

The Customs Journal

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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

PUBLICITY.

OUR friend of the flaming headlines has been at it again, and he surely succeeded in making a recent Friday morning very much brighter for those of us who have to be content with the inconspicuous role of increasing the daily "net sale." The Sunday edition had certainly manufactured the caption, and, although ex-Chief Constable Wensley must have gnashed his teeth, "Smuggling drama in Sydney Street" was too good a "winner" to miss. It may have been that the similarity between the Gardstein of the real Sydney Street battle, and the Goodstein of the smuggling "drama" was responsible for the inspiration, but our journalistic spirit compels us to applaud the scoop.

That being the case, we cannot but congratulate our Special Inquiry colleagues upon the happy coincidence that presented them with a good press. We are certain that it is not of their own seeking, but consolation in the event of it being required is theirs in the knowledge that a good publicity manager's motto has it that anything can be said so long as the client's name is kept "in type."

These scribes of the press, however, sadly disappoint us on many occasions. What wonderful

stories we have seen missed for the want of a little knowledge. Only the following day of the "Sydney Street Scoop" there appeared the anti-climax of the indefinite motor-boats (with a variation that they were our boats this time), and illicit trade in Silk, Spirits and Dope. We had hopes that they were really on the track and that our every-day task of defeating the smuggler was to enjoy the limelight to the very limit. Even whilst we were enjoying the advance information he gave us of the intensive campaign against women smugglers, there was a real "top-liner" of a story going begging. Our Special Correspondent was "Somewhere on the East Coast" when he could have stood on London Bridge and thrown a stone on a vessel with a lovely romantic name. No 'phone message had provided the information, but the Preventive Staff had discovered a hefty parcel of an Eastern drug, and the varying contents bills of the evening papers provided eloquent proof that things were all quiet on the Fleet Street front.

Regulations must be observed, and much though we would like to stand in the limelight of publicity, it is no use anyone coming to us to elicit a few facts. We wouldn't breathe a word.

CURRENT COMMENTS.

THE last week of October brings a heavy load of work at Association Headquarters. Amongst the important items of business are meetings of the Executive, and the Waterguard Sectional Committee. A Staff Side meeting of the latter is followed by a full meeting on the Thursday.

* * * *

This will be the first meeting of the new Executive elected at the last Conference. Their first and most important task will be to examine and give final approval to the written statement of our case for arbitration. Immediately this is done, the document will be printed ready for the moment when agreement has been reached on terms of remit. No reply has yet been received from the Board on the proposed terms of remit that have been submitted by the Association.

* * * *

The Arbitration Court has decided against the recent claim by the Customs and Excise Federation for the application of the National Agreement on subsistence rates to Unattached Officers. It is interesting to note that in the Award of the Court on this occasion, minutes of meetings held by the National Subsistence Committee were used as evidence opposing the claim. When the Court was first established, the Treasury would not agree to the production of Whitley Committee minutes in arbitration cases. The fact that such evidence may now be produced need not, however, cause any uneasiness in the minds of our members. Neither should the failure of the Unattached Officers' claim give rise to gloomy anticipations as regards our own claim.

* * * *

The increasing determination in outside circles to cut wages with the object of tiding over trade depression, seems to have made a few pessimists in our ranks. Memories of previous misfortune through being caught in an economy wave are bound to revive in the present circumstances. But the situation is not quite the same to-day. There would be a more cheerful spirit amongst our members if it were kept in mind that, during the Whitley negotiations on our claim, we succeeded in establishing certain facts which will go a long way to help in winning the claim. Also, it should be remembered that the offer made to the Staff Side would have involved, had we accepted it, a considerable increase in expenditure. Neither should it be forgotten that the Association has proved to the Official Side what it set out to prove regarding conditions of Preventive Staff work. That is three parts of the battle won. The point in dispute now is really as to what measures shall be taken to meet the revealed position. And, it must be repeated, the Official

Side offer was not negligible, even though unacceptable in the form it was made. The handicaps in fighting a claim for more pay in these days are so well known that the facts given above provide ample evidence that the Association has handled the whole business forcefully and skilfully. There is every reason to hope that the Association is capable of overcoming the obstacles still to be encountered. The disappearance of pessimism from our ranks would remove at least one obstacle.

* * * *

In addition to consideration of the arbitration claim, the Executive will have before them many other matters of lesser importance. Discussion of arrangements to be made in connection with the production of the Preventive Staff hand-book will claim a good deal of attention. There will also be a new question as regards filling vacancies in small posts; and another in connection with the issues of General Orders and Instructions to the Preventive Staff. Reports on the progress of the negotiations on subsistence rates, and in regard to promotion to the Officer Grade, will be received and discussed. Several items of instruction from the Conference will also be dealt with.

* * * *

The Staff Side of the Waterguard Sectional Committee will discuss, amongst other things, the question of Mackintoshes. The complaints regarding inferior dye will be investigated and, if necessary, the matter will be raised with the Official Side. No doubt there will be some discussion on the new uniform caps which have recently been issued. Up to date, only good reports have been received, and there seems very little room for complaint in any case. The cap is certainly an improvement.

At the time of writing these notes, there is no news of the examination result. It is certain that the announcement will not be delayed longer than is absolutely necessary, but it is in the interests of the candidates that the examination of their work should be carefully carried out, particularly as assessment for merit purposes is involved. This process can be unduly hurried.

* * * *

In anticipation of the next examination, applications for the V.E.S. course for C.P.O. are already coming in. Those who intend taking advantage of the course should not leave it too late before applying. The tutors find it physically impossible to take more than a limited number of pupils. There can be no mistaking it that the tuition given under this course is highly valued. Apart from numerous testimonials, there is the fact that one or two shy inquiries have been made

as to the possibility of persons already in the C.P.O. grades obtaining papers for study purposes. It is also a healthy sign that some of the candidates have signified their intention to continue the course of study if it can be arranged, even should they be successful at the exam.

* * * *

The National Council Agreement on subsistence was not welcomed by members of the Preventive Staff. Its effect has been towards worsening already bad conditions so far as our grades are concerned. For some inscrutable reason, the opinion was accepted that grades other than clerical must be prepared to put up with lower subsistence rates. It is gratifying to note that the National Staff Side are trying to rectify this, and at this late stage are pressing their view that the standard laid down for clerical classes shall apply to other grades as well.

* * * *

The Annual Dinner and Dance of the Customs and Excise Staffs, London, is to be held at the Criterion Restaurant on Saturday, 10th January, 1931. Full particulars will be published in due course. In the meantime, those of the Preventive Staff who intend being present should make a note of the date.

* * * *

The cost-of-living figure is still falling. At October the 1st it was 56, as compared with 57 the previous month.

Presentation at Falmouth.

MR. A. THOMSON.

On Friday, October 10th, in the presence of a representative gathering, a presentation was made to Mr. A. Thomson (C.P.O.) on the occasion of his transfer to Grangemouth. Mr. Slater (Surveyor) referred to the very obvious esteem in which Mr. Thomson was held throughout the Falmouth District, and regretted his departure. Messrs. G. Earthy (Officer), W. P. Rickard and W. H. Sunby (P.O.s), H. Edwards (A.P.O.), and W. Gardner (C.P.M.) also spoke of the feelings of respect and appreciation which were felt for the departing officer.

The presentation, which was made by Mr. Slater, consisted of a "Gold Albert," Serpentine Clock (Cornish Stone) and a fountain pen. Mr. Thomson, in his reply, made some very appreciative remarks on the staff he was leaving.

Preventive Staff Association

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DOVER.

Mr. F. P. Smith presided over an enthusiastic meeting of the members of the Dover District on October 2nd.

A full report of the proceedings at the 1930 Conference was given by the Councillor. In the discussion which followed, the meeting expressed sincere regret at the Council's resolution to prohibit private tuition by V.E.S. tutors, as it was thought that this would interfere with the liberty of the subject. A resolution called for the question to be submitted to the Districts for their opinion.

Changes in the Staff.

TO OCTOBER 20th, 1930.

APPOINTMENT.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER :—
Walter, S. J.

TRANSFERS.

CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICERS, LOWER SECTION :—
Dove, E. A., Newport, Mon., to Weymouth, Southampton.

Rolls, A. H., Unattached, Office of I.G.W. to Newport, Mon.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER :—
Powell, J. S., Port Talbot to Briton Ferry, Swansea.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS :—
Lee, J. A., Swansea to Milford Haven, Swansea.

Peers, J., Liverpool to Point of Air, Chester.
Roy, R., Heysham, Preston, to Liverpool.

VACANCIES.

WATERGUARD SUPERINTENDENT :—
1st Class, Southampton, 1.1.31.

CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICER, LOWER SECTION :—
Bristol, 12.12.30.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER :—
*Lydney, Newport, Mon., 2.12.30.

*An official residence is provided at a reduced rental, and there is an allowance of £20 per annum for performing Long Room work, etc.

NEWPORT (Mon.).

The annual meeting of the Newport branch was held at the Queen's Hotel, on Monday, October 20th. Following the discussion of matters of purely local interest, a report of the recent conference was given by Mr. C. W. J. Morgan. Several points from this were discussed in a manner which betrayed the keen interest felt by the Newport membership.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—Chairman, Mr. J. T. Lyons; Local Organiser, Mr. J. T. Lyons; District Secretary, Mr. E. T. Sandford; Local Whitley Representatives, Messrs. G. E. N. Griffiths and E. T. Sandford; Local Joint Whitley Representatives, Messrs. C. W. J. Morgan and W. A. Pragnell; "Customs Journal" Correspondent, Mr. W. A. Pragnell.

Customs and Excise Departmental Council.

The 120th Meeting of the Council was held in the Custom House, London, on 24th September, 1930, the Chair being taken by Sir F. L. C. Floud, K.C.B., Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

PAY.

The Council confirmed a Committee agreement on the rates and distribution of the extra pay to be awarded to Officers and Women Pension Officers, who, in addition to the ordinary work of the Department, have done the work of investigating and reporting on claims made under the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1929.

Six individual cases of the starting pay of Departmental Clerical Officers were re-adjourned to permit further examination by the Official Side.

The question of provincial differentiation in the salaries of Departmental Clerical Officers was referred back to the appropriate Committee for further discussion.

SUBSTITUTION PAY.

The Official Side made an amended offer on the retrospective date of applying an agreement extending the Industrial Court's Awards, Nos. 1418 and 1456 to Customs and Excise Departmental Clerical Officers, and the subject was adjourned for Staff Side consideration.

"P" CLASS PROMOTION.

It was announced that a further batch of about 20 names had been submitted to the Civil Service Commission for certification, and the subject was adjourned for three months.

**OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR
PERSONAL PROPERTY.**

The Official Side, after reconsideration, reiterated that the Department could not accept responsibility for the safety of personal property on official premises. Every reasonable precaution was taken to prevent loss, but the staff must bear their share of responsibility in this connection. The matter was readjourned.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

Requesting the appointment of a special committee of investigation, the Staff Side made a preliminary statement on the lack of suitable accommodation in Northern Scotland for officials employed by the Department, and suggested that the only solution of the problem would be found in the official provision of houses. After some discussion the matter was adjourned to the next meeting.

OTHER MATTERS.

The Council received a schedule of 57 Suggestions considered by the Suggestions Committee, with notes of action taken by the Board in respect of each item.

Numerous decisions reported by Local and Sectional Committees were dealt with, with results that have been advised to the Committees respectively concerned.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on 22nd October, 1930.

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

The quarterly meeting of the Executive Committee was held on Monday, 6th October, when Mr. T. Morton (Vice-President), presided over a good attendance of members. A financial statement for the quarter was submitted, showing that the income from subscriptions amounted to £572, from dividends to £183, from donations £7, and from repayment of income tax £76, a total of £838. The amount disbursed in grants under the various rules was £656. The meeting approved of these payments.

A list of 70 applications for membership was submitted by the Secretary and all were elected.

A small committee, consisting of Messrs. Barnard, Morton, Chase and the Secretary, was appointed to prepare and issue to all non-members a circular inviting them to join the Fund.

The Coming Promotion Crisis.

By "MARCUS."

For some years now students of Waterguard matters have seen that, sooner or later, there will be a great black in promotion. The crisis looms nearer and nearer. Now, the stream of promotion flows rapidly, and those who watch the pleasant progress of those borne upon it are mostly content with the present day, and the good it brings. When the Nile floods came the people of Egypt rejoiced for a season, but the next season, when the floods failed, they starved. Then the Engineer came along and built a dam to conserve and regulate the vital stream, and now Egypt is assured of even and regular sustenance. We have not yet learned this moral lesson in the Waterguard. We do not regulate the flow of promotion.

Just over ten years ago we saw men between 45 and 50 years of age, who were Preventive Men for about 20 years, being called up for promotion. When they were promoted they remained as Preventive Officers for six or seven years, and then some of them started on a headlong career which whirled them about the country from one post to another, and finally left them breathless at the exit from the Service. Years of fight to sustain a growing family; the respite; a few hectic years of money without a home, and then the end. Another phase of Waterguard life is just developing and, briefly, it will be ten years as an A.P.O., and the rest of service as a P.O. For a particular few it will possibly be ten years as an A.P.O., ten years as a P.O., and the remainder as C.P.O. And then, when this particular phase is over, in three or four years' time, we will again revert to twenty years' hard labour; the respite; and then the final whirl.

One has only to examine the establishment list to see that these cycles of rapid movements and stagnation in Waterguard promotion will take place at fairly regular intervals, and the years in which they will occur can be predicted with a certain degree of accuracy. An individual's place in any one cycle is largely determined by the date on which he entered the Service. The introduction of promotion by merit into the Preventive Officers' examination in 1923, and lately the C.P.O.s' examination, have allowed a slight modification, but, as a general rule, a man's promotion in the Waterguard is largely determined by the date he enters the Service. It is the luck of entry which determines whether he will fall into one of the phases mentioned in the previous paragraph, and whether he will have a lean time or a fat time. He accordingly shapes his Service activity. If it is a long wait without a chance, well then, "as long as I keep my nose clean I can review my position in ten years' time--San fairy Ann." If, on the other hand, he finds he has struck the lucky vein, he im-

mediately starts notating "Hams," and joins the V.E.S.

And what is the cause of all the trouble? It is, quite bluntly, this stupid qualifying system of examination. It is the system which disregards the elements of proportion, and overloads grades without regard to their normal periodical requirements. The basic fact that only one A.P.O. out of every two can be a P.O., and that only one P.O. out of every eight can be a C.P.O., is entirely disregarded. If candidates can surmount the barrier of 66% at the examination, they are, other qualifications being normal, assured of promotion. Witness the results of the most recent examinations, when about 90 A.P.O.s were declared successful for the P.O. grade out of about 140 (about 64%), and when twelve P.O.s were declared successful for the C.P.O. grade out of about 50 (about 25%). To maintain the correct proportion, the percentage of passes should be 50 and 12 respectively. When these proportions are exceeded, the flow of promotion is arrested, and those behind must suffer. This is the system which creates the erratic conditions of Waterguard promotion.

Surely the only fair system to all is competition for an anticipated number of vacancies. The number called up should have a definite relation to the number required, and should be about two A.P.O.s for every P.O. vacancy, and about eight P.O.s for every C.P.O. vacancy. Officers should be called in seniority. Every candidate should have the same one in two, or one in eight, chance. To create a surfeit in one examination, and then not hold an examination for a considerable period, as must be done under the qualifying system of examination, is to feed some, and to starve others. It perpetuates the evil of unequal chance, and luck. It places the Board's examiners in the awkward predicament of having to decide a standard of qualification which, under the existing circumstances, when candidates are trained to be of almost equal value, is like trying to count sheep crowding through a gate, and hesitating when to drop the bar. It is a hopeless process. It must, as expert training manifests itself more and more, become increasingly unsatisfactory to examiners after each examination. They must ask themselves, "I wonder if, after all, I was a bit too severe, or whether I was a bit too lenient in the marking." If examiners must ask themselves these questions after examinations, as they must do, then it only indicates that they are concerned with those whom the barrier of 66% has stopped. If the examination was purely competitive, the standard of marking would make no difference. Look round the country; enquire the systems of examination used, and you will find that in every examination where the number of candidates exceeds the posts open, the one which brings most satisfaction, to candidates and examiners alike, is the one in which strict competition for the number of vacancies is employed. We must

have this in the Waterguard before any more harm is done to those who are unlucky on the seniority list. Candidates of to-day should not have better odds than those of the future, and *vice versa*, nor should the present qualifying system be allowed to continue when it disregards strictly fair proportionate chance.

Considering that only half-a-dozen years or so separates the ages of men now going up for the C.P.O. examination, from those awaiting their turn for the P.O. examination, it is quite clear that the inevitable great block in promotion will soon set in. It means, if the Waterguard remains constituted as at present, and the same qualifying system is allowed to continue, that nearly one-half of the P.O. grade will only have a chance to qualify for the C.P.O. grade when within a few years of retirement, and that the majority of the A.P.O. grade will never have a chance at all. As for members of the A.P.O. grade who are not in the next batch, well! the prospect of their becoming P.O.s is like regarding those twinkling stars set in the cold and distant firmament. It is a bleak and dreary outlook—one to daunt the bravest heart.

Why continue in this mood of lethargic indifference? Why continue to smother that little spark of truth which occasionally flashes across your mind and, illuminating your consciousness for a brief moment, shows you that your El Dorado is only a mirage—that promotion is not for you? You are only putting off the inevitable day when you, and most of your colleagues around you, must face the fact, and realise that there is little prospect for you in the Waterguard.

The old structure of the qualifying system, with its vicissitudes of crazy growth, and then stagnation, must be pulled down. In its place we must patiently set to work and erect an edifice built upon strict competition and equal chance. It will take many years to build, but, when it is finally completed, we will have a symbol of fairness and justice in Waterguard promotion. The instrument to use in making this change should be the District Association meetings, and the columns of this Journal. The Association is ours to use it as we will. So back it, and use it.

Grangemouth Presentation.

MR. P. McLELLAN, Chief Preventive Officer.

In the Zetland Hotel, Grangemouth, on 10th October, a company of about forty of the staff of the Customs and Excise met to do honour to Mr. Peter McLellan, Chief Preventive Officer, on the occasion of his retirement from the Service under the age limit.

Mr. McLellan was made the recipient of a handsome oak writing bureau, and an aquamarine and pearl pendant for Mrs. McLellan,

to mark the occasion and as a mark of esteem and good will.

Mr. A. Calder, Surveyor, who presided over the company, said they had met together to do Mr. McLellan all the honour that was in their power. Mr. Calder read some messages of regard from the following well-wishers who were unable to be present:—Mr. Creighton, Waterguard Superintendent, Leith; Mr. Richardson, Belfast, on behalf of the Northern Ireland staff; Mr. Stuart, Aberdeen, on behalf of the staff of the Aberdeen District; Mr. Fox, Dover, late of Bo'ness; and from Mr. Thomson, Mr. McLellan's successor. Proceeding, the Chairman said he had known Mr. McLellan only since he had returned to Grangemouth about five years ago, but during that time their relations had been of a very happy and cordial nature. Mr. McLellan had always been a "bonnie fechter" and a very persistent devil at times (laughter). No red herring, however large, could draw him off the trail (laughter). On behalf of his colleagues, he wished Mr. McLellan long life in his retirement.

Mr. J. L. Brown, in charge of the Long Room, Grangemouth; Mr. McDougall, P.O., Grangemouth; Mr. Kelly, P.O., Alloa; Mr. Arnold, P.O., Bo'ness; Mr. Kennedy, P.O., Grangemouth; Mr. W. McDowall, P.O., Leith; and Mr. J. Johnstone, A.P.O., Grangemouth, spoke in appreciative terms of the worth of Mr. McLellan, after which Mr. Bell made the presentations to Mr. McLellan. In doing so, Mr. Bell said it was a pleasure and an honour to perform such a duty. He was glad to associate himself with what had been said about their guest, whom he had known for many a day, and had always found an upright and conscientious officer. Men of his calibre could be ill spared. These gifts were symbols of friendship, and he hoped they would remind him of the happy days he had spent in the Service. He hoped Mr. McLellan would be long spared to enjoy his well-earned rest.

Mr. McLellan, on rising to reply, was greeted with lusty applause. He said it was very difficult for him to know what to say after all the praise he had been getting that evening. It was surprising how quickly time passed. He entered the Service in 1892, and the Service was much different then from now. He found some petty tyranny, for which there was really no necessity, and he registered a mental vow that he would try to treat everyone as he should like to be treated himself. He had tried to carry that out to the best of his ability, and he thought they would bear testimony to the fulfilment of that vow. He thanked them from the bottom of his heart for the fine manner in which they had honoured him that evening.

The company sang "He's a jolly good fellow" when Mr. McLellan sat down. Songs and recitations were rendered during the evening by a number of the company, and the piano accompaniments were played by Mr. Wesley Dyson, a member of the Grangemouth Staff.

Reflections on the Exam.

By a Candidate.

Long before the first faint light of the October dawn had presented to the half-awakened consciousness a room, strange and weird, a room in which the unfamiliar furniture presently took grotesque shapes, the mind, in that any-man's land which lies just beyond the boundaries of sense-land, had been exploring, seeking and finally finding the much-desired but hidden treasure—the sets of questions. These answered, with fullness, conciseness, and appreciation of principles and elements, some unknown monitor of the mind became active, and then, crossing the boundary to sense-land, the strange room, the unfamiliar furniture, and three large vases looming up, became, as often happens in any-man's land, three faces easily recognised as those of the examiners.

Then a hoot from the horn of a passing vehicle, and the faces faded, the vases became just vases, and I, the now awakened candidate, realised that the long-looked for, prepared-for day actually had arrived.

Breakfast: a sense of repletion and a distaste for food. A strange internal rumbling, reminiscent of school days with a severe caning in prospect.

Burlington Gardens! Yes. This is the place, and yonder portly, middle-aged, semi-maritime men are surely my competitors.

Why! There's dead old So-and-So. How he has aged! The twenty years that have rolled by since we were "put through it" by that old terror What's-his-name, have transformed the callow youth into the severe, stout, and impressive person I now see.

Oh! And that's the well-known "Thingummy" of whom I have heard so many remarkable but probably apocryphal stories! Yonder is the Regulations Fiend, "Whoisit," and so on, through the group.

Time to go in, boys! The first impression—one of cheerfulness—as we are invited to sign on.

The Inquisition Chamber—rows of compact little desks, each desk to accommodate one candidate.

We take our indicated seats, and look round. With the eye of imagination, we see the homes from which these men have come and the anxious, comforting wives who have "turned out" hubby to look his best. We sense, too, the relatives and friends who, each according to his philosophy and outlook on life, is radiating moral support and encouragement.

The examiners are on the dais, and the Chief begins to gather up papers and notes. How very human the examiners are, after all. A painstaking effort by the Chief to make clear to each just what may, or may not, be done, and a pleasing solicitude for our personal comfort. Another examiner takes measures to prevent the bright sun from bothering the candidates sitting in its beams.

But what of the little book, tantalisingly placed face downwards? The book of mystery, soon to be one of revelations! The appropriateness of assigning to us numbers instead of names, recalled the picture in Revelation 13, verse 17,

Of course, Rumour has already informed us as to the questions we shall certainly be asked, and with itching fingers we await the order to open the little book for confirmation.

We're off! Now where are those sweeping innovations, those abstruse subjects? There were we, bursting to expound our opinions on such important subjects as "Smuggling on the grand scale," "Development of Civil Aviation," "Extension of Imperial Preference" and certainly not least, "The Whitley System—National, Sectional and Local—and its disciplinary reactions," confronted with the familiar subjects and well-known terms that soon we were "taking steps to secure the trial of the offender and conducting the case before the Court."

As so many marine mammals, we dived, came to the surface, and lo! 'twas 12.30 p.m. Lunch! and a welcome respite.

A feeling that the test is fair makes the meal more palatable than was breakfast.

The second paper. Once again the familiar terms and subjects, but, please, Examiners, how did you contrive to select those very sections with which, in the office, we are so familiar, and which now elude us? How very different, too, is the possession of knowledge from the ability to express and demonstrate it in the time allowed!

One discordant note now! Those of us who, lacking pre-natal wisdom, had managed to be born of parents hailing from the comparatively insignificant triangle of land SOUTH of the Tweed, were already sufficiently aware of the difficulty of "putting one over" the "Caledonians, stern and wild," without having our fears increased by the accretion to them of moral support transmitted by bells in the near-by church. "Where, and oh! where is my Highland laddie gone?" forsooth! Had there been but one faint skirl from a bagpipe, I verily believe that I and other Saxons and Sassenachs would have protested (Ses me!).

'Tis over at last. "What we have written, we have written," and now to the kindly fates and the sapient Examiners, we commend our efforts.

"The Oral." Well, this is the least trying of the three ordeals. It must be acknowledged that all that consideration and politeness could do to put the candidate at ease was extended.

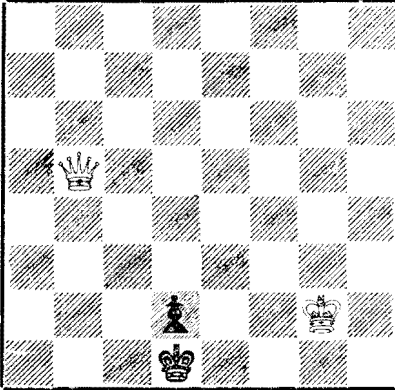
Still, on reflection, how much more was in those questions than we discerned at the time, and what a pity we cannot answer them again when this, and that, and the other points could be made!

The publishing of the written questions will certainly have good results. The aspiring officer will, additionally to mastering the letter of law and regulations, devote time and care to assimilating their spirit and principles, and, it is advised, be determined to cultivate the art of committing to words, written and spoken, the result of his personal studies and his opinions on administrative problems.

It is "up to" the members of our branch of the Service to demonstrate their fitness to occupy any post, administrative or executive, and that being in the Waterguard Department is very different from being in a water-tight department,

Customs Preventive Staff Chess Club.

PROBLEM No. 64*
Black.



White.

White mate in two.

Solution to No. 63.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------|
| White. | Black. |
| 1. Q-QR8. | Any. |
| 2. Accordingly. | |

RESULT OF MATCHES.

Versus Office of Works II.—Lost 3-7. Mr. Welsford won his game, and Messrs. Dudley, Steel, Bishop and Farmer drew.

Versus Ministry of Labour II.—Lost 2-8. Messrs. Welsford and Murray won.

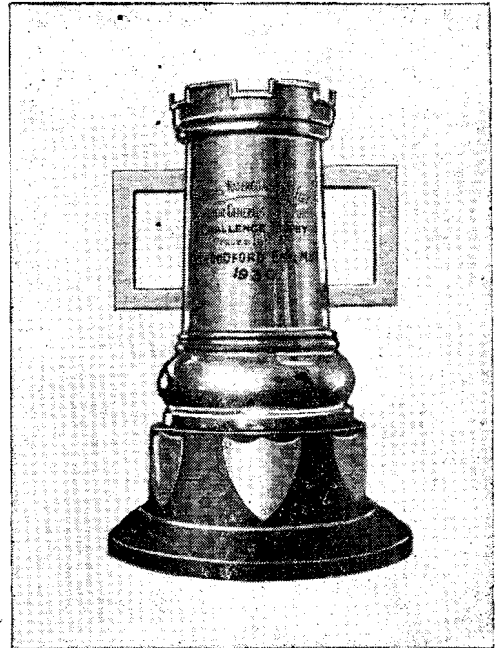
Messrs. Smallwood and Dudley have been chosen to play for Kent County team on October 1st, at St. Bride's.

Newport (Mon.) Whist Drive and Dance

During the past year the social side to the Customs and Excise at Newport has advanced from strength to strength, and a whist drive and dance held at the Westgate Hotel recently continued the high standard of previous functions. Mr. C. Davison was the M.C. of the whist drive, in which there were twenty-two tables, and it was the evident partiality shown by Mr. B. Edwards to certain of these that gained for him the distinction of the "booby" prize. Other prize-winners were Miss E. M. Hurley, Miss G. H. Kerr, Miss E. M. Jones, and Mr. C. H. Pitt. The prizes were kindly distributed by Mrs. J. W. Dawson.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to dancing. A "Paul Jones" proved to be a very successful method of a general introduction, and the evening was carried through in that atmosphere of happy good fellowship which this graceful pastime engenders.

The Entertainment Committee deserve praise for the thorough success of the evening, and the Newport staff is showing its appreciation in the truest manner by asking for more.



THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S INTER-PORT CHALLENGE TROPHY.

This trophy was presented by Mr. T. W. Matthews, a vice-president of the Chess Club, on behalf of Mr. C. M. Woodford, the President, to the winning team, Messrs. F. G. Boodle, W. E. Morrison, B. C. Reilly and W. J. Tuck, at the Custom House, Dover.

Mr. Matthews first heartily congratulated the winners and expressed his great pleasure that the trophy had come to Dover on the first year, and said that he hoped Dover would defend it successfully in the future. He regretted the absence of Mr. B. C. Reilly, who had recently left the port on promotion, but stated that a letter of congratulation would be forwarded to him.

Mr. Matthews read a letter from Mr. Woodford, in which he expressed his regret at being unable to personally present the cup, but that he congratulated the winners, and hoped that there would be more competition from the larger ports in future years, as, apart from the interesting game, correspondence chess linked up the members of the various ports and enabled a spirit of fraternity to grow.

The Collector (Mr. E. Hall), was very interested in this contest, and conveyed his congratulations to the team through Mr. F. G. Boodle, the captain.

The trophy was then handed to Mr. Boodle, who replied for the team, especially thanking Mr. Woodford for his interest and for his encouraging letter.

The silver rook now occupies a prominent position in the Superintendent's office, Dover.