

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," 93, Fairfax Road, Hornsey, London, N.8.

It is essential that all matter for insertion in the forthcoming issue should reach the Editor on or before the Monday preceding day of publication.



AFTER a recess of seven weeks the Joint Committee of C. & E. Associations met on 7th September, and virtually re-opened Whitley proceedings on the major questions. The unavoidable delays and inevitable disorganisation due to the vacation period no longer hamper negotiations and there is compensation in the fact that business can now proceed with redoubled vigour after the much-needed spell of recuperation.

The election of officers of the Joint Committee takes place at the next meeting and nominations closed on the 7th September. The Committee is to be congratulated that no change is likely to take place and that the work of the Committee and the Staff Side will continue to be in the capable hands of its well-tried officials.

Interesting and important as Departmental and central discussions undoubtedly are, there is a natural tendency to concentrate attention on the workings of the Waterguard Sectional Committee.

Members will be glad to learn that a meeting of this Committee has been arranged for the 27th September. The Staff Side meeting takes place on the 23rd.

Some idea of the scope of the discussions can be gleaned from a glance at the agenda.

- Work and Wait Rule (Out-stations).
- Payment for extra attendance of C.P.O.s.
- Recruitment of Steersmen.
- Reorganisation of Launch Service.
- Annual Leave of A.P.O.s.
- Control, etc., of Mobile Crews.
- Attaché cases for A.P.O.s on Rummage duties.
- Electric Torch, new type.
- Issue of mackintosh leggings.
- Age of retirement of Waterguard officials.
- Reorganisation of Waterguard Service.
- Issue of improved rummage equipment.
- Uniform—two suits to new entrants.

The September meeting of the Executive Committee (P.S.A.) will be held on the 27th, immediately after the meeting of the W.S. Committee and will permit early treatment of urgent points arising on the more important items. This apparent haste will be more readily appreciated when it is known that provisional arrangements are being made to hold the Annual Conference on 27th and 28th October.

In the light of this latter announcement it is appropriate here to remind District Secretaries that Conference resolutions and amendments to the Constitution should be forwarded

to Headquarters as early as possible and that "Business for the Annual Conference" should be an item on the agenda of every district meeting.

* * *
A further meeting of the Special Committee of the Departmental Council on the staffing, control, etc., of Aerodromes takes place on the 9th September. The Committee will consider a draft report and it is anticipated that this will be the final meeting. Quite obviously, comment on the report would be out of place at this stage.

* * *
What is probably the least reported and yet the hardest worked committee—the Suggestions Committee—comes into the news this week with the intimation that its Staff Side Secretary will not be standing for re-election on the 21st September.

Mr. H. H. T. Davies, who has carried out the onerous and exacting work of the Committee for the past twelve years in a manner conscientious to the *nth* degree, has been appointed as one of the Secretaries to the C. & E. Federation.

* * *
The newly introduced Credit Service appears to have been much needed, judging by the number of members taking advantage of it. Among the enquiries, however, one point seems to stand out and suggests clarification. This relates to the reference to "Banker's Order." The popular impression is that the Credit Service is available only to members who operate a banking account. This, of course, is quite erroneous. The service is available to all members—with or without banking accounts.

* * *
The social season is drawing near and among the earlier announcements we note the Horticultural Society's Autumn Dance and Cabaret on the 29th October at Portman Rooms (2/6d.), the Armistice Night Rally (in aid of C. & E. Social Service) on 11th November at Harrods (2/6d.), and the London Preventive Staff Sports Club Annual Dinner and Dance on 18th November at the First Avenue Hotel (7/6d.) Each of these dates is really worth booking.

Customs Waterguard Associations

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Excerpts from

"The Customs Journal," 10th September, 1904.

UNDERMANNING IN THE WATERGUARD

Undermanning in the Waterguard has been brought about by the penny-wise and pound-foolish craze for economy which at present finds favour with the authorities. I say penny-wise and pound-foolish advisedly, as undoubtedly the revenue is losing by the present policy thousands of pounds for every hundred that is saved. Of course, it is well known that the advisers of the Board with their unlimited faith in other people's honesty pooch-pooch this and ask and ask for proof. Proof can be given, and will be forthcoming when the proper time arrives, and then there will be an outcry and a hunt for scapegoats.

In many ports, Preventive Officers and Boatmen are being galloped to death, particularly on the day stations, and as a consequence the most important duties are performed in a slipshod manner. Baggage is passed wholesale with the most superficial examination. Bonded stores are shipped somehow, and bulk cargoes of all kinds are examined at a distance. The supervision exercised over the shipment of export coal is like the examination of free goods at some ports, nothing more or less than a farce.

Of course, our penny-wise rulers say that the revenue is not endangered by this mode of procedure. Their plea is that the public generally, and merchants in particular, are much too honest to think of taking advantage of any weak spots in the Customs armour. However, their belief has received a few rude shocks lately. Perhaps there will be a grand awakening some day.

It will be said that the foregoing is an exaggerated statement of facts and that no Collector would allow such a state of things to exist. Preventive Officers and Boatmen, however, know full well that many Collectors do not take the slightest interest in the Waterguard and are altogether indifferent as to how matters go in that despised department. Other Collectors who, although they are aware that their staffs are short-handed, are afraid to tell the Board so. Wise men, they are looking after themselves, for well they know that any Collector who has the courage to speak the truth about such matters runs the risk of being barred from further promotion.

There are rumours of an Inquiry into the working of the Customs department and I have no doubt that, if required, our Executive will be prepared to prove all and even more than has been stated above.

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

The Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee took place in Room 120, Custom House, C. M. Woodford, Esq., O.B.E., occupying the Chair.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Hon. Secretary's quarterly financial statement was presented and approved. The statement gave the following Income and Expenditure items:—**Income:** Subscriptions, £905; Dividends, £130; Donations, £8. **Expenditure:** Rule 23, £567 being grants made to assist in the maintenance and education of children. Rule 26, £286, being grants made to widows left in necessitous circumstances. Grants made under other Rules amounted to £81.

Fifty-nine applications from established officials of the Department for membership were considered. All were elected. They comprised 1 Surveyor, 13 Officers, 2 U.O.s, 2 Exec. Officers, 1 Assistant Acct., 1 H.C.O., 19 D.C.O.s, 3 C.O.s, 1 C.P.O., 3 P.O.s and 13 A.P.O.s.

New applications were considered from five widows asking for assistance in the maintenance and education of their children. Grants were made, i.e., to the widows of a Surveyor and a Waterguard Supt., each left with one child, to the widows of two officers each left with one child, and to the widow of a P.O. left with three children.

New applications from five widows made on their own behalf were considered. Grants of £20 were made in two instances. One application was referred back for further information, and two applications were refused.

Seven widows applied for a renewal of assistance, and the grants were renewed. One application for renewal was referred back for further information, and in two instances the Committee declined to make further grants.

Once again Mr. G. Eperon was unanimously re-elected Hon. Treasurer.

After the re-election of a Visiting Committee, the Meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Without Comment.

"Mental nimbleness is not necessarily intelligence. Often, sitting on examination boards, I have wondered, "How would Darwin, or Bismarck, come out of the test?"

—Philip Wayne, Headmaster.
of St. Marylebone Grammar School.

Civil Service Examinations.

Day Classes.

The Civil Service Educational Council in conjunction with the London County Council has arranged a series of Day Classes to be held at the Westminster Training College, Horseferry Road, Westminster, S.W.1. They will commence at the end of September, 1937, and enrolments will take place during the week commencing 20th September.

Classes will be held during the day-time in preparation for the following Civil Service Examinations:—

1. Typists and Clerk-Typists.
2. Shorthand-Typists.
3. Clerical Assistants.
4. Clerical Officers.
5. Executive Officers.
6. Assistant Inspectors of Taxes.
7. Sorting Clerks and Telegraphists.
8. Probationary Inspectors.
9. Minor and Manipulative Grades
—Entry to Clerical Class.
10. Boy Messengers.
11. Assistant Preventive Officers.
12. Officers of Customs and Excise.

Preparation for these examinations will be given by experienced tutors. Tuition in the following modern languages will also be given:

- (i) French.
- (ii) German.
- (iii) Spanish.
- (iv) Italian.
- (v) Russian.

Native teachers will conduct the language classes.

Full information concerning the times of the morning and afternoon classes, fees and other particulars can be obtained from The Secretary, The Civil Service Educational Council, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1.



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Assistant Secretary: H. L. BOALCH.



To the Editor,
Dear Sir,

At least I deserve your thanks for having provoked five letters in answer to my criticism of the "C.J."

One point on which I was wrong has been well and truly exposed, namely, the printing of "Changes in the Staff." In my ignorance I was not aware of any scheme whereby retired members could contribute to the "Journal." My apologies to our former colleagues, and may their shadows never grow less.

R.W.B. agrees with me so heartily that I have nothing to say. He has obviously given thought to the subject, and I think his suggestions as to further reports of smuggling cases are quite sound.

I definitely disagree with "Anon." and S.J.D. "Anon." is polite, but S.J.D., from an apparently superior intellectual perch, bemoans "the attitude of many in the Waterguard to-day." My contention, for those who forget, was that we have so little space, and our "Journal" is such a specialised publication, that we should omit things which have not a direct bearing on the Waterguard. While agreeing that we should be informed of anything which may affect us, I still hold that something "which indirectly affects the Civil Service in relation to County Court work," cannot have any bearing on our position. I resent S.J.D.'s innuendo that we of the Waterguard are of such low intelligence that we are incapable of doing anything. I am proud of the Waterguard, and convinced that a good officer must have a high mental standard. People who have such a standard are not those who overlook any avenue which may lead to their own betterment. It may require discernment to sift the wheat from the chaff when news of other associations is received.

E.H. demonstrates at least one method of turning reports of prosecutions to good account. But both he and you, Mr. Editor, imply that I don't think reports of prosecutions of much value. Although I didn't say much about them, I do enjoy reading them.

By all means give us twelve pages if you can, and keep a nice head of froth on. If I gave the impression that I object to the lighter side of the "Journal," it was a wrong one. I have had many a good chuckle over "Neighbourly Nippits by Nod." With regard to chess (and bearing in mind that "hell hath no fury like a chessman scorned"), I object only to the publishing of problems. Chess players are entitled to

descriptions of matches, or social functions, just as football and cricket players are, but the problems are impersonal, and can be obtained elsewhere. Football players do not demand expositions on the throw-in, or cricketers on the leg-break.

I don't intend to write again on this subject, as a protracted correspondence becomes irksome.

H.G.R.

Sir.

My sympathies to you in your struggle to do the impossible and please each reader. I have no grouse at present, but I certainly should have if you bowed to H.G.R.'s wishes and cut the chess column. Chess boards figure prominently in many watch-houses and the fortnightly chess problems arouse considerable interest; I am sure that I voice the opinion of many in wishing to retain this feature.

While on this subject, our thanks are due to Mr. Bishop for the very able manner in which he produces this column issue after issue and maintains such a high standard. Possibly he would be only too pleased to be relieved from the onerous duty and it says much for his enthusiasm that he has not taken advantage of the slight criticism published and beat a graceful retreat. Too little appreciation is shown to that little band of stalwarts who, without thought of any reward such as is paid to contributors to the majority of other Civil Service publications, keep the Editor supplied with copy and thus enable him to produce a Journal of surprisingly good quality for such a relatively small organisation as the P.S.A.

B.B.

Injury on Duty.

An unfortunate accident occurred here on Thursday, 12th August, as Mr. J. G. Vining, P.O., Belfast, was leaving the s.s. Arlington Court. Just as he stepped on the gangway it took a "run," the lashings snapped and it turned sideways precipitating him head foremost into the dock. The space between the ship and the quay at the time was approximately twenty inches, and all the onlookers could see for some time was Mr. Vining's cap floating in the water. The dockers in their excitement were pushing at the vessel in an attempt to ease her off the quay. Mr. R. Sloane, A.P.O., however, snatched up a rope from the deck and as soon as Mr. Vining appeared, lowered the end to him and with plenty of assistance soon hauled him out.

The ambulance was on the scene in twenty minutes and conveyed Mr. Vining to the Royal Victoria Hospital where it was ascertained that he had a dislocated shoulder, some bad bruises and was suffering from shock. Mr. Vining is still on the sick list, but is making steady progress towards recovery. We hope he will soon be back in his accustomed place again. J.G.

A Peep into the Future.

Scene: A business office, the walls covered with files and thick official-looking books all neatly labelled and precise. Hanging from hooks round the walls are more files and various coloured documents, charts and graphs, etc. This office is occupied by four bent figures all poring through thick horn-rimmed glasses at official documents. The senior one sits in splendid isolation at his own desk and when spoken to is referred to as "Guv'nor" in a respectful tone. He, like the rest, is attired in a black coat, pin-stripe trousers and spats.

The next senior one alternately walks round to the others inspecting their work and fawns round the "Guv'nor." The Junior one is occupied in menial tasks such as filling ink-pots, cleaning nibs, his work being interrupted from time to time by vicious kicks from the other two persons. These kicks are borne with a patience which he has inherited from his predecessors since the beginning of time.

A door opens and on the threshold appears a ghostly figure in a shabby ill-fitting uniform. He hesitates and appears uncertain of himself but addresses the nearest Clerk thus:

Ghost: "Excuse me, I thought that this was the Custom House."

Clerk: "So it is. What do you want? We are very busy, you know."

Ghost: "I wanted to see some of my old colleagues, A.P.O.s you know."

Clerk: "Well, we are A.P.O.s."

Ghost (aghast): "What! A.P.O.s Don't you wear uniform?"

Clerk (ruffled): "This is the usual garb for office work, isn't it?"

Ghost: "I suppose so, but don't you go afloat?"

Clerk (puzzled): "Afloat? What do you mean?"

Ghost: "On launches. Don't you know what a launch is, or does?"

Clerk: "Oh yes! What do you want to know (he takes down a large book from the rack and quotes from it).

"The launch 'Snorting Sue,' tonnage 60, length 40 feet, breadth 10 feet, speed at maximum 2.5 knots (with tide). Consumes 40 tons of coal per week. Crew 1 navigating officer (late R.N.), 1 Engineer Commander (late R.N.), 1 Naval expert on deck. Patrolled to Ancient Lights last night and back to Squeakand Creek."

Ghost (staggered): "But don't you do any rummaging?"

Clerk (a little nonplussed, but his expression clears and he says):—

"Oh! you mean the quarterly return and monthly digest. We are busy on that now. I got four hours' O.T. out of it + is week.

(He takes down a sheaf of papers and shows them to Ghost who is further taken aback but like a genuine old-timer comes back for more).

Ghost: "Ah! but let me see, you must do some passengers occasionally still."

Clerk: Well, we used to about ten years ago but it took up too much time, you see, and interfered with our clerical duties and railway special train services, so now a C.P.O. attends and takes records, time and other data and we do the rest here." (He shows another book full of figures in red and blue ink, certified cross-certified, etc., to Ghost who is now almost speechless).

Ghost: "But surely you have a Boarding P.O. and A.P.O. who do some Revenue Protection?"

Clerk: "Well, we do, but the A.P.O. who should be here this evening is off sick with writers' cramp but I can tell you to the second how much time they spend on doing each task on board ship."

(As he reaches over to get another book the Ghost seizes the heaviest book in reach and brings it down with a resounding bang on the sleek head of the bumptious Clerk and glides towards the door which he opens with practical hand with a piece of wire and disappears into thin air.

R.S.

O Wad the Power.

"I acted as an interpreter for a Frenchman who seemed very much bewildered by all that was going on and the official neatly showed his gratitude by marking my luggage without comment.

..... I myself had nothing to declare, but two friends had a good deal of silk embroidery to show. After asking whom it was for the officer put it all back without further ado, and turned his attention to a big German doll which one of them had bought.

Usually the duty on such things is heavy. What happened this time was that the officer picked up the doll tenderly, made her open and shut her eyes, say "mamma" and "papa," patted her on the back and returned her with the dry comment, "I hope the child will appreciate her."

Doubtless the poor man was feeling jaded after having coped with six boat-loads of holidaymakers in one afternoon, the culminating party being 1,600 strong.

His reaction to the charms of little Elsa (as the doll had been christened) proved very strikingly that even Customs Officers are human after all!

—Nottingham Evening News, 21st Aug., 1937.

Do You Know—

That the London Customs hail of "Ooo-oi!" is said to be derived from the call of the "watchers" of the Tower calling upon French vessels to stop in the name of "Le Roy!"

The Newest Arabian Nights.

THE TALE OF THE CONJURER AND THE CUSTOM HOUSE INSPECTOR.

There was once a comely young man named Mustapha Job who was famed for his unflinching probity and unexampled ability in the place where are collected the dues levied by the Sultan. He was also spoken of with admiration for his ability to subsist on a few small pice a day. It can easily be imagined with what indignation and pain he observed one day a conjurer who had arrived with others in a large galloon, the "Arabia," place inside the inner band of his turban various articles of underwear, eighteen flasks of sherbet and much mixture for smoking (O.S.) With a cry of rage he summoned the Vizier, Abdul the Damned, from his place at the Royal Treasure-table and besought him at least to behold the dishonest conjurer.

"At least," said the Vizier, stroking his chin, "Twelve strokes on the bare feet. And yet, maybe he did not intend . . ."

The conjurer fell upon his knees and cried in suppliant tone, "Spare me, my lord, for what was it after all but a boyish and indiscreet prank? Be not less generous to me than the Foreman Stevedore and the Porter."

It is known that these royal officials delight in humorous stories telling of strange and incredible people performing impossible feats. "What tale is that?" asked the Vizier. "Stop me if you are already familiar with it. It runs thus."

THE TALE OF THE FOREMAN STEVEDORE AND THE PORTER.

An uncertain stevedore of the foreman class named Ali Dozisbal was standing with his forty thieves on a barge on to which was being conveyed from a treasure-ship much costly merchandise, and looking at the bowl of the sky as one seeking an omen.

"Do you seek a forecast of the horse-contest to be held two hours after the sun stands highest?" asked a witty porter from the gate of the harbour.

"No," said the foreman, who was indeed regarding an airship flying serenely above. "I am thinking of what provision I can make for your future, slave."

At this remark the porter was much amused, and the foreman presenting him the look of one about to raise a scimitar, and again regarding the aeroplane failed to observe certain oranges which had fallen from a case the workmen had accidentally broken open at the time of the midday repast. Stepping on one of these fruit, he therefore fell in the water with a loud lamentation. The courageous porter, with no hesitation, jumped after him and with unparalleled strength, brought him to land.

The foreman thanked the porter fervently but, said he, "as you let me drop my golden

watch, a gift from the mother of my wife, I will throw you in again."

"Do not so," said the porter, "for my father, Tomi Far, was a justly celebrated warrior and taught me some of his more difficult feats. I will cleave you in two, you ingrate, if . . ."

"Stop," said the foreman, "treat me no less mercifully than the Sweepstake Merchant and the Publican."

"What tale is that?" said the porter.

THE TALE OF THE SWEEPSTAKE MERCHANT AND THE PUBLICAN.

Once upon a time in this city there was a certain itinerant seller of tickets for sweepstakes, by name Padi Kif, who plied a busy trade in the places where were sold strong waters. One day, the Sultan, whose gods had told him such amusements were impious, sent his soldiers to prevent the landing of these tickets at the seaports. For they were sent to Arabia from a distant and unholy land. It therefore came to pass that the livelihood of Padi Kif became as deciduous as that of him who sells turbans of straw in the cold regions. The ingenious seller, therefore, procured papyrus and, for he had some learning, depicted characters on this papyrus resembling those formerly sent from the far country. As the frequenters of the caravanserai thought these elegant things in themselves and more elegant for their promise of many drachma he sold them like warm comfits. One day a certain publican, a fat and evil person, learning that the characters on the papyrus were not as they seemed, after he had despatched a messenger to collect treasure he believed he had won, declared that he would take Padi Kif to a high place and cast him outwards.

"What trouble over a small piece of paper when in your own store you have all the treasure a man needs? Will killing me give you the more treasure? Nay, treat me no less mercifully than the Association Secretary and the Geni." "Never heard of it," said the Publican.

THE TALE OF THE ASSOCIATION SECRETARY AND THE GENI.

A certain secretary of an association, tiring of labouring long hours for his slaves when he could be studying the dancing-girls at the "Casino" (for he was a man sober in demeanour but fond of the luxuries of the city), said to himself, "I am weary of toil in the place miscalled Beer. Would that the treasure I seek for these slaves would come to them without industry on my part."

As he was thus speaking dolefully, he was wiping a lamp used for inspection of the pirate-corsairs with an ancient agenda. Picture then his astonishment when a huge black appeared. "I am the slave of that lamp," he said with a wide gesture. "Ask what you wish, my master, and it shall be yours."

The secretary had but opened his mouth, "A pint . . .", when the geni, for such he was,

disappeared and in a little time returned with many documents.

"Appointments," he said. "For all the lesser slaves. Speak but the word, master . . ."

With many cries of delight . . .

"I get you," said the Vizier, "how long will it take you to finish this tale?"

"You have heard but the preface," said the conjurer. "If you will let the train depart and employ yourself extra hours . . ."

"Extra hours?" said the Vizier. "Now, indeed, will I punish you. You may pay three times the value and dues of your merchandise or appear before the wielders of the bowstring."

"And my goods?" said the conjurer.

"That is yet another tale," said the Vizier.

The Vizier became honoured in the city and Mustapha Job, marrying his beautiful daughter, became an Officer and his days were long in the land.

C. F. S.

Plymouth—A Cameo.

Despite its population of approximately 200,000, Plymouth is a peculiarly old-world and completely west-country town. It gives the impression of living still in the days of Drake. Here is no bustling, cosmopolitan, sea-front, with foreign colonies of Arabs or Greeks or Hindus. Just a somewhat sleepy and thoroughly Devonshire town. Modern amusements do not prosper here. Skating rinks, indoor swimming-pools, gymnasiums, theatres, are not to be found. There are, however, dance halls, public houses and picture houses, in abundance. Summer bathing, too, is well catered for at Tinside swimming pool.

The real pride of the city, however, is its situation, one of the finest in England. Built between the Plym and the Tamar, with the Devon moors behind and the sweep of the Sound in front. The Watch-house is built in the G.W.R. docks almost below the famous Plymouth Hoe. The view from the window is invariably commented upon by new-comers. And it is indeed magnificent on a summer day. A great expanse of sparkling water, with the green slopes of Staddon Heights on the left and the woods of Mount Edgecumbe estate on the right.

Devonport, now included in the city of Plymouth, the Naval Base, is on the Tamar. The dockyard there dominates the life of the whole town. The great majority of the men are employed in it (there are no other industries of any magnitude), and in one way or another the Navy influences the lives of everyone. Perhaps because of this, the Plymouthian with a day off duty betakes himself out of Plymouth. And in this respect he is indeed well served. Boats will take him over to sleepy little Cawsand, or far up the glorious river valleys between rounded verdant hills. Almost innumerable buses and trains will take him

round the coast, to bathe from quiet little beaches, or up to the moors to climb the Tors. All of which reminds one of the sarcastic saying that Plymouth is a good place to get out of.

The Waterguard Staff of the port is fifteen A.P.O.s and ten P.O.s, distributed as follows:—one Rummage Crew, three Boarding Crews, one P.O. and two A.P.O.s at the Naval Station, one P.O. and one A.P.O. on liner boarding, and the remainder General and Relief.

The old-world nature of the place appears in its somewhat out-of-date docks and wharves. Consequently, Plymouth does not rank high as a cargo port. In the year ended 31st March, 1937, 381 vessels discharged cargoes from foreign direct and 70 via another British port. These cargoes were chiefly grain, oil, timber, strawberries, tomatoes, bulbs. During the year, 82 deck cargoes, inwards, were measured, but none outwards. The shipment of stores also is a very small item.

The real work of the staff is in dealing with passengers' baggage and the Navy. Liners call here from almost all parts of the world, save Europe, and land passengers by tender. In the year under review 34,421 passengers passed through our baggage shed. As Plymouth is merely a calling port, the passengers are landed immediately on arrival, which may be any hour of the twenty-four.

Perhaps the classic example of early rising here was provided by the P.O. and A.P.O. who went on duty at 7 a.m. one Monday and got steadily earlier every day of the week. It may be easily imagined that three months of that is somewhat wearing. The worst feature of this passenger business, however, lies in the fact that one can never be sure of being off duty on any particular evening. The making of appointments for two or three days ahead is impossible.

The Naval Work is more spasmodic. In the period previously mentioned, 99 naval vessels arrived from foreign. This may not seem very much, but unfortunately the ships do not arrive singly. And it must be remembered that in a crew of about 1,000 there may be 800 men who desire to pay duty. So when the fleet comes home from the Mediterranean or China stations, the whole staff has to be called upon. There have been occasions in the past when the boarding watches were carried on entirely by A.P.O.s.

The other great occupation of the staff here, is relieving Penzance, Hayle, Falmouth, Truro, Par, Charlestown, Fowey, Brixham, Appledore, Torquay, Dartmouth, Exmouth, Teignmouth, Scilly Isles, are all relieved from Plymouth. Thus a considerable portion of each year is usually spent away from home.

Finally, overtime for A.P.O.s averages £30-£35 per annum. Rents are high but living is, on the whole, reasonably cheap.

A. N. OTHER.

Cousin Officers.

That excellent correspondent, H.L.F. of Southampton, in a recent 'Journal,' gave us some quotation from an article in an American magazine called 'The Crime of Coming Home,' which was an attack on Customs officers in America and other places. Apparently more freedom in the matter of publicity is allowed to the American civil servant than to us for, in a later number of the same magazine, appears an answer to the charges by a Customs Inspector. What he has to say may interest his English—sorry, British—equivalent by reason of his affinity to us as much as by his dissimilarity. He opens by admitting discourtesy but, 'the public is not wholly blameless.' He speaks of stopping an important-looking car on the border. Inspectors don't like cars. 'In it may be an official who looks unfavourably on any inspection or maybe someone's friend whose complaint would receive instant attention. On the other hand it may be a big shot in the Customs Bureau and then you'll be sorry IF YOU DON'T LOOK HIM OVER CAREFULLY . . . Damned if you do, damned if you don't.' In this case the passenger is asked if he is American and gives the inspector a stream of abuse for his 'damn fool questions.' So the Inspector knew he was a native!

'I am willing to grant,' he goes on, 'that ordinary people are generally honest; yet it is surprising with what coolness many of our upright citizens can lie to a Customs officer . . . It is human nature to resent the examination of effects. But remember that the average Inspector gets no kick in pawing over someone's dirty clothes . . . I know one Inspector who passed a respectable-looking family without examination, and upon returning home the man complained to the department that the Customs Service was inefficient and lax . . . The Inspector was jumped on (American euphemism for 'put on paper.')

Perhaps, he thinks, the system of recruitment has something to do with the faults of the service. Consider 'political pull.' After taking his examination the writer had to wait several months until he got in touch with a local politician and then he was appointed immediately. Apparently Congressmen can have passes put up or down in the list, maybe from fiftieth place to second, by a wave of the hand or a certificate to say the passee is disabled! Thank God, in this country, etc., etc. 'It isn't what you know that counts, but whom you know.' This also applies when disciplinary trouble arises. Strings are pulled and the offender is, er, O.K.

More appropriate to our conditions is his citation of a lack of training for the recruit. You receive a badge and, hey, presto, you're an Inspector. 'No wonder some of the appointees adopt a hard-boiled attitude to hide their ignorance. Bawling out a luckless citizen will

sometimes fool a man into thinking he is efficient.' I haven't anybody in mind, readers. But they do have a correspondence system of training after entry with a diploma to help towards promotion. But promotion is rare because the higher posts are political appointments and the men appointed know nothing of the job. Therefore if an Inspector can find another job outside the service he hastens to do so.

'Overtime is another annoyance. Nobody minds working a few extra hours when the 'needs of the service demand,' but when it happens week after week . . .'

However, the pay, £420 a year to start with, is good. Lack of promotion is what makes for discontent principally. 'Until some means is put into effect for rewarding efficient service the morale will continue at a low ebb. Truly might there be graven over the doors of our federal buildings "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." **No one can look forward with any certainty to improvement in either salary or position . . .** Throughout the force there is a cynical feeling that the man who does the least gets on the best. He who does nothing makes no mistakes . . . I believe that the conditions I have pointed out could be changed without any great expense, so that our civil service—like that of England—would attract men of capabilities instead of men who have failed in other lines.'

From a life of Hitler, referring to his father: 'Three wives, seven children, one divorce, one birth before marriage, two shortly after the wedding, one wife fourteen years older than himself and another twenty-three years younger—that is saying a good deal for a Customs officer.' What's 'Customs officer' got to do with it?

Here, though, it is not relevant, may I say, that the 'Watchhouse Yarn' that recorded the offer of twopence-halfpenny to a C.P.O., 'You like one glass beer,' is incomplete. The C.P.O. replied, 'You ought to know the parlour price is three-pence.' C.F.S.

Tidesmen of the 18th Century.

The official minutes of the London Commissioners of Customs show that the Customs tidesmen employed on The Thames had rather a hard time. They were divided into two classes, "preferable" and "extraordinary." Those in the preferable class were kept constantly employed, the pick of them in the Pool and on the quays, and a certain number of the seniors were stationed upon the sacred Customs wharf itself. These last were called "piazza men." The "extraordinary" men were employed at a daily wage when required. The majority of the tidesmen were on "boarding duty"—i.e., kept in readiness at the London Custom House, and drafted in bodies to Graves-

end as required, to accompany ships from foreign up the Thames, and remain on board them as watchers till they were cleared. The records are full of curious things about these waifs of the river. There were at Gravesend two taverns, at which tidesmen were expected to lodge whilst waiting to be boarded. In times of fog or slackness, the men often remained in these taverns for several days, and then the tavern-keepers were permitted to advance them money up to a specified amount. When news arrived of East Indiamen in the Downs, a number of tidesmen were sent to Deal to be boarded on them. These men performed the journey from Gravesend to Deal on horseback, and were as merry on the way as Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims.

Once two of the tidesmen quarrelled, and one trounced the other. The Board fined the victor, and gave the fine to the beaten man. One afternoon a London tidesman went to sun himself on the Tower Quay, lit his pipe, and made himself comfortable. The sentry on duty ordered him to put his pipe out; the tidesman refilled it, and smoked harder than ever. The sentry summoned one of the guard, and the two soldiers attempted to enforce routine, on which the tidesman beat and overthrew them, and broke one of their firelocks. For this he was severely punished.

An extraordinary tidesman, being boarded on a ship in the Pool, neglected to apprise the river inspectors of the completion of the vessel's unloading. Why should he? Her charge meant 2s. a day to him, and if he were cleared it might be a week or two before he was employed again. So he stayed on for eighty days after the vessel's discharge. The Board were extremely wroth with the careless inspectors who had permitted this, and made them pay the tidesman's wages out of their own pockets.

The tidesmen appear to have often suffered through the churlishness or inhumanity of ship-masters. They were, in a way, at the mercy of the captains of the vessels which they were deputed to watch, the captains being able to make things uncomfortable for them if they became officious. A master refused to allow his tidesman a place in which to sleep, and made him walk the deck for two days and two nights. The Board took the Solicitor-General's opinion on the matter, who decided that a prosecution would not hold. But the captain was not allowed to escape. There was a certain bounty called "Portage," which the Customs paid to masters of vessels from foreign, to induce them to make correct reports of their cargoes. The Board made a practice of refusing this bounty when a master failed to report correctly, or otherwise misbehaved, and in the case mentioned they stopped it for "obstinacy." Once a master lost his portage for "abusing" a tidesman, and another skipper's bounty was

stopped because his tidesman's "trunk" was stolen. One master gave his tidesman a dram upon drinking which the unfortunate fellow went to sleep, and awoke no more. Apparently the case was not clear enough to warrant a prosecution, but the Board stopped the captain's portage. —The King's Customs.

North Neath News by Nod.

Heartiest congratulations are extended to Mr. Triton, A.P.O., of this port who nearly made a seizure this week. He was in attendance on Baggage duty, and Lady Dunswoople presented one sea-bag for examination. With the aid of lorgnettes she gave a haughty glance at the notice handed to her. Her ladyship said that she had nothing to declare, but at the bottom of the sea-bag, among purple and foul linen, Mr. Triton discovered a battered coronet bearing the motto "Deutschland uber Alles." On being questioned, the Lady admitted that she had "obtained" it only the previous night during a drunken brawl in a café at Calais, where she had been taking the cure for the week-end.

Realising that trouble seemed to be imminent, her ladyship became hysterical and screamed for her maid. The maid, named Yvonne Moustard, entreated the C.P.O., volubly in Yiddish, at first, not to take any notice of Madam, and explained that her Ladyship could not have possibly have understood the notice as she couldn't read!

* * *

A pleasing function was to have taken place here on the 31st August (pay day). We had heard that Mr. A. N. Oldan, P.O., who had retired some time ago, had received his gratuity, so we decided to hold a smoker and promise him a "token of esteem." A large number of his old colleagues assembled at the King's Arms at 5.30 p.m. for this purpose, but unfortunately our organiser had informed Mr. Oldan that the smoker was to take place at the Queen's Arms, from which place the future recipient came along about 10 p.m. He said, with deep emotion and with tears in his eyes, that he couldn't make a speech as he felt speechless with the overwhelming generosity that had been displayed towards him.

* * *

Sport.—We are pleased to announce that our Club is now in a better financial position than it was at this time last year. We are now only about £50 in debt. A very favourable position, when we come to consider that we have just paid off the last instalment on the Club's dart-board.

* * *

We hear on good authority that at long last our Watch House is to be repainted. Several officers are looking up all about painter's colic.

Impossible Sayings (7).

"That will be more than sufficient," said the officer's wife on the first of the month as he "paid over."

For Your Note-Book.

U.U. Spirits—(continued).

This neutrality gives it particular value in most of its uses, such as for perfumery, gin-making, etc. Its price abroad is low, owing to the cheap supply of potatoes. Foreign plain spirit is usually imported in iron drums of varying sizes up to 150 gallons each, and other strengths run from about 65 to 75 overproof. Spirits of this sort are rarely met with in bottles.

Kirschwasser is the name given to a spirituous beverage—used as a liqueur—prepared from a peculiar description of wild black cherry grown in the Black Forest and parts of Switzerland. The cherries are dried, crushed with the stones, and left to ferment. From the fermented mush the spirit distilled is made up by adding further spirit to adjust flavour and then allowed to mature and so develop the aroma and flavour which characterise it. There is no addition of sugar or sweetening and hence the exemption on importation from the "sweetened" rate of duty.

Absinthe is a very strong and usually coarse spirit flavoured with the oil of wormwood. The properties of wormwood are very excitant and injurious to mind and body.

Absinthe was the favourite beverage of the "boulevardier" of the Paris café, and the evil effects of indulgence in it are not exaggerated in Marie Corelli's "Wormwood." It is largely imported in London, where it finds consumption chiefly amongst the foreign element. It is usually imported in half-litre bottles at a strength of about 23 overproof, and the best-known brands are those of Pernod. In appearance it is greenish, turning milky on addition of water owing to the liberation of the wormwood oil.

Arrack, Sam-Shoo and Saki. These beverages, produced and used chiefly by Chinese and Japanese, are frequently met with on ships from the East, but have a small consumption in this country. Arrack is a rice spirit, originally distilled from the fermented juice of the East Indian cocoa palm-tree, but nowadays obtained from fermented rice. The rice is made into wort, on the lines of brewing and distilling, and after fermentation is distilled. As imported it is almost colourless, with a grain spirit odour, and somewhat harsh to taste. It mellows and develops improvement with age. It is usually imported in bottle, and is admissible as U.U. spirits, if, as is usually the case, free from obscuration. In the case of small quantities on board ship, however, where testing is not claimed, it is usually charged as mixed spirits. As it is much under proof, and probably not sweetened, the option of test would probably be taken if the quantity is at all considerable.

Sam-shoo is practically the same class of spirit as Arrack.

Saki is the Japanese wine of rice. It is prepared from rice, which is first steamed, then

impregnated with a ferment prepared from rice straw, and allowed to ferment until all the rice starch is converted to spirit. It is then clarified and casked or bottled at a strength of about 24 to 28 degrees of proof spirit. It is charged at the spirit rate of duty on importation, and, if in bottles, with the bottle tax. It has a pale sherry colour, with an odour and taste something like a dry Manzanilla sherry minus vinosity.

Corn Brandy of northern Europe—properly speaking a corn whisky distilled from rye and other grain, generally colourless and often flavoured.

Akjavik, largely made in Denmark, a rectified corn brandy flavoured with aniseed or other ingredients.

Vodka, formally manufactured in great quantities in Russia. It was originally made almost entirely from rye and malted barley, but later the raw material used were potatoes, maize, and a percentage of green rye malt. The wash was then doubly distilled in a patent still, the strength before marketing being reduced to underproof by the addition of water.

(To be continued).

Changes in the Staff.

TO 6th SEPTEMBER, 1937.

APPOINTMENTS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Aspinall, R. T.
Beckett, K. S.
Bentley, R.
Davies, E. M.
Dixon, W.
Foot, W.
Franklin, A. T. H.
Lazenby, G.
Lones, G. T.
Nicholson, S. H.
Urquhart, A.
Wallace, J. W.
Willington, G. A.

TRANSFER.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Adams, J. W., Immingham, Grimsby to Dover.
Drake, C. D., Southampton to Newcastle.
Dunstone, M. F., Holyhead, Chester to London.
Johns, H., Liverpool to Runcorn, Manchester.
Langford, J. N. D., Barry Dock, Cardiff to Southampton.
Ross, J., Dover to London.

The transfer of Mr. W. V. Reed, from Hartlepool, Sunderland to Newcastle, has been cancelled.

OFFICER LEAVING THE SERVICE.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Purcell, F., Manchester (to Inland Revenue).

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Burke, W., Preventive Officer
Hughes, J., Preventive Officer.
Kay, G. W., Assistant Preventive Officer.

Belfast Presentation.

A very enjoyable function took place in the Free Goods Office on the 7th August, when Mr. W. A. L. Taylor, A.P.O., was the recipient of a beautiful chiming clock, presented by his colleagues and friends on the occasion of his marriage which took place on the 10th inst.

A large gathering of Waterguard and Landing Staff was presided over by Mr. Wilson, Waterguard Surveyor, who opened the proceedings in his usual witty manner. Mr. G. R. Parish, C.P.O., gave some good advice and also commented on the fine relations existing between the Landing and Waterguard Staffs at Belfast. Mr. T. Shannon on behalf of the Landing Staff intimated how pleased he was to be present on such an occasion and expressed the view that men like Mr. Taylor were largely responsible for the happy relations referred to.

Mr. Sloane, A.P.O., then made the presentation and paid tribute to the sterling character of "Les," as he is familiarly known, both as a colleague and when off duty. All present joined in wishing Les and his bride every happiness, each vying with the other in being original.

Mr. Taylor replied, thanking everyone for their kindness to him and his bride-to-be, and the meeting closed amidst laughter, and good wishes expressed on all sides.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman was passed unanimously and the company gradually melted away, some hither and some thither. J.G.

As We See Others.

"The Italian Customs officers appeared charmed to see us. Followed the usual mystic rites. Flashing his teeth, a black-shirted officer pointed to a suitcase. "Let me look at that, please, he said. The suitcase was the one underneath all the other luggage. It is an old Customs custom . . . as played with delighted laughter at every frontier on earth.

We had a riotous five minutes. Everyone crowded round to see what was in the suitcase, to my dismayed blushes. They appeared pleased at my taste in beach shirts . . . A man came by, followed by six St. Bernard dogs. Would these worthy animals live up to their reputations and rescue this traveller in distress? Did they not carry brandy bottles round their necks? No. Sniffing kindly, but aloofly, they marched on. They realised I was in friendly hands.

Everything was in order at last. My Italian friends waved me good-bye, and wished me a happy sojourn in their beautiful country. And down, down we went into Italy."

—The Daily Mail, Aug. 30th, 1937.

An Apology.

Inadvertently in our last issue the rank of Mr. R. G. Salmon was shown as A.P.O., when it should have been Preventive Officer. We regret the oversight, and trust that no inconvenience has been caused.

Lupton Inter-Port Challenge Cup.

FIRST ROUND.

Drawn by Mrs. A. S. Lupton during the London v. Hull Cricket Match.

Liverpool. Bye.

Bristol. Bye.

Dover v. London.

Gravesend v. Southampton.

First named play at home.

Secretaries should make their own arrangements as to dates, etc., but the P.S.S.C. Secretary should be notified as per rules immediately after the game. W. W. B.

Gravesend Cricket.

On Monday, September 6th, Gravesend were entertained at cricket by "K" Division Metropolitan Police on the old Essex County Ground at Leyton. The Gravesend party had a very enjoyable afternoon and evening and we look forward to visiting the Leyton ground again next year. Gravesend batted first and scored 136, thanks mainly to Thomas, who made 49. The Police were all out for 99, Gravesend thus winning by 37 runs. Jones bowled very well indeed, as the first three Police batsmen will testify, as they did not score a run amongst them. Jones took 7 for 38, and Duckworth also bowled his slows with great cunning.

This is the last match on our fixture-card, but it is hoped to arrange an A.P.O.s v. the Rest match amongst the staff, to wind up the season. The club has had a very good season indeed. Of the matches played, 14 have been won, 3 lost and 4 drawn. Here's hoping that we shall do even better next season—and, now for football. J.B.F.

C. & E. Rugby.

Further to the appeal for playing members (contained in the July issue of the C. & E. Sports Magazine), it is understood that there are a number of people who are thinking of joining the Club this season, but haven't yet done anything definite about it. It will considerably help the the Club officers if prospective players will get in touch immediately with the Secretary who will give them full particulars and make the necessary arrangements for trial games.

For the benefit of newcomers we might mention that the Club's ground is at Kingston—easily accessible from all points—and that excellent changing accommodation with hot baths, etc., is also available.

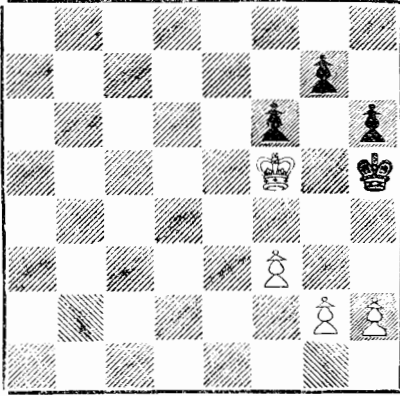
The Club won the Civil Service Rugby Football Cup last season, and we should like to repeat the performance in the coming season.

The Hon. Sec. is G. J. Richardson, Valuation Branch, Vintry House, Queen Street Place, E.C.4. Telephone Mansion House 1515, Ext. 365.

Preventive Service Sports Club.

CHESS PROBLEM No. 162.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White play and win.

Solution to No. 161—

1. — — —. B—R6 ch.
2. R×B. Q—Kt8 mate.

Glasgow Golf.

The final of the Jubilee Shield provided a fitting climax to the Glasgow Club's Competition, which has been notable for shrewd handicapping and keen play. The finalists were Mr. "Tommy" Thomson and Mr. George McKain.

Thomson, slight, dapper, earnest, was conceding fifteen strokes to his lanky, long-driving opponent. It was obvious that both men were keyed-up for the occasion.

See-saw play marked the first nine holes, and the players turned round all square. However, the second half provided the expected "fire-works."

"Tommy" was three up at the thirteenth, and seemed all set for victory, but George refused to be hurried and won the fourteenth and fifteenth holes. The sixteenth was halved, and McKain won the seventeenth to square matters one more.

I would like to devote a column of description to the play at the eighteenth hole, but the Editor would probably object.

The atmosphere was so tense that even the sheep stopped bleating. After witnessing the mulishness of Mr. McKain's ball, and the tantalising tactics of Mr. Thomson's "Dunlop," I could almost write a thesis on the theme, "Are golf balls subject to demoniac possession?"

However, I must content myself with announcing that the eighteenth hole was also halved, thus necessitating a replay to decide the destination of the Shield.

To conclude, here is an intimation that almost rivals golf in importance.

The V.E.S. class will commence on Thursday, 16th September, at 7.30 p.m. The class which will be held at Mavisbank is under the direction of Mr. R. M. Murray, P.O., and Mr. S. L. Oldfield, P.O.

Will all A.P.O.s concerned please note?

J. C. G.

Gravesend Cricket.

The Gravesend cricket team, having almost reached the end of another season, has every reason to be proud of its achievements. Out of a total of twenty games, only four have been lost. The batting, bowling, and fielding of the side has improved, with the result that we are stronger than most of the local sides.

On Tuesday, 24th August, took place that most enjoyable of fixtures—the London Waterguard match with Gravesend. This compares favourably with the Eton-Harrow fixtures, as the 'beauty and chivalry' of the Waterguard Staff in London and round about appear in force on the "Bat and Ball" Ground. One could easily mistake this ground this day, and think himself at Lord's, instead of Gravesend. The game itself was very sporting and keenly contested. Exception might possibly be taken to the wiles of a certain wicketkeeper, who, in the hottest part of the day, kept talking about foaming pints of beer to the perspiring batsmen. However, all's fair . . . Gravesend eventually won the day, scoring 205 for five wickets, declared. Ellingham and Duckworth scored 69 and 74 not out, Palmer 16, and Foers 13 not out.

For London, Grey did best with the ball, having 3 for 27.

London scored 59 in reply, of which Grey scored 27; very creditable, but hardly surprising, since he spent a good many years in Gravesend, and learned their tactics.

For Gravesend, Jaques took 4 for 20, Urwin 1 for 23, and Duckworth 4 for 6. The keenness of the fielding can be judged by the action of one of our senior officers. Just due for further promotion, he risked his neck in stopping a shot close in which was going fast enough to pass through him. A hardy breed, these Gravesend chaps.

Altogether, it was a splendid day; glorious weather and a perfect wicket to play on. The Inspector-General, Mr. Woodford, honoured the game with his presence for a short time, and in the pavilion one could pick out Mr. Purser, Waterguard Superintendent, Mr. Warne and Mr. Donaldson, Waterguard Superintendent (retired), Mr. Howell, of the Secretary's Office, Mr. Hughes, our own Surveyor, and Messrs. Creese, Sharrack, Standring and Westcott, Chief Preventive Officers.