

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.



AT the May meeting of the Departmental Council no less than nine of the first fourteen items were of direct Waterguard concern. These included local agreements from London, Ipswich (Harwich) and Dover (including Folkestone) involving increases in staff strength totalling 1 C.P.O., 8 P.O.s and 8 A.P.O.s. Two disagreements relating to local Schemes at Dover and Folkestone were referred back with a view to obtaining agreements on modified proposals. Among these items there was also the disagreement from the Waterguard Sectional Committee relating to the commuted subsistence allowance payable to unattached C.P.O.s. The Staff Side re-argued this matter, and the Official Side undertook to reconsider the case.

* * *

The next meeting of the Executive Committee (P.S.A.), is being arranged to take place on Monday, 31st May. On this date it will be possible for the Committee to consider, not only the important business remitted from the Half-

Yearly (P.S.A.) Conference but also the situation in the National field arising from the decisions taken at the Annual Conference (C.S.C.), 28th May. The Association's notice of withdrawal from the Confederation expires on the 30th June, but authority to continue affiliation, if deemed necessary and desirable, has been vested in the Executive Committee.

* * *

Representatives of the Waterguard Sectional Committee attended on the Promotion Board at its meeting on the 18th May, in connection with the filling of the vacancy in the post of Deputy Inspector General of Waterguard and gave evidence in support of the selection of an experienced Waterguard officer for the post.

* * *

The Annual Civil Service Sports Meeting will be held at White City Stadium, Shepherd's Bush, on the 12th June (King's Birthday Holiday) commencing at 2.30 p.m.

We understand that Mr. T. W. Rogers, who for many years has so efficiently held the office of General Secretary to the C. & E. Federation, is shortly transferring to Oswestry and will thus be forced to relinquish this post and also his seat on the National Staff Side as representing the Customs Group.

The fine spirit of good will which has marked negotiations between the Federation and ourselves during recent years is in no small measure due to the tact and personality of Mr. Rogers. The loss will be no less to Departmental and National Whitley than to the Federation.

The Executive Committee have decided to recommend Mr. E. E. Buck for the vacancy.

* * *

We have to thank one of our contemporaries for the information that a Civil Service Flying Association has been formed with the object of providing cheap flying facilities for Civil Servants. It is proposed to enter into a hiring agreement with the West Malling Aero Club, Kent, and also to establish a branch in the Glasgow Area. The Annual subscription of 10/- will entitle the member to make use of the Club aerodrome and aircraft (if holder of an "A" licence) at specified rates per hour. Tuition in flying up the "A" licence will be given at an inclusive cost of £8 and provision for payment of this amount by quarterly or monthly payments will be made. Mr. V. J. Peacock, Report Branch, Custom House, London, E.C.3, is the representative for this Department.

* * *

Inset in each copy of this issue of the "Customs Journal" will be found a pamphlet of considerable interest to all Civil Servants and of paramount importance to the widows and orphans of deceased colleagues. It has been said that our own C. & E. Widows' and Orphans' Fund meets all the needs of the situation, but this is not so. Wonderfully generous and widespread as are the benefits of our Fund, there are bound to arise situations outside the scope of our rules and it is such cases as these that fall for treatment under the Service movement.

An effort is being made to ensure that the 1937 membership drive surpasses all previous attempts and so commemorate this Coronation Year. Will you help?



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

At the Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee, held in Room 120, Custom House, T. Morton, Esq., M.B.E., Vice-President presided over a well-attended meeting of members.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The Hon. Secretary submitted the financial statement for the year ended 31st March. Total income for the year amounted to £4,282, and the total expenditure to £3,850. Of the expenditure £2,310 was disbursed under R.23 to assist in the maintenance and education of children, £1,117 in grants under R.26 to assist widows in necessitous circumstances, and £255 under various other Rules. Working expenses amounted to £168.

Forty-four fresh applications for membership from established officials of the Department were considered by the Committee, and all applicants were elected.

Applications were considered from four widows seeking assistance to maintain and educate their children. One was the widow of a Surveyor with one child, one the widow of an Officer with three children, one applicant was the widow of a member of the Clerical Class, with two children, and one was the widow of

an A.P.O. with one child. Grants were made in three of the cases, and the fourth was adjourned for fuller information.

Applications were considered from 23 widows left in necessitous circumstances: 5 were new applications, and 18 for renewals of grants. Grants were made as follows:—8 at £20 each, 11 at £15 each, 2 at £10 each, and 1 at £7/10/-. Consideration of one application was adjourned for fuller report.

The Half-Yearly Reports of the Visiting Committee members were submitted and approved. They showed that the children receiving benefits from the Fund were well cared for and properly educated.

Approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was given, with authority for the printing and circulation thereof in view of the Annual General Meeting to be held in June.

It was with deep regret that the Committee heard of the death of Mr. Charles Howard (late A.P.O.), and arrangements were made for the Fund to be represented at the funeral. Up to his retirement Mr. Howard was a zealous worker on the Committee, and since retirement he had rendered useful service to the Fund.

At the instance of the Chairman a record was made of appreciation of the active and kindly interest in the Orphanage always shown by A. S. Lupton, Esq., C.B.E., who recently retired from the Department (and from the Committee) on superannuation.

Do You Know?—

That formerly the higher officers of Customs were surrounded with a certain amount of state? A beadle clad in gorgeous uniform, carrying a silver mace, preceded the Collector in London, when proceeding to the Board. Scarlet robes and gold lace were generally worn by underlings, and landing waiters on duty were attired in court suits with swords, knee breeches, silk stockings and silver shoe buckles. Now there is nothing to denote such personages; the plain uniform of a blue frock coat and gilt buttons, with an ordinary cap, little different from an officer in the Mercantile Marine, is only worn by our out-doors officials, brought into contact with the outside public.

The only remnants of the gorgeous uniforms formerly prevailing are to be found in constables who guard the principal entrance to the Custom House, London, attired in large scarlet robes and cocked hats.—“Chester's Chronicles.”

Civil Service Horticultural Federation.

By far the most important activity of the Federation is the organisation of exhibitions of gardening products on a Service-wide basis. Individual Societies built up from a local or departmental standpoint naturally possess geographical limitations, and it has been clear to many that the size and importance of the organised horticultural movement in the Service, warrants the holding of shows with a wider appeal. In other words, it should be possible for the enthusiast, irrespective of official location, to compete for inter-departmental distinction under the auspices of a central body. That is the role which the Federation is called upon to play, and it can be said truthfully that in its short history it has put the Service Horticultural Movement well and truly on the map.

A reference to the “Handbook,” a tastefully designed publication now in the hands of all members, will reveal details of the next big event, which is to be held on July 9th. The list of classes is comprehensive, and all types of entrants are provided with opportunities. At the present time, when the garden is in full swing with its burden of late spring and early summer flowers, it is a little difficult to visualise what the picture will be like in July. Nevertheless, whether you have a small or a large plot, or even no plot at all, there is sure to be at least one class in which you can find some interest. If you are one of the world's unfortunates in not possessing a garden and yet wish to enter, there is a complete section of four classes for which the flowers used may be purchased.

For the rest, there is ample scope even if the garden is small. The section devoted to roses provides an opportunity for all growers of these flowers to exhibit collections of three blooms or more. In addition, there are classes for ramblers and polyanthuses.

The date of the Show naturally ensures that the general gardener who just grows hardy plants of various kinds is bound to have something to enter. Apart from sweet peas and delphiniums, which are separately provided for, there are several classes for which many people should be able to provide sufficient flowers to form an entry. Finally, there are the combined classes for Societies, as such, to enter.

Although, of course, the biggest attraction, when one is competing at an exhibition of this sort, is the sense of personal satisfaction that is felt when one's efforts receive the approbation of experts, a substantial number of cups, trophies, medals, as well as monetary prizes, will be there for the winning. The last-named totals to a considerable sum, which, on this occasion, has been augmented by the newly formed “Supporters' Club.” Particulars of this move-

ment have been circulated through the Service with an invitation to well-wishers to help the prize fund along by a small annual gift. A maximum sum of one shilling annually promised by just a few hundred individuals will do much towards lifting the Service right into the front rank of horticultural institutions in this country. It will be possible to more fully reward existing effort, and to stimulate competition to a still higher standard. The circular is meeting with a ready response and bids fair to produce something really substantial.

Merseyside News.

On Tuesday, May 11th, Coronation Eve, a good number of officers attended a social evening run under the auspices of the C. & E. Football Club, which is composed of players representing the three branches of the department. The occasion was to celebrate the winning of the Wainwright and Lever Cups by the team this season. The Preventive Staff contingent, headed by Mr. B. J. Herrington (Waterguard Superintendent) and Mrs. Herrington, and Mr. J. P. Little (Waterguard Surveyor) and Mrs. and Miss Little, was well to the fore in the entertainment which followed the presentation (by Mrs. Herrington) of the cups and replicas. Musical items by the Coady Brothers, instrumentalists, were well received; Mr. E. E. Harding was again at the piano, and the 'star turn' of the evening proved to be an eccentric dance by Mr. J. C. Manning.

As the evening wore on the party got better and better, and dancing went on until after 1 a.m. when people began to remember that there was work to be done that morning and reluctantly wended their way homeward.

"Thanks very much, Saturday team!"

J.W.D.

Southampton News.

The rush of visitors arriving for the Coronation reached its climax on Monday, May 10th. Vessels which arrived during the day included the Queen Mary, direct from New York, Strathmore, Warwick Castle, Atlantic, Stella Polaris, Westernland, Bremen, Llanstephan Castle, Vandyck and the Berengaria. Over 5,000 passengers were dealt with during the day by the Waterguard staff, which was further augmented by officers from London. Fortunately, vessels arrived at their scheduled times, and at noon the rush was practically over, enabling the London staff to return. Last arrival for the day was the Berengaria at 8 p.m., which concluded a very busy 24 hours.

Imperial Service Medal Presentation.

A cordial assembly of officers attended at the Customs Boarding Station, Eastham, Cheshire, on the evening of the 7th instant, the occasion being the presentation of the Imperial Service Medal to Mr. S. Hargrove, P.O., after a period of 46 years' service, including service as a Messenger.

Mr. S. Calvert, the Collector, Manchester, presided and made the presentation, and in a very genial speech paid tribute to Mr. Hargrove's lengthy and faithful service, most of which was done at Manchester and Liverpool, where Mr. Calvert had come in contact with him for many years.

Among those present were Mr. R. McHarg (Collector), Mr. J. W. P. Little (Waterguard Surveyor), and Mr. K. Cameron, C.P.O. Tribute was then paid to Mr. Hargrove's qualities and service by Mr. J. W. P. Little (Waterguard Surveyor) for Mr. B. J. Herrington (Superintendent, Liverpool) and the Custom House Staff, Liverpool (Mr. Herrington desired the assembly to know that he very much regretted being unable to attend the presentation on account of having an important official engagement elsewhere); Mr. K. Cameron, C.P.O. for Liverpool and Birkenhead; Mr. E. S. Hicks, P.O., for Mr. J. F. Lee, C.P.O., and Staff, Manchester; Mr. T. Rigby, A.P.O., for Mr. Paulson, Officer, and Custom House, Ellesmere Port, and for Mr. Knight, P.O., Ellesmere Port; Mr. J. W. Clayton, P.O., and Mr. J. G. Reay, A.P.O., for the P.O.s and A.P.O.s, respectively, at Eastham.

After being presented with the I.S.M. by Mr. S. Calvert, the Collector, Mr. Hargrove, in a very apt manner, responded, and described the pleasant years he had spent in the Service, and as a gesture of good will showed the medal to each members of the assembly in turn.

The presentation concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman. J.W.C.

Customs Waterguard Associations

An Offer Worth Accepting **COUPON** Privileges to Members

To **KENDAL & DENT**

WATCHMAKERS TO THE ADMIRALTY, &c
Gold Medal, Paris Exhibition

Manufacturing Goldsmiths, Wholesale Jewellers, &c

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Please send me, free of charge, a PRIVILEGE TICKET relating to your offer of Special Discount to members

Name..... Office.....

Address

.....
This Coupon can be posted in an envelope under Jd. stamp

Neighbourly Nippits by Nod.

HOPEFUL (Land Boundary).—So you have two tickets for the Coronation for sale? Where is it being held? Are you sure you mean Coronation and nothing to do with £30,000. Please write again.

STRANGE (Grimsby).—I'm glad that you took my advice, but it is disappointing to know that your wife does not agree with you. It takes about three or four days before they take the stitches out. Raw beef steak was at one time considered good, but nowadays tincture of arnica is used for bruises.

ETYMOLOGIST (Liverpool).—The word rummage is derived from the Anglo-Saxon runic script, RUMM, meaning a kind of spirit, and AGE, meaning old; therefore a free rendering gives us OLD RUM, although how this came to be applied to our searching crews is doubtful, and the theory is purely speculative.

HOME BIRD (King's Lynn).—So you like a busman's holiday? Well, why don't you go to London? It strikes me you will have a good time.

WORDLESS (Southampton).—No. I'm afraid that you must have misunderstood the lady passenger, for some of your words are quite meaningless. What she probably said to her husband was, "Why all this procrastination? It is impossible to conceive with any degree of accuracy that this emissary of the Crown would be able to designate these diminutive articles of such intrinsic value by their correct cognomen."

SCOTIA (Stronalloway, Outer Hebrides).—Yes, there is a duty on silk and artificial silk. You say that you haven't received a Tariff for years? Well, I certainly would apply for one if I were you. You never know what may happen one of these years.

INCOME TAX (Greenock).—What on earth do you mean by liquid emolments? I can find no place for the insertion in Section B. Possibly you refer to liquid assets. In reply to your other question, no, I'm sorry, but I'm short myself.

SHAKESPEARIAN (Bristol).—The Bard was right when he said, "Put not your trust in Princes." The same applies to braces. They will both let you down.

HEALTH (Cardiff).—The fact that your doctor has put you on a light diet does not signify that you should apply to stand off night watches.

UNIFORM (Yarmouth).—No. The fellows you saw in the Procession wearing cocked hats silk knee breeches and hobnail boots were not the new J.P.O. grade. They were representatives of the Transylvanian Navy.

CELT (Llanelly).—Wi llu bymeiif ite llu.

DISCIPLINE (Newcastle) suggests that a lie detector should be attached to every appearance sheet. What genius! What technique! What a comrade! What a pal!

Excerpts from**"The Customs Journal,"****May 21st, 1904.****THE WATERGUARD OF TO-DAY.**

In 1891 Mr. Goschen resolutely attempted, by his now notorious minute, to make the Waterguard a distinct self-supervising department, but we, in this year of grace 1904, look upon a condition of things entirely at variance with the spirit of the Goschen minute, and after 13 years, we find the Waterguard by no means free from the influences of the Landing Department.

Since 1891 we have times and again striven by approaching the Board and Treasury with the view to obtaining a reasonable salary for the performance of arduous and responsible work, with the following results: an increased initial salary from £90 to £95, entrants remaining at this for two years! Creation of staff of Upper Section numbering now about 70, with a salary £160 to £200, and lastly, a suit of uniform after 12 years! To the very large majority, the only immediate advantage obtained is the suit of uniform, which is open to severe criticism. With the immensely increased cost of living, and many of us struggling with large families to maintain a degree of respectability, upon a salary of £95, progressing only very slowly, is a feat requiring some skill; add to this the studied efforts upon all sides of us to deprive us of every particle of overtime, a most arbitrary proceeding, from the fact that it in no way affected the coffers of the Treasury.

A few years ago, it was authoritatively stated the Board's intention to grant us a portion of the Free Goods, in order that some relief from the severity of ordinary Waterguard work might be possible to us upon reaching maturer years. How strangely this reads in the light of our treatment to-day!

The Customs is, of course, one of the recognised saving departments, and the necessity for every care to be exercised in its administration is obvious; nevertheless, it is extremely hard that we, the "protectors of the Revenue in its most dangerous stages," should be doomed to a life-struggle with genteel poverty, brought about by a system of official sweating and injustice so conspicuous in the Waterguard, and time and space would fail me in detailing the contemptible subterfuges resorted to, departmentally as well as locally, by one and another in order to eclipse his predecessor in showing a saving, designed, of course, with a single eye to the benefit of the Revenue, and with an utter disregard for commendation or advancement.

Preventive Staff Association

Half-Yearly Conference.

REPORT.

The regularity of Conferences is apt to put them into a routine category, unless, as on the occasion of the Half-Yearly Conference at Anderton's Hotel on the 27th and 28th May, there is something of more than ordinary interest to the membership generally. Perhaps it would be an over-statement to say that this meeting was more important than others in that each and every one is packed with matters of great moment to the staff, but it can be truly said that on this occasion Reorganisation was the focus point of interest and overshadowed the many other items on the agenda.

Although each item received its due measure of attention, it was with obvious relief that the Council got to grips with the main question before the meeting and stuck to it tenaciously until they were completely and wholly satisfied that this particular job of work was well done. The "Journal" would hardly suffice to tell the full story of this item alone, and so the reader must be content with but a brief account of Council happenings. Much credit must go to the Chairman for his very able handling of a difficult subject, and it was pleasing to note the ability and zest displayed by several of the new Councillors.

The complete attendance was as follows:—

Mr. W. E. Standring (Chairman), Messrs. W. H. Powell (Gen. Secretary), A. E. Farmer (Organising Secretary), H. L. Boalch (Asst. Secretary), J. T. Sutton, Abbott, Hill, W. B. Clayson, W. F. Grosart, W. J. Bittel, F. S. Lewis, S. Bradley, W. H. Taylor, R. Davies, J. N. S. Moore, R. M. Murray, A. S. MacFarlane, B. C. Reilly, N. G. Brennan, P. W. Howard, G. T. Clarke, F. S. Worner, D. T. Sutherland (Journal Editor).

To the above list one is surely tempted to add the name of Mr. C. M. Woodford, Inspector-General, for despite the fact that his attendance to open the proceedings is of fleeting duration one feels that he is now part and parcel of London Conferences, and his presence reflects that real spirit of friendly co-operation that is the essence, not only of good administration, but of Whitleyism. His lighter vein was not apparent on this occasion—indeed, he was rather serious, for, as he said, he could not help but be aware of recent happenings in Association circles, and the Council had important issues to face. His advice, as always, was that the Councillors should appreciate the responsibility

of their duties and give the most careful consideration to the problems which were as much his as their own.

Work and Waiting Rule.

The General Secretary dealt with this question from the commencement of negotiations and explained how, in the first instance, the rule had been introduced to cover absences involving considerable travelling and waiting time to jobs away from the home ports. Later it was found that the rule was being applied to work within ports, and by amendment of the Instructions the Official Side had covered such application. At this point the Staff Side had stepped in to secure deletion of the amendment and had meanwhile fought each case in Committee. A stage had recently been reached where a Sub-Committee set up to explore the matter had virtually reached agreement as to those places to which the Rule should not apply automatically, but the Official Side of the main Committee were not prepared to adopt the findings of the Sub-Committee.

Leave of Assistant Preventive Officers.

The Council was informed of the Official Side offer in respect of Assistant P.O.s' leave—14 days up to five years' service and 21 days thereafter—and in the discussion which followed attention was drawn to the leave scales enjoyed by other grades of similar standing in the Service. From this comparison it was clear that the offer was in no way fair to junior officers, and the decision of the Council was that the original claim should be pressed.

Uniform Items.

Issues to New Entrants.—The Council agreed that a claim should be made for an initial issue of two suits of uniform to new entrants to the Service, having regard to the various types of duties performed and the necessity for reserving one suit for particular work.

Mackintosh Leggings.—Approval was given for the action previously taken by the Executive Committee to secure a general issue of mackintosh leggings to the staff.

Overall Cleaning.—Following reports by Councillors of certain difficulties arising from the laundering of overalls the Executive was instructed to consider the question of additional issues of overalls.

Subsistence Allowance—Unattached C.P.O.s.

The Council took a serious view of the disagreement on the Staff Side claim for increased commuted allowance, and specific instructions were given to the Executive Committee as to the action to be taken if the disagreement is ratified by the Departmental Council.

Acting Duties.

A short time ago the Executive Committee gave consideration to the amount of acting work performed throughout the country, and arising from this review certain action has been taken in respect of those places where the acting appeared to be excessive. Increases of staff have resulted at some places already, and the way is now open for local action at any place where, in the opinion of the Staff Side, increased staff is warranted.

Reorganisation.

Discussion opened with a statement to Council as to the reasons which had guided the Executive to their decision to return the item for further consideration, and it was quickly apparent that a shock was in store for the die-hard opponents of Reorganisation in any form. One after another representatives stated in no uncertain terms that the areas they represented favoured Reorganisation, but in certain places objection had been taken to that part of the Scheme dealing with the formation of a new junior grade.

The opinion was generally expressed that the Executive had acted wisely and constitutionally in allowing the Council another opportunity to amend the Scheme, if necessary, and a unanimous vote of approval was given.

Once more the complete scheme was before the Conference and immediate opportunity was taken to test the feeling of the meeting regarding a straight salary claim as against Reorganisation proposals, but the verdict was never in doubt for a moment, and the Council proceeded to discuss the various amendments that had been proposed to the Scheme. It was perfectly clear that the main, in fact the only, bone of contention was the proposal to create a Junior P.O. grade, which in the opinion of some Districts was both undesirable and represented a possible danger to the P.O. grade.

On the other hand, it was generally stated that the objective aimed for—a measure of responsibility for experienced Assistant P.O.s—was highly desirable if it could be achieved by other means. Eventually it was decided that the title of J.P.O. should be deleted, but that in accordance with the proposals Assistant P.O.s should be given equal opportunity to qualify for P.O.-ship after a given number of years' service, and having qualified, should be competent to undertake certain responsible work and proceed on a salary scale commensurate with those duties.

Having cleared the main hurdle, several consequential amendments of a minor nature were made, and representatives raised the question of extracting that part of the scheme dealing with Preventive Surveyors for immediate action.

There was a lengthy discussion on this point, during which Councillors expressed sympathy with the grade affected by the delayed action, but it was felt that the complete scheme would be ready for presentation in reasonable time and that concerted action would be to the benefit of all grades concerned.

The final instruction that a reference was to be sought on the amended scheme was a unanimous one, and left no doubt that the country had definitely made up its mind on this important issue and is solidly behind negotiating representatives in their efforts.

Chief Preventive Officer Salary.

The Council then dealt with a matter that had to some extent influenced discussions on Reorganisation, in that consideration had to be given to an Official Side offer in respect of the minimum salary figure of the C.P.O. grade. Although the offer itself was wholly inadequate it was believed in some quarters that, at least, it opened the way for negotiations to be pursued with a view to securing an improved offer.

Against this, there was a desire to safeguard the position of these members in connection with the Reorganisation Scheme, and after full discussion the Council decided that negotiations should only be entered into with the Official Side on the basis of the minimum salary for Preventive Surveyors as laid down in the Scheme.

Mobile Crews.

The method of operating these crews has already been dealt with by the Staff Side in Sectional Committee, and is at present under consideration by the Official Side. A new point was introduced at the last meeting when staff representatives raised the question of the conveyance of Mobile Crews and indicated that motor cars were almost essential to effective performance of the work.

Attache Cases.

Of recent months a great search has been in progress for the ideal attache case, that is, ideal from the viewpoint of utility and cost, but little headway has been made. A case in use in another Service Department holds the field at the moment, and whilst from the cost aspect it is no doubt ideal, it is certain that its utility for Waterguard work is indeed questionable.

Electric Torches.

The General Secretary said that a new type of torch, embodying many desirable features, was being experimented with at the present time, and reports would be to hand shortly. It was hoped that as a result of these reports any necessary modifications could be embodied and a more suitable type of torch produced.

Continued foot of page 127.

NIGHTMARE.

Jim Splodge lay in the hotel bed, thinking of his "oral" on the morrow. Ever since he had thought about it, he had been convinced that the "oral" made all the difference between a pass and a high place. Jim was ambitious, aspiring even to the dizzy heights of a tutor, and as he fell asleep his last thought, a fevered thought, was "Must make a good impression. Must . . . make . . . a . . ."

* * *

He was just entering the dreaded room. It was just as he had imagined it all. He liked the cheerful look of his examiners. He felt strangely cheerful, almost aggressive.

One of the examiners smiled and bade him a cheerful "Good morning."

"Is it?"

Splodge was shocked. Had he said that? He had opened his mouth to reply courteously, to impress them from the start, to show in a few words that he was unfurried, capable and responsible, and yet deferential to his superiors. But he knew, without thinking, and yet with a dreadful certainty, that it was all going to be the same.

The examiners' eyebrows lifted sharply, but otherwise he gave no sign that anything unusual had happened.

"Now, Mr. Splodge, I believe you've spent all your service at Southpool?"

"If you know, why ask me? If you don't know, you don't need to," retorted Splodge. Sweat poured from him, but he was strangely impelled.

"Very well. You deal with many passengers there, don't you?"

"An elementary fact," barked Splodge, "which can be found in any geography book."

"Do you like passenger work?"

"I'm paid to do it."

"Good. A passenger produces to you 75/100 gallons of liqueur. What is your action?"

"Any passenger who is awkward enough to do that deserves a kick in the pants, and I should be happy to supply it."

"Well, then, the Master of a ship produces one plug of tobacco and says that that is the total of his ship's surplus stores. Imagine that I'm the Master and this is the plug."

Splodge took the plug and cut it neatly in two with his penknife. Handing one-half back he remarked, "There you are, Captain, there will be no seal."

Another examiner took up the thread. "I'm a Chinaman . . ."

"I thought so."

" . . . and your A.P.O. finds concealed in my pigtail a spear of opium. I have no utensils. What is your action?"

"If," said Splodge, "you have a pigtail, you ought to go on show, because a Chinaman with a pigtail is about as rare as quins. If you have opium and no utensils you should have your bumps felt, unless you eat it, which is a disgusting habit. I think I'd let you go, because you are deserving more of pity than anger."

"However," he continued, "this is not a music hall, gentlemen. I didn't come here to answer silly questions. Let's all be sensible. You must ask me reasonable questions, or I shall simply refuse to answer."

Splodge was in agony. Not one word had he wanted to utter, and yet they had been pronounced of their own volition. All the time he knew with sickening certitude that he was finished. He strove mightily to apologise, to abase himself, to plead illness, or to drop unconscious. Instead, he faced his examiners with a pugnacious scowl, leering at them, defying them.

The man at the end of the table rose and walked towards Splodge. As he drew near he assumed gigantic proportions. He stretched out a pair of enormous, hairy hands, with cruel hooked fingers, and whispered in a menacing growl, "That's done it, Splodge. I'm going to strangle you."

The hands descended, and under the powerful grip Splodge choked. There was a rushing sound in his ears, and his tongue felt thick. In a frenzy he emitted a cracked scream, "Let me go, LET ME GO."

* * *

"If you want to pinch the sheet and strangle yourself with it," grumbled Pareques, his bosom chum and bed-mate, "you'll have to sleep by yourself in future." H.G.R.

The Present and Former Custom Houses.

AT THE PORT OF LONDON.

As far as can be ascertained, five Custom Houses have been built for the purpose of carrying on the business of the Port of London.

The first is stated to have been built by John Churchman, Sheriff of London, in 1385, and it stood on the site of the present building, but what description of edifice it was we have been unable to ascertain.

The second was built in Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was destroyed by fire in 1666.

The third was built from the design of Sir Christopher Wren in 1668 on the same site, at a cost of £100,000. This House was burnt in 1731, and was the only one of his buildings destroyed during his lifetime.

The fourth was built by Ripley, who introduced a "long room," and stood immediately east of the existing building; it had a fine river front, but was greatly altered afterwards.

On the 13th January, 1814, this building was discovered to be on fire, and so rapidly did the flames do their work that it was soon doomed to destruction.

In the brief account given in the "Times" of the 13th following, it is stated that panic set in among the firemen and bystanders. A large quantity of gunpowder belonging to the Custom House Volunteers, then enrolled, exploded, sending that part of the building in all directions.

The building at that time was the repository of valuables of every description—plate, jewels, silks, china, etc., awaiting payment of duties which were lost. Plunderers who were on the scene, laid their hands on anything within reach; some were caught red-handed and were dealt with according to law, and doubtless swung in mid-air at the Old Bailey, as was the custom in those days for such offences.

The Government of the day had previously decided to alter the site of the Custom House, and had purchased all the quays, wharves and buildings between Water Lane end of Thames Street and Billingsgate, to the westward of the former Custom House.

The amount paid for the freeholds was £41,700, and before the destruction of the old building the plans for a new building had been drawn up, and the work of construction commenced.

The new Custom House was opened for business in 1817. It was erected at a cost of £300,000. In 1825 the centre portion gave way, the Long Room falling in bodily, but no loss of life occurred.

The Long Room in the present building, the roof of which has no intermediate support, is considered the largest and handsomest in England. It measures 199 feet by 66 feet, and up to 1850 was no greater than was required for official purposes.

There was a busy scene from 10 to 4, merchants and their clerks passing in and out on business. In old guide books the Long Room of the Custom House was designated as one of the sights of London. This room, compared to the former attraction, is a waste, and the public attendance comparatively small to what it was.

The Board Room is handsome and possesses two full-length portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of George II, and the Prince Regent.—
"Chester's Chronicles of the Customs."

Goole Prosecution.

At Goole Police Court, on the 4th instant, Captain Coopman, Master of the Belgian steamship "Charles," and Cyril Schofield, Master of the motor-barge "Rawcliffe," were charged in connection with 3 lbs. tobacco, O.S., 1-6/16 lbs. cigars and ½ gallon of spirits.

The evidence of Mr. H. Collier, P.O., and Messrs. F. Whitfield and D. S. Grant, A.P.O.s, stated that Coopman and Schofield were seen conversing on the deck of the "Charles," after which the latter was seen to descend the companion-way leading to the saloon and Master's room and carry something aboard the barge. This happened twice. A search of the barge-cabin by Messrs. Whitfield and Grant resulted in the finding by Mr. Whitfield of the goods, which were covered by some bedding.

Schofield pleaded guilty, Coopman not guilty, the latter submitting that there was no proof that the goods were obtained from him. The Master of the barge said that he went aboard to buy some tobacco and the Captain offered the other goods as well. He said that he paid £2 4s. 0d. for the lot.

Coopman was ordered to pay £17 8s. 0d. (T.V.D.) and Schofield £5 16s. 0d. (S.V.D.).

Fines of £25 and £8 were imposed on the steamship and barge respectively. Mr. E. A. Abel, C.P.O., conducted the case for the Crown.

Rat's Run.

Some years ago I went into a seaman's berth to search it. I put my hand into an empty box, as I thought, when something ran right up my sleeve and nestled inside against my shoulder.

Cold shivers ran down my back, and I did not know what it was until the owner came back to the berth and said, "It is all right, officer, it will be my pet rat!"

He was right. It had taken me for its owner. And that was his favourite resting place.

B.J.B.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council.

The one hundred and ninety-fifth meeting of the Council was held at the Custom House, E.C.3, on Wednesday, 21st April, 1937, the Chair being taken by C. J. Flynn Esq., C.M.G., Deputy Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Remuneration and Allowance Questions.

The major item under this head was an agreement in respect of the salary scale of Women Pension Surveyors, and for its introduction, as a special case, from 1st November, 1936. The scale agreed, £400—£18—£525, represents an increase throughout of £25, the old scale being £375—£18—£500.

The subject of minimum credits payable to the Officer Grade was also under discussion arising from an agreement reached in the Officer Grade Committee, and ratification of this agreement involved changes in that the allowances for minimum credits should be 2 hours between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., 3 hours between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., and in that the credits should be related to normal spells of attendance and not to the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

A further Officer Grade agreement which was ratified related to the interpretation of the phrase "nearest available route" in Establishment Instructions, Volume 3, paragraph 157, and this should serve to remove anomalies which have arisen under this paragraph.

Agreement was also reached, following upon discussion in the Departmental Clerical Class Committee, that a Departmental Clerical Officer employed temporarily on relief or other detached duty be allowed any necessary travelling expenses incurred in excess of the cost of reaching his normal headquarters when the place at which he is so employed is more than three miles from his home and normal headquarters.

One disagreement was reached under this head, and related to a Staff Side claim for the increase of the allowance paid to Watchers employed on Book-keeping duties from 8s. 6d. to 10s. per week.

Staffing and Methods of Work.

A considerable number of Local Committee staffing decisions were examined, and it was found possible to agree the bulk of these decisions including Excise Station schemes in Brighton, Newcastle, Northampton, Dundee and Greenock Collections. Waterguard schemes at Shoreham, Clydebank and Ardrossan were agreed, and schemes for time attendance Stations were approved in Brighton and Greenock Collections, subject to the inclusion, at the request of the Staff Side, of the schemes of attendance as part of the agreement,

The latter point was discussed with particular reference to a disagreement reached in Dover Local Whitley Committee in connection with the Staffing of Folkestone 2 Station and the Staff Side said that they felt compelled to raise the question as one of urgency.

The Local Staff Side had been supplied with details of the schemes of attendance and rotation but the Official Side had refused to allow these to form part of any decision reached. This would appear to indicate a new policy to which the Council Staff Side strongly objected and they wished to know the views of the Official Side.

The Official Side said that the position had arisen as the result of a misapprehension, and they suggested that the matter should be referred back to the Local Committee for the inclusion of the schemes of attendance and rotation in the discussion with a view to a comprehensive agreement being reached. They wished to make it clear that the scheme of rotation was necessarily subject to the terms of General Order 12/1933.

The Council decided to refer back the matter to the Local Committee for treatment on the above lines.

The Outdoor Service Sectional Committee had recorded final agreement, duly ratified by the Council, on the extension of Woman Pension Officer Areas in Leeds, Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester, Croydon, Brighton, Plymouth, Derby and Glasgow, and the re-scheming of Woman Pension Officer Stations in Brighton Collection was also agreed.

Collector's Office schemes discussed included those for Glasgow, Leith and Manchester (Customs) and Departmental Clerical Class Committee disagreements in respect of the first two were confirmed. The margin of difference between the two Sides in relation to the Manchester Office was so unusually wide that the Official Side promised re-examination of the matter.

Agreements were ratified covering a revised unit for Compounders, Spirit Dealers, etc., and for the inclusion of Hydrocarbon Oil Dealers and Users under Schedule 2 of Appendix A of the Rescheming Instructions, whilst the procedure to be followed in certain cases where preference is claimed was agreed.

The Staff Side claim for the appointment of a Departmental Higher Clerical Officer at Stafford 3 Station was further debated and adjourned for Official Side consideration.

Retiring Rooms and Sick Bays.

The Staff Side said that they assumed the Official Side had received a copy of the document issued on this subject by the Official Side of the Joint General Purposes Committee of the

National Whitley Council, and they would like to know what steps the Official Side proposed to take to give Departmental effect to the terms of the document as regards provision of Sick Bays and Rest Rooms, and as regards incorporation of the subject matter in the Office Accommodation Instructions. The Official Side said that Sick Bays were already in existence in the Custom House, Adelaide House, Vintry House and at Endell Street, or, in other words, at all places where the female staff numbered 40 or more. The document referred to made no explicit recommendations as to Rest Rooms, and it had been anticipated that the Staff Side would advance their views on the whole subject. The Staff Side said that having ascertained the general view of the Official Side they could now examine the question fully, and adjournment for this purpose was decided upon.

Miscellaneous.

An agreement, reached on the Watcher Grade Committee, was ratified covering the issue of mackintoshes to Watchers employed on certain duties, and the Council confirmed another decision of that Committee, namely, a disagreement on a Staff Side proposal for the expunging from the list of Watchers' duties of all reference to the cleaning or scrubbing of offices or buildings. The same fate was accorded a disagreement on a Staff Side proposal that relief for the leave of Senior Chief Clerks and Departmental Higher Clerical Officers be provided by members of the same grade.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 19th May, 1937.

Continued from page 123.

C.S. Confederation.

The Council gave serious consideration to the position of the Association in the light of the notice of withdrawal and the possibility of action being taken at the C.S.C. Annual Conference (May, 1937) which would make it possible to retain membership. It was decided to give the Executive Committee power to settle the question of continued affiliation after the meeting referred to.

V.E. Section.

The Council adopted the Executive Committee's recommendation that the fees in connection with tuition for the P.O. Exam. be increased by 2s. 6d. for each course, and that the increase be passed on to the tutors.

The Council received reports on the following items and noted progress:—**Retirement, Small Port Allowances, Accidents on Duty, Deck Cargo, Short Attendances, Rummaging Tools, Area Representation.**

For Your Note-Book.

WINES.

Wines exceeding 25 but not 42 usually.—Cape 32, Marsala 40, Sherry 33, Lisbon 33, Madeira 38, Tarragona 36, Tenerife 34, Malaga, Canary, Malnsey, Manzanilla, Port, Ratafia.

Wines not exceeding 25.—Bordeaux, Burgundy, Carowitz, Red and White Claret, Champagne, Elder, Hock, Hermitage, Red and White Mozelle, Rhenish, Sauterne, Tokay and Vermouth.

Clarets.—18 to 23 per cent. proof spirit. Well known French wines produced in great quantities along the banks of the Garonne, around Bordeaux, and in other parts of France. Imported under such trade names as Claret, St. Julien, St. Emilion, St. Estephe, Chateau Lateur, Chateau Margain, Medoc, Laffitte, Fransoc, Macau, Labarde, Blaye, etc.

Natural White Wines, Burgundy.—Red and White, 20-25 per cent. proof. Produced in a district in France bearing that name. It resembles claret, but is richer and has more body. Trade names—(red): Beaune, Chambertin, Beaujolais, Pommard, Aloze, Volnay, Savigny, Nuits, Fleurie, Vosne and Romanee; (white): Chablis, Pouilly.

Sauterne (or white claret).—20-26 per cent. proof. Produced in the Sauterne district of France. Contains a good deal of sugar. Trade names:—Sauterne, Barsac, Graves, Chateau Yquem, Chateau Larox, Blanche, Chateau du Roi, Chateau Duc d'Epemon and Clos du Cardinal.

Hermitage.—Red. 20-24 per cent. proof. Cross between a Claret and Rhone Burgundy. There is also a white variety of this wine.

Haut Brion.—Red. 20-24 per cent. proof. Produced in the Garonne district. Resembles a red Burgundy.

Rhine, Moselle and Maine Light Wines.—17-25 per cent. proof.

Hock.—White still wine. Takes its name from Hockheimer on the River Maine. A pale wine about the same strength as claret. Choice varieties; Johannesberger, Steinberger, Marco-brunner, Rudesheimer, Nursteiner, etc.

Moselle. White still wine. Trade names:—Winningen, Berncastle, Scharzberger, Reisling, Moseloro, etc.

Bingen. Assmanneshauser, etc. Light red wines.

Italian Light Still Wines.—Low strength. Capri, (white) Falerno, (white) Chianti, (red) Barola, (red) Vaiteluna, (red) Montferrat, Lacryma Christi.

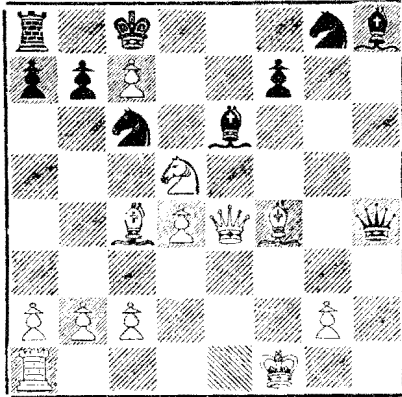
Hungarian Wines.—Both red and white. About the same strength as Claret Tokav, a white sweet wine of low strength. Ausbruck, Karlowitz, Erlau, Kobanyai, etc.

(To be continued.)

Preventive Staff Chess Club.

PROBLEM NO. 154.

BLACK



WHITE

Mate in three.

Solution to No. 153.

1. Q-Q8 ch KxQ.
 2. B-K15 ch K-B2 (a)
 3. B-Q8 mate.
- (a) if KK-K1: 3. R-Q8 mate.

Southampton Golf.

A match between the Waterguard and the C.P.R. staff took place at the Southampton Golf Course on May 7th. We defeated our opponents by the highly creditable score of 5 games won, 1 lost and 1 halved. This is our first match and the result is very encouraging.

Changes in the Staff.

TO 10th MAY, 1937.

OFFICER LEAVING THE SERVICE.

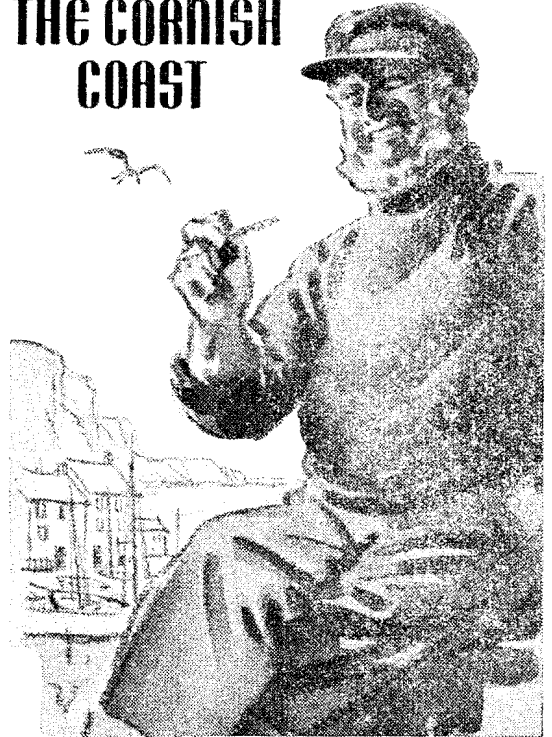
RETIREMENT—PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Sumner, J. R., Harwich, Ipswich.

DEATH—PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Collins, H. L., Leith

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