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THE DISTRESS FUND

To all and sundry comes this appeal,
Give a little it will make you feel
That our Pals who have felt the "Blitz"
Handed out by that monster "Fritz,"
Know that Service friendship is real.

It is very little from all we seek:
A car fare saved every week.
Gathered together these amounts will grow
And help to soften a terrible blow
Given by that horrible sneak.

Don't let this appeal be in vain
And let it pass like a shower of rain.
Every cloud has a silver lining;
It won't be long ere the sun is shining
And our darkness lightened again.

NAP.

Wisdom from the Past (19)

A.R.P. LAMPS.

"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided,
and that is the lamp of experience."—Patrick Henry.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

To 17th April, 1941.

TRANSFERS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS.

de Cothi, A. A. C., Cardiff to Bristol.

Ellis, H., Cardiff to Newport, Mon.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT:

PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Phelan, B., Bristol.

DEATH:

PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Fox, J., Salcombe, Plymouth.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Brache, C. J., Chief Preventive Officer.

Clark, J., Chief Preventive Officer.

Coulter, S. R., Assistant Preventive Officer.

Dowland, H., Chief Preventive Officer.

Goodall, N. J., Preventive Officer.

Johnson, R. E., Preventive Officer.

Jones, T., Assistant Preventive Officer.

Longstaff, J. D., Assistant Preventive Officer.

Macpherson, A., Chief Preventive Officer.

Rouffignac, J., Waterguard Superintendent.

Wyman, A. J., Assistant Preventive Officer.

OBITUARY

MR. J. FOX, LATE P.O.

The rather sudden death, at Salcombe, of Mr. J. Fox, Preventive Officer, will be regretted by all his old colleagues. He was on duty until mid-day on 22nd February and passed away the same evening. He came to Salcombe four years ago, and in his own unassuming way made a quiet success of this in-charge port.

The funeral, on Wednesday 26th February, was preceded by a service at the Roman Catholic Church. Besides the widow and family there were in attendance at the ceremony Messrs. G. Stanford, Wgd. Superintendent; W. H. Finley, Wgd. Surveyor; E. J. Sprague, Prev. Officer; E. Haynes, T. Cheal and M. Young, Coast Preventive Men. Tribute to Mr. Fox's friendly relations with other departments and concerns, whose interests dovetail with our own, was paid by the presence at his funeral of Lieut. Murch, R.N.V.R., Senior Naval Officer at Salcombe, and Messrs. Vivian, Lloyd's Agent, Southwood Harbour Master, and Captain Sladen.

Mr. Fox was only 45 and his death at such an early age is a sad loss to the Department. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow and family.

C.H.S.

OUR BOYS

We are pleased to place on record that Brian Kelly, the 18-years-old A.R.P. messenger and son of Mr. H. Kelly, A.P.O., London, was presented with a gold hunter watch and 12 War Savings Certificates by the Mayor of East Ham on 15th March, in appreciation of his bravery and devotion to duty, when a hospital was struck during a recent air raid on London.

To a reporter, a Sister at the hospital said, "One of the bravest was Brian Kelly, who ran backwards and forwards with messages although he had a badly lacerated head and face."

Congratulations, Brian, and jolly good luck. We are proud of you!



CURRENT COMMENTS

Civil Service War Bonus.

WE were just able to include in our last month's issue the outline of the revised War Bonus and since then we have received a copy of Treasury Circular No. 4/1941 in which the arrangements are given in full.

In the main our previous notes were complete, but a little amplification of three particular points is, we think, advisable.

Para. (2) deals with the "escalator clauses." It reads:—

"To obviate anomalies in the case of salaries or wages immediately exceeding the limiting rates of remuneration quoted above, the amount and incidence of the war bonus may be adjusted so as to ensure that no officer receives less in pay and bonus together than he would have received if his pay alone had been smaller."

Para. (4) "Overtime rates, where these are calculated in the normal manner as a specified proportion of the officer's actual salary or wages will be calculated by reference to the revised bonus rates and conditions with effect from the first "overtime week" beginning after the 15th March, 1941."

Members will note that the overtime rates referred to in this paragraph are "time" rates. No mention is made of the effect on "flat" rates. A point which is being pursued by the Association departmentally.

Para. (7) deals with "provincial differentiation" and states "that for the purposes of the new bonus salary limits are the same in London and elsewhere".

This last point is particularly pleasing to us in that we represent some of the few "undifferentiated" grades in the Department.

With all its shortcomings, and there are many, we are inclined to agree with the Chairman of the National Staff Side when he refers to this revised bonus adjustment as a "successful disagreement".

Cost of Living.

The Cost-of-living index figure as at 1st February stood at 97. This is one point above the figure for January and 42 points above the figure for September, 1939. The increase in the latter-mentioned period equals an increase of 27 per cent. in the cost of living.

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
1939-40 ...	55	55	65	69	73	74	77
1940-1 ...	85	87	89	92	95	96	97

Deferred Promotion.

In the March issue under this head we referred to the non-filling of vacancies in the Waterguard and to the fact that this matter was being re-opened with the Official Side. A particular point was made of the

plight of certain Assistant Preventive Officers who, though successful at the March, 1937, Examination, were still awaiting promotion.

We are pleased to be able to report that following a further review, arrangements are being made to promote these Officers.

War Emergency Committee.

The April meeting of the War Emergency Committee will be held at the Offices of the C. & E. Federation on Wednesday the 16th of the month.

Injuries on Duty.

Some concern has been felt regarding the compensation rights of officers who continue at work after an "imminent danger" signal had been given. Earlier instructions were, to say the least, a little ambiguous on the point.

The National Staff Side have now been assured by the Treasury that such officers will not be regarded as in "default" because they continue at work, whether at their own discretion or not, after an "alert" or warning of imminent danger, and their rights to compensation will not be affected by any decision on their part to do so.

Fire Prevention Duty.

Paragraph 11 (b) (iv) of Treasury Circular 2/1941 refers to the fact that a man may secure exemption from compulsion to perform fire prevention duties in his office on grounds of medical unfitness or exceptional hardship, by applying to the appropriate tribunal.

In this connection it has been decided that the Military Service (Hardship) Committee for the district shall hear applications from Civil Servants.

C.S. Arbitration Tribunal.

The following appointments to the Official Side's panel of the Tribunal have been renewed for a period of one year:—Mr. F. C. Fairholme, Mr. J. E. Greenwood, Mr. F. N. Hepworth, Mr. H. E. Parkes, Sir Felix Pole and Sir L. A. P. Warner.

Mr. L. S. Woolf has been re-appointed, on the nomination of the National Staff Side, for a further period ending April 7th, 1943.

Congratulations.

We learn that two London Preventive Officers have received letters from the Board commending them on their splendid work during the "blitz" of December 29th last—the occasion on which the Custom House was damaged.

Good work Mr. J. E. Bookey and you, too, Mr. F. W. Brooks.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and thirty-eighth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 26th March, 1941, the Chair being taken by Sir Wilfred Eady, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Prior to the commencement of the proceedings the Chairman said that he knew the Staff Side would be pleased to hear that Sir John Sutton was progressing satisfactorily if more slowly than both Sides would wish. The Vice-Chairman, M. A. J. Cowherd, expressed the Staff Side's pleasure in hearing this good news of the Deputy-Chairman.

Sir Wilfred Eady then intimated that the present was the last occasion on which Mr. Shepherd-Jones, the Accountant and Comptroller General, would attend the Council before his retirement. The responsibility of such an office in a Department collecting £500,000,000 of revenue was very great and Mr. Shepherd-Jones had worthily filled the post. The Chairman felt sure the Staff Side would join him in wishing Mr. Shepherd-Jones health and happiness in his leisure and that they would remember him with affectionate regard. The Vice-Chairman voiced the Staff Side's concurrence and said that every Grade in the Service would wish him a long and happy retirement.

Mr. Shepherd-Jones expressed his thanks and appreciation of the kind remarks and good wishes.

Filling of Vacancies and Employment of Temporary Staff.

In reply to Staff Side questions, the Official Side stated that one more Temporary Assistant had taken up duty, but no more interviews were in prospect at present, and they had no further news on the reservation age. The Staff Side said they were anxious to have more details of the work falling to the Department under the War Damage Bill and of the methods adopted to meet it. The Official Side regretted they were still unable to make a full statement, but would do so at the earliest possible moment. They would communicate with the Staff Side as soon as definite information was available and in regard to the draft General Order.

Fire Prevention Order.

In reply to a Staff Side inquiry as to the general position the Official Side said that in 504 cases the Department had set up or participated in fire watching schemes; in 126 cases report to Local Authorities for assistance had been necessary; and in 756 cases premises in our occupation had been found to be covered by independent arrangement without our co-operation. In a very small number of cases only had compulsory schemes been found necessary, and recent events would entail a reconstruction of schemes in a few places.

The Staff Side said they would examine this statement but added that they would appreciate an early indication of the proposals to cover the questions of the provision of equipment and facilities, and of the payment of certain expenses recently announced in

the public Press. The Official Side said they had not yet had information on these points, which involved a general Service issue.

The Staff Side referred again to the necessity for the Department to meet, without rigid control, the position of sharing expenses for accommodation, etc., in those cases where the Department was a participant in a scheme, and the Official Side said they had submitted this matter to the Treasury.

The Official Side said that the position at the Custom House had now been eased. With regard to City Gate House the response to the call for volunteers was not at present satisfactory and a scheme based on the present total would involve more frequent duty spells than appeared necessary. The Official Side proposed to take further steps to secure more volunteers for a job which was a duty to be performed irrespective of rank or grade, and the position might arise in which Staff Side co-operation would be sought to secure further volunteers.

The Staff Side said they would co-operate in any way possible to secure the working of a satisfactory scheme and instanced the excellent voluntary scheme in operation at Vintry House.

Steel Helmets and Protective Clothing for Officials employed in exposed places.

The Official Side said that returns were now in from all Collections shewing the numbers of helmets which had been agreed upon after local discussion. In some areas the figures reported were out of alignment with the general position and would have to be examined before they could be accepted.

The Staff Side said they had seen the return on the previous day only, and were at a loss to understand the astounding variations in treatment. They could not reconcile the figures given in some cases, e.g. London Port, with their own information and they had noted the exclusion of Departmental Clerical Officers from the staff figures in each Collection.

The Official Side said they had not included Departmental Clerical Officers in the staff figures as they came into the picture very little, although where these officials had been scheduled for the issue of helmets they had been included in the column of total helmets required. In all cases the total figures had been agreed with Local Vice-Chairmen. The returns indicated a complete exclusion of General Station Officers in some Collections in contrast to wholesale inclusion in others, and it seemed that this aspect of the question must be examined with regard to the actual circumstances of the work.

The Staff Side said that the exclusion of any particular section of officials could not be accepted and they felt that the present complicated position need not have arisen if their earlier views had been accepted, but they were ready to assist in clarifying the position with a view to securing as early and as comprehensive a supply of helmets as possible.

The Official Side agreed that the matter which was one of priority of issue must be brought to finality as soon as possible and they would make early contact with the Staff Side to clear up differences in detail.

The item was thereupon adjourned for consultation accordingly.

Promotion to the Officer Grade.

The Official Side said that the situation was unchanged from that at the previous meeting and the item was accordingly re-adjourned.

War Bonus.

The question of the *Effect of War Bonus upon Overtime of Assistant Preventive Officers* was re-adjourned for the Official Side who stated that their investigation of the matter was being actively pursued.

With regard to the question of the *Exclusion of Small Port Allowances from the Basis of Calculation of Bonus* the Staff Side said they had re-examined this matter in conjunction with the Official Side proposal made at the previous meeting, and while they adhered to their claim that Small Port Allowances represented commuted overtime they were prepared as an ad hoc settlement of the present problem to agree to the counting of seventy-five per cent. of the value of the allowances as overtime if the operative date were accepted as the 1st February, 1940. They outlined the disadvantages under which the small number of men concerned laboured in comparison with their colleagues at the larger ports, and reminded the Official Side that it had been agreed to leave the settlement of the question of the basis of Small Port Allowances until after the war.

The Official Side said that they assumed the Staff Side were appreciative of the consequences if at any time the war bonus were changed to a percentage basis, and with regard to the Staff Side proposal, they could not put this to the Treasury as it involved definite allocation of a precise percentage of the allowances as representing overtime. Neither they nor the Treasury could accept such allocation, and they had made their suggestion for a possible settlement on a fifty-fifty basis on the clear understanding that it would afford some measure of compensation to the men affected without in any way prejudicing the views of either Side or the outstanding question of the actual basis of the allowances. If the Staff Side accepted this offer in the spirit in which it was made they would put the matter to the Treasury, together with the Staff Side's proposal as regards the operative date, but on the latter point the Staff Side were of course aware of the difficulties.

The Staff Side said the Official Side's statement had made the position clear, and they requested a further adjournment in order to give it further consideration.

Air Raid Shelters.

Two items were dealt with under this head, the first concerning the *Heating of Air Raid Shelters*, and the Official Side said that all the reports from Collections had now been received and the necessary action taken regarding shelters reported as requiring heating.

It was agreed that the item should be discharged from the Council agenda, the Staff Side remarking that the subject could be revived if circumstances rendered it necessary.

The second item dealt with *Shelter accommodation at City Gate House*, and the Official Side said that the necessary strengthening was actively proceeding, but there had been some difficulty in finding suitable alternative accommodation for the military personnel now in the building. It was anticipated that this difficulty would soon be overcome, and this Department

as the main tenants of the building could then feel quite satisfied with the shelter accommodation.

Re-Scheming, Office Accommodation, etc.

A Statistical Office agreement was ratified, covering work returns, in the form that individual returns of work made by Clerical Officers should not normally pass beyond the Higher Clerical Officer, subject to the right of Higher Officials to call for returns in particular instances, e.g. disciplinary cases.

A local agreement on the equivalents of Woman Pension Officer Stations at Bristol was also ratified and a number of office accommodation decisions was also approved.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 23rd April, 1941.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "Customs Journal."

Sir,—The paragraph "Promotion to the Officer Grade," in the Departmental Whitley Council Minutes, recorded in your March issue, implies that in the Staff Side's view there are vacancies in the Officer Grade which should be filled. If that is so then it is obvious that prevailing circumstances will preclude promotees being drawn from the Waterguard—and yet—could it be claimed that every Waterguard Officer is as fully employed as he might be? With shipping as it is it seems to me that a satisfactory solution to the problem could probably be found in the transfer to the Waterguard of some of the handling and shipping work, even if only as a war emergency measure.

For nearly a decade under the provisions of G.O. S/1932 paragraph 40 et seq., the examination and supervision of discharge of certain cargoes has been performed satisfactorily by the Waterguard. An extension of those arrangements would result in no loss to the Officer Grade, but rather enhance their prestige as "technicians" certifying the goods being as described, leaving the subsequent examination and supervision of discharge, which can properly be regarded as "preventive" work, to the Waterguard.

In the case of approved aerodromes I believe the Staff Side agreed that handling officers should initiate the work and when its proportion of any airport became too great for one Officer then the Waterguard was called in to take over the "preventive" duties. That was a common-sense economical use of man power which, vice versa, in these days when every one of us is expected to do his utmost and, if need be, to make sacrifices might, I suggest, be applied to ships and their cargoes.

Yours faithfully,

BARKIS.

The Editor, "Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,—Now the March amendments give the Waterguard their application to the Purchase Tax on Passengers' baggage and Crews' effects, why shower upon us the O.W.O. parts, and G.O.'s for which we have no use?

Considerable saving of paper would be effected if future instructions of this Tax was confined to those affected in the operation of the Tax.

Yours faithfully,

"SPUR"

Southampton Notes

The postman has been active again since the March issue, and from a hefty pile of letters we open our comments with the boys' congratulations to D.B. (Jimmy) and Mrs. James. Best of luck to them, and especially to Jimmy, who has passed out as a Telegraphist, R.N. and can now be written to:—"H.M.S. Ark Royal," c/o G.P.O., London

Proceeding alphabetically:—

Joe Beckett, now a Rigger's Mate, has left his usual berth after a long wait and he is at Rosyth for a short spell.

Charlie Cardall, still enjoying life in the North-East, refers again to his garden roller, which is now acting as a shock and bullet proof protection to an Anderson Shelter. Some roller, what? Charlie has developed his talent for hobbies, and is also well occupied in spare moments as a Savings Group Organiser. Good for him!

Arthur Cheney is keeping as fit as ever, and contrary to previous reports of his going to the West Indies, he is studying for a Naval Commission at a shore establishment.

Ron Greenhalgh successfully completed his R.A.F. course, and is now in the Near East as an active member of the Bomber Command. Happy landings, Greeny! Slip a few down for us when you get the chance!

The inseparables, Dudley Heal and Les Twentyman, have passed for R.A.F. Flight, and are now in training for the job ahead. We are hoping to see "Twenty" when he comes North on leave.

Ted Midlane, R.N., is still "unattached" in the South, and has met several of the lads who have been stationed in the same area during the past three months.

Cliff Pearson, again on the high seas, wrote in just before he departed and again after putting to sea. Like the other lads he is fit and well, and joins in the remembrances sent far and wide to those still at home. Cliff met Colin McDougall while he was in home waters, since when we hear that the latter has lost his home in a recent air raid. The exiles send their sympathetic wishes to Mac, and hope that no personal injury accompanied this foul stroke of misfortune. A similar piece of bad news was that of Cliff Bayliss, who lost his home in the So'ton raids, and to him the exiles send a message of sympathy. You will be glad to know that Cliff and his fellow Sotonians at Silloth are keeping fit. The problem of accommodation is acute in that port and has brought certain difficulties to which Ron. H. can testify.

Davy Youdell, now a proud parent, was over to see the Silloth boys, prior to his overseas departure. Here's wishing that Davy has had a safe voyage, and that he will continue to keep fit in strange climes.

Another A.P.O. well known to you all has now transferred his affections to the Royal Navy, and I know that Bill Foot will have your good wishes for the days ahead.

In one recent letter, the writer wants to know if any of our lads were present at the Lofoten Isles "do" seeing that an issue was given to the "Locals." Any information?

Had good news recently of Bert Hornsby (ex Lupton Cup Finalist), now at Appledore. Some of our Weymouth colleagues are now in the first stage of D.D., and one or two of them are in the North-West, where we hope they will find "the change as good as a rest, etc."

I hear from So'ton that the exiles at Preston are A.1. and that also goes for those betwixt Mersey and Irwell.

Our former colleague at Boston, Doug. Joy, has had a successful medical and interview and has been accepted by the R.A.F., but at the time of writing he has not been called for service. He sends his good wishes to the boys at home and away.

News from So'ton tells of the retirement of "Bill" Crack, our long-standing Engineer. We'll miss Bill when we go back, and to him and Mrs. Crack the exiles send their wishes for a safe and happy spell of leisure when this active time has passed. Similar wishes go to another old colleague at So'ton, "Alf" Williams, Watcher, who retired recently. The "Point" will not seem the same somehow, and we hope Alf's health will benefit by his absence from that "unhealthy" spot.

The reflective "Airman" (March issue) reflects not only his thoughts, but the thoughts of scores of his Service colleagues, and although we are generally looked upon as being a "hard boiled" crowd, the lads' letters go to prove that behind the "poker faces" lies much sentiment and concern for others who are in more dangerous spots than those who make the enquiries.

The letters which dwell upon the "effect of the War Bonus upon Overtime (A.P.O. Grade)" however, contain little that leans to the sentimental, and while the position may have been erroneously interpreted ("C.J." Vol: 38, p. 51) the Officers concerned register approval of the Staff Side's intention of keeping the discussion to the simple issue as denoted in Current Comments (March). We go to press hoping that the further consideration by the Official Side since 26.2.41 will prove favourable to the men concerned.

Do any of your chaps show the "C.J." to your land-ladies? Otherwise I cannot account for a letter received recently from one in the Liverpool Union, detailing at great length the faults of a recently-departed paying guest, who had actually taken up residence there at my suggestion. "No more A.P.O.'s" says she! Wow! Anyhow, keep your Journal in your locker in future.

In closing, I must acknowledge the "Pen" wise-cracks, and say that I hope I'll be signing on with it at 29 Berth in the near future. Cheerio L.B.

SMALL PORT LAMENT

Rise two hours before the tide,
Patrol your station on every side,
Home for breakfast, back for ten,
Long Room duties for you then,
If you're lucky dismiss at three,
Hoping to partake of tea,
The tide then claims you once again
Sign off duty, and sigh Amen.

NAP.

QUO VADIS ?

There are few Waterguard Officers to-day who, even in those two or three ports where Waterguard work is plentiful, are not experiencing an uneasy feeling that, through no fault of their own, they are not able to pull full weight in the national effort. In those many ports where Waterguard work is far from being plentiful the feeling is something more than uneasiness. Disgust would perhaps be a more descriptive word—disgust at their own impotence. They are conscious of being equipped with useful qualifications derived from unique experience of a kind that must surely mark them as fit for classification with those whose *full* services are necessary to the State during these critical times. It is lamentably true however that force of circumstances prevents Waterguard officers from exercising their capabilities to anything like full capacity—and the staff are not happy about it. The fact that they are not able to take part in spare time voluntary national work like most other citizens does not improve the situation. The conditions under which the whole nation is now living are of course unprecedented, and no doubt it was beyond the powers of human wisdom to have forecast what our own Waterguard conditions would be during war time. But now that we can see those conditions unpleasantly obvious before us, surely something can be done to prevent their continuance for the duration of the war. The situation is now a known quantity and is therefore capable of being tackled. Pondering on these things recently it seemed very apparent to me that war-time strains and stresses had definitely found the weak spots in the organisation of Customs Services—those weaknesses whose existence the Association has endeavoured to point out time and again. The chief of them is "overlapping" as between the work of the Officer Grade on quayside work, and Waterguard officers on their ordinary duties. Had this problem been settled years ago there would not have been the waste of man power that we have to-day. It is true that Association efforts to impress the Waterguard point of view in this connection have not been so persistent as they might have been. Many of us were fearful that the remedy for overlapping, i.e. the taking over by the Waterguard of all quayside preventive work, would result in some of our superior posts being made available for promotion from the Officer Grade. To-day, however, such a consideration should be pushed into the background. Sacrifice is rightly expected of all of us, and in examining any proposition for increasing man power, and at the same time effecting substantial saving in expenditure the question of personal advancement should be considered last. It must not be forgotten that to relinquish quayside revenue duties would entail sacrifice on the part of the Officer Grade, and it would be a sacrifice for which the small prospect of a few extra promotion posts could not compensate. Whether the Officer Grade are prepared for such a sacrifice we can only guess. But since we do know that the present anomalies must be very apparent to them, it would not be a very difficult guess.

Therefore I make the proposal that the Association should forthwith open negotiations with the authorities with a view to extending the scope of Waterguard

duties to include all such quayside work that can rightly be regarded as preventive in character. Successes in such negotiations would mean not only that Waterguard staff would have means for fuller employment, but also that the general efficiency would be increased owing to the removal of those long-standing anomalies which arise from overlapping. This proposal is by no means new, and, in fact, there is in existence a Memorandum which the Association submitted to the Board as far back as May, 1928, dealing with the same question. So far as I remember, this Memorandum received not unfavourable consideration, and that the real cause for its being unfruitful was that general Service conditions at that time made it inadvisable to introduce any major change in staffing policy. Recently I dug out a copy of the Memorandum and I find that the statements contained therein are even more convincingly true than they were ten years ago. It has now been officially recognised that the quality and responsibility of Waterguard work are high enough to warrant a salary scale for the Preventive Officer grade which is substantially greater than in 1928. This is because the authorities have found that the grade has successfully undertaken all their complicated duties in connection with the far-reaching and revolutionary changes that have taken place in the Tariff system. Time has thus provided further evidence of the adaptability of the Preventive Staff, and of their capacity to perform preventive duties relating to all kinds of imported and exported goods. I don't need to go into the details of argument. That could be done very effectively by our Association when presenting the case: and I have no doubt that in compiling the arguments the Association officials would not overlook the importance of the 1937 Report from the Select Committee on Estimates where it was shewn that the relationship between Waterguard functions and those of the Officer Grade on quayside work had come under fire. The Report provides good illustration of the difficulties that are encountered in explaining to laymen why the examination of baggage, and the assessment of duty on articles imported in baggage, require lesser qualifications than are required for the examination of ordinary imports. It seems not improbable that the authorities may already be taking the view that some reorganisation of work could profitably take place now. It is not without significance that the versatile capabilities of the Officer Grade are being sought after in spheres outside the Customs and Excise, and that even within the Department this grade is being employed on work which in normal times would hardly be regarded as coming within the scope of Customs and Excise. The Officer Grade is specially adapted to this kind of thing whereas we in the Waterguard are not, because our training is essentially for Customs duties, and if we are to be fully employed during war time conditions we must seek any additional work strictly within that sphere. Since the outlets which are available to the Officer Grade are not open to us, there is obviously a very strong case for a full examination of our claim that our Customs knowledge and experience should be utilised to the utmost.

Yours truly,

PATRIA.

IT'S UP TO YOU
A PLAY IN ONE ACT
 By ROWAN.

Scene I.

The curtain rises on a dingy room of average size, decorated in a colour scheme of brown and yellow. Around the walls are lockers, some in natural wood shabbily varnished; others are of steel and painted green. The floor is concrete and roughly in the centre of the stage is a table, the top an enamel plate. A slow-combustion stove, on the top of which stands a white enamel tea-pot, is in the front of the stage, and half-turned to this, half-turned to the table, are seated two figures: one is Mr. Broadman, a P.O. in his early fifties, grey, tending to obesity and generally showing the signs of a strenuous youth now accustomed to a somewhat easier life, the other is Dick Dattle, an A.P.O. in his late twenties, of good build and looks the average Englishman. They are eating, the elder some foreign-looking sausage, the younger some sandwiches, which, on closer examination, turn out to be cheese. Both are reading copies of the "Customs Journal."

DATTLE: I see that Seaport has passed a resolution advocating a gold ring for A.P.O.'s uniform.

BROADMAN: What good will that do 'em?

D.: Well it would give us some status.

B.: When I was an A.P.O.—Preventive Man, I mean—we had no thought for gold rings, we didn't want status—money was our want—and we earned it in those days.

D.: Yes, guv., but do you know, only to-day on the pier-head an old girl asked me what time the ferry was due in. I said I didn't know, and she said: "If I worked on a ferry I'd know what time the boats came in."

B.: Ha! ha! ha! I'd have told her something if I'd been there.

D.: What, guv.?

B.: That you wouldn't know what time the boats came in if you did work on the ferry.

D.: Course I should.

B.: Yes, but do you take any interest in your job? You want some status! When I was your age I did what you couldn't do—I ran the station myself many a day when my guv'nor was too tired to turn out.

D.: Tired?

B.: Well, yes; I've seen some sights. I remember old Dumpsy, as we used to call him . . .

But as this story has no interest for Dick, as he's heard it many times before, we'll drop the curtain and a few minutes later raise it on

Scene II.

(The same.)

Under the combined effects of the stove and the supper both Broadman and Dick have dozed, and as we wonder how anyone could sleep in such postures, we see a figure materialising beside the stove. His garb is obviously that of a man connected with the water—a rough serge suit with no embellishments. At times he look like a Preventive Man; at times a Boatman, and occasionally we wonder if he is even a Tidewaiter. His name is Harry. He knocks out his pipe on the stove, which rouses Broadman and Dick; neither show any real surprise.

DATTLE: And—and—who are you?

HARRY: 'Arry, and I'm fed up.

BROADMAN: What with?

H.: Well; I've bin funnelled dahn for over a month—and I was only in the Lobster Pot when I should ha' bin aboard the Maria Jane. Wot's that ring for?

B.: To show I'm a commissioned officer.

H.: 'E ain't got no commission then.

D.: Course I have, and no different to his either.

H.: Well, why the difference?

B.: You see it's like this. He's my assistant—I take the responsibility.

H.: Ain't he got no responsibility?

B.: No, he hasn't sat the exam.

H.: So you can take exams. now and . . .

D.: Oh, yes! There's only 43 to go and I shall be called up.

H.: Well, you've got somewheres at any rate. Sometimes old Bob an' I used to talk things over and say as 'ow we'd like to have a cut at the Examining Officer's job. But we were always kep' dahn. Still, I am pleased to see the old job's not quite what it was. Nah I comes to think, I believe I heard talk of an association some time arter I'd retired.

And with that 'Arry fades away and Broadman and Dick resume their nodding without further comment.

Curtain.

Scene III.

(The same.)

Beside the stove there appears another figure, in uniform, though it's hard to say what branch of life he's in. His uniform is neither naval nor military, yet smart, and obviously impresses Broadman and Dick.

BROADMAN: Good evening—have I the honour?

FIGURE: Probably not. I don't even know myself who I am.

B.: What are you, then?

F.: Customs Officer.

D.: Landing or . . .

F.: Customs Officer, I said. Oh! I see—you're P.O. and A.P.O. of the 1940's—I've heard of you.

B.: But what grade are you?

F.: We don't have grades—once you've proved yourself capable of protecting the revenue you become an officer of Customs and Excise—and there you are.

B.: What! no P.O. grade?

F.: That was washed out long ago.

D.: And no Surveyors or C.P.O.s?—no one to see you don't take a half-day when you shouldn't?

F.: No; you see we're trusted—actually the senior one takes charge of the station on doubtful points, but on the whole we each have our job and get on with it.

B.: Who is the actual boss, then?

F.: Well, we have an officer in charge of a collection, but he's no very big noise, and his position isn't greatly envied.

D.: What's the O.T. like?

F.: O.T.? I don't follow.

D.: Overtime.

F.: Oh, that! It was abolished when we merged the old Waterguard and the Customs and Excise officers.

B.: How did that merger come about?

F.: Well, so far as I can gather, the whole position became ludicrous—or perhaps, to be more correct, it was suddenly appreciated how ludicrous it was—a Landing Officer saying he couldn't do this because it was proper to the Waterguard—and vice versa. But not only that—the staff themselves were imbued with a new spirit—the spirit to serve—to do the job in hand instead of making sure first that no one else would do it.

D.: Who does the rummage?

F.: Actually it's done by a man who enters the service as a rummager, and remains at that—usually a naval pensioner. But there's a Customs Officer in charge, and whilst he may not do the heavy and dirty work, he does direct rummage on the spot. Part of our probationary period is spent as a rummager.

D.: I like your uniform.

F.: Yes; it is dignified, isn't it?

B.: But I don't see how in shipping circles you can hold much respect without a gold ring.

F.: We do! In fact it was to avoid any comparison with officers of the Royal Navy or Mercantile Marine that we had this style.

D.: How grand it must be to work under those conditions!

F.: I suppose it would be.

D.: Would be?

F.: Yes; you see I'm not really alive—I'm not sure of myself.

D.: Wouldn't you like to live?

F.: I would—but it's up to you!

And he fades away as the curtain drops, to rise immediately on

Scene IV.

(The same.)

D. (rubbing his eyes): I've been thinking . . .

B.: No!

D.: . . . about what we were discussing over supper—gold rings and status and that. An A.P.O.'s job hasn't great potentialities—has it?

B.: Well, no; I suppose it hasn't.

D.: And when you've spent twelve to fifteen years rummaging and so on, it's almost like taking on a completely different job as P.O. If we could only have some responsibility now instead of having to wait nearly a generation for it, I'm sure we'd take more interest in the job.

B.: Perhaps there's something in that. But what work could you do?

D.: It would have to be some of yours.

B.: And then you'd be my equal!

D.: More or less. And why shouldn't I be, once I'd done two or three years in the job.

B.: I suppose there's no real reason; or for that matter why we shouldn't take more from the Landing staff.

D.: Merge the two services!

B.: Yes; there's nothing really difficult in the way of that.

D.: Nothing is impossible; but why do chaps worry about small details when there's such big things to do?

B.: You're talking sense; but, come on, let's clear the table and get something done.

D. (after a long pause): Yes.

Final Curtain.

NEIGHBOURLY NIPPETS BY NOD

STRANGER (Belfast) writes that he has been reading our contemporary of Eire and finds a column printed in Erse headed "Shiltlear a Bhitear"; could I translate?—Yes, shilling a bitter!

LODGER (Liverpool) is in uncomfortable digs and asks what, in my opinion, is the best day on which to take a half-day?—If you are on duty, I should imagine a Sunday.

MONETA (Glasgow) says that he is getting a pile of "O" Circulars just lately.—Yes, so have I, and what with the rates, etc., I think the electric light bill is simply shocking.

LITERARY (Birkenhead) writes a nasty letter and suggests that this column is a pile of tripe.—In colloquial Cockney, you certainly know your "onions"; therefore we have something in common.

RUMMAGER (no port by request) writes that the Governor appears to be carnivorous and is complaining that there have been no seizures lately.—Really? Why don't you request a joint meeting on the matter?

SENSATIONALIST (Cardiff) asks what do I consider the greatest mystery of the age?—Where the brass buttons from old Waterguard uniform go to.

P.O. (Hull) is very indignant. He says that Customs launches have not the speed they should have.—Don't worry, I understand that after the war there will be a large number of Naval seaplanes to be disposed of, so there is no need to "go up in the air" just at present.

CONFIDENTIAL CLERK (somewhere in England) says that he found an unfired incendiary bomb had penetrated the cupboard where the Old Man keeps the P.O.'s Pocket Journals. What had he better do?—A sharp blow on the blunt end should have the desired effect.

SCRAN (London).—So the Governor is fed up with your excuse when you say you are going to lunch?—Why don't you say that you are going to see the Ministry of Food?

BLITZ (London) says that he was on duty when the Custom House was bombed, and that he was blown off his feet.—Still, I hear that the Waterguard rose to the occasion; sub rosa, of course.

MUSICIAN (Dover) says that he is playing at a Waterguard "do" shortly, and asks what is the prevailing tune at the moment?—Well, I think a Bren and Befors obbligato is opportune.

ADAM (Gravesend) says that he is a keen gardener and remembers the time when one could buy rockery stone from the Houses of Parliament; therefore wonders if he could get the same from the Custom House?—Don't know for certain, but I understand that some nice sections of Tuscan columns, suitable for garden rollers, will be available c.o.d.

NOMENCLATURE (Liverpool) reflects that we are of the Waterguard and at some aerodromes were known as the Airguard. Those on duty at railway termini resented the term Railway Guard, but would not have minded Home Guard, and now even appreciate Fire Guard.—Having regard to your guarded statements, we must be on our guard against our chaps of 5ft. 4in. being called for the Life Guards. Anyway, kind regards!

The Confession of an Agitator

BY JOHN BALL.

"'Er petticoat was yaller,
An' 'er little cap was green. . . "

Almost as exotic, if not so chromatic, was my garb on that first day of my probation. The greasy waistcoat's looseness was neutralised by the excessive tightness of my jacket, which, on my plump outline, gave me the appearance of a page-boy who had failed a second time to get a porter's job. The cap recalled the Little Marvel Tram Conductor Set which had delighted me in an earlier probation. Besides being arrayed thus to be made a matter for mirth for dock labourers, coal trimmers, able-bodied seamen and the girl in the tobacco kiosk, I was expected to wear my own trousers. The tweed plus-fours being unsuitable I was constrained to wear out a perfect pair of navy blues, the product of the firm which asks to be allowed to dress you. These were rather wide, in the mode of the time, thus adding the final touch of unsuitability to my appearance. The title "officer" was poor compensation for thus being ridiculous. Therefore I protested. Here was something wrong with the Customs service, and I would put it right. So began a career of agitation.

I have since found many other things wrong with the Customs service—and some things *very* right.

* * * *

Some day someone must write a history of our Association. Pending that, this autobiographical fragment will have any value it has by being a study of the Association, in the last dozen years, crystallised in a series of personal experiences. This will show the need for an Association, its faults and its virtues. Make no mistake, the very essence of life for people who have to make a living is their protective organisation, their trade union. Freeze on to that fact and you will forget many faults. I hope that some of the younger fellows (including those who read the Journal in army messes or the fo'c'sle of battleships—for very important as their present activity is, *this* is their job) will see what interest and fun can be had by taking an active part in the Association. As this is my object (for the most part) I trust apparent egotism in all that follows will be excused.

* * * *

A young fellow away from home for the first time in a most unusual kind of job is a matter for laughter and tears. He will be shy and cocksure. He will be anxious to do things and scared to make a mistake. He will be proud and ashamed. Scared of his fellows and contemptuous of them.

The port which I was dandling with the garments described above was Vandan, a recognised probationer port. The old C.P.O. who sent me off on my first day to look round the town . . . his tiger who worse confounded my confusion by "showing me the ropes" . . . the boarding crews with whom I was double-banked for a few days . . . the watchers who let me sit with them for a warm (only dock gatenmen can excel a watcher's fire) . . . They were all very kind. The camaraderie in this service is one of the best things about it. There can be few jobs to excel it in that. I was very lucky.

Yet, for all the kindness during the day, I was lonely at night. For 25s. a week I had an attic to

sleep in. Although this seemed fitting to one with literary aspirations it was rather cheerless and uncomfortable. The furniture consisted of a bed, a three-legged chair, a vase de nuit, and a number of cuttings from Home Notes in *passee* partout. My vaccination had "taken" rather badly. My landlady did not believe in getting up in the morning, and she used to leave me cold egg sandwiches for my breakfast. In my lunches I encountered for the first time that cheap and dubious sort of paste which, though anonymous, might well be called Landlady's Relish. Laundry was an "extra." The landlady's daughters were very friendly, but I had been well warned about that sort of thing! And the landlord's friendliness was excessive. It amounted to old palliness. He permitted me to buy his beer and was not too proud to let me pay for the game of skittles at the local club. Those occasions, however, were few. I was permitted on occasions to sit in the room we North Countrymen call parlour, and which is known elsewhere variously and, according to the speaker's degree of gentility, sitting-room (in which case t' kitchen becomes the dining-room, drawing-room, morning-room or lounge. The leading feature in this room was a bookcase, in whose contents I revelled: Jane Austen, Borrow, Carlyle, all uncut, and a large reproduction of Dante and Beatrice. I was copying the latter (my pocket-money from home was exhausted, and my first wages, four days' pay, left me, after paying the digs, no money for riotous living) and the family would troop in and bring their friends to view with awe and amusement this eccentric paying guest.

Well, there was a General Election and the overwhelming victory of the Labour Party convinced me that prosperity was not merely round the corner, but was rushing to meet us with open arms. I stayed out till early in the morning, excitedly watching the results flash on a screen in the main street, and, when I got back to my digs—I had no key. In attempting to enter by the back wall and then through a narrow glass fanlight I created such discord and disorder that I left these digs (paying an enormous extra for having had three handkerchiefs brought a couple of degrees nearer white).

Now, before I go on to record how, thus falling on my head among the pantry's crockery, led to my falling on my feet in the best lodgings I ever had, I will pause. . . . This remembrance of things past is not to be a personal indulgence, a sybaritic bathing in luxurious retrospection. It must point a moral and adorn a tale. So what have we learnt so far?

One day the lights of London will shine again, and one day we shall have probationers again. These probationers should be, if only for the dignity of the service, kept indoors until they receive a suitable uniform. They could be learning of the theory of the job meanwhile from a suitable tutor. They should receive at least three pounds a week, so that they had decent digs, a little spending money and a chance of saving for trips home (Adequate leave for this latter.) And, wherever possible, approval and assistance should be given by the Civil Service to *any* "extra-mural" activities (clubs games, etc.), which will prevent the shy ones glooming in cold lodgings.

(To be continued.)

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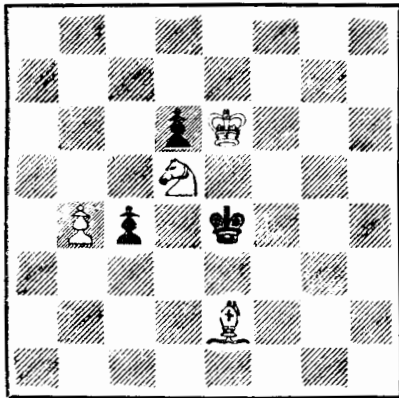


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R.J.L.

" ICH DIEN "

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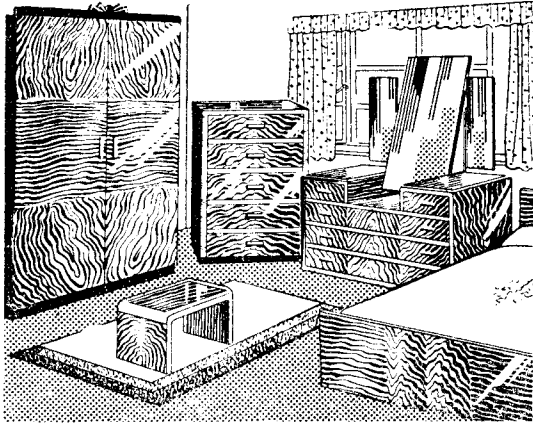
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