

THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL EST. 1904 CUSTOMS & EXCISE

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

VOL. 38. No. 941.

FEBRUARY, 1941.

MONTHLY

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PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

Temporary Office:

6, BROOK LANE, BEXLEY, KENT.
Telephone: BEXLEY HEATH 3613.

President: W. E. STANDRING.	General Secretary: W. H. POWELL.
Organising Secretary: A. E. FARMER.	Assistant Secretary: H. L. BOALCH.

CORRESPONDENCE, LITERARY MATTER, ETC.—*Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," 93, Fairfax Road, Hornsey, London, N.8. It is essential that all matter for insertion in the monthly issue should reach the Editor on or before the 25th of the month. Articles submitted need not be typewritten, but the use of one side of the paper renders a great assistance.*

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TO THE "CUTTY SARK"

Is there a calling from the distant seas?
And does a whispering in the passing breeze
Bestir your captive peace?
In fancy's flight to gain your bygone pride?
With canvas set, full crowding on the tide,
To seek a brief release?

Sought through the ages, acme of your race,
With every wind's caress to lend you grace,
And haste your journey home,
You were perfection, born of wind and sea,
A Queen at last, a sweeping symphony
Of sail and sparkling foam.

O'er distant sands the sighing waves retreat,
And fishing craft, a tiny, scurrying fleet,
Have set their sails for sea.
They passed your silent decks in line astern,
And as they passed, methought I saw them turn,
Or was it phantasy?

—John Kennedy.

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CHANGES IN THE STAFF TO 27th JANUARY, 1941.

OFFICER LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT:—

CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—
Evernden, G. W. Avonmouth, Bristol.

TRANSFER.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Eve, C. H., Southampton to Kirkwall, Inverness.

OBITUARY

Mr. B. A. GROAT, P.O., Liverpool.

It is with regret that we announce the death of Mr. B. A. Groat, Preventive Officer, who passed away on 22nd December, 1940, owing to severe injuries inflicted by enemy action two days previously. We wish to record our grief and sorrow for one of our best-loved colleagues and to convey our deepest sympathies to his widow and family in their sad loss. The funeral took place at The Gardeners' Rest Cemetery, Thornton, on 28th December, many being present, including the Collector, Mr. Large; the Waterguard Superintendent, Mr. Herrington; and Mr. Angus, Waterguard Surveyor. E.G.H.

Bristol Presentation

Mr. G. W. Evernden, who was Chief Preventive Officer at Avonmouth until his recent retirement, was the recipient of a presentation made by the staff of all departments and friends at the Waterguard Office, 58, Queen Square, Bristol, on January 6th, 1941.

The Collector presided, and the presentation, which consisted of a gold wristwatch, was made by Mr. G. H. Jenkins, Waterguard Surveyor. Mr. Evernden was also handed a sum of money wherewith to purchase a suitable handbag for Mrs. Evernden.

Among those present were Mr. C. F. Winder, C.P.O., Bristol, and Mr. J. Knights, C.P.O., Harwich, All spoke of their happy associations with Mr. Evernden whilst at Avonmouth.

Mr. Evernden had the unique record of 39 years' continuous service without a period of sickness.

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sea. Two floors only. H/c all rooms. Excellent menu.
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CURRENT COMMENTS

COST OF LIVING BONUS

AFTER reference to all constituent bodies, the National Staff Side reached the conclusion that they ought not to allow the Chancellor's rejection of their claim for the tying of Civil Service remuneration to the cost-of-living figure to deter them from exploring, along alternative lines, the possibility of securing some relief from the difficulties in which the constantly mounting figure is involving large numbers of Civil Servants both within and without the existing limit of £260 for bonus payment.

They were concerned both to increase the present rates of bonus and to raise the limit for payment, and with these objectives in view and with the intention also of improving, if they could, on other features of the existing scheme, they asked that a Joint Meeting of the National Whitley Council be held.

It was decided that at the meeting they would also revert to the position of the worst-placed pensioners, despite the Chancellor's unfavourable reply on that point at the recent interview.

The Joint Meeting of the National Whitley Council was held on January 22nd at the Treasury, and the Staff Side presented a closely-reasoned claim for a substantial improvement in the present bonus, both as regards "ceiling" and amount.

The Official Side, after raising several points of elucidation asked for time to examine the data submitted to them, and promised to give their reply at a further Joint Meeting, which has been fixed for Wednesday, the 5th February.

It will be remembered that at the end of the recent interview with the Staff Side, the Chancellor said he would instruct the Treasury to meet the Staff Side and report back to him.

There is an interesting sidelight on this matter. We have watched with a certain keenness the progress of the wage claims of certain big industrial interests before the National Arbitration Tribunal. The findings on the shipbuilding and engineering side have now been issued and a million and a quarter workers will receive an increase of 3s. 6d. a week on their existing war bonus.

BEER LANE

Two points under this head.

Firstly, a mild complaint. In reporting the "incident" that robbed us of everything, including our address book and mailing list, we asked all Area, District and Local Officials to send us a postcard giving name, address and particulars of documents required. We have, of course, had prompt replies from the majority, but our list is not yet complete. This is one of those occasions where just a majority will not do—the response must be unanimous. The address is No. 6, Brook Lane, Bexley, Kent.

Secondly, a little more cheerful, an acknowledgment of valuable and timely assistance from many quarters, but in particular our thanks go to the C. & E. Federation, the Secretaries of the Departmental and National Staff Sides, the Official Side Secretary, Waterguard Sectional Committee and the Chairman London L.W. Committee.

WAR BONUS AND A.P.O. OVERTIME

We are still awaiting the reply of the Official Side on the claim that the Treasury ruling that War Bonus should not be added to basic salary in determining the **rate** of overtime, should be set aside.

Provided the Board does not attempt to enforce the refunds, we can afford to wait, because we feel confident that after due consideration we shall receive a favourable reply. We are strengthened in this direction in the knowledge that the case, as reported in these columns, has caught the eye of the Secretary, National Staff Side, and that he has written to our Departmental Secretary, indicating his agreement with our views.

* * * *

WAR BONUS AND SMALL PORT ALLOWANCES

At the January meeting of the Departmental Council, the adjourned discussion on this item was resumed. The Staff Side re-argued the claim for the exclusion of the allowance and replied to the points in favour of inclusion made by the Official Side at the previous meeting. The matter was again adjourned, this time for further consideration by the Official Side.

* * * *

CIVIL SERVICE DISTRESS FUND

Elsewhere in this issue we publish an appeal sent out by the National Staff Side in connection with the setting up of the Civil Service Distress Fund. The objects are there clearly defined so we will not repeat them.

We are, however, very pleased to see that something is at last to be done in this direction—particularly because an earlier attempt by us to get a Customs Distress Fund going was stymied; (a) because the Premier had then just announced the probability of a Government Insurance Scheme, and (b) because the word had gone out that the National Staff Side had discussed the matter.

Still here it is, and we know that Waterguard Officers will support the Fund 100 per cent.

* * * *

PARCELS TO THE TROOPS

In most areas there is a scheme for sending parcels of comforts to members of the Department serving in the Armed Forces, but we seldom hear of this good work.

We now learn that the Liverpool Comforts Fund (the first, we believe, to be formed) sent out **one hundred and seventy parcels** to serving members during the Christmas period. Good work, Liverpool.

Maybe other ports will now drop this shyness and let us know how **their** Comforts Funds are progressing.

* * * *

"C.J." pens have been awarded to the following in recognition of their valuable contributions during the past year:—

L. Battersby	...	...	...	Liverpool
R. Davies	...	...	...	Aberystwyth
C. F. Shaw	...	...	...	Liverpool

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and thirty-sixth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2. on Wednesday, 22nd January, 1941, the chair being taken by Sir Wilfred Eady, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Prior to the commencement of the business on the agenda, the Vice-Chairman (Mr. A. J. Cowherd) announced the appointment of Mr. P. MacHugh as a member of the Staff Side, vice Mr. A. J. Taylor.

The Vice-Chairman then referred to the retirement of the late Chairman, Sir Evelyn Murray, whom he described as a great Civil Servant. Sir Evelyn had always given full and close attention to the many problems treated in Departmental Whitley, and the Staff Side wished him the best of health and many happy years of retirement. The Chairman promised that their wishes would be conveyed to Sir Evelyn.

The Vice-Chairman expressed the congratulations of the Staff Side to Sir Wilfred Eady on his appointment as Chairman of the Board, and hoped that he would have many happy years with the Department.

The Staff Side also offered congratulations to the Deputy Chairman, Sir John Sutton, K.B.E., C.B., on the Knighthood conferred upon him. They recognised this honour as an appreciation of his many years' service in the Department, and because of his close association with Whitley since its inauguration they felt they had a share in this honour.

The Staff Side entirely endorsed and fully appreciated the sentiments which the Board had conveyed to the Service in O.W.O. 2/41, Part 2, following the bombing of the Custom House. Other premises occupied by Departmental Staff had also suffered by bombing, and whilst war conditions must bring difficulties, they would not destroy the spirit of Whitleyism, which remained despite the loss of Room 120, Custom House. They hoped that before very long Whitley machinery would be functioning in dealing with post-war reconstruction problems.

The Chairman suitably acknowledged the congratulations of the Staff Side and fully associated the Official Side with the reference to the bombing of the Custom House.

At a later stage in the agenda the Staff Side raised the question of the staff remaining at the Custom House and the provision of Fire Fighters there. In reply, the Official Side stated that as many staff as possible would be moved to City Gate House, and that probably only the Waterguard, Harpy (Waterguard and Landing), King's Warehouse and the Appointer's Staffs would finally remain there. With regard to the provision of Fire Fighters at the Custom House, the Official Side stated that arrangements would be made for the existing A.R.P. personnel to cover both the Custom House and City Gate House, for the time being.

In reply to a Staff Side inquiry as to the adequacy and position of the shelter accommodation at City Gate House, the Official Side said that instructions would be issued to the Staff at once and the whole question would be examined as soon as possible.

Fire Watchers' Orders.

The Vice-Chairman stated that while the Treasury were no doubt considering the general position, the Departmental position in many cases differed from that existing generally in the Whitehall Offices. The problem which would arise in this Department would cover a wide range from the large office occupied by one individual only. Within this range the position of offices in part occupation by this and other departments, of offices on traders' premises, and in Dock areas would require special departmental treatment. The Staff Side were ready for consultation on the matter, which was obviously urgent.

The Chairman promised that the Treasury would be approached and the Staff Side consulted at the earliest moment.

Heating of Air-Raid Shelters.

The Official Side stated that the Ministry of Works were prepared to heat shelters used for sleeping or for long periods of work or in a damp condition, and work would proceed on these lines as soon as possible. Collectors and others were being asked to take action on these lines and report results.

Steel Helmets and Protective Clothing for Officials Employed in Exposed Places.

The Staff Side asked as to the progress made in the issue of steel helmets. The Official Side, in reply, stated that of a total of 802 on order, 700 had been received and were being issued in order of priority over the country. Further requisitions had been received and a further supply of 450 had been ordered. They agreed to give the Staff Side particulars of the issues already made and of the order of priority.

Purchase Tax.

The Staff Side asked whether the Official Side could make any statement regarding the possible extension of registration since any such extension would produce staffing problems, and the Official Side said that it was not proposed to make any such extension at present.

Filling of Vacancies and Employment of Temporary Staff.

The Vice-Chairman asked whether any indication could be given as to the possibility of raising the age of reservation. The Chairman said he was not in a position to make a statement at present, and the item was adjourned until the position became clearer.

War Bonus—Exclusion of Small Port Allowances from Basis of Calculation.

The Staff Side maintained that these allowances represented commuted Overtime, and in support they referred to the system of remuneration of officiators. For the first three months of officiating the relieving officer received, not the proportion of the allowance, but payment for all extra attendance. It need hardly be added that if these allowances were not merely in lieu of overtime but also represented payment for superior work, then officiators over many years have been underpaid.

The Staff Side had considered the statement made by the Official Side at the last meeting and made the following observations:—

Firstly, the Official Side stated that these allowances were recognised for superannuation purposes. This did not appear to prove justification for the inclusion nor to refute the Staff Side's contention that these allowances were, in fact, in lieu of overtime. In the Waterguard, overtime was recognised for superannuation purposes also.

Secondly, it was stated that the allowances were recognised for balance of civil pay purposes. Unless there was a change of reservation age for A.P.O.s, this would seem to be a very hypothetical argument, and in any case hardly one which would be allowed to deprive officers of what they are entitled to from February, 1940, up to the present.

The Official Side's reply to the question of remuneration of officers must, of course, have a bearing on this point.

Thirdly, the Staff Side was reminded that these allowances were included in the last bonus scheme. There were many aspects of the last bonus scheme to which the Staff Side took exception, and this was one. The inclusion of these allowances resulted in officers receiving varying amounts of remuneration for work at the same port; for example, a junior officer, being lower in the salary scale, got a higher allowance by virtue of the larger bonus addition. In any case, the present bonus agreement has nothing in common with the last sliding scale scheme—being merely an adjustment of salaries up to a given ceiling. It was the correct adjustment of the salaries of these officers that the Staff Side were now seeking.

Finally, in reply to a Staff Side question, the Official Side had said that "they could not exclude a part as attributable to overtime." If this meant what it appeared to mean, it was a clear statement that no part of these allowances was attributable to overtime.

The Official Side stated that their previous statement did not mean that no part of Small Port Allowances was attributable to overtime, but that the allowances could not be split to allow of the overtime portion being treated separately for bonus purposes.

The Staff Side, in referring to previous negotiations which took place on a claim for an increase in the allowances following the raising of the overtime rates in the Waterguard, said that, whereas at first the Official Side offered to treat two-thirds of these allowances as overtime and to increase that portion by 25 per cent., the agreement eventually reached applied the increase to the whole of the allowance.

The Official Side said that the interpretation of the offer made was not at all in keeping with their own, as their offer was not based on the assumption that Small Port Allowances represented commuted overtime only.

The Staff Side said that the National agreement specifically excluded allowances in lieu of overtime, and they therefore pressed their claim for the exclusion of Small Port Allowances from the basis of calculation.

The matter was adjourned for further consideration by the Official Side.

Staffing and Methods of Work.

Local agreements were ratified involving Excise Stations in Leeds, London North, London West, Northampton, Southampton, Portsmouth and Preston Collections, but one local agreement on the staffing of a Customs Station in Belfast Collection was referred back for local reconsideration in the light of recent developments.

Miscellaneous.

The Council ratified many local office accommodation agreements, referred back one disagreement for further consideration of the provision of a fire escape, and adjourned the question of overtime rates for Sundays and Public Holidays for Chief Preventive Officers.

It was decided to hold the next meeting on Wednesday, 26th February, 1941.

C. & E. ORPHANS', WIDOWS' AND WAR MEMORIAL FUND

The quarterly meeting was held on Monday, 6th January, at 4 p.m., in Room 6, Custom House, London, E.C. (D. J. G. Moffatt, Esq., V.P., presided).

Membership.

Thirteen applicants for membership were duly elected. They comprised three Officers, one Executive Officer, two D.H.C.O.s, four D.C.O.s and two C.O.s, and one Steersman.

Grants.

Twelve new applications were considered from widows who have been left in necessitous circumstances. The following grants were voted:—

Rule 23.—One family—three children—£40 per annum; two families—each with two children—£30 per annum; three families—each with one child—£20 per annum.

Rule 26.—One widow £20 and one widow £15. Three cases were deferred for fuller information, and one application under Rule 29 was refused, in present circumstances.

Renewals of grants under Rule 26 were sought by twelve widows, with the following result: Voted—three grants of £20, four grants of £15 and two grants of £10. Two cases were adjourned for fuller details, and one application was refused in present circumstances.

RADIO

BANKRUPT BARGAINS. GENUINE OFFER. Brand new 1939-40 models, makers' sealed cartons, fully guaranteed, at 25% to 40% off present prices; also Portables, Midgets. Send 2½d. stamp for lists.—Radio Bargains, Dept. C.J., 261-3, Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham.

CIVIL SERVICE WAR DISTRESS FUND

AN APPEAL

The War, especially in its present phase, has brought tragedy to many Civil Service homes. Death on active service or in air raids has taken the bread-winners from some, leaving dependants in very straitened circumstances; others, in different ways, have suffered grievous loss and hardship far beyond the common lot. Before the conflict has run what may be a lengthy course, these casualties and calamities may be multiplied many times over.

There will be widows to whom a little financial help, regularly given, will make all the difference in the world; orphans whose lives will be transformed if they can be given the educational opportunities that might have been theirs in ordinary course but for the war; and many men and women in the Service for whom a helping hand, promptly extended, will turn despair to hope, and make disaster bearable.

There is evidence of a widespread desire by Civil Servants of all grades, permanent and temporary, to translate into a form of practical assistance the sympathy they feel for those among them who are hardest hit by the chances of war. To meet this desire, the Official and Staff Sides of the National Whitley Council, in full collaboration, have decided to set up a Civil Service War Distress Fund.

The Fund is intended to cover the non-industrial staffs of all Departments except the Post Office, where the need has already been met by the establishment, early in the war, of the Second Post Office Relief Fund. This Fund, now in full operation on a large scale, is modelled on the First Post Office Relief Fund which, by regular subscriptions over the four years of the last war, raised, with dividends and interest, £650,000. It is on the scale of this example that the present scheme for the rest of the Service has been conceived.

The main purpose of the Civil Service Fund will be to assist by regular grants, where needed, the widows, orphans or other dependants of permanent or temporary Civil Servants dying on active service or as the result of it; or killed by enemy action otherwise. It will also give financial assistance, within the limits of its resources, to members of the Service who by enemy action or other consequences of the war suffer serious hardship or loss, especially where this is of a kind for which no existing agency provides relief. It will be specifically a War Distress Fund, dealing with cases arising from war conditions as a whole, and will not handle cases for which the Civil Service and Departmental Benevolent Funds exist.

The Trustees of the Fund will be drawn in equal numbers from the two sides of the Council, and the Committee of Management will consist of nominees of the Official Side and of the National and Departmental Staff Sides, the Staff representatives predominating.

As the Fund will operate on a long-term basis, the system of deducting subscriptions from wages and salaries will be essential. Forms will be made available shortly to all Civil Servants outside the Post Office on which they can indicate the amount that they are willing to have deducted for this purpose from their monthly or weekly pay as the case may be.

Unfortunately, machinery difficulties make it impossible to bring the deduction system into operation until the beginning of the second Quarter of 1941, and in order that the Fund may begin to build up resources without delay, arrangements are being made for the amounts so promised to be collected until then by a corps of helpers in every building where Civil Servants, permanent or temporary, are employed.

It is hoped that when the deduction forms are distributed, **every member of the Service** will pledge him or her self to a regular contribution. Twopence a week, or the monthly equivalent, from everyone would enable the Fund to do a vast amount of good. It should be emphasised, however, that a penny a week will be gratefully received from those who feel unable to give more. On the other hand, larger contributions from those in a position to make them will be welcomed. The prime object is to get support in some degree from **everyone**, and if that can be done the success of the scheme will be assured.

J. A. N. BARLOW,
*Chairman, Civil Service
National Whitley Council.*

A. J. T. DAY,
Vice-Chairman.

Cost of Living

The National Staff Side have now reached the conclusion, after reference to all constituent bodies, that they ought not to allow the Chancellor's rejection of their claim for the tying of Civil Service remuneration to the Cost of Living figure to deter them from exploring, along alternative lines, the possibility of securing some relief from the difficulties in which the constantly mounting figure is involving large number of civil servants both within and without the existing limit of £260 for bonus payment.

They are concerned both to increase the present rates of bonus and to raise the limit for payment, and with these objectives in view, and with the intention also of improving if they can on other features of the existing scheme, they have asked for a joint meeting of the Cost of Living Committee of the National Whitley Council to be held at the earliest convenient date.

At this meeting they will also revert to the position of the worst-placed pensioners, despite the Chancellor's unfavourable reply on that point at the recent interview with him.

Southampton Notes

The last week of 1940 and the first week of 1941 were full of cheery greetings passing to and from Sotonians at home and away, and the postbag contains letters from Forces and exiles who wrote immediately after our January Notes had gone to press.

Returning North after a spell in Soton, I had news from Davy Yondell, who is still at his original Northern station, but is expecting to be moved elsewhere very soon. He is well and sends you his good

wishes for 1941, as, indeed, do all our correspondents to this month's Notes.

A New Year Day surprise was a long letter from Cliff Pearson, now on active service aboard H.M.S. "Revenge." He sends news of his well-being afloat, and also brief but good news of Tom Cannell, who is still at W.D. Our colleagues in the Navy are unanimous in their opinions of life afloat, and without exception they stress upon the fact that eight hours aboard the "Hawke" or the "Vigilant" in mid-winter will be like a picnic in future, after their 1940 experiences.

Leaving the Navy, we turn to R.A.F. news, sent along copiously by Ron Greenhalgh. He wrote on New Year's Eve, and was then at his third seaside resort. His course at this congenial spot is now completed, and ere this appears in print old Greeny will be on the move again, if his anticipation proves to be correct.

Since leaving the exiles in August he has done some long trails and will soon be fully qualified for his R.A.F. duties. His recent course has been taken in company with an A.P.O. from Gravesend, and I gather that the successful conclusion to a month's exam. was celebrated appropriately. Shades of Liverpool 19, if I may say so.

Bill Nicolson sends news of his activities and well-being to-day, so making our correspondence equally divided between the three Services. Bill, or just "Nic" to you, is somewhere South at an O.T. college, where he has been since November last, and he is hoping to graduate to one of his native regiments eventually.

You will be glad to know that one of the exiles recently met Geoff. Madeley, now commissioned in the R.A., who gave us good news of Arnold Bateman, similarly commissioned and away up over the Border.

That completes our Forces news, and looking back over the more recent letters received, one cannot help noting that appreciation of the Waterguard Department grows from month to month.

The present weather moves one of the lads to recall days not long past, when he was a cinder scratcher, enjoying the warmth of "down below" and the seclusion of the tunnel.

News from Ellesmere Port and Liverpool indicates the well-being of the exiles, and of their settling into new stations with fresh colleagues at the start of the new minute for 1941.

Johnnie Walker expects to be called very soon; likewise Jock Strachan and Jack Welsh.

News from Soton is not particularly cheerful, apart from the splendid result of the social efforts organised by V. J. B. on behalf of the British Red Cross Fund during 1940. A fine total of twenty-two guineas reflects greatly to the credit of all concerned, considering that the functions organised were held in the evenings. Nice work, Ben!

The January issue of the "C.J." and G.O. 1/1941 contained the same interesting information regarding the position of officers on detached duty called up for service with the Forces, and no doubt both publications will have been well perused by the men who are

likely to be concerned, particularly by G.O. 1/41, part B.

No official news is to hand at the time of writing (20.1.41) regarding the alteration of the reservation age limit for this Department, but Ministry of Labour officials state that they have been notified of the alteration. Strange! or is it?

In closing I hope you will enjoy the following extract from an exile's letter. He was on relief at the time of writing, and I know that all of you who have had negotiations with the Landladies' Union will appreciate his comments to the utmost. They are intended to give you a smile:—"The digs. here are not too good. I stayed in the first digs. just one day. I will tell you the whole story one day, as my experiences for those twenty-four hours would fill a book. A rough outline is this: This 'home from home' was recommended to me and my first duty was 10.6 a.m. A glance at the digs, and I knew they would only suffice for the time being. The landlady was not expecting me, and there was no food in the house, so I proceeded up-town, had a meal, saw a show, tried the 'turps' and reported for duty. Now I have always been unable to adjust myself to night duty, so the following morning I was feeling very tired. The dear landlady welcomed me with open arms and insisted that I should sit in the broken arm-chair—incidentally, the only easy chair to be had. A couple of slight taps on my shoulder and, to my disgust, I found that the budgerigar had taken me for a Nazi and had scored two direct hits! The mess cleaned up, and from the kitchen there arose a smell which any Chinese fore-castle or Lascar dive could never hope to compete with. Anyway, the breakfast arrived, probably a 'local' grill I should think; a sausage appeared to be in command, surrounded by a mixture of fried cheese, scraps and other pieces of dog. The sausage was 'downed' reluctantly, and the rest went back for the next lodger, whoever he may be. From breakfast (?) to bathroom; yes, correctly named, a room with a bath in it, but not even a curtain, or a mirror, or anything to accompany it; perhaps nothing would, for that bath was black, rusty, grimy and shiny. A second look at it and I felt queer, with memories of that breakfast dog. There was a knock at the door and the landlady produced a tin bowl which had to be balanced on the window-sill, and a towel which nearly fell to bits at the sight of water. A wash was obtained with some difficulty, and so to bed. That bed never intended anybody to sleep in it; it had no mattress, just a few odds and ends of blankets over the most cruel springs. I believe they were a contour of the Scotch mountains. Half an hour passed by, the wind got up, doors and windows rattled, then there was a scuffle outside the door. I wondered what the next move was! It was the same dear lady plugging the door with paper. Unable to sleep I arose at 11.30 a.m., and lunch was prompt at noon with fish and chips from the local fry-up. Things proceeded in the same way until the evening, by which time I had procured a new abode, and, boy, was I told my fortune at 10 p.m. for leaving 'the best digs. in —."

Cheerio, Forces!

L. B.

Merseyside News

Blitzes may come and go, but we still try to go on for ever. And we are doing so, despite many obstacles, which may be the failing hurricane lamp, the sudden departure of vessels from the station, the sudden arrival of ditto, and the headaches that the purchase tax has brought or may bring. Nevertheless, even though they say it is natural to fear the worst, it is just as natural to make the best of it, and that is what we do. That is what will have to be done in the near future by many A.P.O.s in the division whose services may be required in a more pugnacious capacity, and for whom the scale of reserved occupations will hold little or no interest.

It would not be safe to offer the suggestion that the Liverpool staff may suffer many changes ere long, but it would be wise to foresee that the monopoly in numbers of P.O.s and the becoming shortage of A.P.O.s will of necessity cause many new ideas to be adopted. We can rest assured that the Water-guard Superintendent, Mr. Herrington, will listen most readily to any Staff Side suggestions in order to meet whatever problems may arise.

Best wishes to Stan Stobbs, who is in hospital with an injured leg, the result of one of the recent blitzes, and a speedy return to duty. Also our best wishes to Jimmy Edmondson; and we hope he has got over that unfortunate incident in which the late Mr. B. A. Groat and he were involved. May it be that as long as it is humanly possible grief and distress may be alien to us all during these tragic times.

Two of our north-end rummage crews had quite a gala day recently on a foreign vessel at this port. On 18th January, J. van Laeken, an oiler employed on the vessel, was charged at Dale Street Police Court with concealing 5 11-16ths lbs. cigarettes, Mr. Francis, C.P.O., prosecuting on behalf of the Crown. A fine of £5 was imposed on van Laeken, this sum being paid.

The goods were found in the offender's room by Mr. C. M. Porter, A.P.O., of the Gladstone rummage crew, directed by Mr. A. E. Burke, P.O. Five cartons were concealed under the seat of a wicker chair and eight cartons were wedged between a chest of drawers and the bulkhead.

Incidentally, the seizures from this vessel totalled 9,600 (No.) cigarettes, and as the duty exceeded £25, a fine on the vessel was imposed. Two of the seizures were unowned, one, 2,200 (No.) cigarettes and 10-16th lb. tobacco, discovered by Mr. W. S. Melhuish, A.P.O., of the Alexandra rummage crew (Mr. R. Steers, P.O.).

WATCH HOUSE YARNS

It was New Year's Eve and the lads were folding uniforms and collecting odd pieces of sealing wax and tape, etc., preparatory to the general exodus caused by the change of stations at the commencement of the New Year. Old Tom was lecturing the lads. "If you are thinking of making any resolutions for the coming year," lectured Tom, "I suggest that you

should resolve to have a little more patience with the other fellow's point of view. There is an old yarn about a man talking to his son who said, 'D'ye know, laddie, all the world is queer except thee and me, and even thee are a bit queer at times.'

Perhaps I should explain why Tom felt obliged to give this advice. Recently a transferred P.O. arrived on the station, and some of his interpretations of the Regs were, to say the least, a little rigid. For example, he saw a fellow in the tram-car the other day with about 12 sticks of "hard," and he wanted to seize the tram-car as a "means of conveyance." He was the sort of chappie who when boarding a yacht which had arrived round the coast, would assess the duty on a tin of condensed milk half consumed. Once he checked ALL the stores on a passenger vessel, with the result that the vessel was nearly late sailing, whilst some vessels went to sea without any of the stores being checked at all. He was the type that studied every full stop and comma in the "Regs," but could not employ that essential elasticity in the interpretation. A steward once asked him for an issue of six packs of playing cards, fortunately the ship sailed before he had arrived at the decision as to whether playing cards were consumable stores or not. What actually caused the outburst from the A.P.O. this particular day, was the fact that the P.O. had told him to put a seal on all the bags of sugar—all the same barrels of wine—and considering there was about 40 bags, the A.P.O.'s annoyance may have seemed justified.

However, Old Tom, in his experience, then came on to the side of the P.O. and asked for everyone on the station to try and see the other fellow's viewpoint.

"I remember once," he started, "we had a fellow in the job, who had the same failing of carrying out the regulations without any trace of imagination, he carried them out to the last letter. It appeared he was a farmer's son, his father having quite a large farm in Cheshire. One day, during hay-making, the farm hands were all eating their mid-day meal, sitting outside the farmhouse. Some of them were throwing crusts of bread to the ducks, of which there were at least a 100, in the near-by pond. The farmer shouted to his son and said, 'Give the hands a drink, Jack,' well knowing his father never drank water, the lad, using his imagination and elasticity of mind, issued about 10 gallons of father's best cider to the labourers. On their return to the farmhouse in the evening, it was found that all the ducks were drowned. Apparently, the men had soaked their crusts in cider before throwing them to the ducks. In due course all the ducks got well soused, with the result that their heads fell forward into the water, and every darned duck was drowned. Now all that was by taking a too liberal interpretation of the instructions, and that lad has been careful with issues ever since, and what's more, he still bears the mark to this day where his father showed his disapproval. So, lads," Tom concluded, "have a little indulgence and try and help the other fellow a little more often and criticise a little less."

EVENING WATCH.



Correspondents using a *nom-de-plume* are assured that names and addresses (which should be given) are strictly confidential.

Freedom of the printed word is frequently allowed to enable a clear and adequate expression of views. The opinions expressed, however, are not necessarily held by the Editor, who accepts no responsibility for them.

Dear Mr. Editor,

As the war progresses one wonders in just what way our department has been affected, whether it has kept abreast of its responsibilities or whether it has gradually slipped back into a state of inactivity through the feeling that it is a back number in the scheme of things now prevailing in the machine designed to win the war.

To begin, I think we all must agree that the Head of the Department and those operating in the busy places must be having a very difficult task to keep astride of the administrative and operational aspects of the staffing and other problems necessary to cope with the very important duties which the authorities have placed upon us. No one who has studied the various war orders which have been issued can have any doubt as to their National importance if properly understood and efficiently carried out. The test of leadership must be enormous and time will surely prove whether we have men in our sphere who are capable of rising to great heights of influential control with the necessary dependability.

This is all very well in the busy places, but what of those erstwhile busy places? I am aware that surplus staff have left, but what of the others, those filled with keenness who daily come on duty to find just nothing to do?—or to speak more truthfully with only ordinary routine jobs to be attended to. Surely theirs is a hard task. Are there not many very capable officials of all ranks in these places who are just “rotting” away for the sake of something real to do? Could they not be transferred to other service departments where their talents could be usefully occupied in doing real war work for the duration? From Superintendents downwards it seems to me that there are men who would prefer to have a real job of work in these difficult times. Instead of using trained surplus staffs to make up new departments it would appear that the Government have gone to an enormous expense to build up mushroom departments of untrained outsiders who will be useless after the war and mainly unemployable. That is how it appears to me, but I may be wrong.

What of the administrative side? Have they produced brilliance or have they just gone along in that nice peacetime habit of “passing the buck”? My view is that the “Sections” have taken months longer to deal with very ordinary matters of administration. A

little investigation would go a long way to prove this to be more than true. Some things seem to go on interminably, without ever a decision being reached, when the local people could come to a sensible conclusion immediately and so keep the wheels of the department running smoothly and efficiently. Look at the question of travelling claims alone. Are not the officials who certify them capable of recommending the Collectors to authorise immediate settlement without the senseless trek to London for every little detail? There are many other things to which similar application would be more efficient and speedy.

What is the lesson of all this? Surely it is that the Superiors of each district or division must shoulder more responsibility and be held responsible to shoulder it. I visualise that, with proper and sensible inspections by our own Headquarters Staff, the cumbersome and very expensive administration of “Section” control over practical officials will, in the near future, become useless and unnecessary in the main scheme of things, and so release the flood of outside enthusiasm to the betterment of all and the greater efficiency of the department. The war will end one day, so why not look at the lessons it is daily teaching us, and give thought to constructive ideas for the difficult tasks of the future.

Yours sincerely,
“A VERY HUMBLE STUDENT.”

The Editor, THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL.

Sir,—It is a pleasure for me, a very old contributor, to write under my old initials. I do so, so that the local application of my remarks on national affairs will be clearly seen. *Verb. sap.*

The great slogan from the Christian prayer, *Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles* (He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble), appears to be becoming the inspiration behind those who are *fighting* this war (on *every* front). The belief that we will win the war never falters, but many who doubt if we are winning the period which will come after the war—and many who might have been called conservative, certainly many would have resisted the label “red”—are shaking themselves. They hear the most unlikely people they see the most unlikely newspapers, advocating a proper treatment for the people when they have won the “people’s war.” They know that however bad past rule had been in this country no sane man can face the possibility of even a small degree of success for Hitler’s schemings. And they may become complacent. When we win the war everything will be all right, they may say. Perhaps things were not right in the past but they will be all right.

In such a discussion Civil Servants, especially such Civil Servants as Customs Officers, may feel that they are in a backwater untouched by such problems. Well, the problem of making the post-war world one which will not be merely another pre-war one by curing the evils, on our own doorstep, which lead to war is a problem for all of us as believers in the brotherhood of man (and, I hope, the fatherhood of God). But it will be not only a problem for each of us as men and as citizens but it will be peculiarly our job

as Customs Officers. I do not mean the petty, but none the less important consideration, that the impoverished post-war England will need every half-penny of revenue it can by just tariffs raise. I mean that we must set an example to all the other Civil Servants—as we are doing now—in carrying out the true spirit of Whitleyism. In our capacity as employees of the State the State must first, in its capacity as employer, give us the fullest justice. We will then see how far that spirit of Whitleyism which concerns itself with the more efficient working of the job, rather than the settling of grievances between the bottom dog and the top dog one can operate. I touched on this in an article early in the war in which I appealed to the ordinary Customs Officer to take the long and unselfish view. We have been well treated since. Nationally, the Whitley system has been kept as fairly as before. We have, among other things, had a cost-of-living bonus for the poorer paid officers. But there is much, both locally and nationally to be done before all injustices are smoothed out, both sides, each the asymptote of the other, the Staff and the Official Side can work together. I should add, parenthetically, that those who think there is an inevitable antagonism between both sides and that people like myself who “agitate” about our differences accentuate this, are wrong. What Priestley has said about our greatest danger being “the loud-mouthed patriot” and not the critic applies in its degree in this case.

Nationally, I will content myself with saying that what is needed, in these times when the more democratic methods of Conference, etc., are not possible, is an exact and infrangible code, drawn up by the War Executive on the basis of things democratically decided in the past, of what their aims, short term and long term, are. Things are done piecemeal and as they turn up, now. A short scheme of staff aspirations (e.g. at least as good accommodation as other Civil Servants, abolition of the Work and Wait rule, promotion of the A.P.O.:—this giving what the original reorganisation plan visualised, the status of “unattached officer” to the A.P.O., a War Bonus for P.O.s) is wanted. It need not be complete and should have an element of elasticity. But the member should have a clear idea of what our aspirations are, and the official side should know in advance what principles we will work on. They must be principles and not expedients.

I would have the same plan adapted as far as possible to local conditions. Districts must now work to a large extent as independent units and the district officers, through the difficulty of having meetings, and hence of having elections, may hold office for a long time. They too must have a code. If, for example, some slight local advantage might be gained by advocating something contrary to the general interest of the whole staff, something, let us say, that would give more overtime pay, something hard and fast should exist to guide the local staff representatives. In some places it might be the policy to do this. In another it might be the policy to do that. Even though conditions between place and place naturally vary there should be some synthesis of the ideas of both sides. In many districts, and despite

assurances from the national representatives of both sides, a tendency to allow war circumstances to govern things remote from the war and so to take action arbitrarily without consulting the staff side (who, if the Whitley regulations are studied carefully, should, clearly, be consulted on matters which might even be considered purely administrative matters—so far did Whitley’s idea of “co-operation” extend) has grown. As I do not want my letter to be too long may I, having given as many assurances that my main idea is a better service, state firmly that unless the spirit is drastically altered nothing can be done. Little talks about accomplished facts, informing the staff about plans after the plans have been formulated, delays, ignoring the staff altogether or refusing legitimate requests, will not only bar the way to that complete co-operation we all hope for, but it will mean that the staff, in matters where they feel their rights are being wiped out unnecessarily, may at least consider other means than pious resolutions on paper which are ignored or motions on Whitley which are adjourned indefinitely.

Yours, C.F.S.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I am sure that all our colleagues felt the deepest regret to learn of the tragic damage recently sustained by the Custom House, London, and that all are filled with sympathy and sadness that, in its partial destruction, there should have been sorrowful casualties. For me, it has brought back keen memories of happy times spent with the best colleagues one could ever hope to have. This thought recalls to my memory a pleasant morning when the I.G. proudly escorted Cattell and I round the noble old Board Room and the excellent Library. He told us with pride its history, past and present. How we enjoyed the joke, occasioned by his certain and long memory, when a comparison was made with the Board Room at Somerset House, and a tale was told of a messenger, of long ago, who nearly fell by the way. Later, when in the Library, the I.G. pointed to his old corner where the Registry used to be and told us of some of his early escapades there in the far-off happy days. It was a very human story, which shows how much alike we all are in our youth. It was an intensely interesting morning, rounded off with a view into the secrets of that famous Library, under the auspices of the ever-kindly Mr. Leftwich and his able assistant.

What a terrible thing it is that these historic connections with our service have gone for ever! It is hoped that some of the exhibits have been saved.

I am proud to have been in that Board Room, for it is very pleasant to be left with a memory of a somewhat sacred and very historic room, around which the whole service revolved and had its being.

I fear that the Refreshment Club must have gone also, and with it the chance of a good square meal and a break from routine. I wonder if Little, Stanford, Fox and Cattell recall the happy times spent together there when all our wants were so gladly served by the ever faithful Flossy, the dog fancier. We enjoyed ourselves so much that I fear we often became a nuisance to our fellow diners. We always

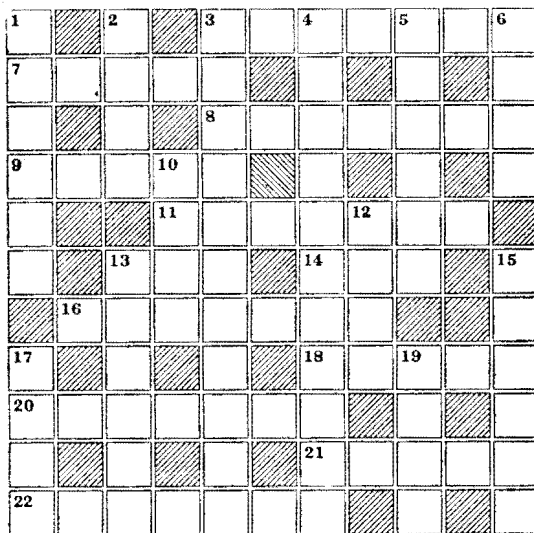
kept up the fun until back in the office, where the dear old General, with sombre countenance, soon brought us back to our senses and our "heavy" burdens.

What of the passage to Ocean House? Has it gone, also? It was here that we met and passed all kinds of important people, from the Chairman to fearful colleagues straining at the thought of a coming oral ordeal. It was also our fortune often to pass dear old George Grace on his way up to grub. Alas! the pity of it, these things can never happen again, in quite the same way, for we have all departed to the four ends of the earth; and some have gone for ever. May we hope, in conclusion, that one glad day, soon, that good old crowd will all fall into line, wherever they may be, to raise a loud cheer at the end of this madness and wanton destruction and perhaps to view again with gratified pride some new and worthy edifice which in time will be surely built to honour and carry on that noble tradition of service which to all of us is our official existence and our very life.

Yours, etc., R.

Crossword No. 12

By SERPENS.



CLUES.

ACROSS.

DOWN.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3. Fatty. | 1. Toil, envy, want the — and the gaol
(Dr. Johnson). |
| 7. Grotesque posture. | 2. Overwhelm. |
| 8. Two fishes to make one. | 3. Tell insects for these men. |
| 9. Instructions are often issued in this. | 4. Impartial. |
| 11. Troubled. | 5. A Rowland for an —. |
| 13. Fellow. | 6. Urges. |
| 14. This tune is rich. | 10. Cupid—in Greece or London. |
| 16. These buildings in Spain are not so strong. | 12. Waste. |
| 18. Thread a rope. | 13. Flower. |
| 20. This in hand is ready money. | 15. Covetous. |
| 21. If Diana joined the Waterguard would she become this? | 17. Countenance. |
| 22. Passage. | 19. Here I make my this. |

NEIGHBOURLY NIPPITS BY NOD

WAR SAVINGS (Aberdeen).—So you have gone in for Cycle No. 3?—Ah wheel.

GAMES (Cardiff) would like to see darts in the shelter.—Would you like a photograph of me darting in?

PURCHASE TAX (London) asks, would it be correct to assume that the price paid by a sailor for two bars of soap from the "bum-boat" would be the correct wholesale value?—Um, maybe; but what about the couple of pairs of old socks thrown in to make up the value?

SOMNIA (Glasgow) says that it is very comfortable to sleep on a cloth rug made from old uniform trousers cut up.—For the last three months I've slept in mine without them being cut up!

SPEED (Aberdeen) suggests that in order to save time in making up Form 201, it should contain more printed particulars.—Good idea. What about a form showing every Sunday on duty, with the totals at the bottom included?

JOURNALIST (Liverpool) says that he has written for this publication a treatise on a deep and dark subject. Could I suggest a title?—What about "Happy Half-hours in a Shelter"?

EXAM. 1950 (Swansea) asks, should Salami be taken at the Perique rate?—Don't know, but it smokes all right.

METALLURGIST (Port Talbot).—Yes, I understand that our "tin hats" are made of pressed steel, but I cannot tell you the Fahr. melting point of this compound. However, our Christmas puddings have turned out all right, in spite of their unusual shape.

TRANSFERRED (Runcorn) writes that he is broke and married.—That's not singular!

OFFICE MAN (London) complains that they have been without gas for some time.—Why, are all the Staff on leave?

POET (Newport) enquires who wrote, "Oh, to be in England."—An A.P.O. after being stationed at Lerwick for ten years.

WAITING (Liverpool) emphasises the fact that when he is promoted he intends to be a man of iron.—Don't forget even that element gets rusty!

CODEX (Soton) says that it is going to be awkward if the issue of Codes and General Orders is to be abolished—Yes, especially as we are not allowed to have bonfires now.

BOMBED (E. Coast) says that the office is in an awful mess.—Ours always is!

RETIRED (South Coast) writes that tears came to his eyes when he read of the destruction of the old Beer Lane Offices.—Yes, I almost had the same when I heard that 2 lb. of onion seed there went up in flames at the same time.

COCKNEY (London) says "We can take it!"—That's what the A. & C.G. says regarding Income Tax!

Wisdom from the Past (17)

H.Q. BEER LANE.

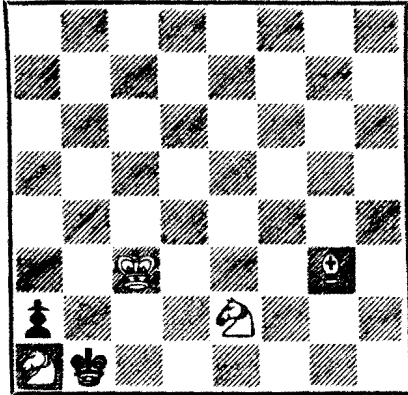
I shall never forget the emotion which filled me at the sight of London.—*Hyacinthe.*

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C H E S S .

PROBLEM No. 233.

(BLACK).



(WHITE).

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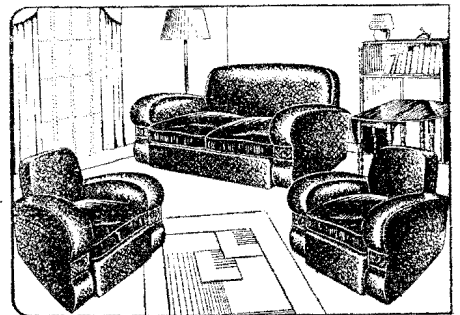
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