport competing with each other, whereas under a national scheme each would have its proper place, co-operating with the others.

Since our industrialisation began we have had our towns and cities extend enormously, and, like Topsy, they "just grew." There was no semblance of order, valuable ground was wasted, streets ran haphazard, with consequent waste in the cost of public services, and it is only of recent years that we have heard of town planning. A government which knew its business would encourage the economical use of space while enforcing the provision of breathing spaces in the form of parks and gardens at a certain amount per thousand of population as a minimum, and would see to it that the overcrowding which makes slums was not permitted. Under a national scheme, of dimensions far beyond the enterprise of any individual or even a corporation, industrial power could have been provided generations ago at a fraction of its present cost, by the utilisation of waste water power, coal waste, which is mountains high about our collieries, and in many other ways. Peculiarly enough, almost everything which goes to waste in this country is something that could make a material contribution to our well-being. We must wake up to the fact that we, more than any other nation, are unable to bear waste of any description, and it is for the central government not only to enquire about it, but to act, and that promptly.

THE V.E.C. BOOKLET.

The best criticism of the Booklet was sent in by Mr. W. M. Sheshan, to whom the ten shillings has been forwarded on behalf of the Committee. Many excellent suggestions have been forthcoming, and these have been placed in the hands of the Committee.

We gratefully acknowledge the interest that has been taken in this small competition.

C. & E. ORPHANS', WIDOWS' AND WAR MEMORIAL FUND.

The quarterly meeting of the Executive Committee was held on October 3rd. Mr. T. Morton presided.

The Secretary submitted a statement of income and expenditure for the quarter showing that £490 had been received in subscriptions, and that £317 had been disbursed in grants to assist in the maintenance and education of children and in grants to widows in necessitous circumstances. To further increase the stability

of the Fund authority was given to augment the invested funds by £1,000.

It was resolved to refer to a Sub-Committee for consideration and report the question of admitting all members of the unestablished staff to membership.

PROSECUTIONS.

Elsewhere in this issue appear communications having a bearing upon the Press opinions of Revenue protection. It is remarkable that the Press should be so ready to publish opinions, in many instances ill-founded, of what might occur. So long as there is a tariff in existence, so long will there be attempts at smuggling. The only way to abolish smuggling is to abolish the tariff, a course of procedure economically unthinkable. Another method of dealing with the situation would be to have Revenue officers posted within hailing distance of each other round the coast. This latter method would also rouse the ire of all true economists. That the practices of smugglers are no easy task is proved by the many accounts that reach us of seizures of irregular importations made at various points round the coast. This journal does not exist for the purpose of publishing smuggling prosecutions, and we are only able to give accounts of one or two here and there as space permits. If the public Press was as fair to the Customs Department as it is to the critics, the work of the Department would receive much more prominence, and the public would have a chance of learning of the work that is done, as well as the work that certain people think *might* be done.

We have before us an account of an attempt to smuggle 165 bottles of brandy and 16 bottles of perfume at POOLE, the maximum fine on which would be £489 10s., with the confiscation of the goods and of the vessel used in the attempt. The magistrates imposed a fine of £122 10s., and promised to inform a higher authority of their wish that the boat be not confiscated. The perfume was found under the bedding of a bunk. A good deal of the brandy was found in sacks concealed in the cargo of potatoes and onions. The accused had been previously convicted for a similar offence at Plymouth. The officers concerned in the seizure were Messrs. F. M. Harris, P.O., R. J. Gawn and J. H. Rowe, A.P.O.'s, and the vessel was the "Tony," owned by the defendant, a French subject.

At CARDIFF on October 3rd, Mr. Pucknell, A.P.O., of Mr. W. H. Hill's rummage crew, discovered 9½ lb. of Cavendish tobacco concealed under a bottom drawer in a berth of the sailing vessel "Olivebank," and the offender, the steward, was fined double value and duty, amounting to £14 9s. 2d.

At SHEERNESS on October 11th, the cook of the s.s. "Johann Blumenthal," from Yxpila, was charged with concealing 5 lb. of tobacco o.s., and was fined double value and duty, £6 7s. This was discovered by Mr. C. W. Borrill, A.P.O., of Mr. W. T. Fryer's crew.



We learn that in consequence of a large number of applications for the V.E.C. Booklet, a further supply has been printed. A margin has been allowed in view of anticipated further requests, and there are still some on hand. We would advise anybody desirous of obtaining the Booklet to make early application in order not to be disappointed.

The Secretary of the V.E.C. has received several applications from students who wish to take two courses at the same time. They wish, in the same term, to take both the intermediate and the advanced courses. In reply to further queries as to the method of payment of fees in such cases, we are authorised to state that the method adopted is to pay for one course at the beginning of the term when making application, payment for the other course being deferred until the middle of the term.

Regarding our suggestion, in the last issue, of a quarterly report from Districts for insertion in this journal, we are ready to make arrangements for publication. With this end in view, will all District Secretaries please communicate with the Editor as soon as convenient.

"A SMUGGLING MYSTERY."

By "OWL."

Being somewhat of a practical man, and withal true to my King and Country, and Fate having decreed that I should sojourn in Plymouth for the space of one month, and, moreover, bearing in mind the long-continued articles published by certain sections of the Press that smuggling by means of fast motor-boats, assisted on the shore by fast motor-cars and lorries, was in full operation on the south coast, I determined to while away the hours of my spare time in keeping my weather-eye open for an opportunity of detecting, if possible, the reported ramifications of the wily fast-motor-boat smuggler, should he appear in that neighbourhood.

My usual good luck did not fail me even in this venture, and I had not long to wait for some excitement, for during my first Sunday's vigil, whilst gazing wistfully over the granite walls which buttress "The Hoe," I espied a fast motor-boat which came into the picture like a

bolt from the blue. It splashed across the Sound from the shadowed neighbourhood of Drake's Island, and being skilfully handled, glided alongside a small sailing ship.

A man from the motor-boat dexterously vaulted over the ship's side, and was seen to be in close conversation with a burly-looking seaman on board, then, after a furtive look round, the man, pushing something quickly into his inner coat pocket, rejoined the motor-boat and hurried away to the precincts of the Hamoaze and was temporarily lost to sight.

Later, again emerging into the Sound, the motor-boat raced away to some other craft anchored off, and was seen to repeat the same tactics, quite openly, fearlessly, brazenly, and even audaciously.

The motor-boat continued the same apparently nefarious methods with other craft far up the Cattewater, and was again lost to view. I had previously seen at least two powerful motor-cars standing in close proximity to the famous stone landing steps at the Barbican, from which the Pilgrim Fathers set out in 1620; the very spot, I thought, for determined men.

I quivered with almost uncontrollable excitement, and felt perfectly convinced that, had the Chancellor of the Exchequer been present as a witness of these dare-devil escapades, he would have been consumed with righteous fury at the obvious lack of any semblance of protection in his "first line of Revenue defences."

P.S.—Perhaps it would be as well to mention that the motor-boat happened to be the vehicle by which the Customs Waterguard Officers were carrying out their lawful occasions!

CORRESPONDENCE.

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.

Sir,—I consider the letter published in the "Journal" of the 8th inst. by "A.E.F., Liverpool," most opportune.

Since joining the Service as a 1923 Entrant, I have always wondered how the difference in wages between the earlier ex-Service Entrants and the 1923 Entrants was justified. To the unbiased I am sure the position is unjust, and I think the time is now ripe for the Association to once more approach the Board and secure a "pay for age" basis for all ex-Service Entrants.

I would appeal to every member concerned to have the Liverpool resolution brought up at the next meeting of their Districts and secure the support of their colleagues.

There is one matter more which I think could bear discussion, and, if secured, would eliminate the previous paragraphs of this letter. Increments are too small, especially to the poorly-paid A.P.O. I consider an A.P.O. who has attended conscientiously to his practical

duties, takes theoretical tuition (at his own expense and in his own leisure time), is worthy of encouragement from the Board. I think the Board could devise a scheme whereby an A.P.O., if he proves his efficiency, would be granted his maximum pay after five years' service. Such a scheme would instil into the new entrant an enthusiasm for his job, a desire to know all that there is to be known about Revenue protection, which would easily recompense the Board for the additional wages they had granted.

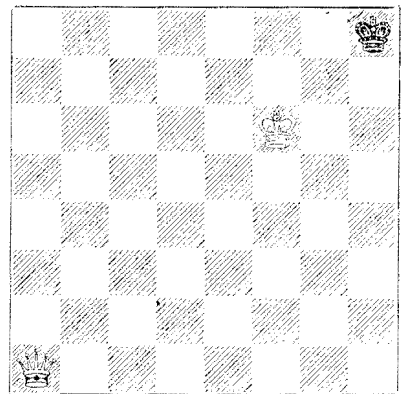
At present the efficient and the non-efficient are treated alike, invariably, and the ambitious A.P.O.'s who spend time and money studying by means of the V.E.C., etc., are rewarded by a gain in knowledge, but nothing extra in the way of increased wages.—Yours, etc.,

K.S.

[See General Secretary's Notes.—Ed.]

CUSTOMS WATERGUARD CHESS CLUB.

PROBLEM No. 1.



White to move and mate in two.

Solution to Mr. Boodle's problem—

- 1. R—Q4+ 2. Kt—B1

Section 1—Round 3.

Mr. Kidman beat Mr. Dudley.

Messrs. Dudley and Smallwood, P.O.'s, London, represented the C.W.C.C. playing for Kent against Sussex at Brighton on October 1st. Although they were unsuccessful in their games, they evidently did well, as they have again been selected to play in one of the most important contests of the year. On October 22nd they play in the match, Civil Service v. The Rest. Opponents number 500 a side, and play will be in London. We wish them success.

The Waterguard teams are now in the first stages of their match in the Kent County Correspondence Chess Tournament.