

THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL

EST. 1904
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CUSTOMS & EXCISE
PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

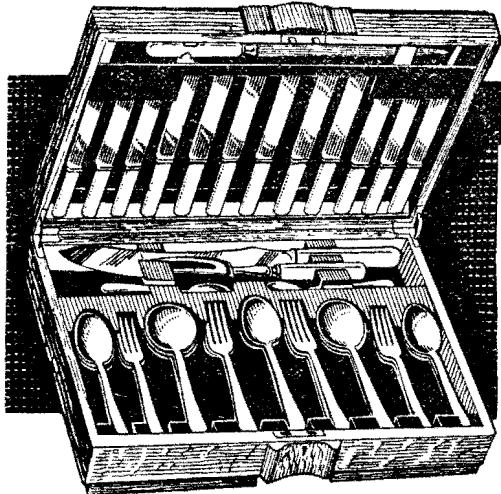
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JANUARY, 1942.

MONTHLY

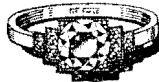
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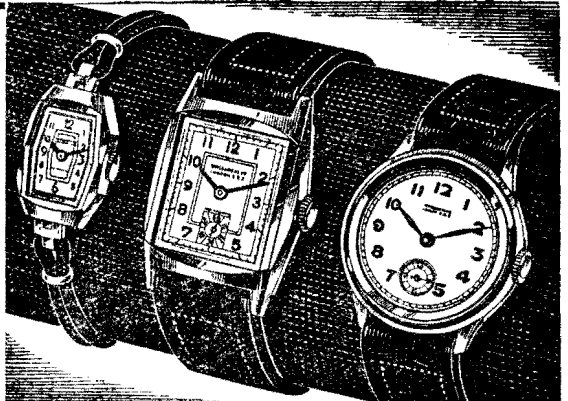
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W. H. POWELL.

Organising Secretary:

A. E. FARMER.

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H. L. BOALCH.

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CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 12th January, 1942.

OFFICER LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Knell, K. J., Gravesend, London.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICER.

Fooks, E. J., Preventive Officer.

SAILOR

Home to London,
What a trip;
What a welcome,
What a ship!

Customs counting,
Baccy, Sir?
Half a' Capstan,
No, no more.

Immigration,
Can't they see?
Am I British?
Asking me!!

Soldiers asking
What I've seen;
Asking sailors
Where they've been!!

Bloomin' soldiers,
What a war!
Here's my baccy.
No, no more.

Him in civvies,
P'liceman feet.
Asking questions,
Oh! so sweet.

I can tell him,
He's a split.
Army boots on;
Hope they fit.

If you must ask
So and so,
Try a voyage,
Then you'll know.

Customs searchers,
Soldiers, too.
Do we love them?
Yes, we do.

What a welcome!
What a ship!
Where's the gangway?
Where's my grip?

J.K.K.



DIAMONDS

-stone Cluster Half-hoop


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HEIGHT IS
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CURRENT COMMENTS

WITHOUT regret, indeed, with a measure of relief, we write *finis* to 1941 and turn hopefully to a new year.

The old year opened badly for us, with the complete loss of our Association Offices, and though much has been done to overcome the retarding effects of the loss of our valuable records, it will be some years before we recover from that calamity. The past year has been one of working against odds; comparatively simple issues have been complicated by the absence of the ready solution that would normally have been available at Beer Lane. But Brook Lane (the initials of the two lanes may be significant) is doing great work, thanks to the Assistant Secretary, and before this new year passes great strides in reconstruction will have been made.

All this sounds rather parochial when considered in conjunction with world events, and we would hasten to add that P.S.A. policy (in common with that of other Associations) is still subordinate to the major war effort. Total war brings disturbances, calls for sacrifices and creates suffering. Many of our members have experienced the first; most are making the second, but few have suffered in the sense in which the word applies to-day. A thought to our colleagues in the Forces; to the unfortunate people in occupied Europe, and to our gallant Allies in Russia will assist us in regarding that sense of proportion.

Notwithstanding this, our efforts to eliminate unnecessary hardships and anomalies arising, mainly, from central agreements, must be continued with all vigour. The past two years have shown that the Waterguard can "take it," but there are some things that we refuse to take, at least not lying down.

An Amendment.

In the first paragraph of "Current Comments," in the last issue, an error occurs in the eleventh line. The age group referred to is, of course, the 25s (i.e., officers up to but not including those who had reached their 26th birthday at the date of registration).

Free Returns for Detached Officers.

The negotiations between the National Staff Side and the Treasury on the claim that civil servants, like those in the Forces, should have their free passes home increased from two to four a year has resulted in a refusal, with a promise to look again at the question if the general travel position should improve.

Apparently the Official Side consider comparisons as odious unless it suits their purpose to make them. When the number of free passes was originally fixed at two a year, the Staff Side claimed more, but the Official Side pointed to the Forces and said they felt unable to do more for civil servants than was done for the Forces. They could have added, "but we do not mind doing less."

Caps and Badges.

We learn that in answer to a Staff Side enquiry regarding the delay in the issue of caps to C. and E. Grades, a reply has been received which states that the contractor expects to deliver all the caps at present on order (i.e., up to and including the issue of January, 1942) by the end of March next. He also proposes to deliver the remainder of the May 1941 badges and approximately half those of the September issue by the same date.

It would not be out of place under this heading to deal with the point raised by "W.C.H.," in a letter published in

the last issue. First, we should state that the phrase he quotes in his first paragraph was not printed in the previous Journal. What was printed, however, was, "It might be that rank distinctions would be more advantageously displayed on the headgear." We were present at the Council meeting in question, and when we remembered the smiling reference of the Chairman to the Portuguese Navy, we were rather surprised to find this "headgear" point in minutes. Frankly, the Association representatives did not take this bright idea seriously, nor did the Staff Side.

War Emergency Committee.

The January meeting of the War Emergency Committee (P.S.A.) will be held at 2.30 p.m. on Friday, the 30th of the month.

These Reservations.

Replying to criticism of reservations of civil servants under the National Service Bill in the House of Commons, Mr. Ralph Assheton, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, said: "I want to make it quite clear that the Schedule of Reserved Occupations does not merely give an excuse for not going to the war, but it says definitely that people who come under it cannot go to the war; so it is unfair to criticise civil servants or anybody else, if the Schedule of Reserved Occupations has prevented them from going into military service."

"Customs Journal" Pens.

We must apologise for our failure to make the announcement earlier that "Customs Journal" pens for 1941 have



been awarded to:—

J. K. Kennedy, Newport, Mon.

R. J. Lowe, London (detached to Liverpool).

In extending our rather belated, but nevertheless sincere, congratulations to these subscribers, we have to crave their indulgence if the difficulty of obtaining the pens should delay the dispatch.

Cost of Living Index Figure.

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1940	80	81	87	85	87	89	92	95
1941	100	100	99	99	99	99	100	101

Boots Library Scheme.

Members are reminded that Boots Booklovers' Library year terminates at the end of this month, and those who wish to carry on must complete a renewal form.

For the information of those who may be contemplating joining the Library, these are the terms available to our members:—

Class A—16/6 per vol. per year.

Class B— 6/6

Forms of application and renewal will be placed in the hands of District Organisers, from whom Association members can obtain them.

From the I.G.W.

"To all my friends and colleagues I send my best wishes and sincere hope that the coming year will see the ending of this tragic state of things in which we now live, and the restoration of that happiness and peace we enjoyed in past times."

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and forty-sixth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 17th December, 1941, the Chair being taken by S. R. Wilfrid Eady, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

The Staff Side announced the appointment of Mr. J. A. Hoyles as a member of the Staff Side vice Mr. J. A. Godfrey.

MAN POWER.

(i) Application of unit values, O.W.O.s 42/41, Part 2, and 43/41, Part 10.

The Official Side stated that these two orders were in process of withdrawal and that the other instructions referred to by the Staff Side at the last Council meeting were not general instructions, but specific directions given in response to particular inquiries by certain Collectors. The Staff Side said that the same specific directions issued, without central agreement, to many Collectors would have the effect of establishing a general unit value. The Official Side said that it was impossible to refuse such requests for guidance in these particular cases, but the directions were not to be regarded as inculcating principles which would be generalised in due course.

(ii) General operative date for G.O. 32/41.

The Official Side appreciated the concern of the Staff Side behind their request for a general operative date, but observed that the problem was rendered complex by rate of withdrawal to date of personnel for His Majesty's Forces. They felt that if a general date were to be adopted it must be a prospective, not a retrospective, date. Neither the institution of the 51-hour week nor accruing of the allowances would take place if it were possible and practicable to provide assistance where needed, and the Official Side suggested that a joint examination of the various difficulties might be useful.

The Staff Side thought it unfortunate that whilst General Order 37/41 had given authority for immediate operation, it was not yet known what was being done throughout the country. They further suggested that a general inquiry from Headquarters might be made, and the resulting replies would be available for joint examination and a general stocktaking of the position.

The Official Side said that the problem concerned units and W.P.O. Stations mainly, but a few time attendance stations were involved, and they would make the general inquiry. They agreed that the body which had been considering the matter should have plenary powers to deal with it before the next Council.

(iii) T.C. 10/41, paragraph 2 (i) and (ii).

Both Official and Staff Sides stated that their inquiries in regard to the cutting out of less essential work were being expedited.

(iv) Kennet Committee Report.

In reply to Staff Side inquiry as to whether deferments asked for were permanent or temporary, the Official Side said that no deferments were being asked for with a definite time limit so far as the Department was concerned. The Kennet Committee would be the deciding authority on behalf of the Government.

(v) Release of Women.

In reply to a Staff Side question as to what action was being taken under E.O.C. 535/41, the Official Side said that a draft announcement calling for volunteers would be sent to the Staff Side for observations.

REMUNERATION FOR EXTRA WORK PERFORMED BY CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENTAL GRADES.

This item was re-adjourned at the request of the Staff Side.

PETROL ECONOMY.

The Official Side observed that as a result of their inquiry into the cases of difficulty following on restriction of coupons, it was found in some of the cases cited no difficulty had occurred, and in others additional coupons had been furnished.

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON COLLECTIONS.

The Staff Side observed with reference to the saving of staff mentioned by the Official Side at the last Council meeting, that according to their information the operation of a 51-hour week in Southampton Collection would effect an identical saving, viz: one Chief Clerk, one Departmental Higher Clerical Officer, and three Departmental Clerical Officers. The Official Side pointed out that the figures given in regard to the proposed amalgamation were, however, based on 44-hour week calculation; the fact that the figures calculated in different connections were identical was a coincidence, and they would examine the matter again. The 51-hour week was not a factor in the proposed amalgamation. The Staff Side said that in view of the fact that the Portsmouth Collector's Office staff was already on a 51-hour week basis, the coincidence was remarkable, and the item was re-adjourned.

STANDARD SUBSISTENCE RATES. STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL THAT ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS BE PLACED IN CLASS C (Establishment Instructions, Volume 3, paragraph 54).

The Official Side announced that the new categories and relative rates had now been received in E.O.C. 528/41, and had been issued to the Service in G.O. 49/41. The new rates gave some improvement to Assistant Preventive Officers, but the Official Side were considering the Staff Side claim further to see whether any further alteration could be made in regard to Assistant Preventive Officers. They therefore suggested re-adjournment, and the item was accordingly re-adjourned.

PURCHASE TAX.

(a) Verification.

The Staff Side referred to the examination informally of the list of traders to be dealt with in the special Purchase Tax centres. A large number had been under consideration, but agreement had only been reached as regards fifteen out of the fifty odd which comprised the final Official Side list. The Staff Side decisions had been made in relation to the time occupied and economical use of staff. The covering General Order had now been agreed, and a report on the experiment would be due in March, 1942. The Official Side confirmed that the scheme was experimental and agreed to further consultation at the end of the experimental period.

(b) Additional registration of traders (G.O. 37/1941). Position of transferred Officers.

The Official Side intimated that of the seventy-seven Officers transferred from London, fifteen had returned and others would follow. A number would, however, remain on detached duty in the places where purchase tax work continued to require additional staff. The position would be regularised as the men returned.

PROMOTION, RECRUITMENT AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) Common Seniority list for Higher Clerical Officers in Headquarters Offices.

The Staff Side, in making a claim for a common seniority list, observed that while Headquarters Offices were regarded as separate units inequality of prospects was inevitable. In comparison with the Departmental Higher Clerical Class the Treasury Class was thus at a disadvantage. The Staff Side accordingly proposed that a common seniority list of Higher Clerical Officers in Headquarters Offices should be instituted and that Higher Clerical Officer vacancies should be advertised to allow of transfers to gain experience in various offices.

The Official Side promised consideration, and the item was thereupon adjourned.

(b) Abolition of the upper age limit for promotees to the Women Pension Officer Grade.

The Staff Side claimed that the removal of the upper age limit would provide a more satisfactory field of selection for promotions to the Women Pension Officer Grade. The Official Side observed that preference would be given to suitable candidates within the normal age limits of 25-35 years, but as a war-time measure they were prepared to waive the upper limit. Agreement was registered accordingly.

(c) Recruitment to the Temporary Clerical Class, Grade III.

The Official Side agreed that members of the Packer Grade should be included with Unestablished Paperkeepers and Unestablished Messengers for consideration of their qualification for transfer to Temporary Clerical Grade III posts, with similar right to continued employment. (This agreement is accordingly supplementary to the agreement on the Official Side's offer regarding Unestablished Paperkeepers and Unestablished Messengers recorded at the October meeting of the Council).

(d) Vacancies in the Waterguard Service.

In response to a request from the Staff Side, the Official Side promised to furnish a note explaining in detail the circumstances in which existing vacancies were not being filled.

(e) Promotion of Sub-Clericals to Clerical Officer.

The Staff Side referred to the discussion in September and October, and to the Official Side promise at the latter meeting to keep this matter under review. The recent issue of E.O.C. 534/41, abolishing the requirement of two years' service for the promotion to Clerical Officer of Clerical Assistants, Grade I, stressed the necessity, in the Staff Side view, for immediate attention to this particular aspect and to the question as a whole.

The Official Side said that the position was under consideration prior to the issue of the E.O.C., and their consideration would now include the provisions of that document.

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

Regarding the amendment of the memoranda of the conditions of employment of Unestablished Deckhands and Stoker Deckhands, the Official Side intimated that it was necessary that the terms thereof should not be at variance with those of the Civil Service Commission document on the same subject. This point was being looked into.

Regarding making further appointments to established rank in the Launch Service, the Official Side said this was not possible at present. Some promotions had been made recently, and there were already as many posts as were required. In view of the surplus staff available at the present time there was no prospect of further posts being authorised.

In regard to the case of the Unestablished Steersman, the Official Side said the matter was not adjustable by means of notional promotion, as no fillable vacancy existed. The Staff Side said that they considered it should be possible without actual removal of the present holder of the post to take steps to remedy the present unsatisfactory position, wherein a man serving in His Majesty's Forces was being denied promotion, and, what was more, establishment.

ALLOWANCE QUESTIONS.

(a) Attendance on Public Holidays.

The Staff Side referred to the issue of an Omnibus Weekly Order (No. 50/41, Part 2) following on Establishment Officers' Circular 527/41. Generally this cleared up the position, but the Staff Side want to refer again to Departmental Clerical Officers required to be on duty on Christmas Day.

(b) Allowances to Established Messengers at places separated from Headquarters.

The Official Side confirmed that Blackpool was the only place where the conditions concerning eligibility for one of these allowances were fulfilled, but the allowance in this case could not exceed £15 to the Established Paperkeeper there. In origin the £25 allowance was based on the difference between the maximum salary of an Established Messenger and the minimum of Office Keeper Grade 2, i.e., £205 and £230. The Established Paperkeeper's maximum being £215, the allowance calculated on the same basis would be £15.

The Staff Side requested an adjournment for further examination.

SPECIAL INQUIRY BRANCH.

The Staff Side said that they have given very careful consideration to the Official Side proposal contained in their letter of 29th October for the addition as an interim measure and without prejudice to the ultimate organisation of the Branch of three or four posts of Inquiry Officer (£650-£750) to meet a recent increase in the work of the Branch largely due to Purchase Tax cases. As they had already pointed out in their correspondence, the Staff Side were not satisfied that an increase of the staff of this Branch was necessary on account of Purchase Tax work. Additional Purchase Tax centres had been created and very recent arrangements made to transfer certain larger traders to these centres. In addition, special verification by Staff in London Central Collection had been approved under G.O. 40/41. The measure now proposed seemed to be carrying specialisation to the extreme, and the Staff Side were not convinced of the necessity for the new posts at the present juncture, especially as the Deputy Chief Inquiry Officer had been away from his post for a considerable time, and there was already one seconded Officer on the staff in excess of the authorised complement.

The Official Side said that as stated in their written reply to the Staff Side they were fully convinced of the necessity to increase the strength of the Branch, and that the Purchase Tax work had emphasised the necessity of team work under the charge of Inquiry Officers. It would probably be necessary to add further posts of seconded Officer as well. The question of filling the Deputy Chief Inquiry Officer post would need examination from the point of view of the staff as a whole, and the post of Assistant Chief Inquiry Officer would be absorbed in one of the posts of Inquiry Officer.

The Staff Side repeated that they were not convinced of the necessity for increase, and must reaffirm their policy as stated in the ad hoc Committee in 1937 and recently re-stated in writing, that any new posts of the type now proposed should be open to all members of the Department, of whom many had Purchase Tax experience, and that the posts should be filled by normal Promotion Board procedure. An assurance had been given in 1937 that the posts of Inquiry Officer should not become an avenue for transfer to the Surveyor or Controlling Grades, and in present circumstances the Staff Side were of opinion that the posts could be readily filled on the temporary basis proposed by the Official Side by members of the surplus staff in the Department.

The Official Side maintained that the Inquiry Officer posts required special knowledge of the work of the Branch, and they must therefore adhere to their view that the field should be restricted to past and present members of the Special Inquiry Staff. In reply to a further inquiry, the Official Side said that the position of members of that Staff at present in His Majesty's Forces and on loan to other Departments would not be overlooked.

The Staff Side urged that the whole question should be re-examined in the light of their proposals and of recent arrangements of Purchase Tax work.

The Official Side said they could not see their way to suspend action in regard to the additional posts of Inquiry Officer, but would look into the position of the Deputy Chief Inquiry Officer and would consider the position of absentee members of the staff past and present.

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 Collector's Offices.

The Official Side said that the Board of Trade were largely concerned in the matter which was the subject of this General Order, and until the procedure of special rationing was more stabilised the Official Side were unable to make any pronouncement on this proposal. The Staff Side had considered that the proposal could have been decided more readily, but in the circumstances concurred

in an adjournment for two months, and the item was re-adjourned accordingly for the Official Side.

(b) Local Decisions.

An agreement covering Women Pension Officer Stations in Aberdeen was ratified, but a further local agreement on the staffing of Portsmouth Sub-Office was adjourned at Staff Side request. The Council then considered two agreements from Glasgow involving the discontinuance of one Excise Station, and in reply to the Staff Side the Official Side said that these agreements had not resulted from G.O. 17/1940 or G.O. 32/1941, and formal treatment had been decided upon in order to give the Officer of the Station in question displacement rights. The Staff Side observed that there were many stations temporarily discontinued, and they would like to examine this case with a view to its effect—prejudicial or otherwise—on other Officers rendered redundant as a result of G.O. 17/40 or G.O. 32/41 adjustments.

Both items were accordingly adjourned for the Staff Side.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 28th January, 1942.

Southampton Notes

"Keep smiling!" is the keynote of the many cards and letters which have been received from the exiles and the Forces over Christmas, 1941, and the news accompanying this sound advice makes a very pleasing start to our 1942 Notes. The interest and co-operation of several of the boys' wives and parents has been an encouraging feature during the past twelve months, and we proceed in the hope of retaining this happy link.

Here we go with news of the Forces, one or two of them having chosen, appropriately, this season as the time to make their "annual" contribution to our monthly effort, and I know that you will be very glad to hear that Ernie Soane is fit and well in the Home Counties. He sends his best wishes to you all, in company with our other writers, which include Bill Nicolson, 2nd Lieut., who is now attached to a regiment in the Indian Army. Bill is in good trim, and fears that he will be "an awful bore" when you meet him again; we beg to differ, and look forward to his return, together with the story of his experiences. He closes his letter with "my chin-chin to the lads." Good luck to you, Nic!

Still with the Army, we learn that Davy Youdell found the opening stages of his voyage to be comfortable. We await his first letter from the other side with interest. Johnnie Walker was at 29 Berth in mid-December; he likes his job, and is anticipating wearing three stripes very soon. He has been in action with a mobile unit on the West Coast, and off duty has had the pleasure of "going places" with the rear gunner of F. for Freddie, of "Target for To-night" fame, whom many of you will remember.

The Army claims our latest addition to the list of our lads with the Forces, as Steve adds his weight to the R.A.S.C. this month. We wish him well in the new life which follows his two years of D.D. at Poole. The R.A.S.C. (No. 12 Training Battalion) cricket eleven should be very "appealing" during the 1942 season.

The Navy is represented by our consistent Cliff, who sends good news as well as greetings from South Africa. He likes the Union very much, and ought to be an authority on Dominion and Colony affairs by the time he is back home. Cliff writes: "Convey my best wishes to the boys."

Tom Carnell has had embarkation leave, and was at 29 Berth in December to say "Cheerio!" He takes our good wishes with him to his overseas station. Tom is an Aircraft Fitter (R.N.), and is progressing well in his job.

Now for the R.A.F., which is likely to have the services of George Gray and Paddy O'Boyle in the very near future; the latter, like the former, has been accepted for flight duties. Peter H. J. is another Flight aspirant, and after volunteering he passed his second medical on 8:1:42; this will be followed by the usual attestation and a few months' deferment.

The three of them will take our constant wishes for their future welfare: a capable trio, indeed.

Ron. Greenhalgh will be on operations by the time you receive this issue, and he is now in the stages of final preparation, in the company of men from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Burma and U.S.A. He had expected to remain with the lads who trained with him in South Africa, but instead of going to an O.T.U., they were drafted to various squadrons. Good luck, Ron.!

Twenty continues to send good news in letters, which are a pleasure to read. At the time of his last letter, written on 3:11:41, he was certainly hard at work, his day commencing at 4.30 a.m., ceasing at 6 p.m., although revision and writing-up continued until 9.30 p.m.; this in terrific heat, at 5,000 feet above sea-level. The temperature on December 20th was likely to be 118 degrees in the shade. Les. writes rather plaintively of the cheery fires and homely fogs prevalent in his home county at this time of the year. Well, there is a real snorter of a fog up here at present, which we would willingly exchange for a spell of Cape sunshine. Some of Twenty's co-trainees hail from Malay, India, Fiji Isles, Brazil, Australia and Greece.

News of the exiles from Liverpool, Ellesmere Port, Preston, Runcorn, and Silloth is as good as ever, and from home we are glad to hear of George C. being again on duty. A local P.S.A. Meeting was held in December, mainly for the election of officers for 1942, but no details are to hand as yet, so I do not know whether or not I am your official correspondent, or who is the Secretary, or who is to handle the "dibs" this year. Do not let the obscure identity of the latter interfere with your suits, payments; one or two of you have left plenty of room for improvement upon your 1941 efforts.

The Manchester staff will probably be pleased to hear that one of their ex-probationers (1934-1935), Tom MacPherson, was contacted in Southampton in December. I presume that young Mac is serving with the R.N., but I cannot confirm that yet. The London staff, and ex-London men who have worked with Bill Turnbull, will be very pleased to have his good wishes, which are conveyed in a brief and recent letter. Bill has been in hospital for a long spell, and we are glad to know that he is making progress. Sincere wishes for his recovery are sent by all with whom he has worked in the past.

Cheerio, Forces!

L. B.

Southampton District Meeting

At the Southampton District Meeting, held on 8th December 1941, Mr. Gray, P.O., was elected to the chair. After the minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, the District Organiser, Mr. Martin, briefly covered the year's working, and spoke about the large fall in subscriptions due to the many officers being on detached duty and others serving with H.M. Forces. Otherwise the financial position of the district was as sound as circumstances permitted.

The following officials were elected for 1942:—

Mr. Gray, P.O., Chairman.

Mr. Sweet, A.P.O., District Organiser and Secretary.

Mr. Lindell, A.P.O., Mr. McNeill, A.P.O., A.P.O. Whitley representatives.

Mr. Clarke, P.O., Mr. Turvey, P.O., P.O. Whitley representatives.

Mr. Lindell, A.P.O., Mr. Turvey, P.O., Auditors.

The District Organiser read a letter from Mr. Powell re a motion submitted by Liverpool to the War Emergency Committee about officers on detached duty being relieved after twelve months. It was proposed by Mr. McNeill and seconded by Mr. Russell that discussion be adjourned until observations had been obtained from the whole District.

There being no other business of District interest, the meeting was closed and re-opened as a local meeting.

Several points of local interest were discussed, including the continued use of the 11-7 p.m. watch for Rummage crews, clean bedding for the firewatchers' bed, and a new method of allocating Sunday duties for A.P.O.s.

The meeting was then closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

W. R. M.

Merseyside News

By the time these notes appear the year 1941 will have made its exit, the new station minute will be in operation, the newly elected Association officers will be strapping on their armour, some of us will be wondering how long it will be ere we change uniforms, detached officers will continue to be very hopeful just in case, and finally we will all be looking forward to this coming twelve months with no uncertain moods of optimism for a prelude to peaceful and more happier times.

The meeting held at the Landing Stage on 17th November, 1941, may be the last for some time, owing to circumstances as may be expected at these crucial periods, but all matters entailing the advice of the Association may be forwarded to the proper quarters. So many points may happen to fall outside such procedure as Whitley discussion, but members may rest assured that their grievances, and I doubt if there will be many, will command the active attention of the local officials. Our specific tasks in upholding the laws charged in our keeping will greatly facilitate the success of the general efforts of the country. Every one of us knows that, and all of us are proud to do it. I think that all outward passengers are a wholesome respect for Waterguard officers, as did no doubt our friend in the sand-locker so conveniently introduced to the light of day by Mr. Wardell, A.P.O. Probably many more tasks of national importance could be added to our menu, and if man-power can be properly harnessed and applied to our department, then we will be even more proud to show our potentialities.

Another bit of news comes from Bob Stacey, whom most of us remember in Liverpool on sporting days. Bob is in the Artillery Signal Section somewhere in Britain, and says he is well and looking forward to getting married in the New Year. Well, here's wishing you all the best on behalf of the staff, and you can do a lot worse things. Other officers serving with the forces are asked to communicate with us in Liverpool, so come on, you fellows. Sid Dixon, Harry Abblett, Bill Oates, Tom Brown, Jack Rankmore, etc., etc.

Big seizures are in a minority at present, but I understand the Woodside crew have been doing well recently, but they are far too modest to publish their successes. It has been a bumper six months for them, and evidently not a case of "give us the fools, and we find the jobs."

In passing, we must pay homage to the retiring District Secretary, Mr. Hyland, P.O., and the retiring chairman, Mr. Kemp, P.O., both so consistent, sound and solid in debate. Also many thanks, C.F.S., for your good turn. I will give you twelve of my uniform coupons in February.

E.G.H.

"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

Charlie Scorfe will have been on a brief leave to the home town by the time this appears. He reports being fit and well. We are looking forward to your visit, Charles.

Eddie Ladbroke dropped in on Christmas leave. He was very fit and well; evidently Navy life is kind to him. He informed me that instead of a pleasure cruise in E Boat Alley, he wangled 7 days' leave. Atta Boy. Keep smiling.

Harold Coulson reports having made a good recovery from his operation, and is back once more in harness. So far, "Harold," we haven't heard of your craft being torpedoed. Still, Jerry may manage it; anyway, don't scuttle her yourself, will you?

No news of the others this month. Stan Gill, Griffio and Co., are in the East, and news takes time.

It is with deep regret that we learn that Marine R. G. Phipps, son of our esteemed colleague, Alf Phipps, is reported missing.

To Mr. and Mrs. Phipps we extend our sympathy, and hope to hear that the worst that has befallen George is that he is a prisoner of war. Keep your heart up, Alf, and keep smiling.

Well, that's all for now, Forces! The old place still stands, and our flag is mast high, and it shall remain so until your return.

Good luck to you all. Cheerio, Forces! Over to you.
O.H.L.

Hull News

On Thursday, 11th December, a P.S.A. meeting was held in order to consider the Liverpool District resolution re Officers on Detached Duty.

It was conducted in an atmosphere of uncertainty, because it was a question which we in Hull had had no occasion to discuss; and there were no concrete facts or instances on which to base the debate.

After much time had been spent in an effort to appreciate the reasons underlining the Liverpool resolution, Mr. Taylor, A.P.O., moved an amendment, which was seconded by Mr. Nightingale, P.O., and carried by a large majority.

The amendment was: "That Officers on Detached Duty should be relieved at the Crown's expense after a period of 12 months, and should not have a further period of Detached Duty until all other officers have had a period of such duty."

This, of course, is the Liverpool resolution except that the option of being relieved has been eradicated.

The change of stations has brought to a close a very successful Rummage Period—probably the best that the Port has known, and all crews are to be congratulated on their good work.

The astuteness of a railway porter who reported the fact of 19 packages being conveyed as personal luggage led to a raid on the home of Chief Steward Jonsson, of Hull. The raid was conducted by Mr. Cameron, W. Sur., and those taking part were Messrs. Lockwood and Crowe, C.P.O.s, Messrs. Reeves and Shooter, P.O.s, and Messrs. Leedham and Barker, A.P.O.s.

22½ lb. tobacco, 13 lb. cigarettes, 10 bottles spirits, lime juice, beer, tinned foodstuffs of every conceivable kind, linen and other household effects were seized.

At the subsequent court case Johnson and his father were confronted with several Customs and Ministry of Food charges. As first offenders, some of the charges were dismissed, but altogether fines to the tune of £30 were imposed.

On November 29th and December 20th, at Hull City Police Court, two men were charged with smuggling opium. Both were Chinese firemen from Dutch vessels, and Mr. Walton, A.P.O., was responsible for their appearance before the bench. Mr. Codd was the Rummage P.O., and Mr. Crowe, C.P.O., conducted the prosecutions. Fines of 7 guineas and costs and £10 and costs were imposed, the amounts seized being 13/16 lb. and 27/16 lb. prepared opium.

At the same Court, on December 23rd, a Norwegian fireman, who chose to go to Court rather than pay the compromise penalty on 110/16 lb. cigarettes was fined D.V. and D. The seizing officer was Mr. G. Head, A.P.O.

Christmas brought several greeting cards from men in the Forces and on Detached Duty, and to them we reiterate their greetings and good wishes.

N. S. M.

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The Lads o' London

The new year was ushered in by many of us with heartfelt thanks for quiet nights free from raid-raids, and for the knowledge that many of our loved ones and colleagues are safe and well, and what is more, for the brighter prospects of ultimate victory and the happy and peaceful times that will follow.

Yes, in that knowledge we must work together more, towards the quicker, successful prosecution of the war. In our dealing, then, one with another, and with the Official Side, let us not lose sight of the fact that there is a war in progress. Don't think for one moment that we should relinquish all concessions and better conditions of service secured for us by Association stalwarts of yesteryear, but rather to give ourselves more freely towards securing the desired peace, by working in closer harmony with all people connected with the shipping world, and indeed, to lend as much as we can to the Government commensurate with our incomes (see General Order 46/40). After all, it is more blessed to give than to receive, and although one can imagine oneself being described as writing "like a parson," I claim your indulgence if I appear to be in a soliloquising mood. 'Tis the outcome of new year's resolutions.

Numerous Christmas cards were received from colleagues in the Forces, and most of them apparently had plenty to eat and drink over the festive season. Several were lucky enough to spend Christmas at home.

Pip Penfold, who volunteered for flying duties with the R.A.F., went to America for his training, and on board the boat met Bill Foot, of Liverpool. No doubt they had much to say to each other. Jack Sides was home on leave for some time, as his ship was undergoing a refit. He asked about Jimmy Sutton, and requested that Jimmy be informed that the water is still B— cold off Iceland.

A welcome post card was received from Wally Blake, late of King George V. Dock, but unfortunately now a prisoner-of-war. Wally's only amusement is reading, and he said that he even reads poetry now. I believe I mentioned in an earlier issue of these notes that he spent the first four months of his imprisonment in bed, but he is now quite well and is working. He wrote, "please write, as letters keep most of us going,"—so if any of you would like to perform a little kindly and friendly act to a colleague, please put pen to paper and drop him a line! Letters must be kept to strictly personal matters, and should be written legibly. A special prisoner-of-war air-mail letter card can be obtained at any post office, price 8d. His address is as follows:—

Gunner W. A. Blake,
British Prisoner-of-War No. 10505,
STALAG VIII B.,
E.140. GERMANY.

He will reply, I know.

A card was also received from Ted Waters, via his mother, thanking the lads at King George V Dock, for the gifts of parcels of cigarettes. He, too, is keeping well.

Jack Bushell received a welcome birthday present last month in the form of promotion from Lance-Bombardier to Bombardier. Still in Dover, we hope to meet this month.

That's all from the Forces this month, but when they see this paragraph I am sure they will all send me their overdue letters. Hurry up, then, lads!

John Scott, who incidentally told me of Pip Penfold's departure to the U.S.A., is at Bo'ness, and apparently likes the job there, and sends word of Bert Finch, who is at Kircaldy. Bert expects to be called to the colours soon, and by the way, he too, like many of our other friends, has just become a father. Congratulations Bert, and may all your troubles be little ones!

Had the pleasure of meeting a contemporary of mine this week, in the person of Les. Battersby, of Southampton, and we exchanged many ideas concerning the writing of these notes. One hopes that he passed on my good wishes to Messrs. Soane, Stevens, and Yondell, all of his home port, and it is largely due to his example that this column appears at all.

Readers will remember the proposals that were sent to London for consideration by headquarters, by a meeting of detached officers in Liverpool. Headquarters sent them to other districts, asking for their observations. I noticed that Cardiff district held an inquest on them, and a motion put concerning the return home of the detached officers was

defeated. They said the unenviable lot of the D.D. officer was appreciated by all, but felt that the Liverpool scheme would only result in the passing of the hardship from one man to another, and was therefore not a real solution to the problem. There can be no solution to the problem of returning home, except by exchanging with others, and, as was written some months ago, there should be an equality of sacrifice. Those who have been undisturbed as yet, ought to take a turn in performing detached duty. Presumably none of the Cardiff staff are on D.D., and do not desire to do any! That is, of course, understandable, but when so many of us have been away for so long a period, there comes a time when the desire to return becomes the paramount feature in our lives, and who can blame us? Something **MUST** be done about this problem. Detached officers everywhere, if you want to get back to your home ports, **DO** something towards securing that end.

An interesting and well-attended district meeting was held in Liverpool recently, and one of the items on the agenda was the time and method of overtime payment. It is the practice here to pay the overtime moneys on the Thursday following the end of the period. Establishment Instructions Vol. 2 state that O.T. pay is to be paid as soon as possible after the end of the period. It was felt that to wait four days after the end of the period was too long, and accordingly a motion was tabled that O.T. pay should be paid on the Monday following the end of the period, as in London and other ports. An amendment was moved which was carried, and the whole question has been referred to Local Joint Committee for action. It would be quite simple; each station C.P.O. could certify as to the correctness of the particulars on form C.203, at the same time as he checks the 201's. Then the form could be certified by the Waterguard Surveyor and countersigned by the Collector on the same day, and the money drawn from the Cash Branch for ultimate destination to the staff. It would be the means of saving a lot of work and time for the Waterguard Appointer and secure much quicker payment to those concerned.

A very charming letter that I was privileged to see, told of the continued progress that our friend Bill Turnbull is making. He has been off sick for some considerable time, and the staff at home gave him a welcome Christmas box, which amounted to £15 10s. 0d. His wife replied on Bill's behalf and thanked George Richards and the lads at home for their wonderful kindness, and said that the kind thoughts of all his friends has done much to clear him up. **BOON** send their sincere wishes to the London staff for 1942.

I should be glad to hear more of the activities of the London detached officers in other ports, and would welcome any suggestions from persons concerned, re the penning of these notes.

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

R.J.L.

O Wad Some Power

On the Northern Ireland Border,

FRIDAY.

"Police, Customs officials, and prevention officers on both sides of the Border are investigating a smuggling racket.

"The transportation of smuggled goods across the Border is an easy matter. Police vigilance has to be maintained on a Border line stretching 600 miles.

"At Dundalk even the seats of the trains are removed to see if any articles are hidden."—*Evening Standard*, January 9th, 1942.

Wisdom from the Past (28)

Character Assessment.

Character is based not merely on energy, not merely on strength. It is the quality of soul which frankly accepts the conditions in human life, of labour, of obedience, of effort, of unequal success; which does not quarrel with them or evade them, but takes for granted with unquestioning alacrity that man is called—by his call to high aims and destiny—to a continual struggle with difficulty, with pain, with evil, and makes it the point of honour not to be dismayed or wearied by them.—RICHARD WILLIAM CHURCH.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

The letter written to you by "Slippery Sam" and published in the last issue of the "Journal," calls for an immediate and detailed examination. It must be very embarrassing and difficult for any one of the Association Secretaries to reply.

"Slippery Sam" asks if members think that the honoraria received by certain Association officials could be reduced or abolished. Some of us think that in war-time the amounts paid to the persons concerned could be reduced, but abolished, NO! Whilst there must be a great "falling-off" in Association activity these days, which would call for a reduction in honoraria, on the other hand certain work has still to be done, and as every labourer is worthy of his hire, a fair day's pay should be paid for a fair day's work. I know from personal experience that the officials mentioned by your correspondent are in peace-time never really free, and are always to be found in Beer Lane after office hours, or attending some meeting for the ultimate good of the staff as a whole.

To hold a conference would be expensive, and the expense would not be justified. The question of the honoraria could be dealt with by districts, and the decisions of those meetings transmitted to the Executive Committee.

Your writer says "the King is still in London," and, while that may be true, it is irrelevant. The General Secretary is still in London (and will continue to remain there, I hope) because he is needed there. Meetings of the Departmental Whitley Council have to be attended, as also do Local Joint Committee meetings, etc., and a lot of time and money would be wasted if he were sent out of London. Besides, he must of necessity be in close proximity to Waterguard Headquarters, and to the various sections of the Secretaries' Office, with whom he is in frequent contact. The office of the Association is now outside London. Cannot "Slippery Sam" read that on the first page of any number of the "Journal" printed recently? If the headquarters of the Association had been moved to Liverpool or Glasgow, would not members have commented upon the danger that beset important documents whilst they remained in either of those ports, seeing that both places have been badly blitzed?

Continuity of office may be good, it may be bad, it depends largely upon the individuals who hold the respective offices. I say without fear or favour that the right men are in the right place at the moment. It would be fatal to replace the secretaries at this juncture; and how many of your readers (other than London officers on detached duty, and, of course, "Slippery Sam," whom I suspect of hankering after one of the secretarial posts) who are suitably qualified, would now be prepared to remove their homes and families to London to take up office? Substitution would have to be gradual, it could not for the good of the Association be done at once. His remarks about the morals of London and the quality of the beer there are poor humour. Has he ever taken a walk around the streets and pubs of his home port?

It is true that there are no A.P.O.s on the secretariat now, but then there were two for quite a considerable period, and the constitution does not forbid the holding by members of any one grade of all the secretarial posts. Certainly it would be better if the A.P.O.s were represented, although you, Sir, do represent the grade as the Editor of this paper.

The suggestion that the secretaries get much more overtime pay than many officers is resented. Their overtime pay is equalised in common with other officers in District II of the London Waterguard Division. Those officers who get no overtime pay at certain ports knew that that money would not be forthcoming when they applied for those posts, and, anyway, they are usually congenial sorts of places.

Has your correspondent ever approached the General Secretary on the question whether he is prepared to work

often day and night for the benefit of many people who are prepared to take all and give now? There is no fun in doing that. I myself would not be willing to labour for the betterment of conditions of service in the Waterguard for men who have not one good word to say for the Association, and who are content to ride upon the backs of others.

One would be sorry to see at the head of affairs in Association activity a full-time paid secretary. He could not possibly get to know our job and its peculiar conditions without being a member of the staff.

The secretaries are not likely to leave London unless something very much unforeseen happens. A London Branch meeting decided that they should remain, and agreement was recorded with the Official Side in that respect. They also continue to give as much time as is necessary to Staff Side work, and therefore there must be another reason for the apparent lack of communication from Headquarters. The "Officers Journal" is published fortnightly, remember, hence the frequency of news. The subject of promotion is not closed, but is indeed a very live issue (see the last number of the "Officers Journal"). There should be no excuses for not paying Association subscriptions, as an Association is a necessity (Est. Instns., Vol. 5), and I venture to suggest that if subscriptions were reduced there would still be many non-paying officers. It is a pity that members of the C. and E. staff are not compelled to belong to their respective Associations, as in many outside jobs.

The problem of finance is not overlooked, and, believe me, there must be confidence and trust reposed in the secretaries during these difficult times.

The columns of this paper are still open to anyone who cares to write, and whilst there is still freedom of expression and thought allowed in the letters that are published, we need have no fears about the policy and activities of Headquarters. They receive from District meetings and from the columns of the "Journal" the feelings and reactions of the staff as touching their many problems, so the conference is not yet really necessary.

It will be interesting and instructive to have the views of other members upon the points raised by "Slippery Sam."

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT J. LOWE.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

Proposed Changes in Uniform Rank Distinctions.

I share "W. C. H.'s" astonishment at the quotation, without comment, in the Journal saying that "rank distinction may in future be provided in headgear." Even more alarming is the fact that no editorial reassurance was given at the foot of "W. C. H.'s" letter.

I should be glad, therefore, if the Editor will so far unbend as to state in a footnote to this letter:—

- (1) That any such change in the headgear will not apply to cap badges.
- (2) That the few who are entrusted with the formation of P.S.A. policy at present are resolved, at all costs, to obtain an additional ring for P.O.s, and the ring and curl for A.P.O.s.

Far from the present being inopportune for the proposed uniform changes, I think to-day, when every second person one meets has a uniform, and we cannot afford to wear anything nondescript, we have a "golden opportunity. Now all are concerned in this question of improved uniform, so that it is important that we should all make what influence we have felt. There is only ONE way to do that to-day. Every member of the P.S.A. should write at least one letter MONTHLY to the Journal, pressing attention to this matter.

J. L. COULTHARD, A.P.O.

(1) See "Current Comments" in this issue.

(2) The answer is definitely in the affirmative.—Ed.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

The current news at the time of writing is that President Roosevelt has signed the amendment of the Neutrality Act, and U.S. Navy Secretary, Frank Knox, has stated that American ships will be on their way to Britain within the next ten days.

This news indicates that an increase in volume of Water-guard work may be expected shortly, and unless some prompt action is taken by those in authority it is likely that Preventive Officers dealing with these friendly vessels will be in a very invidious position; do I hear those in authority crying: "How come?"

In case it should have escaped their notice, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, in case it has not so far been brought to their notice, it might be mentioned that there has been for some time past a feeling among Merchant Seamen that present allowances of tobacco, cigarettes, etc., are totally inadequate. This feeling was fairly common last winter when the shortage ashore was not nearly so acute as it is now, and not without very good reason.

It may never have been reported officially, but it is a fact that there were many complaints last winter that the allowance of 4 oz. of tobacco or 100 cigarettes (for eight days) was in fact frequently used by the men in two or three days.

This is not unreasonable, as men were often standing-to aboard ship in port during the many long night Blitzes as well as working by day, and as an inevitable consequence smoking increased tremendously. Many requests for "supplementary" issues were made to Preventive Officers. Few, if any, such issues were in the writer's experience actually made.

In one instance, an issue was requested after six days and it was refused, but the Master, who had business ashore, went to the Naval Control and put his case to an Admiralty representative, who took the matter up on his behalf. The result? a Collector's instruction that the vessel in question be visited and an issue given. As a sidelight, it might be interesting to know on how many occasions since the war began has a Collector or other high Official been approached to grant an issue to a vessel not strictly entitled to receive one under Standing Regulations. Probably no such figures are available, but many requests have undoubtedly been made.

It is known that many of our brave Merchant Seamen, whose deeds of valour and service to the Nation have been placed by our Prime Minister on a level with the highest traditions and services of the Royal Navy, feel that they are getting a very raw deal in return by way of tobacco allowances.

They see the men of the Royal Navy much more favourably treated, able to draw supplies whenever they need them, and they not infrequently wonder when there will be some relaxation forthcoming in their favour. They wonder, too, why the Officers of their ships are entitled to receive half as much again as, and Masters double the quantity, they are allowed, especially they reason, as these gentlemen can usually better afford to purchase additional duty-paid supplies ashore, if supplies are available.

The point has now been reached, however, with supplies short ashore, and usually reserved for regular customers, where the Merchant Seaman is at a disadvantage, and complaints are numerous. It would be interesting to know just how many offenders convicted of petty smuggling recently have proffered the legitimate reason: "I wanted a few more to smoke, they are hard to get ashore and your allowance is not sufficient," or words to that effect, as an excuse.

American ships will soon be here, their forerunners, the Panamanians have been arriving, and these nationalities are notoriously heavy cigarette smokers. In view of the shortage ashore, it is likely that Preventive Officers will be further inundated with requests for issues before they are due. To refuse these friends as we have so far refused our own seamen would be most ungracious, to put it mildly, and the whole regulation screams out for modification.

Having put the case for a concession, perhaps it is only right that a suitable alternative to the present method be suggested. For what it is worth, the writer proposes that the regulation be amended so that all members of ships crews (Officers and Masters included) be allowed 4 oz. of tobacco or cigarettes, etc., in use on arrival and that issues of a like amount be allowed every four days (as at present with spirits, wines, etc.), provided the vessel is entitled to receive

issues and the issuing Preventive Officer is satisfied that the amount left out on arrival, or since issued, is consumed or nearly consumed. Persons paying-off on arrival would be entitled to double the foregoing allowance, which would bring the amount to the same as at present.

Outward-bound ships entitled to receive issues to also be eligible to receive tobacco issues every four days. In this connection some modification would appear to be necessary in cases of vessels sailing in ballast; this is happening quite frequently these days. Such vessels having crew victualled aboard, and in every other way qualified to receive issues, are frequently prevented from receiving a second issue when the vessel may, for various reasons outside normal control, be prevented from sailing according to schedule. With crews now on six-monthly articles there is really little possibility of their receiving issues and then the voyage being cancelled, which is surely what the regulation was meant to cover when it was first framed.

The modifications suggested would, it is felt, involve little risk to the revenue, and both the Preventive Staff and the Merchant Navy, as well as the crews of Allied and Neutral ships, would welcome the concession. It is hoped that the powers that be will give this matter their earnest and sympathetic consideration

Yours faithfully,
LEASE-LEND.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Regarding the recent correspondence concerning a sleeve stripe for A.P.O.'s' uniform, and the lack of gold braid that is preventing such a concession being made, I should like to offer a suggestion which may go a long way towards meeting the obvious need of such a decoration, and which calls for neither extra braid nor the alteration of the P.O.'s uniform.

A badge should be worn on either the upper or lower part of the left sleeve of the jacket (a ruling can be given as to the exact position), or perhaps one worn on each sleeve. The badges used would be those taken from discarded uniform caps, because it may be assumed with a fair degree of certainty that every A.P.O. has at least one cap-badge that is now out of use, and no doubt the P.O.s would be willing to make up some deficiencies.

In the case of probationers (I now refer to post-war days), the necessary qualification to wear such a badge would be the receipt of a commission, which would, having completed at least one year's service, incidentally being a new cap, and therefore provide a spare badge for insertion on the sleeve, and at the same time form a ready distinction between probationary and commissioned officers.

I would suggest that disused badges can be made clean and bright again, and also that uniform overcoats might also bear a badge.

It is hoped that this suggestion be received with sympathy, and that steps will be taken to secure the approval of the Official Side, in what is hoped will be regarded as a co-operative proposition towards the solution of an acutely felt problem.—Yours truly,
G. B. D.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Surely the proposed recommendations of the Board to retain all A.P.O.s over the 25 age group cannot be justified from the point of view of time worked?

Before the war there were roughly 1,000 A.P.O.s doing a job of work. Now there are approximately 700 A.P.O.s endeavouring to do the same amount of work as previously carried out by 1,000. (Loss of passengers' baggage—not now very extensive—is more than counterbalanced by security work, etc.). This means that on an average an A.P.O. should be attending for about 68 hours a week, exclusive of Sundays—and we are not even on the 51-hour week in this department!

How important, therefore, must this very vital security rummage be when we are so seldom allowed to incur overtime in its performance.

If, therefore, it is possible for 700 to do the work of 1,000 with so little extra attendance, surely with the remaining A.P.O.s put on a 12-hour day, it would be possible to release all of the up-to-30's (of which group I happen to be a member).—Yours truly,
A.A.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,—

I am on detached duty, have been for over eighteen months, and, although some hardships and many troubles have occurred, I cannot grumble—much! I have been one of the few lucky ones. I have had little trouble in obtaining permission to move my home, and left no irksome commitments in the home port. I am obtaining extra rent allowance under G.O. 26/41, para. 16—a very essential help if one is to escape the threat of what is euphemistically termed "financial embarrassment," and apart from the monthly wrestling match with Form 230, etc., everything in the garden, if not exactly lovely, is fairly tolerable, which is all one has a right to expect in a total war!

From the above you have probably formed the excusable opinion that I am a particularly smug and self-satisfied prig. You are wrong, though. I am merely counting my blessings. For I am only too painfully aware that others have not been so fortunate. My own colleagues at this small port, for instance, have not fared so well owing to the increasing state of overcrowding in this reception area, and the fact that they arrived later. Others at other ports have much more still to complain of. A great deal has been done to improve the lot of we D.D. officers, but much remains to be done; but that is not the subject of this article.

Now another little matter arises which has not hitherto come up for discussion in spite of the numbers already called to the Forces. Suddenly a bolt has fallen from the blue, though somewhat cloud-flecked, Waterguard sky. Many more of us are to be called up. I am one of the 58 in the 25 age group, but the call-up may extend to 30, roping in hundreds, including many married men. This in itself is not so terrible. Most of us welcome a chance, long awaited, to have the honour of serving in the more active lines of the War Effort. But why must some of us be penalised?

According to G.O. 1/41, Part B, para 2, an "excess rent allowance" cannot be continued beyond four weeks after an officer joins H.M. Forces. True one has the opportunity of moving at the Crown's expense back to one's base, but what of those whose houses at the home port have been "blitzed?" and who wants to return his family to a danger area? True one may also remove to some other place at the Crown's expense within the limits of the cost of a removal home; but how many of us will be in a position to take advantage of this provision? True also that "very exceptional cases where the Board considers that the strict application of this rule would cause serious hardship may be submitted to the Treasury." This, however, affords bleak comfort as no-one knows exactly what is the Board's conception of an "exceptional case." Anyway it means that those of us who need it will have to beg for charity.

So we are thrown back on the prospect of possibly having to leave the "wife and kids" to try and eke out an existence on the balance of civil pay, which, mark you, will be minus that vital O.T., which just stands between "living" and "existence" for an A.P.O., plus what little we are able to send home out of our Service pay. Out of this must be paid, among other things, after the aforesaid four weeks' grace, all of a possibly astronomical rent.

There is the case as I see it, and I think it is a poor way of treating fellows who have, since 1939, put up with a good deal of upset in their lives and now face a possibly protracted separation from their families. I submit that the authorities should realise more fully that a man fights better when he knows that his nearest and dearest are comfortably housed and fed, and this regulation means that after four weeks either the housing or the feeding will undoubtedly suffer.

Having had my grouse, let me plunge into the fray which threatens to divide the Service. By doing so, I shall probably collect many brick-bats, but who cares! There seem to be two definite schools of thought on this vexed question of the jobs the Waterguard is doing. They are best termed the "Extremists" and the "Moderates" for want of better words.

The "Extremists" say definitely and without equivocation

that the peculiar and unique experience and abilities of our staff are being abused, wasted, neglected or altogether ignored. There seems ample grounds for such a view. Furthermore, they say, it is so disheartening that they welcome being called up so as to get out of such a back number of a job. With this, while being duly sympathetic, I do not agree. It smacks too much of defeatism and consequent treachery to one's colleagues. They have therefore spoilt their case by going too far.

Now as to the "Moderates." They, by their silence on the point, tacitly admit that they agree with the others about the waste of Waterguard talents. But, they say pacifically, is it not our own fault and could we not go a long way to remedying the position by performing those duties we have got to the best of our ability and less half-heartedly? (What an admission by implication?) Here is a bit of real constructive criticism, but it is spoilt by being based on an untruth.

Firstly, how can a decision, which rests entirely with the administration—that is, as to what work is assigned to us—possibly be laid at the door of the staff? Secondly our work has always been performed, on the whole, efficiently, sometimes almost miraculously. Has not the very nature of the War jobs produced any so-called mediocrity of performance? Not that I myself have noticed any evidence of this. Isn't it therefore an effect rather than a cause of us being squeezed out of our rightful heritage.

"But," says one correspondent, "how can such a numerically small service like ours hope to get any of the operational plums in war-time, or any other time?" My answer is, how could a small army like ours was, or a small Air Force like ours was, hope to be given the colossal task of freeing the world? This was achieved by expansion, drafting in more men. Could our service not, in the same way, have received more men at the beginning instead of giving them up?

But, I can hear you say, they would not have been experts and it is our very expertness which is our strong point. The answer proclaims itself in the analogy. The men drafted to the fighting forces in millions were for the most part novices, as incidentally we shall be when called up, but the fully trained nucleus soon passed on their knowledge and experience and in two years we have a force to be reckoned with. It is an easy step from these premises to suggest that our present nucleus Service, by the same token, could have passed on their knowledge and experience to the recruits and by now instead of a "skeleton" we should have a "heart" and "brain" of experts surrounded by a strong "body" of semi-experts. As things are, the branches of the Forces doing those jobs for which we are so eminently suited, such as examination, contraband control, security and the like, have had to start from scratch, and after much friction and heart-burn, they have in most cases fallen back on the time-honoured expedient of picking other people's brains—namely ours.

Since this, to me, obvious remedy is at the moment practically impossible owing to it entailing a complete volte face on the part of the authorities, a gymnastic evolution not to be expected in time of war, it seems that many of us have to go to the wars. Still it is worth bearing in mind for future reference after the "tumult and the shouting dies."

As to the actual call-up, I can see no cause for complaints, other than those specified above, once it is accepted as inevitable. It has been suggested that in addition to A.P.O.'s a proportionate number of the higher grades, say up to C.P.O.'s, should also be released. This may sound vindictive though I don't think that is the intention of the sponsors of the idea. Its real virtue lies in the avoidance of a top-heavy service and the consequent sealing down of duties.

Anyhow those of us who are called up will be glad to enter into a more active and perilous branch of the war effort, but our thoughts and sympathies will be with our less(?) fortunate colleagues still drudging at home.

In conclusion I cannot do better than to give vent to the well-known cry: "California here I come," only delete "California" and substitute "Lads in the Forces." and for "I," substitute "we."

Yours sincerely,

HAMPTONIAN.

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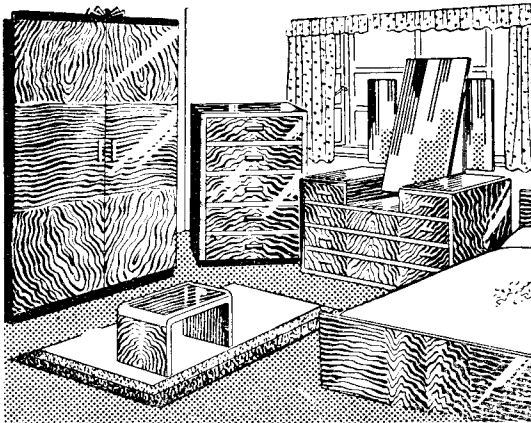
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