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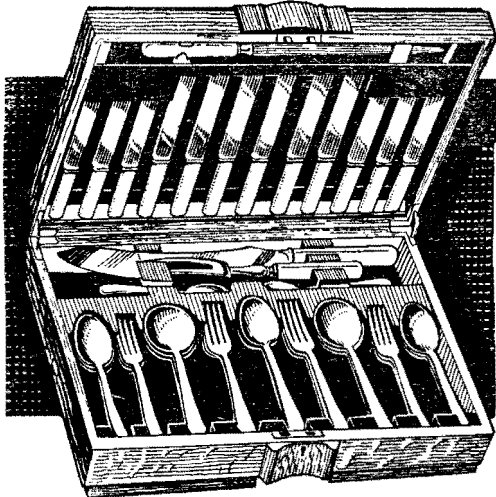
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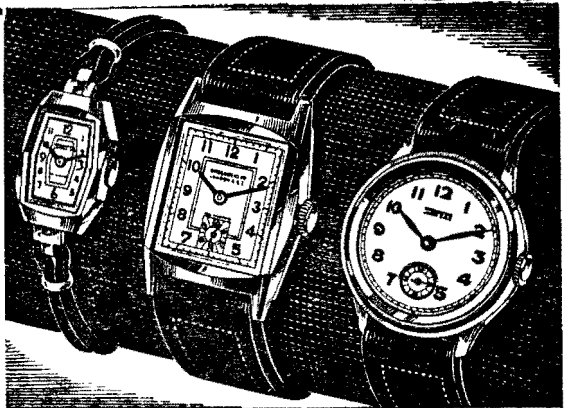
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Editor acknowledges with grateful thanks £1 sent by Mr. B. T. White, retired C.P.O., London, and Mrs. White, as a contribution to the London Prisoner of War Fund.

Mr. White suggests that an appeal be made to retired London Waterguard Officers to swell the fund.

Money should be forwarded to the Secretary, Mr. G. Camburn, P.O., H.M. Customs, No. 8, Pier Head, King George V Dock, London, E.16.

COALING

Her bow is to the east'ard,
Lying right for coaling;
And coal in clouds goes groaning
Down to hungry holds.

She's outward bound for Suez,
Built for ocean plying;
Content with coasters lying
Proud in equal berth.

From out the sleepy sidings,
Lazy trucks are taken,
And lifted up, are shaken
Day by dusty day.

In swirling clouds, dark drifting,
Blue-eyed, black men labour,
To build with ancient timber
Tents of shining steel.

Then eventide and silence,
Ships no longer straining,
Each tip a giant plaything
Wearied of its play.

J. K.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 8th December, 1941.

TRANSFER.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Roe, A. W.—Dartmouth, Plymouth, to Lydney, Newport, Mon.

DEATH.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Moses, A.—Fleetwood, Preston.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Berryman, W. J.—Preventive Officer.

Harvey, W. J. G.—Chief Preventive Officer.

War Savings in the Civil Service

The third year of the Second World War finds the nation fully prepared for any sacrifice and resolved at all costs to win the victory. The whole nation is being exhorted to curtail unnecessary expenditure, practise rigid economy, and save to the limit. In the present stupendous national effort Civil Servants, whether Established or Temporary, should be asking themselves: "Is the Civil Service really pulling its full weight in the Savings Campaign?" Undoubtedly, much remains to be done in strengthening the organisation for the enrolment of new subscribers to the Civil Service Voluntary Savings Scheme or to Savings Groups, and in making known to Civil Servants everywhere the existing special facilities at their disposal.

Under the Civil Service Voluntary Savings Scheme, which is worked in "cycles" and by central deductions from pay, any Civil Servant whatsoever may authorise a deduction of 2s. 6d. per Savings Certificate from his monthly salary, or 6d. per Certificate from his weekly pay. The "cycles" are, therefore, of six months' and 30 weeks' duration. If desired, 3 per cent. Defence Bonds (£5 units) may be purchased in cycles of 10 months and 40 weeks respectively. Deductions are at the rate of 10s. per Bond for monthly-paid and 2s. 6d. per Bond for weekly-paid officers. Besides the advantage that Certificates and Defence Bonds when issued bear interest from a date midway through the cycle, the purchaser is spared much time and trouble.

Supplementary savings towards the purchase of Certificates or Defence Bonds or for deposit in the Post Office or Trustee Savings Bank, can be effected by the formation of a Savings Group using 2s. 6d. and 6d. Savings Stamps, a credit stock of which is provided by the National Savings Committee. The popularity of this method is well illustrated in the case of a town in the north of England, where thousands of Civil Servants (mostly temporary) are employed. In May, 1941, no less than 125 such Savings Groups were set up amongst staffs, and of these, nine Groups, with some 500 members, saved £1,222 during the first quarter. Naturally, a spirit of competition was aroused, and a regular tournament has been arranged. This has resulted in Groups striving to reach 100 per cent. membership and greatly increasing subscriptions. The almost complete absence of clerical work, the variability of subscriptions, and the fact that the Civil Servant can take his savings with him on transfer, have proved a great boon to many. All savings transactions, whether under the Central Deduction Scheme or through Savings Groups, are regarded as highly confidential, and can have no bearing on past, present or future questions of pay or other conditions of service.

Civil Servants should enquire for further particulars of these various methods of saving from their National Savings Liaison Officers or Departmental Committees.

Lord Kindersley, President of the National Savings Committee, has appealed on numerous occasions for vastly increased savings from the nation, and Civil Servants, in company with their fellow citizens, will wish wholeheartedly to respond and avail themselves of the facilities devised for their special benefit.



CURRENT COMMENTS

ARISING from the Board's recommendations to release Assistant Preventive Officers in the 25 age group, discussions have taken place on the operation of the "detached duty" agreement (i.e., junior officer to go) when the vacancies caused by this call-up have to be filled. It was pointed out that to replace an officer called up under the 25 age group by another officer in the same group, and who may be called at any time, would be a sheer waste of effort and would cause unnecessary hardship. It has therefore been agreed that in applying the juniority rule to a detached duty moves the officers in the 26 age group should be passed over, excepting, of course, those medically graded 3 or 4. These latter would take their turn as juniors to go away.

The bogy of uncertainty regarding the appropriate grouping of P.O.s and A.P.O.s for reservation purposes is raising its head again. We had hoped that the Board's announcement in October, 1940, "that for this purpose they were classified as Executive or analogous," had settled this matter, but apparently this is not so. Evidence came to hand that in certain Ministry of Labour Offices these officers were grouped with "clerical and analogous Grades," and a question was addressed to the Official Side on the point. We are informed that no explicit decision has been given by the competent authority as to the precise classification of these grades. The W.E. Committee will be considering this unsatisfactory situation at its next meeting.

Balance of Civil Pay.

With the extension of the scope of the call-up, men in the older categories have had to register, and against a possible call to service they have been asked to state a preference for particular types of National Service. In this connection they have been told they may undertake full-time duties with the National Fire Service (the old A.F.S.). A question was raised by a number of members as to whether a Civil Servant in the N.F.S. would receive balance of civil pay. The answer is definitely in the affirmative, and G.O. 10/1939 confirms this.

Man Power.

Replies from districts to the Association circular on Man-Power questions are coming in rather slowly, and we have been asked to remind District Secretaries of the urgency in this matter. Arrangements have been made with the Official Side for an early joint examination of the available material collected by both sides.

War Emergency Committee.

The December meeting of the War Emergency Committee (P.S.A.) will take place at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 30th of the month.

A.P.O. Subsistence Rates.

We had hoped that having seen the new classification and rates (issue in G.O. 39/41), the Board would now be in a

position to make an announcement on the claim that Assistant Preventive Officers should be transferred to Class "C." It was with some disappointment, therefore, that we learned that the item was re-adjourned at the recent meeting of the Departmental Council at the request of the Official Side.

As we see it, neither the new classification nor the new rates have any bearing on this particular problem. The claim for A.P.O.s is based (a) on the similarity of need with those in Class "C," and (b) that Class "F" (now "D 2") is not appropriate to the status and salary range of the A.P.O. grade. A slight improvement in the rates generally cannot be considered any answer to the claim.

Waterguard Vacancies.

In reply to a recent enquiry, the Association was informed that the following vacancies in the Waterguard, above the rank of Assistant Preventive Officer, existed on the 29th September, 1941:—**one** Assistant Inspector, **two** Waterguard Surveyors, **six** Chief Preventive Officers, and **twenty** Preventive Officers (three of these being due to absences in the Forces). The information was accompanied by a statement that "in existing circumstances it was not proposed to fill these vacancies." The matter was pursued through the Staff Side of the Departmental Council, and at the last meeting the Official Side promised to supply a list giving the reasons for the non-filling of each vacancy.

It is not out of place at this stage to make a note of the members of the Waterguard Branch retained or re-employed beyond the retiring age. In addition to the Inspector-General, there are **one** Waterguard Surveyor, **one** Chief Preventive Officer, and **four** Preventive Officers.

C.P.O. Extra Attendance.

Early in the year the claim "that the hourly rate on which the allowance for Sunday and Public Holiday attendance of C.P.O.s was based should be increased," was remitted by the Departmental Council to the Waterguard Sectional Committee. The claim was made on the ground that the salary range had been increased. A meeting of the Committee was held almost immediately, and then silence for several months. On December 4th the Sectional Committee met again, and despite the arguments of the Staff Side the issue was forced to a disagreement. The matter now passed back to the Departmental Council.

Special Inquiry Staff.

Members may recollect that in 1936 an Official Side proposal to reorganise the Special Inquiry Staff was considered by a Special Departmental Committee and eventually the matter was shelved owing to the falling off of the work of the Branch. With the recent increased scope of enquiries, due largely to Purchase Tax cases, the Board now propose to add temporarily three or four new posts of "Inquiry Officer" (£650—£750) as an interim measure and without prejudice to the ultimate reorganisation of the Branch. These posts, it was stated, would normally be filled from among past and present members of the Branch.

The Staff Side made a strong but unsuccessful attempt to secure that these new posts shall be thrown open to the Department as a whole.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and forty-fifth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 19th November, 1941, the chair being taken by Sir Wilfrid Eady, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

The Vice-Chairman extended a welcome to Mr. Gregory, Director of Establishments, on his return to the Department and to the Council and the Chairman associated the Official Side with the welcome.

This being the first meeting for the year 1941-42, it was agreed that at the Council meetings during the ensuing year the Chair should be taken by the senior member of the Board present, and it was also agreed that Mr. A. J. Cowherd should be Vice-Chairman.

Both Sides intimated that their present Secretaries, Messrs. J. F. Bell and G. T. Bussey, would continue in office.

The Standing Committees of the Council were re-appointed. **Man Power.**

(i) The Staff Side referred to the two instructions (O.W.O.s 42/1941 Part 2 and 43/1941 Part 10) on the **application of unit values**. Informal discussion had taken place on the effect of these instructions, but the Staff Side could only conclude therefrom that, if the policy indicated by the instructions were pursued, finality on the intentions and objects of the man-power order would never be attained. In order to avoid delay the Staff Side considered that these instructions should be withdrawn and all action thereunder cancelled forthwith, Collectors being given complete power to proceed with local treatment of their proposals under G.O. 17/40 and G.O. 32/41.

The Official Side were not prepared to go so far as the Staff Side suggested: there were two problems—1. where the unit was legitimately changed; 2. where a unit was changed in one place and not in another, without any apparent reason.

The Staff Side maintained that it would be preferable to cancel the instructions at once, and said there were other instructions issued from the Chief Inspector's Office in addition to those quoted which were affecting the matter. Uniformity of treatment throughout the country could not be expected if expedition were the primary consideration, but if uniformity must be secured full Whitley treatment with its attendant delay was inevitable.

The Official Side said they would examine the position further to see whether the two instructions quoted could be withdrawn at an early date.

(ii) The Staff Side then suggested that a **general operative date** should be fixed for the proposals under the Man Power order, i.e., 1st October, 1941. It would not be reasonable to have varying operative dates within the same Collection. They understood that proposals were already in operation at certain places, and under G.O. 37/1941, paragraph 19, a direction was issued for the introduction of the new arrangements of business as quickly as possible to free staff for additional Purchase Tax registration work.

The Official Side inquired as to the significance of a uniform date, and the Staff Side replied that it would remove doubt in the minds of all officials concerned as to their position as a result of the re-arrangements of work.

The Official Side promised consideration of the Staff Side's suggestion.

(iii) **T.C. 10/41, paragraph 2 (i) and (ii).**—The Staff Side said they were obtaining their information in this connection. The Official Side said they had some suggestions under consideration, and when both Sides were ready a joint examination could be made.

(iv) **Kennet Committee Report.**—The Staff Side referred to a letter which had been received from the Official Side in which it was stated that after taking account of the national policy, which called for the release of men of military age wherever practicable and which the Board were sure would be the desire of the staff to further to the fullest capacity, he staffing position in the Department and the need for maintaining the essential services of the Department, the Board had decided not to ask for deferment of Hisber Executive Officers (2), Executive Officers (39), Clerical Officers (10) and Departmental Clerical Officers (41), who would accordingly become liable for service with the Forces from the 5th December.

As regards the Administrative Class, deferment of call was being asked for in respect of the 4 Principals affected and on the assumption that this would be granted, the Assistant Principals affected would be released.

The question of the release of further Officers of Customs and Excise and Assistant Preventive Officers had been carefully considered, but having regard to the difficulty of replacements, the numbers already released to the Forces and the war-time duties allotted to these grades, it had been decided to offer for release to the Forces the men in the age group in each grade, numbering

Officers	177
Assistant Preventive Officers	58

and to ask for deferment for the remainder.

Application had accordingly been made for deferment these lines to the Committee through the Treasury, but would be appreciated that whilst these were the Board's conclusions the final decision on the matter was not in their hands.

In reply to the Staff Side's inquiry as to the method arrived at the figures, the Official Side said that they had been arrived at by reference to age groupings, after balancing such factors as wastage, substitution, requirements for additional Purchase Tax registrations, etc., and that they had come to the conclusion that the numbers shown as for release were the limit that was at present possible. A mathematical coincidence with figures given at an earlier date in connection with the 51-hour week was purely accidental, and the figures now given were not in any way related thereto. They considered they had given figures beyond which serious risks would be involved, and felt that they ought not to go beyond those figures. They did not consider that they should supplement the figures in the event of medical rejection of any of the men released. New recruitment was a doubtful asset, and various other losses, e.g., to the Royal Air Force and to appointments under the Ministry of Labour and National Service, had to be borne in mind. The consequential results of the release of staff would be a matter for future discussion.

Remuneration for Extra Work Performed by Customs and Excise Departmental Grades (51-hour week).

The Staff Side referred to the claim they had already submitted, viz., an allowance of 15 per cent. of salary for the following grades:—Controlling Grade, Surveyors, Women Pension Surveyors, Waterguard Superintendents and Inspectors, Waterguard Surveyors, Senior Chief Clerks, Chief Clerks, and maintained that arrangements and conditions fixed departmentally should be amenable to departmental discussion as regards the matter now in question. The Official Side said they could only repeat what they had said at the previous meeting; they considered it would be unprofitable for the Council to discuss the matter as things stood at present because the change involved by the operation of a 51-hour week was a change in the condition of Civil Service classes generally.

In reply to the Staff Side observation that there had been national discussions on the subject, the Official Side said they could not anticipate the deliberations of the National body, but if a general principle were determined the matter could then appropriately be examined in this Council.

The Staff Side said that, without prejudice to their view that the question was one for discussion in this Council, they appreciated that discussions might not at the moment be of immediate practical value, and suggested adjournment.

The item was thereupon adjourned.

Petrol Economy.

The Staff Side said that this item must now be viewed in its relation to O.W.O. 4/1941 Part 10 (already mentioned in connection with Man Power above). If units were to be controlled on a pre-Man Power G.O. 32/41 basis the economy restriction of petrol coupons would be considerably affected. The Official Side said that they would want to know where difficulties occurred owing to the operation of petrol economy so that they could consider the issue of the necessary coupons to overcome the difficulties. It was essential that this aspect of the matter be examined.

The item was re-adjourned.

Proposed Amalgamation of Portsmouth and Southampton Collections.

The Official Side had given further consideration to this question and had found that a position of some difficulty was in being. If the amalgamation were accomplished it was

estimated that a saving of Clerical Class staff would be effected, and although there was no intention of raising any general issue on this aspect of the matter it would be difficult to justify the retention of these two as separate Collections involving the cost of four or five units of staff otherwise unnecessary.

The Staff Side requested a further adjournment and the item was accordingly re-adjourned.

Filling of Vacancies and Employment of Temporary Staff.

This item was re-adjourned for two months at the suggestion of the Staff Side.

Standard Subsistence Rates. Staff Side Proposal that Assistant Preventive Officers be placed in Class C (Establishment Instructions, Volume 3, paragraph 54).

The Official Side observed that subsistence rates generally were at present under consideration by the Treasury and they must await the result and see how the allocation of Assistant Preventive Officers in the new categories of rates affected their position. The Staff Side considered that the proposed temporary telescoping of subsistence classes did not affect the main principle, which was that allocation to a particular category should be governed by the salary of the grade.

The item was re-adjourned.

Purchase Tax Verification.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the informal consultation which had taken place at which agreement had been recorded as to the transfer of one-fourth of the listed number of traders to the Special Centres by reason of the time and volume of work involved. Regarding another fourth of the number, disagreement as to transfer was recorded as the amount of work was considered relatively small and the transfer regarded as uneconomical. Consideration of the remainder was proceeding.

This statement was taken as a report of progress, and the item was re-adjourned.

Promotion, Recruitment and Transfer Questions.

(a) *Appointees under paragraph 39 of the Reorganisation Report of 1920—Limitation of Period of Service to Two Years.*

The Staff Side said they agreed that Higher Clerical Officers employed under paragraph 39 should be informed of their fitness or otherwise for employment on Executive duties within a period of two years, and that if regarded as suitable their claims for further advancement in the Executive complement should be considered along with those of other members of the Executive staff; but if they were not found suitable for Executive duties they should revert at the end of two years to the normal duties of their grade. In either case the avenue to advancement in the Clerical Grade should remain open while they were employed on basic grade Executive duties.

The Official Side concurred and agreement was reached accordingly.

(b) *Vacancies in the Waterguard Service.*

The Staff Side inquired if and when it was proposed to fill any of the twenty-seven vacancies existing in the Waterguard Service. The Official Side stated that the work had fallen off considerably and it was not possible to give any answer at present.

(c) *Launch Service—retention beyond normal retiring age of established personnel.*

The Vice-Chairman inquired as to the amendment of the memoranda of conditions of employment of Unestablished Deckhands and Stoker Deckhands. The Official Side replied that suitable amendment of these memoranda would be effected. No alteration of the regulations was involved, but an indication would be given that eligibility to establishment would not necessarily cease after the age of 50 had been attained.

The Vice-Chairman further inquired if the present position in the Launch Service could be improved by making some appointments to established rank. The Official Side said there was no immediate prospect of doing so: there were some difficulties, but the matter was under consideration.

In regard to the suggestion made by the Staff Side at the last meeting, in connection with the retention of an Unestablished Steersman beyond the age of 65, that one of the Deck-

hands at present serving with H.M. Forces should be given the benefit of immediate establishment, the Official Side observed that the conditions under which national promotion was possible were not present in the case in question, but they were examining the possibility of a departure from normal arrangements to meet a case like the present one where the question of establishment was involved.

(d) *Recruitment to the Temporary Clerical Class Grade III of Unestablished Paperkeepers and Unestablished Messengers.*

The Staff Side asked whether the Official Side's offer of consideration of suitably qualified men from the above Grades for transfer to Temporary Clerical posts which had been accepted at the last meeting of the Council might be extended to include members of the Packer Grade.

The Official Side said that consideration would be given to the matter.

Allowance Questions.

(a) *Chief Preventive Officers—Overtime rates for Sundays and Public Holidays.*

The Staff Side drew attention to this item, which had been remitted by the Council to the Waterguard Sectional Committee in May last without any report having yet been made. The Official Side said one meeting of the Sectional Committee had taken place, but the question was still under consideration and another meeting would be held as early as possible with a view to a decision being reached.

(b) *Attendance on Public Holidays.*

The Staff Side referred to an alteration in the treatment of attendance on Public Holidays, including cancelled Bank Holidays. They had brought the matter to the notice of the National Staff Side, and they understood a pronouncement had been made to that body. The Official Side said that following recent consultations nationally they were reviewing the position and would communicate with the Staff Side as soon as possible.

(c) *Allowances to Established Messengers in charge at places separated from Headquarters.*

The Official Side replied to a Staff Side inquiry on the above matter that Blackpool was the only case where the three conditions conferring eligibility to the £25 allowance were fulfilled, but the Establishment Officers' Circular covered only Established Messengers, and the Official Side were exploring further its application to an Established Paperkeeper as in the case at Blackpool.

Uniform Rank Distinctions for Assistant Preventive Officers.

The Staff Side appreciated that this proposal was considerably affected by the general shortage of gold braid, and suggested—pending the result of inquiries elsewhere as to the substitution of other material—an adjournment for two months. The matter was re-adjourned accordingly.

Staffing and Methods of Work.

(a) *Staff Side Proposal that the work under G.O. 18/1941, paragraph 4 (3) and (4) is appropriate for performance by the Clerical Staff in Collectors' Offices.*

The Official Side stated that in their view it was premature to deal with this proposal owing to the fluid state of the work at present, and on the suggestion of the Staff Side the item was adjourned for one month.

(b) *Purchase Tax: Reduction of registration limit from £2,000 to £500—(G.O. 37/41).*

The Staff Side said there was still uncertainty as to what was likely to happen under paragraph 20 of this General Order as regards the adjustments of the numbers of Officers made available for the additional registration work, and they thought the position needed early clarification. The Official Side promised inquiry.

(c) *Local decisions.*

Local agreements ratified covered Women Pension Officer Stations in Grimsby Collections and Excise Stations in Plymouth, Sunderland, Dundee and Leith Collections. Five agreements were referred back for local reconsideration as temporary adjustments under G.O. 17/40 and G.O. 32/41.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 17th December, 1941.

Southampton Notes

A modest bag this month, but as pleasing as ever in that the news remains good, and before dealing with the letters I would like to reassure our several correspondents who may have overlooked the November Notes that Jimmy (D. B.) James was not aboard the *Ark Royal* at the time of her end. He was intended for that vessel, but immediately prior to joining her his draft was revised, and since the Spring of 1941 he has been serving as a telegraphist aboard a corvette, unknown to us until October. I can assure you that Jimmy is A.1, and he is hoping to spend a few hours up North in January.

An eve-of-departure letter came from Davy Youdell, and I am glad to be able to pass along his personal wishes to you all for the days ahead. He knows that such greetings are reciprocated. The prospects of his voyage (over by the time you read this) were good, inasmuch as the accommodation was A.1 aboard a vessel which was originally destined for regular attendance at 27/28 Berth.

We had not to wait long for news of Twenty, who confirmed our surmise as to the surroundings and daily life he was about to experience. Les. is very fit and happy in South Africa, and the main points of his very newsy letter deal with trekking in the Bush, under the baleful eye of our established big-game hunter (a real "Bring 'em back alive" chappie), partaking of supper on the veldt, not so pleasant stories of the playful habits of local big chiefs, and, believe this, he has met another Twenty out there and been told of still another of the clan in the Fiji Isles! He also writes of the pleasant hospitality of the residents and of the fine crowd of lads who are his colleagues. Multi-cylindered aircraft is his choice.

Since the P.S. to the November Notes we have received two letters from Joe, plus some very welcome snapshots, showing our lively friend, complete with topee, beard and a couple of piccaninies, one upon each knee. His letters dwell mainly on the climate (a contrast to that over here just now), fresh fruit menus, and ball games by the sea. The sharks interfere at times, but it is obvious that Joe is having a good trip so far away.

Nearer home we have had letters of interest from Johnnie Walker and Phil Pettit. The former is still in Wiltshire, putting on weight and inches all round, while the latter is now in the Orkneys, not very far from where the Revenue is guarded by our friend C. H. Eve, P.O. Phil, of whom we have heard little this year, was not very far from home until early in November, when he moved North. He is very well, is now a Corporal and anticipates being a 1st Class Coxswain shortly, well accustomed to Service life and all that goes with it. We wish him well in his future operations, which we know will not always be easy. Phil was seen in Soton in November, but that was prior to his Northern draft.

Ron. G. is now back into harness, after a lengthy leave, which was extended by several weeks and which enabled him to see so many of his colleagues up here.

"Jack" (A. C.) Hobbs, R.N., was down in Soton early in December, following a short spell in hospital on Clydeside, the mention of which brings you the good news of Jimmy Agnew being back on duty in November. It has been a long job, but we are glad to know he is back again, amid the hustle and bustle of such a busy spot. Jimmy and Colin Mac join in sending the boys greetings, especially at this season of goodwill.

The other exiles are still going strong. Our friend Holly thinks of nothing but A.A. guns and furniture, and is anticipating a return to dockside duties shortly, as his chair has been taken over by our former Soton colleague, R. J. H.

Late November and still in the same uniform is Jack Welsh, who says cheerio every time he writes, and in between whiles manages to get mixed up in all kind of unusual situations. His latest catch weighs 1 14-16 lbs. Any to beat that? It was codling, not Cavendish, in case you query it. Coupled with his expected departure I hear that several of the 25's reside on Clydeside, so keep an open mind on the subject of detachment.

Recent medicals, interviews, receipt of calling-up papers, followed by telegrams of cancellation (temporary) have served to keep the boys on the top line in a glorious state of

uncertainty. The decision of the Kennet Committee will indeed be welcome, and the sooner the better. Another of our 25's has had permission to volunteer, and he is Jimmy Rough, on D.D. at Heysham. Bert Fry received an address of welcome from the R.A.F. in November, reached the packing stage, and then had a cancellation. It makes one think that some Departments are working on instructions of which they know nothing, and that others are doing nothing about those of which they know something.

Home news is much the same, in fact, in some respects it reminds one of the 1938/39 days! The boys are well, and have their eyes on the places likely to be vacated by the 25 and successive age groups. Dwelling on this point, we venture to hope that any New Year surprises will be pleasant ones, and we end another year's Notes with every good wish to all Sotonians, at home and away, for 1942, and all that it has in store.

Cheerio. Forces!

L.B.

Cardiff News

A district meeting of the P.S.A. was held at the "Old Arcade" Hotel on December 6th, the chief item on the agenda being the Liverpool proposal with regard to the return home of officers on detached duty.

A lively debate took place and eventually the motion was lost by the narrowest of margins. The unenviable lot of the D.D. officer was appreciated by all, but it was felt that this scheme would only result in the passing of hardship from one man to another and was therefore not a real solution to the problem. It was also suggested that in the future it might be possible for the Association to do a little more to alleviate any cases of exceptional hardship.

The annual balance sheet was the next bone of contention, Mr. Kennedy, District Organiser, stated that despite numerous requests this was not yet to hand. Grave dissatisfaction was expressed at this state of affairs, and he was requested to inform the Association that unless this was forthcoming at the next district meeting, further steps would have to be taken in the matter. Another suggestion was to the effect that a statement should be issued setting out the position of the Association with regard to air raid damage.

In addition, the following officials were elected:—

Chairman:—Mr. Williams, A.P.O.

Vice-Chairman:—Mr. Naish, P.O.

District Secretary:—Mr. Smith, P.O.

District Organiser:—Mr. Kennedy, A.P.O.

Dept. Dist. Organiser:—Mr. Dunstan, A.P.O.

Unfortunately an early closure prevented completion of the agenda, and it was decided to hold another meeting early in the New Year, when there are some very interesting items down for discussion. It was gratifying to see such a good attendance and the tone of the meeting was such as to show that the Association in South Wales is not dead yet, in fact I hear a whisper that the next meeting may be a most lively affair, so let us see if we can have a record attendance.

Tyne District News

Held at North Shields Custom House, at 7 p.m., November 6th, 1941, in the dustiest blasted room I've ever known. Those who know my innate purity of language will realise that I refer to a room affected by blast. Decorations are based on a pepper-box motif, and from the holes dribbles unceasingly a fine pepper of plaster. Window frames have gone, and a deep rip in a steel locker marks the spot where I'm glad I was not—or I would not have been—if y' get me meaning.

The meeting was called to discuss the possibilities of the better use of the man-power of the Department. A bare report may convey the impression that little was done, but actually the discussion was fairly full and much more intelligent than some I've suffered. We had to bear in mind all the time that, with the definite increase of the reserved age to 30, and rumours of more to come, there would probably be very little man-power to play with in the near future. Consequently, resolutions were difficult to frame.

and we wouldn't have framed any if it had not been for the fact that we wished to give an indication nationally of the feelings of this District.

The "cutting out of less essential work" was considered, firstly from a local view point. We gazed sadly at our depleted staff, and resolved:—

"That no work performed by this department on the Tyne can be dispensed with."

Considering which Waterguard duties could be relinquished nationally, we were little happier. Mr. Cumberledge, P.O., who could not attend because of sickness, sent a suggestion that the shipment of goods on drawback could be restricted, but the meeting thought that the time saved to the department by this step alone would not be worth the storm which a certain firm of mineral water manufacturers would surely raise. However, it was a concrete suggestion worthy of consideration, and we began to realise that our duties had to be retained either for revenue protection purposes or for the efficient control of imports and exports. So we resolved nothing.

The discussion on the better use of our ability and energy evoked the resolution from Messrs. Moore and Hyde:—

"That members of the P.O. grade be loaned to the Home Office to perform the duties of Immigration Officers."

The P.O. grade was specified because the A.P.O. grade will obviously not have members to spare, the sponsors of the motion doubting even whether the grade specified could be depleted, if only a ghost army of A.P.O.s were left. Mr. Cumberledge suggested, under this head, the official passing of certain duties to A.P.O.s, and Mr. J. Burke, P.O., wrote from Hartlepool to deplore the superabundance of official visitors to ships, instancing a motor vessel arriving coastwise with a crew of two, which had, believe it or not, eleven Governmental visitors.

Messrs. Tindale and Hyde thought:—

"That the ability of the members of this Department would be of value in Security Control and non-technical duties in connection with D.E.M.S."

This concluded the business of the meeting at 8.45 p.m., so we spat out the dust, or washed it down, according to our tastes, and went home.

There is a strong feeling in both grades that the P.O.s are not pulling their weight in Association matters in this District. We would all value their presence at meetings, and it is amazing that they should be content to allow an A.P.O. preponderance in the voting. Perhaps at the next meeting . . . ?

H.G.R.

"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

News at last from Jack Gaston. He is busy training as pilot in Georgia. He reports that he is making good progress, and should soon, if he is not already doing so, be sporting his "Wings." He speaks of a real welcome and hospitality from the inhabitants out there.

Good work, happy landings, Jack.

At long last the Navy has broken the silence. Dick Dixon reports being all present and correct, lights burning bright. Do you still play crib? Your old side kick has lost the fine art of pegging, so there's hope for you leaving him with a big S. Good luck, Dick.

Charlie Scarfe reports "All well." He is enjoying life at a noted seaside resort. He is living in hopes of being in the thick of things ere long. We all wish you "Good scouting" and a speedy and safe return, Charles.

I have no definite news of the others. Eddie Ladbrook was expecting to do a pleasure cruise in E boat Alley when last I heard. Hope you enjoyed it, "big boy."

Our exile at Seaham, Jack Crosby, is hoping to be called to the R.A.F. as a "Dispatch Rider." Take the Gipsy's warning, lads, and don't ride pillion with him. We all know

he's a Mad Hatter on that bus of his. Take it easy, J.M.C. Easy does it.

George Simmons didn't come off so well at his medical. He hoped for a Flight Mech., was offered Fitter Armourer, which he turned down (in spite of coaching by Ron Greenhalgh). So he was passed over to the Army wallah. So if one day you see a tin hat, on a pair of feet, the rest being hidden by equipment, you will know it's Garge.

I hope I am not accused by the Forces of being under the influence when I wrote my last piece, or that the Income Tax bloke doesn't come down for another assessment. I know my fist is hard to decipher, but, I ask you, how can one account for £15 being read as £15,000. Our worthy treasurer cannot balance his books at that figure. No, the sum is £15.

To you all the Staff send "Greetings," and hope that we shall soon have you all back with us again. Hurry up those letters.

Cheerio! Over to you, Forces!

O.H.L.

Hull News

The Annual General Meeting of the P.S.A. was held at Minerva Pier on Thursday, 13th November, by a goodly representative gathering of members.

In his report, the retiring District Secretary (Mr. W. E. Barker, A.P.O.) pointed out the war-time difficulties of convening P.S.A. meetings, but it is worth noting that the timing of this meeting—it was scheduled for 4.30 p.m.—was a success.

The District Organisers (Mr. E. Mesham, A.P.O.) reported a fairly satisfactory financial position, but added that, of the many members transferred to other ports for the duration, there were some who were out of touch. He would like such members to contact either the local D.O. or himself—please note you Hull people.

After the minutes of the previous meeting had been passed, the following officials were elected for the year 1941-42:

Chairman.—Mr. L. Whittaker, A.P.O.

Vice-Chairman.—Mr. T. Nightingale, P.O.

District Secretary.—Mr. E. Chester, P.O.

District Organiser.—Mr. E. Neesham, A.P.O.

Auditors.—Mr. F. Bugler, P.O., and Mr. H. Taylor, A.P.O.

Whitley Representatives.—Messrs. F. Nightingale and J. Shooter, P.O.'s; Messrs. H. Taylor and L. Wallon, A.P.O.'s.

Journal Correspondent.—Mr. N. Manners, A.P.O.

An interesting and progressive discussion on matters of local interest followed, and a lengthy and very lively evening closed with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

During the month, I had a letter from W. H. Allen, A.P.O., who is evidently enjoying the hospitality of the N.W. Port, at which he is stationed. He asks for news of other Hull exiles. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to afford it, but would welcome news from Hull officers for inclusion in this column.

N.S.M.

LOCKING OUT 1941

She's moving down to meet the sea,
In deepening gloom, yet carefully;
She's guided, roped, as if she might
Become some evil of the night,
And move too hastily.
The gates are moving slowly out,
And men are watching, stood about,
And with the last, long farewell shout,
She sails unhurriedly.

J. K.

The Lads o' London

Peace on earth—goodwill towards men. How strange those words seemed to us all this Christmastide! With the entry into the battle arena of Japan and the United States, together with the majority of the South American Republics, this truly has become a world-wide war, and all our problems of detached duty, billeting allowances, uniform, rank, distinctions, etc., pale into insignificance, compared with the terrible plight that now confronts mankind. Still, in spite of further anxiety as touching the recent turn of events, I hope that all the lads in the Forces—those on detached duties, and you at home—managed to forget war for a short time, and were able to enjoy yourselves over the festive season.

All still in the job will have seen the recent O.W.O., dealing with the Board's recommendations to the Kennet Committee, so no comment is necessary, except to say that the final decision is awaited concerning the Officer and Assistant Preventive Officer Grades.

The new subsistence rates announced by the Treasury show some slight improvements, but the result of our claim for A.P.O.'s to be placed in Class C, is not yet to hand. The item was re-adjourned at the November Departmental Whitley Council meeting until the 17th December, when the Council met again, the Staff Side observing that they considered the temporary telescoping of subsistence classes did not affect the main principle, which was that the amount of salary received should govern the particular class of subsistence rates assigned to the grade.

I noted in the "Daily Express" (issue 9th December) that, according to the Mayor of Blackpool, the Government has decided to offer landlords in that town 30/- per week for each billetee that they have in their homes. If that is correct, it should be applied to all who are billeted, irrespective of where they are living. It would certainly help to solve many of the financial problems that now beset certain Civil Servants.

Whilst upon the subject of allowances, I read that the Staff Side of the Departmental Whitley Council are claiming an allowance of 15 per cent. of salary for members of the Controlling Grade, Surveyors, etc., for extra work performed by those grades owing to the working week having been increased to 51 hours. This would mean that a Waterguard Superintendent 1st Class, or Inspector, would receive an extra £138 15s. 0d. per year, Superintendent 2nd Class, or Assistant Inspector, £123 15s. 0d., and a Waterguard Surveyor, £105 0s. 0d. if the claim succeeded. Nice work if you can get it!

The C.P.O.'s claim for increased rates of overtime was rejected by the Waterguard Sectional Committee. They have again been informed that they are a non-overtime earning grade, and that 5s. an hour is already one of the top rates paid by the Treasury for overtime purposes. It must be very galling to them, when subordinates are receiving only 4½d. an hour less. That the grade should be abolished is the view of many in the Department, and give executive status to the Preventive Officer Grade, who would be able to perform the necessary extra duties devolving upon them.

With reference to a correspondent's claim that the Waterguard ought to be able to transfer to the Immigration Staff, it should be ascertained if the Whitley agreement that bars such transfers is in fact in existence, and then at once revoked. All officers of Customs and Excise are duly appointed as Immigration Officers by an order made by Mr. J. R. Clynes, when he was Home Secretary, and we should be the first to have the opportunity of transferring. There are not many facilities open to us for transfer. What about it, Beer Lane?

The uniform rank distinction claim must not be allowed to die a natural death. The matter has been adjourned for two months.

The new minute here has been published, and all the exiles have again been given fixed station jobs. It is a six-monthly minute, and one good feature is that everybody has a chance of having rummage and boarding duties within a period of eighteen months. At home I believe they are in the throes of a change around as well. Two or three of us here would only be too willing to do twelve months of continuous 4/11

duty on the Blackwall station if only we could get back home.

The Civil Service continues to be used as a yard-stick by some of the national daily newspapers.

Unfortunately the Service cannot answer back. As I write these notes the question of the length of detached duty looms uppermost in my mind. Returning from a week-end at home, or even after a spell of leave, always tends to make one feel miserable. The cancellation of Christmas leave did not improve the position, and what's more, officers in this part of the country are much more fortunate than their colleagues in the far north, who cannot possibly get home for week-ends. Long absences from home are having a detrimental effect upon the health and actions of several colleagues who are on detached duty, and the problem of how long a man is to be away must be given careful consideration in London. Association policy is for an absence of three months, but that is too short a period. Twelve months is a fair and reasonable time to be away.

Forces news continues to arrive, and a cheery letter was received from Jimmy Dunn, who is in the Middle East. He is now a Lance Corporal in the Queen's Own Hussars and, like Frank Dowdell, he was able to transfer from the Infantry to the Armoured Corps. He sends his regards to the cricket team. See you soon at Chiswick, Jim! Yet another of our lads has married—Doug. Sommerville, who endowed his good lady with all his worldly goods on October 4th last. Doug. was first posted to the London Irish Rifles, but is now in the Royal Army Pay Corps. When first appointed to the Customs and Excise he doubted whether he would like his job, but it did not take him long to make up his mind, and he now longs to be back. He requested me to convey his kind regards to all the London staff. John Griffin is enjoying a month's leave at his home in Surbiton, and he said that he often comes into contact with friends from the Upper Pool and wharves on the Harpy Station, and many reminiscences are exchanged.

Denis Maguire, who is still on detached duty in Barrow-in-Furness, has been accepted for flying duties in the R.A.F., but does not know when he is likely to be called upon.

Ted Crowther wrote and told me off for describing him as a private in the Marines, and said that it was sheer ignorance on my part. Sorry, Marine Crowther! Ted often meets Mr. Jack Matthews, P.O., up north and has quite a few chats with him, and also informed me that he became engaged last January, but is putting off the nuptial day until after the war. I think he is very wise in more ways than one. Mr. Eric Partridge, P.O.—our feathered friend, has left here and gone to Aberdeen. Don't get "flirting with death" there, Eric.

I was very glad to have read in last month's Journal of "Cockney's" remarks concerning Bob Catnach, A.P.O. It is a pity that such a splendid period of service in the R.A.F. should have been brought to a sudden end, but never mind. Bob, you have earned the nation's "well done," and we all hope that your health will be finally restored.

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the particularly tragic bereavement that befell our friend Mr. Bob Elton recently. He lost his wife after she had first presented him with a baby daughter. Bob had only been married a year, and this heavy loss has been a sad blow to him. Sincere sympathy is extended to him at this trying time, and the hope expressed that his little daughter progresses daily and will be a source of comfort to him.

Once again we are on the threshold of another year, and it is my earnest desire that next year will see the end of hostilities, and will find the whole of the London staff back home and on the job as usual. To all of you, wherever you may be—A Happy, Prosperous, and Peaceful New Year.

Let's hear from you then,
Till the lights of London shine again.

R. J. L.

Wisdom from the Past (27)

A.P.O.s Gold Ring.

Half a loaf is better than none.

Uniform Decorations

The further adjournment at the September meeting of the Customs and Excise National Whitley Council of the Staff Side proposal that uniform rank distinctions be provided on future issues of uniform supplied to Assistant Preventive Officers, whilst not altogether unexpected, seems to point to a lack of understanding on the part of the Official Side, especially if they have no stronger reasons for declining the proposal than those quoted in the October Journal report.

It would appear that the comparative urgency of the problem escapes them when it is suggested that "a more satisfactory solution would be possible if the question were left for treatment at a more timely date in future."

That suggestion itself implies that the Official Side are more or less prepared to concede the validity of the claim, and that it is only minor matters which are holding up agreement. Perhaps a few suggestions would not be out of place, made, as they are, by one convinced of the urgent necessity for arriving at a speedy and amicable settlement in the interests both of the Officers concerned and the Department as a whole.

The Staff Side have put forward a very good case without mentioning the fact, be it noted, that nowhere in the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy can an Officer be found who is not entitled to wear a rank distinction on his uniform, whilst, so far as can be ascertained, the Assistant Preventive Officer is the only Officer dealing with these people who does not wear any decoration.

The uniform as at present supplied puts the Assistant Preventive Officer on a comparative level with a Cadet or Midshipman (and even the latter have a lapel decoration), yet it is an agreed fact that his duties are constantly bringing him in touch with people accustomed to wearing, and interpreting other officials' status primarily by, uniform decoration.

Thus the Assistant Preventive Officer, and as a consequence the work of the Department, is at a grave disadvantage, and it seems hard to visualise a more timely date to have the matter rectified than the present, when the difficulties being encountered are even greater than in peace-time.

Let us for a moment examine the admitted difficulty arising out of the supply and cost of gold braid. It is a fact that owing to these difficulties officers of both the Royal Navy and, in certain instances, the Merchant Navy, are being supplied with uniform bearing bands which go only halfway round the sleeve (i.e., the outside half, of course).

Let us suppose for a moment that it has been decided to provide uniform for Assistant Preventive Officers bearing one band with curl, the Preventive Officer's uniform would, as a consequence, need modification to two bands, one with curl.

The uniform of the Chief Preventive Officer would not require any alteration, as he already wears two and a half rings, the equivalent of a naval Lieutenant Commander.

Taking our supposition a stage further, let it be pointed out that that uniform decoration could be provided for almost the entire staff of the department as at present constituted on the lines suggested above if, as a temporary war-time measure, we conformed to the present naval practice of carrying the band only halfway round the arm.

It will be obvious that no extra braid would be required to give the uniform of the Preventive Officer a two-band decoration, whilst the braid saved by curtailing the two and a half bands of the Chief Preventive Officers' decoration to half sleeve would go a long way towards providing the amount of braid necessary to provide the one band with curl for the decoration of Assistant Preventive Officers' uniform. In this connection it can be pointed out that a large percentage of Assistant Preventive Officers have already been, or are likely to be, called up for Military Service, so that the number of decorations required would be considerably less than in peace-time. A further saving of braid could be effected, probably bringing up the aggregate saved to sufficient to meet the new requirement, if, also as a temporary

war-time measure, the practice of supplying decorations on the epaulettes of Preventive and Chief Preventive Officers' uniform greatcoats be discontinued.

After all, the mackintoshes supplied bear no such distinctions, and the aggregate number of hours during which in any one year a greatcoat is worn is not large, so that little hardship should result.

The Official Side observation on the naval curl can, on a technical viewpoint, be countered. Are there not at present some Assistant Preventive Officers in charge ports where, as a result of war-time conditions, the Assistant Preventive Officer actually has junior staff under his supervision, namely, a Coast Preventive man? It is presumed that in such cases the Assistant Preventive Officer is in much the same position as a Preventive Officer having an Assistant Preventive Officer under his control.

It can be further stated that there are Naval Officers who, of course, wear their rank distinctions, who have no junior staff under their direct supervision (e.g., those on special work). True they could be diverted to other duties which put such staff under their supervision, but so, too, any Assistant Preventive Officer might be required to take charge at a port where a Coast Preventive man is at present stationed.

The point in question, however, surely is: Are the Assistant Preventive Officers at a disadvantage under present conditions by having to work without the uniform decorations?

Surely this has been amply proved, and the Official Side might reasonably be reminded that as a consequence the Department is at a disadvantage.

It is hoped that the foregoing suggestions will help towards getting rid of this disadvantage.

"LOCAL BOY."

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL.

Sir,

Much has been written in these columns recently on the part played by the Waterguard in the war effort. We would like to stress the importance of one branch of Waterguard work, the importance of which does not receive the attention it deserves. "O.38" has for its object the prevention of the landing of enemy agents.

Traffic between Great Britain and neutral Eire will receive that attention from our staff which will ensure that no unauthorised landings or embarkations could be successful. On the other hand, traffic between Great Britain and Northern Ireland will probably receive no more and no less attention than does ordinary coasting shipping. Herein lies the danger!

Instead of a carefully guarded frontier between a belligerent nation and a neutral state, we have between Northern Ireland and Eire a "comic opera" frontier "controlled" in a truly Gilbertian manner. The enemy agent wishing to avoid what little control there is on the main routes can come and go by hundreds of unguarded roads, footpaths and mountain tracks. Thus the enemy agent from Eire would make his way to one of the Northern Irish ports, cross to Britain in a coasting vessel—with or without the knowledge of the ship's crew—perform his allotted task in Britain, and return by the same route!

This may savour of the spy story, but a close perusal of the Irish Press during the last twelve months reveals the following facts:—

- (1) That German parachutes have been found in the wild and remote country in the south of Ireland in circumstances which point to the fact that enemy agents may have been landed by this method.
- (2) That many prosecutions have been taken in English courts against persons who have landed from Ireland without the permission of an Immigration Officer. The evidence in all these cases discloses that the accused has landed in Great Britain from Northern Ireland after hiding in a vessel with or without the connivance of a member of the crew.

All this goes to show that the rummage of coasting traffic is surely among the most important of all security duties, and we shall pride ourselves that the Waterguard is responsible for this vital work.

DOWN ON THE BORDER.

Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir.—Do your members not think the honoraria received by certain Association officials could be reduced or abolished? And should there not be a revival of the Annual Conference to discuss this and other important matters? The honorarium subject seems a vital one to me for a number of reasons:—

1. The King is still in London. The General Secretary is still in London, but, whereas the King's remaining in the capital is an inspiring symbol to his fellow-citizens, I cannot see the general secretary's fixity in that light. These are days of decentralisation, and although that is not the same as reducing honorarium, if Association control were removed from London the case for its retention would be weakened. London, indeed, is perhaps the worst headquarters for the

Association these days, as the destruction of important documents in Beer Lane indicates.

2. Continuity of office is another unhealthy by-product of the present system. The same officers in the same place, year after year, make the Association tend to be a mere bureaucracy rather than a living, operative, organisation. When, as now, the Executive is also the body forming policy, and no annual elections take place, the result is dangerous.

3. As there are no elections and so no likelihood of new blood flowing into the Secretariat, the old argument that to take an A.P.O. on the poor rate of pay which prevailed a few years ago, to London (notoriously a wicked, expensive place, where the mild beer being unfit for human consumption, bottled stuff has to be bought, thus banging many a saxepee), would be a hardship without financial compensation, is no longer valid. Besides, there are no A.P.O.'s on the Secretariat now!

4. It is often said that another form of compensation was contemplated when the payment of honoraria was initiated. That is, compensation for loss of overtime. If that were ever necessary, it is not now. The Secretaries can get as much overtime pay as anyone else, and much more than many officers; at some posts there is no overtime pay and no officer should ever budget for it.

5. These points would cover a mere reduction, but a case is possible for abolition. Surely at the head of the Association we could get efficient service unpaid as we get locally throughout the country. Of course, generous expenses should always be allowed, and we should set a good example to the Board in the matter of subsistence allowance. We certainly could not regard honorarium as an adequate reward for such work as our General Secretary has done for us in obtaining increased salary and other less spectacular advantages, and we are sure he would do it all quite without reward. We are not like the Clerical Association, who can pay a "salary" for a full-time secretary.

6. Perhaps, too, the exigencies of the Service in war-time (likelihood of transfer, for instance), would mean that the secretaries cannot give us so much of their time as they did. The lack of communications from Headquarters seems to suggest this. The most frequent source of information these days seems to be the Officers' "Journal." And of course, there is in any case less to do. Many matters which would be normally raised must now be shelved, and such subjects as promotion are quite closed.

7. The Association finances might be put to another use. Sixpence a week is not excessive, but a large proportion of the sixpences goes now to honorarium and gives a lever to those who don't wish to pay. Illegitimate criticism of the Association hinges on the honoraria and not on any real principle. Remove this excuse and put the money towards some such scheme as the Insurance Scheme, once proposed in these columns by H. G. R., a Comforts Fund, or any good war cause: invested in War Savings it would make a post-war nest egg for a new head office or other necessary improvements.

Now, matters of voting cash should never be taken out of the hands of the general membership. At the moment it could almost be said that the people receiving the money can vote it to themselves. Whatever changes in the Constitution the war makes necessary, that should not be. The old contact with the membership through a Conference must be re-established. The Councillors, instructed by the membership, may re-elect the existing officers (forgetting the old Naval custom of occasionally shooting an Admiral *pour encourager les autres*, and may give them the same honoraria. If so the thing will have been done legally, and I do not think the Conference will lack other subjects to discuss. For instance, more regional autonomy! Work and wait rule! Co-ordinating the ideas now being gathered throughout the country on man power!

Other Associations have held their Conferences—the officers at Edinburgh, I believe. Why should not we? The Councillors must be getting a bit stale (some of them were due to retire a couple of years ago), and the membership generally must feel that it is no longer *their* Association. I don't believe the Secretaries desire this, or the War Executive, and now the financial point is raised will be anxious for a clarification of many issues now opaque.

SLIPPERY SAM.

The Editor, THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL.

Sir,

Disappointment and frustration is again felt by the Staff at the further shelving of the question of Uniform Rank Distinctions by the Official Side.

The Board's intimation that the moment is not a propitious one to solve this vexed grievance calls for the reply that it should have been attended to years ago. A further drain on the personnel of the Waterguard is about to be made by the Fighting Services, and it is, thus, all the more important for the Board to tone-up the remaining officers with an outward and appropriate semblance of their relative importance.

We are asked, how best may the full use of the ability and energy of every member of the staff be made. The Official Side should realise that, if they really want our maximum effort, they must lend their assistance in freeing us, as far as possible, from the opposition met with because of our inferior uniform grading.

An official in private clothes is responsible for the personality and force of character he exerts in the performance of his duties. When compelled to wear uniform, those in charge interfere with those qualities and can either enhance them or detract from them, according to the degree of importance and authority displayed on such uniform.

In all other uniformed careers, especially the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, there is no officer without a rank distinction, and it is usual to see officers from 20 years of age upwards with one, two, three or four gold rings on the jacket sleeve. Those who fail to increase the number as they grow older are considered failures. Can it be wondered, then, that Assistant Preventive Officers, who may be aged between 19 and 35 years, and Preventive Officers, who may be aged between 35 and 60 years, experience a compelling influence of inferiority complex and a feeling that their duties are minor ones and relatively unimportant? This is not a healthy mental preparation for the individual who is asked to give his last ounce of effort.

The effect on the person under examination is that the official is of a low order, that his duties are unimportant and his authority of little consequence. This results in an injury to pride and appears as truculence, abuse or attempted obstruction. In the case of officers of the Services with whom we are asked to co-operate, it is particularly evident that our lack of appropriate uniform distinction causes our qualities to be under-estimated, with the consequent loss in united effort.

The excuse that there is a shortage of gold braid can be overcome. For the duration of the war, rank distinctions need only be carried on the outer half of the jacket sleeve, and most Preventive Officers would be able to raise a spare gold ring if the Board authorised them to wear two gold rings and a curl.

Uniform with appropriate rank distinctions is a very important part of our equipment. "Give us the tools and we will do the job."

BRASS TACK.

The Editor, THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL.

Dear Sir,

I read with astonishment the suggestion printed without comment in the last issue of the Journal to the effect that "rank distinctions may in future be provided on headgear."

Surely such a proposal conflicts with Association policy, and any modification such as is implied in the suggestion should accordingly be energetically opposed.

I recall that when I joined the Service there were three entirely different cap badges for the three grades: Chief Preventive, Preventive, and Assistant Preventive Officer.

Much effort was expended through various stages of alteration before the present uniformity was achieved.

The main argument then advanced was, that in the Royal Navy the most junior Sub-Lieutenant wears the same cap badge as the highest Admiral, whilst the same procedure applies in the case of Officers of the Merchant Navy. In view of this, and other facts put forward at the time, it was conceded as being in the best interests of Service to have the cap badges of all uniformed grades made alike.

The conditions then outlined have not materially altered since the present badge was first issued, and one is not aware of any complaint or request from the Staff Side for further modification.

May I end, therefore, with a request for enlightenment on two points: If it is not intended to modify the present badge, just how is it proposed to indicate rank distinctions on headgear?

Secondly, from where did the idea emanate that rank distinction was necessary, or desirable, "when wearing mackintoshes"? Naval and other Officers do not bother under similar circumstances. Why should we?

Yours faithfully,

W. C. H.

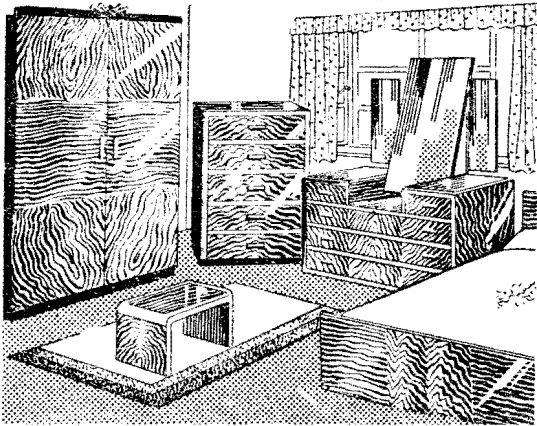
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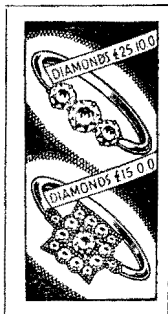
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