

The Customs Journal

No. 612

April 7th, 1928

Fortnightly

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Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication, should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," 91 Tressillian Road, Brockley, London, S.E.4.

All matter for insertion in the forthcoming issue should reach the Editor on or before the Monday preceding the day of publication.

EDITORIAL

THERE are two outstanding orders of disaffection; the cause of one is ignorance, and of the other, knowledge. In the latter case a sense of injustice is at the root of the trouble as a rule, which makes the effort to right matters pardonable, for the striving after justice is in itself a sufficient and laudable field of action. So long as justice remains ill-balanced, so long will there be honest work for honest hands and brains to do. To war against injustice, however, is a long and tedious business. It cannot be carried out in ignorance. A thorough knowledge of all its aspects, its history, and its possibilities is vitally essential. The man who engages in this fight often battles against the unseen, and he must arm himself.

Although the battles of our leaders on our behalf are not always against injustice, their energies are largely taken up by the process of preparation, in which they must study their cases very closely and minutely, memorising as much as they possibly can, for they must be quick of tongue as well as of brain. They often need the active and moral support of those whom they represent. One often gathers the impression that our leaders have been put into office simply for the purpose of being shot at by their electors. What often happens is that a man is put into office to perform certain duties. One of his most important duties is to seek and obtain a complete knowledge of matters upon which he is to represent our interests, and to conduct our affairs in the light of the knowledge he obtains. If he does his part he knows far more than we, and he regulates his actions accordingly; and in collaboration with his Council, to whom he passes on his information, he forms and prosecutes the policy of the body he represents. It can generally be

assumed that the policy is perfectly sound, despite the impatience that is often in evidence among those whose information is deficient. It is here that is observed one of the injustices of ignorance, perhaps the unkindest of all, among his friends. The history of the body is open to all—the origin, the growth, the improvements, of the Association; the current information conveyed by the councillors, by countless circulars, by district officers; the aspirations and methods of attainment are known by all who care to take sufficient interest in their own well-being. And yet there are those who seek to undermine the work of the body by unjust and destructive criticism of matters of which they know nothing. Ignorance of the subject is always apparent. Many biting criticisms could never be uttered were the facts in the minds of the critics. When cornered, the reason generally given is that no opportunity had been given of learning what they obviously should have known, and yet they have been arguing with people who have had no more, and perhaps less, opportunity.

We mention these things because we feel that the time is at hand when the P.S.A. must show itself as a strongly-united body. Our leaders need strong internal Association support. Constructive criticism as the outcome of an intelligent examination of the position is what is looked for.

P.S.A. members are strongly urged to study Current Comments in our last issue. There is much in those three columns to occupy our attention. The Easter holiday reminds us that we are not a great distance from the date of the next Conference. Between now and then there is time to exile injustice from within our ranks in order the better to combat injustice from without.

CURRENT COMMENTS

THE Hardman-Lever Report is undoubtedly a most important item of interest to all the rank and file of the Civil Service. In connection with it much undiluted nastiness, masquerading as candid criticism of the Post Office, has appeared in the Public Press. This in spite of the fact that the Committee is definitely of the opinion that it is bad business to create discontent amongst employees. It is difficult to think of anything more unbalanced than the attitude of certain newspapers who, having provided hooes for the "business committee," and laid it down that the opinions of these gentlemen are sacrosanct, immediately proceed to create a very discontented Post Office staff by handing out insults to them right and left.

No publicity is given to the suggestion in the Report that the rates for Press telegrams have been too low and should be increased; but there has been gloating emphasis on the Committee's reference to "business methods" for dismissing inefficient employees. There is not any eagerness, however, to follow up a further reference regarding the absence of another "business method" by which increased effort on the part of employees may be rewarded by some form of bonus or other compensation. Great jubilation is expressed at the attack, made in the Report, on the existing safeguards for the working conditions of Post Office employees.

This is all very unfair and disquieting. There is not one word of encouragement for thousands of Post Office workers who undoubtedly perform their work with great efficiency, and whose remuneration even the wildest imagination could not regard as extravagant.

The policy actuating the line taken by the Press is quite obvious. The Lever Report is a heaven-sent opportunity for breathing new life into that foolish theory which advocates impoverishing the worker in order to make the country prosperous. Every unbiased and progressive business man knows that this theory has been exploded, and there is some comfort in that fact. Nevertheless, the whole Civil Service must be on the alert in case any attempt is made to utilise the Report for making an undermining attack on the few privileges that Civil Servants still retain.

* * * *

There was a time, many years ago, when Admiralty messages were conveyed from London to the naval base on the south coast, by means of a wonderful relay semaphore system. That system was perfection itself until new inventions came along—and then it was killed. The telegraphs are now suffering a similar fate. As telephony and radio telephony become more perfect, the telegraphs will gradually cease to exist.

* * * *

To blame Civil Service conditions for this inevitable development is hardly logical, yet that is what some people are trying to do. They say quite blandly that as a private enterprise the Post Office would develop so much efficiency as to stay the natural course of events.

The condition of the telephones under private control is conveniently forgotten. And, we are to assume that the railways and the mining industry

are under perfect management. The organisation of the Post Office is at least equal to any of these concerns, and any defects from which it suffers are inevitable in any gigantic business.

* * * *

A reduction of £96,785 in the cost of the Customs and Excise is indicated in the Civil Service Estimates for the year ending March 31st, 1928.

There is no alteration in the staffing figures for the Waterguard, but a decline in numbers for the Officer Grade is forecast, and reference is made to a probable increase in the number of Clerks.

* * * *

The periodical published by the Free State Customs and Excise staff recently contained an article on the origin of the word "Officer" in the Revenue Service. He traces it back to the days when Revenue Officers were closely connected with the armed forces of the State. Commenting upon the status which the term carries, he also mentions that Revenue officials are probably the only Commissioned Officers in the Civil Service. He deplors the loss of the true significance of the term "Officer," which has resulted from the adoption of this title for many other grades in the Civil Service.

* * * *

It is pretty obvious that no one has a better right to this title than members of the Waterguard Service. They are the only purely Revenue force to-day. Yet, curiously enough the unqualified term "Officer" is bestowed on a different branch of the Customs and Excise, to whom it is due only in respect of a comparatively small proportion of the work performed by them.

From the Waterguard point of view the term "Officer," meaning a member of the Officer Grade, is very undesirable. Both departments have frequently to deal with the same public, who are apt to draw wrong conclusions on hearing one Customs official referred to as "the Officer," and it is very often assumed that the Waterguard officer is not an officer at all. Not infrequently this is a handicap, because it tends to undermine his authority, and this is a bad thing for the kind of duties the Waterguard officer has to perform.

But, quite apart from this aspect of the matter, the term as now applied is the cause of a good deal of confusion in General Orders issued to the Service. Everyone knows the old controversy as to whether "Officer" with a capital "O" means officers in general or only members of the Officer Grade. When a sentence in a G.O. commences with the word "Officers," ambiguity cannot be avoided. It is time some change was made in this direction.

* * * *

There is a longer interval than usual between the written test for the Chief Preventive Officership, and the Promotion Board interview. Up to the time of writing there is no news of any date having been fixed.

The wider scope of the questions given in the written test on this occasion is probably being followed up by more detailed scrutiny of candidates' papers. If this is so it is all to the good, and it will do much to eliminate the old complaint of

unsuccessful candidates that no adequate opportunity was given for them to show their paces.

* * *

The Small Port articles by "Vagrbeth" concluded in the previous issue of the "Customs Journal," must have been of much assistance to C.P.O. candidates. One wonders where previous aspirants for promotion managed to glean information regarding small port work, for there is nothing in the Regulations having a direct bearing upon the subject. For that reason the articles which have been contributed are a real boon, and it is to be hoped that the author will decide to publish them in booklet form for the use of the Waterguard staff.

* * *

An Executive meeting takes place on April 11th, and will probably last two or three days. As usual, there is a good deal of business on the Agenda.

A new A.P.O. member, in the person of Mr. Dines, will attend on this occasion. Thus, Gravesend has once more a direct representative on the E.C. Mr. Dines takes the place of Mr. Milne, whose resignation caused the vacancy on the Committee. Our friend Milne, besides being a useful debater, has the gift for making himself popular, and there is no doubt his absence from the forthcoming meeting will be regretted by all the E.C. members.

* * *

Now that we are getting the new entrants into the A.P.O. grade, transfers and changes are rife. It is inevitable that some moves will have to be made which are not to the liking of the individuals concerned. It must be admitted that this business in the Waterguard is usually carried out with the utmost fairness and consideration, and there is evidence of a desire to avoid anything in the nature of harsh treatment. In every instance where an alleged complaint has been taken up by the Association, satisfactory settlement has been reached.

* * *

Assistant Preventive Officers now entering the Service are urged to get into touch with the local Association officials as early as possible. If there is any difficulty in doing this, a letter to Headquarters office will receive prompt attention. It is in the interests of all new entrants to join the Association without delay.

* * *

On March 27th, London Branch experienced one of the largest District meetings on record. Nearly 80 members were present, and there was much animated discussion. Local matters only were before the meeting, and the subject which took pride of place was the question of introducing a fixed system for reserve duty as against the present practice of keeping only junior officers on this duty for indefinite periods.

The staffing of London Port was also an item which caused a good deal of debate, and the question of rotation of duties kept popping up throughout the whole evening.

It was a very satisfactory meeting, in so much as it gave the Association officials an opportunity of putting before a representative assembly a true record of Association action taken regarding local matters. The meeting appreciated the situation, and approved of all action taken.

* * *

There has been a further drop in the cost-of-living figure for March. This now stands at 64, as compared with 66 for the previous month. For food alone the figure for March is 55.

Preventive Staff Association

Head Office:

Thames Chambers,

13, Beer Lane,

London, E.C.8.

Telephone ROYAL 4279

President: E. P. Madden

General Secretary: J. Merron

Organising Secretary: J. T. Sutton

Assistant Secretary: W. H. Powell

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

TO MARCH 26th, 1928.

APPOINTMENTS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Atkinson, J. P., Bailey, G. W. W., Blackburn, K. C., Bradfield, R. C., Cormack, J. H., Glover, T. E., Hayward, S. S., Hussay, E. G., Lane, H. J., Laurenson, R. C. G., Leedham, E. T., Mathews, A. F., Painter, R. C., Pragnell, W. A., Simkins, A. R., Speakman, E. C. M., Williamson, F. J.

TRANSFERS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Green, H. C. G., Ardrossan, Dumfries to Glasgow.

Ross, W. G., Leith to Montrose, Dundee.

Sheehan, W. M., Hull to Rosyth, Edinburgh.

Stevens, F. H., Newcastle to Hull.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Berry, R., Liverpool to Bo'ness, Edinburgh.

Cash, G. G., West Hartlepool, Sunderland, to Hull.

Cooper, L., London to Ramsgate, Dover.

Dearden, A., Belfast to Dover.

Fitzgerald, G. P., Fishguard, Swansea, to Dover.

Harrison, C. W., Glasgow to Troon, Dumfries.

Heaver, P. H., Newcastle to Southampton.

Hemsley, H. D., Cardiff to Avonmouth, Bristol.

Hunter, G., North Shields to Blyth, Newcastle.

Hyde, T. W., Hull to Penarth, Cardiff.

Kearney, J., Londonderry, Belfast, to Belfast.

Lane, W. H., Penarth to Barry Dock, Cardiff.

Lonsdale, H., Newcastle to Hull.

Moody, H. O'S., Falmouth, Plymouth to Southampton.

Murray, J. K., Belfast to Londonderry, Belfast.

Ramsay, D., Bo'ness to Grangemouth, Edinburgh.

Stuart, G., Troon, Dumfries, to London.

Sykes, H. V., Blyth, Newcastle, to Gravesend, London.

Taylor, A. R., London to Fishguard, Swansea.

Thomas, S. E., London to Barry Dock, Cardiff.

PROMOTIONS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS TO PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Beirne, F., North Shields, Newcastle, to Newcastle.

Martin, A. L., Swansea to Ardrossan, Dumfries.

Nicol, A. S., Barry Dock, Cardiff, to Leith.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT—CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Galloway, R., Glasgow.

VACANCIES.

WATERGUARD SUPERINTENDENT,

1st class, London. 5.5.1928.

CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICER,

Lower Section, Swansea. 1.5.1928.

ZEAL

1. WHAT IT IS

By ALBAN

HERE is a growing opinion among members of the Preventive Staff that serious consideration should be given to the value of Waterguard work to the Department and to the State. It is well known that the Waterguard is by no means a contented staff. Apart from the question of inadequate pay, there are many things in existence which have a disturbingly unsettling effect, proof of which is to be found in the discussions of local matters at District meetings and larger issues under consideration by the Council and the Executive Committee. I have no hesitation in asserting, however, that not the least important of these disturbing influences is the fact, or at least the suspicion, that the importance of general Waterguard duties goes practically unacknowledged. It is gradually being borne upon the minds of Preventive and Assistant Preventive Officers, by the remarks and actions of supervising officials, that no matter how they may strive, no matter how loyally they may carry out their duties, no matter what hardships they experience, there is only one direction in which they can hope to be considered as officers of zealous character. That the exactions of Waterguard work are thoroughly understood by Waterguard officers goes without saying, and if the work of twelve hours has to be carried out in the space of eight, well, the Waterguard officer does it. He knows full well that he will be ruled as incompetent if he fails to achieve this, and his only consolation will be that he cannot be accused of possessing that most precious of the virtues—zeal. It is often truly said that to be successful one must specialise; and it certainly is possible to specialise in the Waterguard, provided, of course, that the specialisation is officially recognised. As a rule, however, it is only possible in one direction for the Waterguard officer in certain ports, and that on the system, not yet dead, of special selection, so that to be labelled A.1 under the heading of "zeal for the Service," it seems to be necessary to be chosen to perform one section only of what are complicated regulations. An officer may be specially suitable for performing all the other duties, and he may excel in them, but whatever care and thought he may employ, it is apparently not considered possible to mark him down for zeal. But more of this later. I purpose, in three short articles, dealing with the position of Preventive Officers (and Assistants) under a system which lays down the law that unless an officer makes seizures he is considered somewhat in the light of a "passenger."

To deal with the word itself; if it counts for

anything zeal is a passionate ardour in the pursuit of anything. Excessive zeal may rise to the heights of enthusiasm. In general, zeal is an eagerness of desire to accomplish or obtain some object, and it may be manifested either in favour of any person or thing, or in opposition to it, and in a good or bad cause. It is a quality that an employer has a right to expect in his employees, and a quality that is looked for in all servants of the State. Consequently it is perfectly natural that, in the preparation of individual assessments of character, some importance should be attached to an officer's zeal in carrying out his official duties. To the lay mind this label would most reasonably be attached irrespective of the duties performed. An officer is given a station for twelve months, and at the end of that time his superiors meet in solemn conclave and discuss (among others) his conduct, ability, zeal, etc. It is found that he has faithfully carried out his duties, his books and documents have, throughout the year, been faultless; indeed, at periods, the work of the station has been so heavy that he has, knowing that everything must be completed and that no extra staff will be drafted to the station, many times remained some time over his time in order to keep pace with the mass of documents that would accrue should he put it off until the next day, when he would assuredly be just as busy. There is no doubt that he has taken an enthusiastic interest in his work, and has thereby enabled the station to pass through a year without even the shadow of a slur falling upon it. This man, the ordinary mind would say, thoroughly deserves to be considered a zealous officer. Another officer on the same station has been instructed to perform just one section of duty. He has been able to consider and study the possibilities of his position, and can concentrate upon the carrying-out of his particular work, and has, like his colleague, been very successful, impressing his immediate superior with his enthusiasm and keenness. Again the impression would be that here is a man possessing zealous attributes—a man that should not be retarded in his progress by any suggestion that he is wanting in those qualities which would go to make him successful in any walk of life. So much for a brief consideration of zeal as applied to Waterguard work from the standpoint of, shall we say, the man-in-the-dock. There are other points of view, and I shall, in the next article, endeavour to show one which the staff generally views with grave misgiving. There is a general feeling that the word is more or less misused, and that it is applied to the detriment of many hard-working, keen and trustworthy officers.

GLEANINGS FROM THE PAST.

By DIGGER.

(Reprinted from the "Customs Journal" dated April 21st, 1906.)

UNITY IN THE CUSTOMS.

By ARVID.

The Department is as a house divided against itself.
—The Assistant Inspector, London, 30th March, 1906.

The London Assistant Inspector may truly claim that he put his finger with unerring accuracy upon the weakest spot in the whole composition of the Customs Department when he made the remark which appears at the head of this paper. It is a melancholy fact that the Department is as "a house divided against itself." Good camaraderie is displaced by us by internecine bickerings, and instead of a united effort for a common end, we have endless strife of class against class. The result of all this is an easy victory for the forces of reaction, and to this may be traced the fact that, as a Department, the Customs is in the rear of even the slowest-moving bodies of to-day. And above it all is the indisputable truism that the efficiency of the Department must, as another consequence, be necessarily and grievously impaired.

Many reasons could be cited to account for this state of affairs, and chief amongst them is the "classism" which is such a characteristic feature of our Department. Prejudice, jealousy, and sycophancy are the natural offspring of the class system, and where these exist there can be no real unity. To such an extent, indeed, is the class system encouraged in the Customs, that one may be readily excused if one maintained that the authorities, recognising its potency as an agent of reaction, directly fostered classism with a view to the defeat of united and progressive action on the part of the rank and file for improvement in their service conditions.

But it would be extremely unfair to wholly blame the authorities as the authors of all the ills we are discussing. There are two sides to every question, and those in high places may be as much the victims of a "divided house" as we of the rank and file. Indeed, if we go to the fountain head we shall find a state of things existing there, that, to put it mildly, is capable of an alteration, which, if effected, would be the first essential step towards the emancipation of the whole Department. We refer to the three-headed Commission which at present controls the destinies of the Customs. It is the general experience of mankind that for sharp, sweeping and definite executive action, a Commission of three is wholly unsuited, as whatever course such a body may pursue must necessarily be determined by compromises between the views of the different members. Individuality, in which genius concentrates its power, is absent in the trinitarian administration, and hence the very force essential for the satisfactory settlement of the whole Customs question is, at the very place where most needed, entirely wanting.

This, by the way, however. Coming to an examination of the composition of the Customs Department, we find it divided into three main groups that have not one single tie of common interest

between them. The members of one group will hardly even admit that the members of another have a legitimate claim to belong to the Service. Hence, we are treated to the spectacle of the different classes fighting and scrambling for what are facetiously called "the plums of the Service." If it be true that selfishness is at the root of all human endeavour, we can understand the warring of the classes; but if there is a pathetic sight anywhere to be seen in the whole Department, it is the members of one class falling out among themselves. And we cannot be accused of exaggerating when we say that this spectacle is to be seen in the Preventive class. If there is a body of men in the whole Civil Service who have every *bona-fide* reason to stand shoulder to shoulder as a class, that body of men is the Customs Waterguard. From the youngest Preventive Man to the oldest C.P.O., their service interests are as one whatever their personal interests may be. But, instead of a united Preventive Staff, we find that Mr. Knight's stinging dictum on the Department in general can be applied with forcible truth to the Waterguard in particular. Nor does it require the clairvoyant faculty to observe the many little evidences of classism existing in the grade; but considering the great amount of leeway we have to make up before we can even approach the grounds where the plums are supposed to grow, it would take the brain of a Franklin to comprehend it.

There are other reasons to which may be ascribed the lack of unity in the Waterguard particularly, but these have already been discussed in these columns *ad nauseum*, and far from engendering dissensions should rather be seized upon as grounds for more energetic action. The only true panacea for the "divided house" is UNITY. We have had proof lately of the material benefits of systematic and persistent action, and we are not in want of evidence to show that unity is more essential than ever—not only as a means to the acquirement of further concessions, but as a protection for such as we have, through Parliamentary influence, been able to secure from the Treasury. What we have so far gained has been by the work of the strenuous few; what we have had filched from us is traceable to the "divided house." What greater justification have we then for a UNITED WATERGUARD?

PRESENTATION AT LEITH.

A happy event took place at the Waterguard Office, Leith, on March 19th, when Mr. W. G. Ross, P.O., was presented with a silver-mounted walking stick on the occasion of his transfer to Montrose.

Mr. G. McDiarmid (Waterguard Superintendent) occupied the Chair, and opened the proceedings with a few well-chosen remarks, calling upon Mr. R. G. Smythe (C.P.O.) to make the presentation. In carrying out this duty Mr. Smythe referred in glowing terms to the abilities and qualities of the recipient, and wished him every success in his new port. Complimentary speeches were made by Mr. W. Grieve (P.O.), Mr. A. Milne (A.P.O.) and Mr. G. H. Sheppard (Wr.).

In reply, Mr. Ross thanked the members present for the honour they had done him, and said that he would always have happy recollections of the time he had spent at Leith.

CIVIL SERVICE CONFEDERATION.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING.

The adjourned meeting of the Executive Committee of the Civil Service Confederation was held on Monday, 26th March, 1928, at Central Hall, Westminster. Mr. W. H. James presided over an attendance of twenty-nine.

Mr. C. W. Gibson was congratulated by the Executive on his recent election to the London County Council, representing Kennington.

On the recommendation of the Finance and Organisation Committee, the Executive accepted an application for membership from the Royal Naval Cordite Factory Laboratories Staff Association and the Valuation Office Clerical Association.

It was reported that the Civil Service Society of Professional Shorthand Writers has now been disbanded, and consequently had withdrawn from affiliation with Confederation.

It was agreed that Confederation nominees for the Staff Side Panel of the Industrial Court should be Mr. J. J. Mallen, Mr. A. G. Walkden, J.P., and Mr. J. W. Brown, with Mr. P. Alden as a fourth nominee in the event of any of the other three failing to serve, or an additional member being added to the Panel.

The following motion, put forward by the Civil Service Clerical Association, discussion of which had been adjourned from the last meeting of the Committee, was further considered:—

"That the Confederation representatives on the National Staff Side be authorised to table a motion calling for negotiations with the Government for a revision of the Arbitration Agreement to provide, *inter alia*, for the following points:—

- (1) For the Chairman of the Board to be selected by Agreement between the Government and National Staff Side;
- (2) For the scope of Arbitration to be extended so as to cover grading;
- (3) For the regulations governing procedure of the Board to be determined by agreement between the Board and the Staff Side."

It was decided that the proposals should be referred to the General Purposes Committee of the Confederation, which is at present considering certain other proposals for the improvement of Whitley and Arbitration machinery. An assurance was given by the Chairman that a meeting of the General Purposes Committee would be called at an early date especially to consider the matter.

At the request of the Executive Officers' Association, an undertaking was given that further action on the question of Civil Rights would be kept under review by the Publicity Committee.

Pending receipt of further instructions from the Executive Committee, it was agreed that no further action should be taken with regard to the question of Deferred Pay, subject to dealing with any correspondence which might arise.

A motion by the Civil Service Clerical Association to raise the question of the desirability of the abolition of the ten per cent. deduction on establishment rule was considered and after discussion it

was agreed that the matter be remitted by Confederation to the National Council for discussion on the Joint General Purposes Committee.

Further to the resolution passed at the Executive meeting on the 5th March, giving support to the ex-British Civil Servants who are resisting the action of the Irish Free State Government and the British Government in seeking to avoid the consequence of the Privy Council judgment in the Wigg and Cochrane Case, consideration was given to a suggestion that a deputation should wait upon the Executive Committee of the Labour Party in order to obtain the co-operation of Labour Members of Parliament when the matter comes before Parliament. It was decided to leave the suggestion to be dealt with by the Officers at their meeting to be held on the 30th March.

Consideration was given to various Reports of Staff Side Committees. The Report on Sectional and Grades Committee, and the Report on Nursing Homes were discussed at some length, and, subject to various amendments, were adopted. The Report of the National Staff Side Committee on Promotion was adopted without discussion.

No further progress could be reported in connection with the negotiations with the Joint Consultative Committee.

It was reported that the National Staff Side had received an invitation from the Joint Consultative Committee to co-operate in connection with a deputation to the Treasury on the question of the Super-Cut, and that the National Staff Side had replied that it was not prepared to co-operate outside the Whitley machinery.

A resolution in the following terms on the subject of Age of Retirement was adopted:—

"That members of the basic Treasury Clerical Class, the Writing Assistant, and Typing Grades who, on reaching the retiring age of 60 years, have not completed 30 years' pensionable service, should be allowed to remain until the age of 65, or until such earlier age as they attained 30 years' service."

No further action is to be taken on the part of Confederation with reference to the proposed new Married Women (Employment) Bill, dealing with the Teaching profession only, as it is understood those responsible for its promotion do not intend to proceed with the matter.

It was reported that the Reorganisation Scheme for the Accountant of Court Office, Edinburgh, had now been signed by all parties concerned, and became operative as from 1st February, 1928.

With regard to the question of Removal Expenses for the "P" Class, it was reported that as a result of the deputation to the Treasury from the Associations concerned, a settlement had been reached.

LUCK.

First Coster: "Well, poor old Bill's gone."

Second Coster (scornfully): "Poor, indeed! Luckiest bloke on the market; couldn't touch nuthink without it turned to money. Insured 'is 'ouse—burned in a month. Insured 'isself against accidents—broke 'is arm last week. Joined the Burial Society last Friday, and now 'e's 'opped it. I calls it luck."

B.J.B.

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.

INEFFICIENCY AND THE LONDON STATION MINUTE.

Sir,—The London Station minute, as "Freelance" rightly stated in the last issue, certainly caused a commotion in the port. I have gone back several years and examined the station lists, to find that it is quite true that, generally speaking, the same old names repeatedly appear for the "special" duties of the port. Waterguard officers are asking these questions in every office:—"Why is this?" "Who pulls the strings?" "Why are these officers the only individuals capable of performing these particular duties?" "What is wrong with the other officers in the port?" If the reader carefully examines these questions he will admit that there is something radically wrong somewhere. It is known throughout the port that representations have been made on this question, and the replies given are that "these officers have special zeal or special abilities, etc." Let us see how these wonderful qualifications are obtained. London officers know only too well that for some time past a certain section of officers is invariably employed on rummage duties, and placed at stations which have a smuggling reputation. It is therefore not difficult to realise the expectant result after the expiration of twelve months. When the change of stations takes place these officers are reshuffled to similar positions. This may be unintentional, but it certainly is a coincidence. The other officers are placed on boarding duties. It is quite obvious that to-day the duties of the latter are numerous. Time in the main does not permit of these officers being able to look around to any useful extent, and seizures are therefore not so numerous as with those constantly on rummage duties. We now know how "special zeal" is awarded.

As a body of officers we are extremely tolerant of the administration that looks to a few officers as having these gracious gifts. Such administration is not conducive to the well-being of the staff generally, nor is it likely to produce anything but bitter discontent, and an uninterested and inefficient staff.

Yours, etc.,

"IMPARTIAL."

RETIREMENT OF Mr. D. G. SULLIVAN.

Mr. D. G. Sullivan, formerly P.O. at Grimsby, retired from the service of the Home Office on the 31st March, after serving eight years as an Immigration Officer in that Department.

One of the stalwarts of early Association activities, for many years General Secretary of the P.O.s' Association, first President of the Waterguard Federation, Editor of the "Customs Journal," Mr. Sullivan played a unique part in the evolution of the Preventive Service.

We regret to learn that Mr. Sullivan has for some time back been indisposed. In expressing the hope of his early recovery to health, and in wishing him many years of happiness in his retirement, we feel sure that we are not only voicing the opinions of his many Service friends, but of every member of the P.S.A.

CIVIL SERVICE TRAVEL ASSOCIATION.

The C.S.T.A. have sent us a very attractive booklet of their Continental arrangements for 1928, which should appeal to many of our readers, and which can be obtained post free on application to the Secretary at 6, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.

The tours cover very extensive ground, and if none described are suitable for individual requirements, any special tour can be arranged.

A varied list of appreciations from members last summer indicate the efficiency and satisfactory nature of the arrangements made, and the inclusive prices ranging from under £5, with railway fare, gratuities, accommodation, etc., for a week at Bruges, compare extremely favourably with any tourist agency.

The Committee are all well known in the Civil Service, and the Association deserves the full support of all grades, especially when it is remembered that any margin of profit in any year will be used by the Committee, after paying a fixed percentage for the organisation and general management, for the benefit of members of the Civil Service.

C. & E. SPORTS CLUB.

Under the Chairmanship of A. J. Dyke, Esq., C.B., C.B.E., the annual smoking concert of the Customs and Excise Sports Club at the Cannon Street Hotel, on Monday last, provided keen enjoyment to a large assembly. A particularly excellent programme of music and humour kept the company in very fine spirits.

Sir Francis Floud, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise, was present, and was warmly welcomed.

Occupying a prominent position on the Chairman's table stood the handsome silver Cup, presented to the Club by Sir Horace Hamilton as a permanent trophy, to be held by the best all-round man for the year. With the Cup is to be presented a replica which will be the winner's own property. This is presented by Mr. Grylls.

Before presenting the Cup to the first holder, Mr. Dyke recounted the past twenty-five years' work of the Club, paying affectionate tribute to past and present officers, and mentioned various successes during the Club's history. He announced that the Rugby section has this year won the Civil Service championship.

Sir Francis, in presenting the cup to Mr. Taylor, congratulated the Club on its inspiring record, and supported the Chairman's appeal to the younger members of the Department to uphold the traditions of the Club.

HOLIDAY APARTMENTS

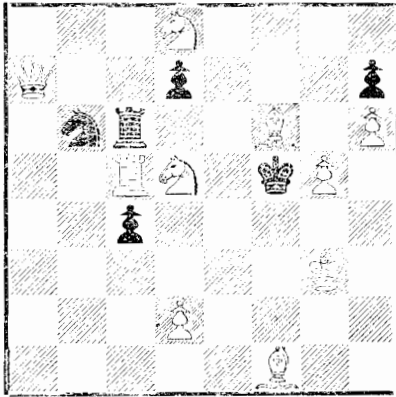
PENMAENMAWR (Wales) Comfortable Apartments. Terms Moderate, on application. Recommended. Mrs. Jones, Bron Menai, St. David's Rd.

BOURNEMOUTH Central. Comfortable Apartments. Bed and Breakfast, or Full Board, if required. Terms Moderate. Mrs. Spratt, 65, Southcote Road.

SANDOWN (I. of W.) Comfortable Apartments with board. Near Station. Ten minutes to Sea. Miss Bull, 5, Station Avenue.

SPORT AND SOCIAL.

PROBLEM No. 12.



By Dr. Gold.

White to mate in two.

Solution to No. 11.

- 1. Kt-B4. 1. K-B6.
- 2. R-KB5.

- If 1--- 1. K-B5 2. R-KB2
- If 1--- 1. K-Q5 2. B-B6

**KENT COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION
CORRESPONDENCE MATCH.**

Primary Round Results.

WATERGUARD TEAM, "A."

1. Mr. J. M. Mitchell (Team Capt.) (51) (a) ...	0
2. Mr. A. Hardie (22) ...	0
3. Mr. F. G. Boodle (50) ...	0
4. Mr. J. Smallwood (36) ...	1
5. Mr. W. W. Bishop (47) ...	1
Total ...	1 1/2

KENT COMPOSITE TEAM.

Miss E. E. Abraham, Herne Bay C.C. ...	1
Mr. S. Hussian, Ramsgate C.C. ...	1
Mr. D. M. Polley, Rochester C.C. ...	1
*Prof. R. W. Genese, M.A., Tunbridge Wells C.C. ...	0
Mr. O. Miles, Cranbrook C.C. ...	1 1/2
Total ...	3 1/2

*We regret to announce that since the completion of this game, Prof. Genese has passed away. His age was 79.

WATERGUARD TEAM, "B."

1. Mr. E. T. Sandford (Team Capt.) (32) ...	0
2. Mr. S. H. Matthews (20-25) ...	0
3. Mr. E. W. Kidman (60) ...	0
4. Mr. O. M. Williams (39) ...	0
5. Mr. R. E. Dudley (10) ...	1
Total ...	1

KENT COMPOSITE TEAM.

Mr. W. B. Dixon, Canterbury C.C. ...	1
Master J. W. Thomas, Orpington C.C. ...	1
Mr. S. H. C. Lucas, Lewisham C.C. ...	1
Mr. F. M. Martin, Sevenoaks C.C. ...	1
Mr. W. Minter, Margate C.C. ...	0
Total ...	4

(a) After adjudication by Kent M.C.
Numbers in brackets indicate moves.

Cup Contest.—Closing date for entries 18th April, 1928. Round 1 commences 1st May, 1928. Entries to Mr. F. G. Boodle, 18, East Cliff Dover. **SCORES. SECTION I.**

- Round 6—Mr. Dudley, London, beat Mr. Bishop, Sharpness
 - Round 8—Mr. Mitchell, Leith, beat Mr. Dudley.
- SECTION II.**
- Round 6—Mr. Vigeon, Ridham, beat Mr. Douglas, Liverpool.
 - Round 8—Mr. Matthews, Newport, beat Mr. Douglas (a).

FINAL ROUND.
Mr. Sandford, Newport, beat Mr. Douglas.
Mr. Vigeon beat Mr. Knight, Sharpness.

PLYMOUTH SOCIAL EVENT.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Plymouth (Mr. and Mrs. W. H. G. Priest), the Deputy Mayor (Mr. Lovell R. Dunston), and Mr. A. L. E. Berlyn (Postmaster) were among the principal guests at the annual whist drive, supper and dance promoted by a joint committee of Waterguard and Landing Officers, and held at the Royal Hotel, Plymouth, on March 28th. The company, which numbered about 200, were received by Mr. C. Nichols (Collector) and Mrs. Nichols. The earlier part of the evening was devoted to whist, Mr. G. R. Parish (Secretary of the Committee) being the M.C. Mr. R. Sharpe, C.P.O., was successful in winning the gentlemen's first prize—a dressing case. After supper, an adjournment was made to the ballroom for dancing, when Mr. R. G. Bultitude was M.C. Music was provided by the Royal Hotel Orchestra under the direction of Mr. Albert Jullbrook.

The proceedings, which terminated at 1 a.m. with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and "The King," were voted a great success by everyone present.

LONDON NORTH SIDE CLUB.

The dances inaugurated by the North Side Sports Club are jolly affairs, as those who have attended will testify. The dance held on March 9th was no exception. All present enjoyed themselves from the beginning to the end. General regret is felt that they are finished so early in the season. These dances are rapidly growing in popularity, for everyone is made to feel perfectly at home. Quite a distinguished gathering met to do honour to the Club and to wish them well. Among those present were Capt. Galloch, Harbourmaster, and members of his staff, Mr. A. E. Howell, Mr. Egan, C.P.O., and a strong contingent of the South Side Club, and Mrs. Fleet. The latter is the wife of our genial President, and the valuable prizes she has so freely given have been greatly appreciated. Time was called with the jolly assembly singing "Auld Lang Syne" with great gusto.

To all who have laboured so diligently on behalf of the Club, the Secretary tenders his warmest thanks.